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## Key Knowledge And Skills Required By Real Estate Graduates For The Real Estate Industry In Uganda

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### Abstract

This paper examines the evolving needs of the real estate industry in Uganda, particularly considering the significant changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. It draws attention to the necessity for universities to update their real estate curricula to prepare undergraduate and graduate students for the current and future demands of the workforce. Using a qualitative research design, the study involved semi-structured interviews with real estate consultants who have hired graduates of the Bachelor of Real Estate Business Management of Makerere University in Uganda. The findings reveal that the most critical knowledge and skills for today's real estate graduates are in health and well-being, property valuation, legal aspects, information and communication technology (ICT), and research. This research is important as it highlights the essential areas of knowledge and skills that real estate academic programmes must emphasise to effectively prepare students for the modern real estate industry.

**Keywords:** *Skills, Knowledge, Real Estate, COVID-19*

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## 1. Introduction

The ever-changing real estate industry always calls for a real estate curriculum that reflects these changes. Previously, universities have focused on delivering academic real estate education approaches; on either the British (surveying) approach or the American (finance and investment) approach. For instance, the American approach focuses on finance with most real estate academics being housed or affiliated with business colleges and schools (Roulac, 2002). The UK approach mostly focuses on the surveying approach to include courses in property law, valuation, planning, economics, management, building construction and information technology (Dasso & Woodward, 1980; Galuppo & Worzala, 2004). The third approach; the multi-disciplinary approach (Roulac, 2002) is practised mainly in continental Europe. Under this approach, real estate courses are organized in a diffused and heterogeneous manner with varying major themes of real estate investments, financial systems, economic evaluation, project management, appraisal, land economics, and information technology (Musil, 2005; Newell et al., 2004). Additionally, soft skills have been emphasized by the majority of real estate scholars (Ayodele et al., 2020; Butler et al., 1998; Poon, 2012; Weinstein & Worzala, 2008) to be very relevant for a real estate graduate given the conditions in which a real estate professional will operate. Other relevant skills argued for a real estate graduate are technological skills (Ahmed et al., 2014), hard skills, and fundamental skills (Butler et al., 1998; Saginor et al., 2014).

However, employers in several fields of real estate continue to complain that students are just graduating with degree certificates, which justifies that they have the subject matter expertise, but they cannot integrate the essential skills and knowledge with their subject knowledge to be fruitful at their workplaces (Azasu & Gibler, 2016). Post-COVID-19, real estate employers need real estate graduates with the relevant knowledge and skills to adjust to a rapidly changing work environment. COVID-19 led to a major change not only in the real estate industry but in all sectors of the economy. The way people work and live has greatly changed. Measures like countrywide lockdowns caused significant increases in operating costs and, a decline in rent collection which led to a decline in demand, net operating income and investment value (Tanrıvermiş, 2020). In developed countries, high streets lost their business role, and became centres of amenities and

window-shopping destinations, enticing customers to purchase online (Florida et al., 2021). In addition, there was a decline in the need for offices and co-working spaces which in turn drove down commercial rents and prompted proposals for adaptive reuse, including residential conversion (Florida et al., 2021). This, therefore, calls for a shift from the traditional knowledge and skills that were previously emphasized in classrooms to newer and advanced knowledge and skills that are reflective of this new environment. The adaption to new skills and knowledge to match the new world creates successful real estate decision practitioners who are equipped with concepts, techniques and skills that are fundamental for solving problems in today's world and in the future (Weinstein & Worzala, 2008).

This study sought to answer a research question as follows; what are the key knowledge and skills required from the graduates of the Bachelor of Real Estate Business Management (BREM) of Makerere University? The rest of the paper is arranged as follows: Section two provides a literature review of the paper, which includes the theoretical underpinning for the study, followed by a section on the conceptual review. Section three gives details about the methods employed for the study, Section four gives the findings and results, and the last section (Section five) concludes.

## **2. Literature review**

This section discussed the theories and concepts relevant to the area of study with a view to laying a solid foundation for the understanding of key knowledge and skills required for real estate education.

### ***2.1. Stakeholder theory***

The stakeholder theory is discussed in this paper. It is adjudged to be more relevant to the discourse in this paper because it relates to the identification of needs and expectations of key stakeholders in sectors like real estate education. Stakeholder theory was developed by Edward R. Freeman in 1984 and provides an extensive framework for analyzing the interactions and relationships between organizations and their various stakeholders. The theory suggests that organizations must address the interests and needs of all stakeholders to achieve sustainable success. Stakeholders include people affected by or able to affect the organization's objectives. He further asserts that stakeholders of a corporation include management, customers, the local community, suppliers,

employees, and firm owners (Freeman et al., 2010). When it comes specifically to real estate, studies on stakeholder theory have been carried out mainly for real estate developments or projects due to their complexity in nature which affects several stakeholders (Caputo, 2013; Martinez & Olander, 2015; Sousa, 2012). However, stakeholder theory is seldom applied to the theme of real estate education. Applying stakeholder theory to the real estate education sector involves identifying and addressing the needs and expectations of key stakeholders to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of the curricula, in this case, the one of the Bachelor of Real Estate Business Management of Makerere University. In this context, key stakeholders include students, employers, Faculty and academic institutions, industry professions and associations and the community. Therefore, using the stakeholder theory as a guiding framework, the BREM program at Makerere University in Uganda could be designed to balance and integrate the diverse needs of its stakeholders and in the case of this paper, employers. This can be done through engaging with employers and industry professionals to ensure that the curriculum reflects current and future trends in the real estate sector.

## ***2.2. Real estate education***

Literature that is appropriate for the research theme is considerable. As real estate continues to evolve, some scholars have argued for the British approach, where land and survey knowledge is emphasized. Other scholars have emphasized the American approach where business knowledge is important, while others have emphasized the multi-disciplinary approach, with reference to a combination of both disciplines (Musil, 2005; Roulac, 2002). In addition, other scholars argue that the knowledge that real estate graduates acquire from university should be a response to the fluctuating trends in the industry permitting for substantial flexibility and incorporation with courses common to numerous academic disciplines in the social and physical sciences, humanities, land surveying and engineering (Nzioki et al., 2006). Moreover, all education should also display the market perspective in which it is conveyed. While countries characterized by mature real estate markets tend to place a strong emphasis on investment and finance, this is not the case for Africa (Mirembe & Viruly, 2018) which is mostly opaque (JLL, 2020), having an immature but developing property market. The knowledge and skills passed on to real estate graduates in Africa should be relevant given Africa's level of economic maturity.

### ***2.3. Real estate body of knowledge***

It has been argued that a comprehensive real estate curriculum rests on four key knowledge outcomes (Black et al., 1996). The four key knowledge areas include market analysis, finance, property development and the legal and public policy environment (Black et al., 1996). The importance of the four key knowledge outcomes has been supported by (Weinstein & Worzala, 2008); who mentions that real estate education ought to include topics of decision-making, financial and quantitative analysis, risk evaluation of real estate transactions, social responsibility, and ethics. The seven most important specific real estate research topics include; the impact of capital flows in and out of the property market (finance), land reform issues (physical and development), property taxation factors (finance), forecasting methodologies for markets (market analysis), computerization of land registries, returns and rents (physical and development environment), and securitization of real estate (finance) (Adewunmi & Olaleye, 2011). Also, Poon et al. (2011) suggest that the top five spheres of knowledge valued by employers are professional practice and ethics, property law, property valuation, customer care and landlord and tenant law.

Sagunor et al. (2014) also identify areas of quantitative and financial analysis, understanding rental markets, and analytical problem solving which are significant for graduates of real estate. Adama et al. (2018) also investigated the competency requirements for real estate practice in Nigeria and their findings indicated that property management, property valuation and real estate agency were ranked the top three key knowledge areas by the Estate Surveying and Valuation (ESV) firms in both Abuja and Lagos. Lastly, there is a suggestion that the body of technical and fundamental knowledge and reasoning in real estate needs to include corporate real estate, facilities management, valuation, investment, finance, construction technology and development (Azasu & Gibler, 2016); in order to be pertinent to the changing global real estate trends. All the above scholars seem to agree on the four key knowledge areas of financial, market, legal and public policy, and the physical and development environments.

#### ***2.4. Real estate skills for graduates***

Apart from the knowledge acquired by real estate graduates, there is a need for skills that will enable professionals to survive in the working environment. The majority of the scholars have divided the skills required by a real estate graduate into four categories: that is soft skills such as communication, presentation, writing, client care and professional practice and ethics (Adama et al., 2018; Ayodele et al., 2020; Butler et al., 1998; Poon, 2012; Weinstein & Worzala, 2008). Technological skills include reading, understanding and interpreting blueprints, plans and drawings, computer expertise in construction technology and software, knowing sustainable construction, knowing project scheduling, estimates and project closeout and handover procedures (Ahmed et al., 2014). Fundamental skills like analytical skills, problem-solving skills, quantitative/financial analysis and lastly hard skills (Butler et al., 1998; Saginor et al., 2014).

Soft skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving skills, written and oral interpersonal communication, negotiation skills, teamwork, effective leadership, advanced technology, flexibility to change and engagement in lifelong learning skills are key skills for any real estate graduate (Weinstein & Worzala, 2008). Similarly, Poon et al. (2011), suggest that professional attitude, capability and commitment to revise professional knowledge, interpersonal skills, enthusiasm and capability to work as a team are the top five skills and attributes rated by employers. In addition, Poon (2012) emphasizes soft skills as the fundamental employability skills for graduates. The above authors majorly focused on soft skills leaving out hard skills.

Furthermore, the need for technological skills is vital for a real estate graduate. Technology software like CoStar Data, GIS programs, ARGUS and skills have been stressed to be a lifelong learner to handle changes and inherent uncertainties in the industry of real estate (Weinstein & Worzala, 2008). The need for technology software is further supported by (Saginor et al., 2014) who assert that financial modelling using EXCEL, and ARGUS are precise skills or tools a real estate graduate may be requested to use when employed.

Real estate graduates also need skills in research and discovery coupled with system thinking which is largely lacking in real estate graduates in the developing world (Azasu & Gibler, 2016). This is to enable them to discover new knowledge in the changing world of real estate as well as

evaluate why things happen the way they do and why people behave the way they do. Graduates of real estate programmes should also have a clear understanding of how real estate participants and partners fit into the process that ensures community living, work and play (Galuppo & Worzala, 2004).

However, with the outbreak of COVID-19, there have been many changes in the way people live and work. However, the existing literature has not suggested any new knowledge or skills that should be added to real estate education for graduates, mostly in developing countries. The reviewed studies above largely entail the curriculum of real estate programmes both in developed countries (Ahmed et al., 2014; Butler et al., 1998; Dasso & Woodward, 1980; Galuppo & Worzala, 2004; Weinstein & Worzala, 2008) and developing countries (Azasu & Gibler, 2016; Chikafalimani, 2013; Mirembe & Viruly, 2018). They provide courses, in key fundamental areas that will equip real estate graduates with the relevant knowledge and skills for the work environment after their degree programmes. Other studies have focused on the knowledge and skills employers of real estate graduates require from them after their degree (Adama et al., 2018; Ayodele et al., 2020; Poon, 2012). Furthermore, other studies look at the effects of COVID-19 on the real estate sector (Nanda et al., 2021; Tanrıvermiş, 2020). This study adds to the existing knowledge on real estate education that addresses the knowledge and skills that real estate graduates should be equipped with for the industry in developing countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. For example, this is the first study to be conducted in Uganda. This study is also qualitative in nature since it used the interview method to get responses from the employers of the real estate graduates. The aim of this study is to examine new knowledge and skills employers expect from real estate graduates post-COVID-19.

### **3. Research methodology**

Past studies that have been conducted in the area of real estate education have mainly used internet searches (Chikafalimani, 2010; Kampamba et al., 2017), document analysis (Chikafalimani & Reddy, 2014; Nzioki et al., 2006), mixed methods (Poon et al., 2011), survey method (Chikafalimani, 2013), to mention but a few. In this study, qualitative methods were applied to answer the research question. This study adopted a constructivist approach which suggests that meaning is hidden and must be brought to the surface through deep reflection through an

interactive dialogue between the researcher and participant (Ponterotto, 2005). In addition, the study uses an interpretivism paradigm (Amaratunga et al., 2002) because it is linked with the constructivism approach that allows participants to share their own experiences and issues (Goldkuhl, 2012).

The study began with a pilot study to address the issue of reliability (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The results of the pilot were used to refine the interview protocol (Morse et al., 2002) and were also included in the analysis. The interviews were conducted using Zoom meetings from June to October 2020. This is the period when the COVID-19 Pandemic had just started, and Standard Operating procedures had to be followed. Therefore, we did not have any face-to-face interviews. We solely relied on semi-structured interviews with individual respondents. This method allowed the interviewees to easily voice their opinions and provide as much information as possible while we controlled the process (Turner, 2010). Interviews are considered extremely efficient when collecting data because they provide deep information about the respondents' experiences and perspectives on a topic at hand (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Turner, 2010). The researchers ensured that the respondent was given authorisation to use an audio recorder. Before that, the respondent was asked to sign a consent form. Ten interviews were conducted, and audio recorded. The data were collected in English and using interviews and secondary information. At the end of all the interview meetings, we had ten respondents in total who took part in the interviews. This number was considered sufficient because theoretical saturation was attained after there was no more new information and the interviewees' responses became repetitive (Johnson, 2015).

The study used purposive sampling. Respondents were selected if they were operating in the property industry in Uganda. Respondents included real estate consultants (realtors, surveyors, brokers, property developers, institutional investors) who had employed Bachelor of Real Estate Business Management (BREM) students in the previous years. Since these employers employ BREM alumni, they understand what skills are needed to make them better. Data was organised and then transcribed by the researchers after every interview. Transcriptions were checked for accuracy before sending one of them to the respondent and a peer for review or assessment and confirmation. This process significantly improved construct validity (Gibbert et al., 2008). The researchers were acquainted with the data by reading throughout the transcript a few times with



the data corpus, while also writing down initial thoughts and feelings (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Data was backed up by external devices like Google Drive and Dropbox to preserve protected soft copies of the work in case of any unexpected challenges. Coding was done after transcribing each interview, then another interview could be taken on. Data was coded using NVivo 12, a computer-aided qualitative data analysis software program known as CAQDAS. Firstly, fewer data codes were created by just detecting and listening to qualitative data. After that, other codes were developed with the assistance of CAQDAS. The addition of codes was done till the content of the cases was well represented by the set of nodes. As the coding progressed, the scale at which codes were created declined. The codes were in close connection with the terms they represented (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In the end, the study had a total of sixty-seven codes which was sufficient (Saldaña, 2021). The codes were revised, and the arrangement was added to them by including prefixes or changing their names with more abstract or conceptual terms. In some instances, descriptive classifications were joined. The produced list of sub-categories was categorized under higher-order headings to enable the list to collapse into similar or dissimilar broader groups of higher order. The process above was followed by searching for themes. Lastly, after the themes had been developed, the final analysis and discussion were done.

#### **4. Results and discussions**

The real estate employers of the BREM students of Makerere University passionately expressed their opinions on issues of key knowledge and skills for real estate graduates, during the interviews. Knowledge and skills that were previously not needed in the real estate industry will need to come into play. This therefore means that the preparation of real estate graduates for the field will also have to change in some cases. Some key knowledge and skills will have to be emphasized much more than previously to get a graduate who is well-grounded and answers the cries of employers. Table 1 below shows key respondent's information.

**Table 1:** Information on research respondents

<b>Respondents ID</b>	<b>Academic Qualification</b>	<b>Position in the Firm</b>	<b>Years of Experience</b>
BS	MSRE	CEO	20
BT	BSC	MANAGER	10
IG	MSRE	Commissioner	12
JR	BSC	CEO	13
KF	Post Graduate Diploma	HR	5
LK	LLA	MANAGER	5
MJ	BSC	CEO	15
MS	BSC	CEO	12
MU	MS	CEO	10
VA	BSC	CEO	13

#### ***4.1. Key knowledge expected from a graduate of the BREM program***

Employers of BREM students had a significant amount of knowledge that they wanted the graduates to have and acquire before they joined the industry. For example, knowledge such as accounting and finance, real estate brokerage, facility management, building inspections and monitoring, ethics, investment knowledge, policy environment, real estate valuation, principles of real estate, legal aspects, property development, tenancy systems, marketing, health and well-being knowledge, geographic information system, risk management and sustainability. However, the knowledge that was emphasized most included:

##### ***4.1.1. Real estate valuation***

Estimating the value of real estate is necessary for several reasons, such as investment analysis, acquiring financing for the project or house, sales listing, insurance of property and taxation. For most people, real estate valuation is very necessary when determining the asking or purchase price of a piece of real property. According to the real estate consultants interviewed, every real estate graduate needs to leave the university when they have knowledge of real estate valuation which others call real estate appraisal. These arguments were pointed out by respondents LK and IG:

**LK**

*“Someone should have basic knowledge about being able to assess value in real estate...”*

**IG**

*... “Should be able to carry out analyses/appraisals....”*

#### ***4.1.2. Legal aspects***

Real Estate Transactions involve a significant amount of documentation at different stages. For example, writing down contractual agreements between the parties. Therefore, a real estate graduate is expected by employers to have some basic knowledge of business law, contract law, property law, land law, etc. This was well articulated by the respondent responses below:

**JR**

*“...Then knowledge about the law; they will need to know the law, especially the laws that apply to real estate and maybe property and land in particular so that they can do things within the confines of the law.”*

#### ***4.1.3. Financial understanding***

The fact that real estate development needs large amounts of capital, its financing can rarely be based on one’s savings. Henceforth, there is a need for real estate consultants to know and understand other sources of financing. These can include commercial loans, mortgage financing, joint ventures, equity and debt financing, sale-leaseback financing, and the sale of securities (Ezimuo et al., 2014; Mwathi & Karanja, 2017). Respondents emphasized the importance of a real estate graduate coming out of university with this financial understanding as illustrated in one of the statements below:

**MS**

*“...they must have a clear capital structuring of that project when you are looking at interacting with other consultants that come in on the project...”*

#### ***4.1.4. Principles of Real Estate***

The employers of BREM graduates advised that graduates should gain an understanding of the basic principles of real estate which will later be needed in the industry. Principles of real estate knowledge entail being able to comprehend the fundamentals as well as an extensive breadth of attributes about real estate development and management. It also entails realizing the multi-disciplinary nature of the real estate industry and thereby learning to integrate other topics with real estate development and management, ability to comprehend matters in real estate development and management in Uganda and having confidence in taking tasks in development, management and usage of real estate as well as guaranteeing the highest and the best use of properties (Ariyawansa, 2016). Below are statements from a respondent regarding knowledge of principles of real estate to be known by the BREM graduates:

**LK**

*“They need to know the basic principles of real estate, they need to know what constitutes real estate, I mean what does it include and how is it validated?”*

#### ***4.1.5 Understanding of Market Trends***

Understanding the ever-changing real estate markets is vital to real estate graduates. For example, in the aftermath of COVID-19, employers would expect graduates of the BREM programme to understand what the real estate market in Uganda looks like on the regional and global scene; to have an indication of what is happening in other markets and not specifically in Uganda alone. This was elaborated by the respondent’s statement below as they responded to the question of what knowledge is needed by a real estate graduate of BREM:

**MU**

*“They should have a mindset of how a business perspective of real estate is, what they think the direction of the industry is. I mean they should have the knowledge that the industry is moving in this direction. For example, if you consider the current environment, a real estate professional should be able to have the skills to determine the dynamics. They should be able to use specific pointers or enablers in the industry to know the direction of the industry.”*

#### **4.1.6. Information technology**

Although there have been several changes in the property sector in the last few decades because of urbanization and digitalization, the COVID-19 pandemic appears to have had a big impact on several changes in the industry. Before the pandemic, the real estate industry was on the path to digitizing processes and creating digitally-enabled options for many of their services. However, with the coming of COVID-19, the speed at which the digitization process happened was brought fast forward. One would say that what would have been established in a period of 10 years all happened within a shorter time (months). For example, workplaces and classrooms transitioned to remote, shopping to delivery and social life played out largely over digital media (Florida et al., 2021). We saw the coming of virtual conference rooms such as Zoom meetings, Microsoft Teams, and Hangouts; normalizing home offices in many countries. Using virtual technology for viewings as well as using augmented and virtual reality to enhance the user experience has been witnessed among players in residential real estate. Therefore, employers in Uganda's real estate industry emphasize the worth of ICT skills for BREM graduates so they can cope with the changing world trends. This is evidenced in the following respondents' statements:

**LK**

*“So, can we give virtual tours, for example? Can we work more online, do they have to be more technology savvy, do we have to market more online, can you close a deal online, how possible is that? So, they need to embrace technology...,”*

#### **4.1.7. Health and well-being**

Understanding and applying occupational health and safety is very important for the BREM graduates, in the post covid era. BREM graduates should think beyond the “business-as-usual” way of doing things as pointed out by the following respondents:

**LK**

*“...maybe we want to educate people about why health should now be a priority area in the development and planning of real estate. Health will influence management and include just normal health and safety. Why do people touch doorknobs all the time? There are germs; are we going to introduce smart doors? Those ones that open on their own. We have them already actually*

*but are we going to promote their use? It is just something to think about. But more importantly, it is health in real estate.”*

#### ***4.2 Skills expected from a graduate of the BREM program***

Among the skills that BREM graduates need to survive in the current world are: analytical skills, communication skills, coordination skills, interpersonal skills, marketing skills, leadership skills, management skills, negotiation and persuasion, presentation skills, research skills, writing skills, and teamwork, as discussed below:

##### ***4.2.1 Communication skills***

Individuals, especially students, have a lot of ideas. The biggest challenge arises in how to pass on these ideas to the next person or whoever they would benefit. This is called having communication skills. Important to evaluate under communication skills: Do the students/graduates communicate well, in terms of written and spoken? Are they able to pass on the knowledge to get a transaction going? Communication skills are explained below by respondent BT when asked about the skills required by the employers of real estate graduates:

**BT**

*“...You need people who are going to be confident, they can communicate what exactly they have in mind. Most of them have knowledge but are not able to present as they would wish to or as a client would want to receive it. Communication skills...”*

##### ***4.2.2. Presentation skills***

Employers argued that much as communication skills are vital for a graduate of real estate, presentation skills should not be ignored. Presentation skills involve public speaking, standing in front of people and talking to them while constructing sentences out of your brain. It also involves how you present yourself to your audience. This may even entail how you dress up for a task. How audible you are to your audience will show your level of confidence in the subject matter that you are presenting, eye contact and nonverbal communication inclusive matter. The above was well articulated by respondent VA during the Zoom interview when he was asked about the necessary skills for a real estate graduate:

**VA**

*“Number 2 is presentation skills. If today if you asked everyone who has finished that program their nightmare in the field is one, to convince a landlord to give them a property to manage. Nightmare. Why? Presentation skills. The guy has a building, but to meet him and explain to him what management all is about and convince him to give you that property to manage.”*

#### **4.2.3. Research skills**

Research Skills in real estate would refer to the competence to search for, locate, extract, organize, evaluate, and use or present information that is relevant to the real estate sector. In this study, employers emphasized the importance of BREM graduates having research skills. This will involve the ability to analyze certain issues and aspects in the industry, evaluate them in relation to the industry and apply the acquired information for their good, as one respondent below elucidated:

**LK**

*“Then I expect them to have the ability to research because the world is now interconnected. They can't leave here, and we say this is what it has always been, and this is what we are going to do. They should have the ability to research, so research skills are very important. The soft skills are marketing and the like. They should have those as well. They should have a little insight into each and everything regarding real estate.”*

## **5. Conclusion**

The results from this study are not very different from what previous scholars concluded but rather broaden the knowledge from an emerging country's perspective. This study emphasizes the importance of knowledge of real estate valuation, financial understanding, principles of real estate and knowledge of the legal aspects of real estate as suggested by Black et al. (1996), and Poon et al. (2011). Different from the existing literature, and well-knowing that the real estate players in Uganda usually will not engage in market research before a major project, the study brings in new knowledge skills like a general understanding of the market trends, hence the research skills. Also, this new suggested skill probably could be a result of the changing world and the fourth industrial

revolution where real estate is now about data or being knowledgeable. The other knowledge aspect that arose out of this study is the knowledge about the health and well-being of people in the industry. We suppose that this can be explained by the fact that COVID-19 brought about a lot of questions regarding health, and social distancing, to mention but a few. Further still, health and well-being can be tied to the social sustainability conversation where, as real estate employees, there is a need to be aware and considerate about occupants' health (the ones who are going to use your buildings), hence such topics as ergonomics in property and facility management. More still, this study's results do not emphasize the knowledge of ethics among real estate professionals which the previous scholars have well-articulated (Weinstein & Worzala, 2008).

Among the skills that this study emphasized are communication, presentation, IT, and research just like previous literature had mentioned (Ayodele et al., 2020; Butler et al., 1998; Poon, 2012). The employers argued that with the current realities of COVID-19 and its aftermath, knowledge, and skills such as health and well-being, IT and research skills are being adjudged as more important given the changing world and the new normal. Important to note is that while the real estate industry was already embracing technology pre-covid, the COVID situation accelerated this move. Internet penetration and widespread availability of 4G and 5G mobile networks have provided a massive boost (Nanda et al., 2021). Technology advancements such as virtual conference rooms, virtual tours, and Artificial Intelligence (AI), to mention but a few that would have been regularly used in developing countries, were introduced within a space of months in the year 2020. Such technology software is vital in real estate operations of property management, investment, valuation, portfolios, budgeting, virtual property, and locations which real estate students should be conversant with. It is therefore very important that our real estate graduates are at the frontline of all these new technologies in the industry. A university degree in real estate alone may no longer guarantee a job placement until the graduate has that additional knowledge and skills.



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