COMPLIANT TO AUTOMATED APPROACH IN MANAGING RESIDENTIAL INCOME PROPERTIES OF ENUGU STATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (ESHDC)

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Abstract
Prior to the emergence of automated management approach to real property administration, manual method of operation has been predominant in running the transactions of real property management in Nigeria. Increase in demand for quality and prompt services due to corresponding growth in housing needs are major issues facing Enugu State Housing Development Corporation (ESHDC). The study examined the use of automated approach in managing real property against the manual approach for effective service delivery. This was pursued by investigating the compliant status of ESHDC in automating the management of their real estate; assessed the responses of clients in embracing automation as a medium to channelling their requests to the corporation; explored the comparative advantage(s) of automated management of real estate services to manual approach; identified the basic compliant requirements for automated management operations and ascertained the performance of human, capital and technical resources for efficient operation of automated management. Data for the study were drawn from ESHDC website, primary and secondary investigations. The study concludes that automated management approach is prompt in attending to clients' request. The study therefore recommends automated management approach for efficient administration of real estate services.

Key Words: Compliant, Automated Approach, Managing Real Property, Enugu State Housing Development Corporation (ESHDC), Residential Income Properties

Introduction
According to Enugu State Housing Development Corporation, ESHDC (2013), the structure of corporation comprises of the Board of Directors at the apex of the management, formulating the corporation's policy. This is followed by the management team of nine (9) officers with the managing Director as the Chief Executive officer seeing to the daily operations of the corporation. The Corporation is endowed with qualified, committed and capable professionals such as Engineers, Architects, Land Surveyors, Estate Valuers, and Town Planner etc., some of whom are management staff.

The Corporation is obliged to extend the scope of their activities as government agency charged with the responsibility for the development, designing, planning, construction and management of real estate properties for Enugu State. The establishment focuses on real estate development outfits that provide comfortable, stable, safe, secure and cost efficient housing facilities. The corporation has been involved in estate management tasks connected to the development, leasing, marketing and management of some housing estates in the state, in fulfillment of their primary obligation. Such estates include Coal City Gardens Estate; Eku East Housing Estate; Network Estate, Ihaw Nike, Real Estate Uwani; etc.

It is obvious that Enugu State Housing Development Corporation faces increased management responsibilities. In order to meet up with the increasing management demand, it is important to examine the management strategy in use. The corporation has progressed from one level of management style to another involving majorly manual method of operation. The manual method was the use of filing system and typewriters (manual and electric) to secure and process information. The emergence of computer use was great relief as it could process data and store the processed information in both hard and soft copies. The increasing demand to serve the public effectively requires a more advanced technique. This technique is design to accommodate the requests of the public using the corporation's real properties. It is an automated approach designed to process data with less human input and more results through electronic media. The manual management approach in use at Enugu State Housing Development Corporation for real estate management is obsolete and cannot address the rising demand of their clients. Non-compliant to automated management affects the operation of ESHDC in real estate administrative issues. The study examined the use of automated
technique in managing real property in ESHDC.

Literature Review,

Automation of Residential Income Property

Residential income property is a branch of real property types, which an individual expresses right, or interest to the exclusive of all others (Ring and Dasso, 1985). Real property rights as agrees by Dubben and Sayee (1991), includes possession, control, enjoyment and disposition. Residential estate is popular investment. Besides generating income and building up equity, real residential estate investment can aid in sheltering an owners income against increasing taxes and the effect of inflation and deflation (Nancy, 2006). Residential income property is a reality that produces monetary income on a continuous basis. The gross annual income for which a property can be rented serves as an index or measure of its productivity as judge by the market.

Pulgram and Stonis (1984) affirm that the relentless evolution of technology moves us inexorably towards a world of total integration. Today's continuing developments in cable, telephone and telecommunications systems promises a tomorrow where office equipment, people, services and facilities, whether distributed or centralized, remote or local, are linked together in a global network of instantaneous communications and information transfer. According to Shimon (2009), over twenty five percent of the surveyed associate automation with replacing humans, but the definition is not about replacing humans as many examples involve activities people cannot practically perform such as complex and fast computing, wireless communications, microelectronics manufacturing and satellite base positioning. The meaning is about the autonomy of a system or a process from human involvement and intervention during the process (independent of whether humans could or could not perform it themselves). Human is always involved in automation to a certain degree from its development, to, at a certain points supervising, maintaining repairing and issuing necessary commands, e.g. at which floor should this elevator stop. The concept of automating the management of real properties as presented by

Teicholz (1992) explains that the use of computer in management of information in relevant field of operation that includes real estate practice. Hammer (1988) affirms that automation would be an efficient computer based approach to real property management. It was further gathered that the capacity of computers to manage large amounts of data accurately and inexpensively makes its application to property management systems very attractive. The use of automation displays a factual advantage as explained by (Molnar 1983), to the fact that many of the operations required in property management involves projections and inventories with possible major time savings.

Management of Residential Income Property

Management of residential properties is demanding and real property managers handle it better. The supervision and control, which is a component of management, contributes to the values of residential properties. The basic function of management, with residential income properties, is to enhance periodic cash flow towards preservation of value and maximizing the rate of return on investment. Residential income property is distinguished from other types of property by its function and attributes. Thorncroft (1965) described it as an investment asset in property investment project. It is identified among various types of real estate property. Outgoings can usually be passed on to the tenants either directly or by means of service charges. It is usual to grant short leases of such premises so that rent can be revised from time to time, or to allow for rent review. In common with all kinds of residential property, however, the responsibility of real estate manager tend to be high, and though reasonably attractive as investment, they are of little interest to those without the means of organizing their supervision and control. Robert (2000) argues that property management is the operation, control, and oversight of real estate as used in its most broad terms. Residential property management involves the processes, systems and workforce required to manage the life cycle of all properties including acquisition, control, accountability, responsibility, maintenance, utilization and disposition.

The roles played in residential property management generally include a minimum of these three primary tasks:

1. The full and proper screening or testing of an applicant's credit, criminal history, rental history and ability to pay
2. Lease contracting or accepting rent using legal documents approved for the area in which the property is located.
3. Mitigation and remediation regarding any maintenance issues, generally within a budget, with prior or conveyed consent via a Limited Power of Attorney legally agreed to by the property owner.
4. Maintaining necessary records for tax and legal purposes.

There are many facets to this profession, including managing the accounts and finances of the real estate
properties, and participating in or initiating litigation with tenants, contractors and insurance agencies. Although a person will be responsible for this in his/her job description but property management, like facility management, can be increasingly facilitated by use of computer-aided approach.

Compliant to the Operation Principles of Automated Management of Real Properties

Responding to the innovation of automated management involves the readiness to accept certain responsibilities involving acquisition of the tools, training personnel to operate the system and funding. Software is an important tool in operation of automation. Different organizations develop software that makes the operation of automation possible. Real estate marketing software improves the management process itself, as well as the relationship between resident and manager. Entrata property management software for example, allows you to spend less time managing your software and more time managing your properties. Get free access and have all of your accounting and resident information in one secure place. Whether you need to move-in a resident, post transaction to the ledger, or automate your renewal offer process, Entrata's management software provides everything you need.

Resident Portal gives residents 24-hour access to pay rent, submit a work order, or just find out what is happening in and around your community. Moreover, with seamless integration to your property management software, tracking and managing resident transactions has never been easier. Simplify business with Resident Portal's seamless integration with your property management software and Resident Pay. Increase satisfaction by giving residents 24/7 access to the leasing office from the comfort of their home. Provide secure access to community information, payment and maintenance portals 24/7. Residents can enroll and be instantly associated to their lease. Residents can manage their profile and preferences including communication, document retrieval, and history and even connect with other residents.

Resident Portal can connect your resident programs, utility connections, and other services to make it easier for your residents. With Resident Portal, companies can accept rent payments online, saving both time and money for on-site management teams by eliminating manual check processing. Resident Portal gives property managers tools to communicate easier and reduce turnover. Property Solutions makes the rental process much more pleasant through Prospect Portal (http://www.proPERTIESolutions.com/Home/Prospect_Portal) and through Resident Pay online rent payment process and Resident Works’ accounting system.

Advantages of Automated Approach to Real Estate Management over Manual Management Approach

Automated management systems help competitive companies streamline their business systems. Advantages of an appropriately selected and correctly used automated management system include control over processes, clear visibility of operations, supply chain streamlining, and more efficient information storage and recall. Such systems also can help a business increase efficiency, keep staff accountable, increase customer service, and bring greater value to the business. Benefits of automated management systems can lead to increased business value, which often leads to increased profitability.

Palmer (1986) further identifies speed, accuracy, consistency and cost as further advantage. In this regard, information can be conveniently compared in various ways affording faster and more complete analysis. Companies can achieve significant benefits from the implementation of automated systems for reliability/quality data capture, management, analysis and reporting. The benefits listed by Reliability Edge (1992) vary depending on the company and on the type of system. The advantages are:

- **Address data capture/management deficiencies that prevent the organization from taking advantage of valuable product performance data.**
- **Facilitate process control for the failure reporting, analysis and corrective action activities in the organization.**
- **Provide timely and accurate reliability/quality reports and analyses.**
- **Provide an early warning system for potential problems in the field.**
- **Meet the reporting needs of management personnel.**
- **Enhance the organization's ability to make financial warranty projections, to respond quickly to emerging issues before problems escalate and to allocate the appropriate resources for responding to customer issues in a timely manner.**
- **Empower professionals to make design improvements and to track the effectiveness of design revisions.**
- **Provide substantial cost benefits to the organization through better product designs, better control of product warranty processes,**
minimization of warranty abuse and more efficient/cost-effective customer support.

- Provide faster product release, better service, improved warranties and more reliable products with better product histories.

The Tools Required in Automating Real Estate Management Activities

It is important to understand that the tenet of automation is basically management of information between two or more parties by means of electronic devices such that activities involving physical assets management are effectively handled. So when we talk about automating the management of real estate, we mean translating communication into machine-coded system that are designed to take up human conversations in faster way with zero energy consumption. System automation tools have four main benefits, namely, (1) encompassing all business models, (2) decreasing costs, (3) allowing your company to focus on clients, and (4) increasing the number of clients. These four benefits are described below.

- **Encompassing all business models**
  The majority of system automation tools are designed for all IT support models. These include break/fix, support bank and managed services. Irrespective of the business model used by your company, system automation tools allow the delivery of high quality IT support services.

- **Decreasing costs**
  System automation tools cut costs because they automate manual tasks, such as submission of alerts and performing manual checks on event logs, disk space, and file sizes.

- **Allowing your company to focus on clients**
  The use of system automation tools enables you to focus on your clients. This is because they take just 10 minutes to implement and do not require any hardware to be installed and maintained.

- **Increasing the number of clients**
  System automation tools alert you before your clients even know that they have an issue. Thus, system automation tools allow you to fix the problem quickly and keep your clients happier. Automating real estate activities are mainly anchored on information services to address the needs of both the organization and their clients. One may be interested in understanding real estate management activities that can benefit from automation.

Human, Capital and Technical Resources for the Implementation of Automated Management in Housing Delivery

It is obvious that man remains indispensable in the scheme of innovations and technology. No matter how automated an industry tend to be, the service of man is required. Hogarth (1987) maintains that skills are learned and developed with experience, training, and practice. Katz (1974) classified management skills as technical, human relations and conceptual. Technical skills are those involved in making a product or providing a service. Man makes decisions and machines execute those decisions according to the instructions fed in the machines. Adair (1997) opines that decisions are inevitable part of human activities. It requires the right attitude. According to Altus and Hagen (1994), selection of an appropriate decision technology depends mostly on the type of information available and the technical working knowledge of the decision analyst. De Bono (1985) argues that the environment one fashions out decisions is the only climate you will ever live in so, before taking any course of action one must discover/create a set of alternative courses of action and gather information about each. Having gathered the information with which to make a decision, one must apply information for each course of action to predict the outcomes of each possible alternative and make a decision for implementation.

Capital is an important resource in perfecting the implementation of any project especially this kind. Capital resources are important determinant to acquire the needed tools for automating a real estate firm. According to Tricholz (1992), most organisations state that cost is the primary reason they have not undertaken the project of automating their services. A corporate decision to invest in automation system is made in the context of a capital budgeting process.

**Method**

The research design adopted survey strategy and archival investigation. The instrument was a closed ended structured questionnaire and interview with relevant management personnel of ESHDC on related issues under study. The focus areas were the management and residents of Real Estate Uwani. Real Estate Uwani is long-standing estate with populated residents. Archive data was drawn from the official website of Enugu State Housing Development Corporation (www.eshdc.net/index.htm). The website contains Home page, properties, facilities, projects, email, history, request/complaint, etc. The population of the study is the working strength (personnel) of Enugu State Housing Development Corporation.
(ESHDC) and the residents of Real Estate Uwani. The staff strength is about two hundred and fifty (250) permanent staff and forty (40) temporary staff (www.eshdc.net/index.htm), which comprises of corpers, students on Industrial Training and some other casual workers. The population of residents of Real Estate Uwani was not determined. So, convenient sampling technique was used to select one hundred (100) respondents from Real Estate Uwani. Eighty seven (87) completed questionnaires were returned. The interview conducted focused on the top management personnel selected through convenient sampling technique also.

Results
The responses obtained from the interview with the Management Personnel is shown in table 1; and the responses obtained from the questionnaires administered to the residents of Real Estate Uwani are shown in table 2.

Table 1. Interview with the Management of ESHDC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/no</th>
<th>Interview questions</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>What is your current approach in real estate management; manual or automation?</td>
<td>Manual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Do you know about automated management?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Are you automation compliant in your management?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Do you prefer manual management to automated management approach?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Why has the management not adopted it?</td>
<td>Management decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Do you have the human resources for the implementation?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Do you have the technical resources for the implementation?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Do you have the capital resources for the implementation?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Do you know the advantages of automated technique and how it works?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Automation is electronic management and secure; will you prefer it?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey 2015

The table 1 above shows the position of Enugu State Housing Development Corporation (ESHDC) in adopting management approach for the transaction of their real estate business. The interview reveals that the current approach to real estate management is manual. The management to some extent knows about automation but is not compliant in practice. However, there is an indication that the management would prefer to adopt automated management against manual approach in running the transaction of the Corporation. Some of the challenges facing the Management in adopting automation are: ignorance of the comparative advantages; the unavailability of human, technical and capital resources.

Table 2. Responses from Uwani Real Estate Residents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/no</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Did you encounter any management problem during the purchase of this property?</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Did you experience delay in response from the staff of ESHDC during the time of payment for the property?</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Are you internet compliant?</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Do you know about automated technique in management?</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Automated management requires online transaction; it is faster and secure. Will you acknowledge it?</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Do you consider that fulfilling your tenancy obligations through online facilities will be more convenient to you?</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Do you have any computer or TV and phone in your house?</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Do you know how to access internet websites and process information?</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey 2015
Table 2 shows the responses of eighty seven (87) observed respondents from Real Estate residents in Uwalla area. The scaling for the response is dichotomous with options of “Yes” or “No” to express the respondent’s opinion. That is, an option of “No comment” for respondents who are undecided on the stated options. The table shows that majority of the respondents encountered problems expressed in the lethargy of the manual approach in ESHDC management style. In reaction, they expressed readiness to accept a more pragmatic approach to management which automated technique can offer. The fundamental challenge is expressed in their greenness to ICT compliant or computer illiteracy.

Discussion of Results
The research question 1 investigates the compliant status of ESHDC in automating the management of their real estate. The finding shows that ESHDC is not automation compliant and presently uses manual approach to address most of their management activities. The clients who would have benefited from the resourcefulness of the automated technique are not all internet compliant. This became a hindrance to embracing automation as a medium of interaction between the corporation and their clients. The incompatibility to the use of automated technique in managing real estate by ESHDC limits the clients and the management from realizing the comparative advantages of automated management. It was observed that the basic compliant requirements such as use of software and other electronic tools became unnecessary because of absence of automation initiatives. The management confirmed that available human, capital, and technical resources for operation of automated management were not provided.

Conclusion
The conclusion drawn from this study indicates non-compliant of ESHDC to automation of management of real estate activities. Majority of the clients are not familiar with the technology on the ground that the ESHDC management does not adopt this technique. The apathy expressed by both parties in embracing automation could not expose them to know the comparative advantages of this technological innovation. The basic requirements for automated management operations are not employed, since they need are not created. The Management agrees that she lacks the adequate human, capital, and technical resources for efficient operation of automated management.

References