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Evaluating the Methods and Constraints of Land Accessibility in Benin City, Nigeria

Bernard Adjekophori[1], Sulaimon O. Adebiyi[2], Iyotor T. Eshiemokhai[3]

[1]Department of Estate Management & Valuation, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State, Nigeria
[2]Department of Business Administration, University of Lagos, Akoka. Lagos, Nigeria
[3]Department of Surveying and Geo-Informatic, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Access to land remains a challenge in developing countries. This paper evaluates the effectiveness of various methods of accessing land and associated constraints in Benin City, Nigeria. Using a cross-sectional survey design, a total of 236 respondents comprising 210 household heads/owners of properties and 26 heads of practice in estate firms were sampled. Tools such as standard deviation and the relative importance index (RII) as well as factor analysis (FA) were used for data analysis. Results reveal that purchase, community allocation, and gifting are the best ways to gain access to the property in the study area. Key barriers to obtaining property are the high cost of acquisition, the uncertainty of tenure, and the difficulties in completing a land transaction. It is recommended that the city's zoning code is revised, to ensure equitable access to properties. An urgent need to address the problem of the exclusionary indigenous land-ownership syndrome is revealed. This will ameliorate the bottleneck associated with community and family land allocation.

Keywords: Access; Constraints; Methods; Land; Land accessibility

1. Introduction

Urban growth relies heavily on the land. It is both the bedrock and the framework upon which a nation's social, political, and economic activities are built, and it serves as the starting point for

✉ [2] soadebiyi@unilag.edu.ng

all subsequent growth (Udo & Udoudoh, 2018). It is paradoxical, though, because as the world's population grows, the quantity of land continues to decline (Adjekophori, Ojeh, Anyanwu, & Mustapha, 2020).

For sustainable development, Land is seen as a necessity for the successful implementation of sustainable development goals (Arjjumend & Seid, 2018). Access to land, on the other hand, continues to be an enormous issue for urban growth in many African nations. Omirin (2002) points out that two of the most important factors in economic development are the availability of land and property rights. The process through which individuals or groups obtain rights and chances to temporarily or permanently inhabit and exploit property is often referred to as "access to land" (Quan, 2006; Arjjumend & Seid, 2018). As a result, a nation's economic growth relies on how efficiently land is shared among its people and competing purposes.

In Omirin (2002), accessibility is defined as the availability of useful land, the affordability of such property, and the ease of transaction with the land. The state, on the other hand, sets the parameters for who has access to and who may possess property. Because of this, land administration is characterized by a variety of players, such as the government, community leaders, families, attorneys, middlemen, and real estate brokers (Isaac, Timothy & Ayodeji, 2019). It is important to point out here that the government has regulations and procedures in place to manage and regulate the activities of these actors.

The Federal Government of Nigeria enacted the Land Use Act of 1978 to improve access to land, but as Ayedun and Oluwatobi (2011) point out, the Act came with the good intention of making land available and accessible to the people. However, it became a clog in the wheel of development due to the problematic procurement process, high land costs, and uncontrolled informal land market.

Researchers, investors, estate developers, and other stakeholders in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa are always looking for new ways to make land more accessible. In their study, Oladehinde, Popoola, Fatusin, and Adeyeni, (2017) indicate that the high cost of land was the most significant barrier to land accessibility among migrants in rural border communities in Ogun State, Nigeria. Ado (2010) examines land accessibility and its consequences for housing delivery in Kano, Nigeria, and finds that flaws in policy formation and needless bureaucracy are the main difficulties. In Lokoja, Nigeria, Adedayo (2018) examines variables that determine access to residential property and finds that the occupation of the people is the most significant determinant.

Gbadegesin, Heijden and Boelhouwer (2016) show that tenure security is a consideration for accessibility in urban housing supply. In Lagos, Nigeria, Odudu (2015) studies urban crop producers in the informal sector and finds that land affordability and competitiveness are the key restraints. Arjjumend and Seid (2018), in their research in Sahara Africa, find that the rate of urbanization, urban poverty, and land corruption pose significant obstacles to the availability of land for urban housing development. Lawal and Adekunle (2018) also evaluate the impact of land on the Federal Housing Authority's capacity to supply housing in Abuja and discover that the organisation is exposed to a tedious and difficult process of acquiring and gaining access to the property.

Given the prevailing ironical situation where so many groups miss out on easy access to land, this

paper argues that a number of obstacles hinder access to affordable land. Besides, there are several factors that have resulted in inefficient use of land resources, inequitable distribution of wealth, poor housing conditions, and environmental degradation. One of the issues is insufficient, unequal, and poor access to land (Omirin, 2002). Based on the aforementioned point, this paper articulates the observed gap in access to land and sets to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of the methods and the constraints to land accessibility in the South-South region with a particular focus on Benin City, Nigeria – a yet-to-be-covered location in other studies. Therefore, the objective of this paper, apart from assessing the effectiveness of the methods, is to also highlight the obstacles to land access with a view to providing a pathway that will enhance easy access to land for sustainable development in the study area.

2. Literature Review

Since the beginning, land has remained an important component of production and a fundamental factor of production all over the world (Kamal et al. 2022*)* Access to land and its resources are seen as significant aspects in the improvement of living standards of urban inhabitants. Therefore, access to land remains a major component in productive activities and security for people. Gbadegesin et al. (2016) describe land accessibility as the capacity to profit from, occupy, or employ land for purposes of shelter, productive activity, or pleasure of relaxation and rest, whether temporarily or permanently. Land accessibility may be defined as the procedures through which individuals independently or collectively earn rights and chances to occupy and use land mainly for productive purposes and other economic and social goals (Oladehinde, Olayiwola & Popoola, 2018). Furthermore, Gbadegesin et al. (2016) emphasises that access to land may instantly alleviate issues like homelessness, dangerous living, poverty, and underdevelopment.

There are three ways to get access to land: the direct occupation of it, exchange of valuables for it (buying or renting), and allocation from the government, other landowners, and/or management agencies. As a result, Gbadegesin et al. (2016) identify rights as "socially or legally recognised entitlements" to access, use and manage regions of land and natural resources. Poor governance, whether in the government's official land management or customary tenure arrangements, is responsible for the lack of housing availability in Nigeria's main cities (Olujimi & Iyanda, 2013). For Gbadegesin et al. (2016), informal transfers and ownership are not protected by law, and customary tenures may be degraded by external influences which might not give the required protection to new bidders.

Table 1a: Description of Methods of Accessing Land

S/N	Methods of Accessing Land
1.	*Purchase*: A good percentage of interests on land in the country have changed hands. The owner of the land receives money from the sales and uses the proceeds for other investments.
2.	*Adverse possession or prescription*: The acquisition of rights through possession for a prescribed period of time.
3.	Access to vacant or abandoned land and/or by bringing vacant or abandoned land into productive use.
4.	*Leasing*: Gaining access to land by paying rent to the owner.
5.	*Sharecropping*: Gaining access to land in return for paying the owner a percentage of the production.
6.	*Inheritance:* Gaining access to land as an heir; inheritance by heirs of the owner gave rise to a form of freeholding called fee tail estate.
7.	*Systematically through land reform policies*: Through land reform measures, the government has also enabled some degree of access to land in Nigeria. Prior to the 1978 Land Use Act, the traditional land tenure system barred many from gaining access to land as only people from landowning families could access land in the country.
8.	*Compulsory acquisition by the government*: This entails possession of land by the government for certain reasons.
9.	*Traditional means:* Through this, land which is bestowed under the custody of the traditional chiefs could be accessed.
10.	*Gift:* Through donations or gifting of land, people in the traditional societies gained access to land in Nigeria.
11.	Government allocation

Source: *Researchers' construct, 2021*

Individuals and groups may earn rights and chances to own and use the land for production as well as other economic, social, or cultural reasons via procedures known as "land accessibility" (Oladehinde, Olayiwola & Popoola, 2018). Having access to land may help alleviate the issues like homelessness, hazardous living, and poverty reduction and development. In the public and private sectors of the economy, social, legal, environmental, and technical restrictions may occasionally limit or hamper the capacity to buy land, according to Umar (2017). But Oladehinde, Olayiwola & Popoola, (2018) argue that land accessibility is constrained by the following factors:

Market constraints: Land is difficult to get because of market constraints such as rivals, external consumers, volatility, and restrictions.

Insecure tenure: When land tenure is uncertain or disputed and those who work the land do not invest in it and do not conserve it, the soil is nowhere near as healthy or as productive as it could be. It could result from possible double transactions (buying a land twice) involved in the purchase of urban land; security of tenure becomes difficult as authentication of land ownership becomes difficult during the purchase.

Difficulty in a land transaction: Demand for urban land has become difficult, especially in the core urban centres. High competition for the use of such land for a variety of purposes is responsible for the difficulty.

High cost of land: There is sometimes an extraordinary rise in the number of transactions in urban regions due to the high cost of land. This makes it difficult for prospective property developers to acquire land in urban areas.

Inability to use land: Additionally, whether a nation chooses to rely on tourism, industrial, or agricultural growth as its economic foundation, all regions of land cannot be used for all things. Some are suitable for certain sorts of industries.

High land competition: The occurrence of competition among property investors for land in the same locality may lead to artificial scarcity of land, especially if the target of the land is for a similar purpose. In this case, the non-availability of land may hinder interested property developers from having access to such land.

Poor living conditions, slum expansion, informal settlements, environmental degradation, and the increasing vulnerability of the urban poor are all consequences of a lack of access to land in the city (UN-HABITAT, 2011). Access to land is a powerful weapon in the fight against poverty and homelessness.

3. Study Setting and Methods

The location of this study is Benin City. The study assesses the effectiveness of the methods and ascertains the constraints to land accessibility in the city. Edo State's capital and main city, Benin City, is located in Southern Nigeria at latitude 6.33500 N and longitude 5.60370 E. It is around 40 kilometres (25 miles) north of the Benin River and about 320 kilometres (200 miles) east of Lagos. Benin City is Nigeria's rubber capital, and oil production is also a major business. Benin City was the capital of the Edo Kingdom of Benin from the 13th to the 19th century. The choice of Benin City as the study location is based on its status as a conurbation and the capital city of Edo State, which receives the overflow of people from other cities and towns in Edo State. Benin City is the usual target location of most people who move from various towns in search of greener pastures in the state. This makes the city overburdened with increased population and its accompanying land access complexities. This also makes the city a major commercial hub with an active real estate market.

This research examines the efficiency of the procedures and the limitations of land accessibility in Benin City. The mixed-methods approach is the model utilised in this research. Here, data (both qualitative and quantitative) were gathered concurrently and evaluated collectively (Creswell & Cleark, 2018; Isah, Shakantu & Ibrahim, 2020). Researchers employed a structured questionnaire to gather data from landowners and licensed estate surveyors and valuers in order to generalize their results from 236 respondents, including 210 household heads/landowners and 26 heads of the practice of registered estate businesses in the study region. Purposive, stratified, and systematic sampling were all used in this investigation. Due to the unique nature of estate surveyors and valuers, the usage of the prepositions was appropriate.

The gathered data were entered into SPSS version 20 and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods such as the mean, standard deviation, relative importance index (RII), and factor analysis. Five Likert scales were used for data collection. Cronbach's alpha of 0.8 was used to examine the internal consistency and reliability, which is within the usual range of 0.8 to 0.95 (Jansen et al, 2021). The Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's sphericity test were used to determine if the measurement data was adequate to test and validate the factor analysis. Principal component analysis (PCA) was used to reduce the number of components in

the data by focusing on the first factor's explanatory strength (Rossoni, Engelbert & Bellegard, 2016). Following are the results of the analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1b: Method of accessing land in Benin City

S/N	Traditional methods	MIS	STD. D	Rank
1	Purchase	4.97	0.173	1st
2	Inheritance	4.59	0.701	2nd
3	Community allocation	4.48	0.661	3rd
4	Gift	4.17	1.094	4th
5	Government allocation	3.51	1.309	5th
6	Adverse possession or prescription	3.43	1.358	6th
7	Application for grant of a right of occupancy	3.40	1.292	7th
8	Deemed grant of occupancy	3.34	1.172	8th
9	Access to vacant or abandoned land and to bring it into productive use	3.10	1.252	9th
10	Plot sub-division	3.00	1.181	10th
11	Squatting illegally on land	2.99	1.293	11th
12	Systematically through land reform policies.	2.98	1.045	12th
13	Application for rectification of informal purchase	2.85	1.292	13th

Source: Field survey, January 2022

Table 1b indicates the procedures for accessing land in Benin City. The table reveals that purchase, inheritance, and community allocation were the major method of accessing land in the study area. These are ranked 1st, 2nd, and 3rd with a mean item score of 4.97, 4.59, and 4.48 and standard deviation of 0.173, 0.701, and 0.661 respectively. Their opinion could be anchored on seeing these methods as the most widely used method of owning land. Next in the ranking are gifts, government allocation, and adverse possession or prescription. These were ranked 4th, 5th, and 6th with mean item scores of 4.17, 3.51, and 3.43 with a standard deviation of 1.094, 1.309, and 1.358 respectively. Squatting illegally on land, systematically enforcing land reform rules, and applying for rectification of informal purchases are the least common ways of getting a hold of land in the research region. They were ranked 11th, 12th, and 13th with mean item scores of 2.99, 2.98, and 2.85 and standard deviations of 1.293, 1.045, and 1.292 respectively.

Table 2: Showing the effectiveness of the methods of accessing land in the study area

S/N	Effectiveness	VE	E	N	NE	RII	Rank
1	Purchase	105(420)	18(54)	4(8)	3(3)	0.93	1st
2	Community allocation	52(208)	65(195)	5(10)	8(8)	0.81	2nd
3	Gift	55(220)	48(144)	16(32)	11(11)	0.78	3rd
4	Inheritance	61(244)	41(12 3)	12(24)	8(8)	0.73	4th
5	Deemed grant of occupancy	50(200)	21(63)	45(90)	14(14)	0.71	5th
6	Government allocation	50(200)	34(102)	15(30)	31(31)	0.70	6th
7	Application for rectification of informal purchase	33(132)	28(84)	46(96)	23(23)	0.64	7th
8	Syst ematically through land reform policies.	26(130)	20(60)	32(64)	52(52)	0.59	8th
9	Access to vacant or abandoned land and to bring it into productive use.	34(136)	26(78)	16(32)	54(54)	0.58	9th
10	Application for grant of a right of occupancy	32(128)	29(87)	18(36)	51(51)	0.58	9th
11	Squatting illegally on land	27(108)	12(36)	60(120)	31(31)	0.57	11th
12	Adverse possession or prescription	31(124)	18(54)	26(52)	55(55)	0.55	12th
13	Plot subdivision	19(76)	28(84)	29(58)	54(54)	0.52	13th

Source: Field survey, January 2022

Table 2 displays the efficiency of the land access strategies in the research area. In the research region, purchase, community allocations, and gifts are the three effective ways to achieve land acquisition, according to Table 2. These are ranked 1st, 2nd, and 3rd with a relative importance index of 0.93, 0.81, and 0.78 respectively. Their opinion could be anchored on seeing these methods as the most widely used method of accessing land. Next in the ranking are inheritance, deemed grant of occupancy, and government allocation ranking 4th, 5th, and 6th with relative importance index of 0.73, 0.71, and 0.70 respectively. The least effective method of accessing land in the study area are squatting illegally on land, adverse possession or prescription, and plot subdivision with a relative importance index of 0.57, 0.55, and 0.52, ranking 11th, 12th, and 13th respectively.

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser -Meyer -Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.793
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi -Square	551.270
	Df	66
	Sig.	.000

The KMO and Bartlett's test results show that the items have a high degree of internal consistency at 0.793, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. Benin City real estate growth is linked to land accessibility methods, according to the chi-square statistic (551.270) at the p-value (0.000) less than the 0.05 threshold of significance found by respondents.

Table 4: The challenges associated with land accessibility in the study area

S/N	Traditional methods	MIS	RII	Rank
1	High cost of land	4.58	0.92	1st
2	Insecure tenure	4.39	0.88	2nd
3	Difficulty in the land transaction	4.20	0.84	3rd
4	Market constraints	4.05	0.81	4th
5	Problems of access to resources especially the capital, inputs, and service s	3.97	0.79	5th
6	Multiple sales of land to buyers	3.88	0.78	6th
7	Poor title registration procedure	3.82	0.76	7th
8	High land competition	3.77	0.75	8th
9	Inability to use land	3.68	0.74	9th
10	Sociocultural and institutional bias	3.58	0.72	10th
11	Possible prosecution due to illegal sale	3.55	0.71	11th
12	Inability to transfer land	3.45	0.69	12th
13	Bureaucratic delay	3.38	0.68	13th
14	Illegal sub -division of land	3.38	0.68	13th
15	Non-availability of land	3.25	0.65	15th
16	Organi sational cons traints	3.18	0.64	16th
17	High demand for bribe	3.18	0.64	16th

Source: Field Survey, January 2022

Table 4 depicts the difficulties in the research region with regard to land accessibility. As seen in the chart, land accessibility in the research region is hampered by high land prices, uncertain tenure, and a lack of ease in land transactions. With mean item scores of 4.58, 4.39, and 4.20 and a relative significance index of 0.92, 0.88, and 0.84, these are the top three most important items. Finally, land sales to many purchasers and market limits are responsible for the round out the top three factors. A mean item score of 4.05, 3.97, and 3.88 placed them in fourth, fifth, and sixth

place with a relative relevance index of 0.89, 0.79, and 0.78, respectively. The least ranked challenges associated with land accessibility in the study area are illegal sub-division of land, non-availability of land, organisational constraints, and high demand for bribes. These were ranked 15th and 16th with a mean item score of 3.25 and 3.18 and relative importance index of 0.65 and 0.64 respectively.

Table 5: KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.734
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	994.753
	Df	136
	Sig.	.000

Source: Field survey, January 2022

According to the test results of KMO and BART, there is a high degree of internal consistency among the items at 0.734 Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measures of sampling adequacy. This signifies that the data is eligible for further analysis and that the respondents' opinions are judged appropriate and trustworthy. Land accessibility has been severely damaged by these issues according to chi-square statistic results with a p-value (0.000) less than the 0.05 significance threshold; in other words, respondents strongly agreed that these challenges have a substantial impact on land accessibility.

Table 6: Total variance explained the challenges associated with land accessibility in the study area

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	%of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.913	28.902	28.902	4.913	28.902	28.902	3.386	19.920	19.920
2	2.011	11.831	40.734	2.011	11.831	40.734	2.194	12.906	32.826
3	1.923	11.310	52.043	1.923	11.310	52.043	2.194	12.905	45.731
4	1.410	8.294	60.337	1.410	8.294	60.337	2.013	11.843	57.574
5	1.252	7.363	67.700	1.252	7.363	67.700	1.722	10.127	67.700
6	.954	5.609	73.310						
7	.857	5.040	78.349						
8	.742	4.367	82.716						
9	.621	3.656	86.372						
10	.535	3.150	89.522						
11	.421	2.476	91.998						
12	.303	1.783	93.781						
13	.282	1.661	95.442						
14	.248	1.456	96.898						
15	.236	1.391	98.289						
16	.163	.961	99.250						
17	.128	.750	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

The total variance is explained by the challenges associated with land accessibility in the study area in Table 6. The eigenvalue in Table 6 and the total under eigenvalue reveal the amount of total variance in the original variable as accounted for by each of the components. The variance was simply the ratio of variance accounted for by each of the components to the total variance of the variables. The extraction of some of the square loadings in the second section explains the

variability in the original 17 variables and out of which, five) factors were loaded. The extracted components explain 67.7% variability in the original variables. Therefore, this study considerably reduces the data by selecting the extracted components as the most emphasised factors or components with a minimum of 32.3% loss of information. This further indicates that the outlined determinant challenges associated with land accessibility in Benin City are representative of entire reasons.

Table 7: Loading analysis of the challenges associated with land accessibility in Benin City

Factors	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	% of Variance
FACTOR 1: Organi sational and legal challenge		4.913	28.902
High land competition	.552		
Possible prosecution due to illegal use	.871		
Social-cultural and institutional bias	.855		
Organizational constraint	.882		
FACTOR 2: Market factor challenge		2.011	11.831
Market constraint	.558		
Insecure tenure	.815		
Difficulty in land transaction	.804		
Inability to transfer land	.508		
FACTOR 3: Corruption and administrative challenge		1.923	11.310
High demand for bribe	.850		
Illegal sub-division of land	.820		
Poor title registration procedure	.841		
FACTOR 4: Bure aucratic and market challenge		1.410	8.294
Problems of access to resources especially capital, inputs , and services	.788		
Bureaucratic delay	.635		
Multiple sales of land to the buyer	.824		
FACTOR 5: Land supply and cost challenges		1.252	7.363
Non-availability of land	.619		
High cost of land	.849		
Inability to use land	.526		

Source: Field survey, January 2022

The items in Table 4 earlier were converted to five factors loading analyzed in Table 7, which shows that Benin City's land accessibility difficulties were analysed and found to have five (5) elements loaded. It is estimated that factor 1 accounts for approximately 28.902 percent of the variance in land accessibility-related challenges in the study area and that these organisational and legal challenges include high land competition, potential prosecution resulting from illegal use, cultural and social bias, and organisational constraint. Market factors (including market constraints, insecure tenure, difficulties in land transactions, and incapacity to transfer land) account for more than 11.831 percent of the variation.

The third factor, dubbed "corruption and administrative difficulty," which accounted for 11.31 percent of the variation reflects Benin City's land accessibility issues. Strong demand for bribes, unlawful sub-division of land, and faulty title registration procedures are all examples of corruption and administrative difficulties. The bureaucratic and market difficulty factor number four signifies an 8.294 percentage difference in land accessibility issues in the research region. Problems with access to resources, including cash, inputs, and services; bureaucratic delays; numerous sales of land to the buyer are among the bureaucratic and market challenges. These factors account for 7.363% of the variation in the determining issues that are connected with land

accessibility, such as land supply and cost challenge, which includes non-availability of land, high land costs, and inability to utilise the property.

5. Conclusion

This study evaluates and assesses the effectiveness of the methods and constraints to land accessibility in Benin City. According to the findings of the research, the most efficient ways to access property in the study region are through purchase, community allocation, and gifting. High purchase prices, the uncertainty of tenure, and difficulties in transacting on the property exist as significant roadblocks to accessing land in the study area. Other constraints include poor land registration system, delay in the documentation of title, and personal and family status. In view of the stated findings, this paper recommends that there is a need for statutory adjustment to the method of accessing land in the city to provide equal access that will guarantee the effectiveness of the process. A proactive response to this will ameliorate the bottlenecks experienced in community and family allocation.

Land officers in the ministry need to undergo regular and compulsory training. Such exercises would enhance effectiveness in land registration and transaction in the state. However, advancement in the study of the factor that affects land accessibility is a suggestion that could be explored. In such research, the effects of new findings on real estate development in the study area would be unveiled.

In conclusion, while access to land for all in the study area is a desirable goal, all indications point to the fact that this is yet to be achieved. Having identified some of the obstacles inhibiting access to land by landless individuals, this paper contributes to the existing literature by empirically investigating land accessibility methods and constraints in the study area. The study also provides practical inputs for policymakers in the decision-making process as it relates to building sustainable land access that will guarantee human and economic growth and development.

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