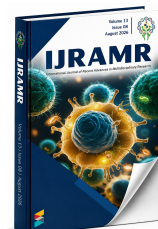




ISSN : 2350-0743



RESEARCH ARTICLE

CHALLENGES OF LAND ACQUISITION SYSTEM ON URBAN HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED CITIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 15th April, 2026

Received in revised form
20th May, 2026

Accepted 25th June, 2026

Published online 31st August, 2026

Keywords:

Land Accessibility, Land Acquisition,
Housing Development, Challenges,
Cities.

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ABSTRACT

Urban housing continues to present itself as a major problem in urban centres in Nigeria. This study aimed at examining challenges of land acquisition system on housing development in major cities of selected states in South-South region, Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted while questionnaire was the main instrument of data collection. The population of the study was drawn from the archive of Estate Surveyors and Valuers Registration Board of Nigeria (ESVARBON, 2022). Consequently, copies of questionnaire were administered to 155 registered members across the States to obtain relevant information on the subject under investigation. Data analysis was done using the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The findings revealed that effective housing development is hindered by inadequate funding (23.3%), high construction costs (19.4%), limited land availability (12.5%) and rapid urbanization (11.2%). The analysis further revealed public dissatisfaction with land acquisition system. The transparency of land acquisition processes scored a weighted mean (WM) of 2.4. Similarly, the clarity of government policies on land acquisition fared slightly better (WM = 2.5). When it comes to rights protection, the Land Use Act's effectiveness (WM = 2.6) received mixed responses, showing that while some believe it offers protection, others remain unconvinced. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) also showed that there is statistically significant relationship between land access and housing development in the study area at $p < 0.05$. Arising from the findings, the study recommended improved access to affordable financing for housing among other recommendations.

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Citation: MeeluBari, Patience Ofonime, Kpang, MeeluBari Barinua Tsaro and Mbee, Daniel Mbee. 2026. "Challenges of land acquisition system on urban housing development in selected cities in south-south, Nigeria." , *International Journal of Recent Advances in Multidisciplinary Research*, 13,(08), 12751-12757.

INTRODUCTION

Land access is obtained either by direct occupation, purchase or rental (exchange) through kin groups and membership of family, or by allotment by government, management authorities or other land owners. Omirin (2002), shared this position when he declared that access to land and property right is important in development and economic growth. Equally, Owioye and Adedeji (2015) suggested that land is essential to housing delivery, growth and development in any society. In every society, housing is one of the basic needs of man. The consequence of decent housing cannot be overemphasized in contemporary society. Housing is important to human being both as a source of protection from the effect of sun, rainfall, and other harmful climatic conditions, and also, as a basic gathering point where important social, political and economic activities are fostered and pursued (Oladimeji, 2015). Access to land is important to attaining effective and sustainable housing delivery.

Access to land for housing development in Nigeria seems to be an exasperating project. The land acquisition process is overwhelmed with a lot of problems and many prospective individuals and homeowners have had to abandon the idea of owning a home altogether. Land as one of man's basic needs, has the capability of enhancing his social, physical and economic as well as his psychological well-being. This is because good housing provides leisure, reflects status, eliminates health hazards and enhances the productivity of workers. Adequate supply of land is generally recognized as a prerequisite for sustainable housing delivery system. However, it has been observed that access to land for housing development in metropolitan areas in many developing countries is becoming highly problematic with each passing day. In most African countries, urban land has increasingly become a commodity to acquire and sold to the highest bidder (Abdullahi & Issa, 2018). Therefore, in many metropolis, rapid urbanization has created growing demand for land and housing. Nevertheless, Access to land remains constrained by complex bureaucratic processes, high acquisition costs,

inadequate planning systems, tenure insecurity and weak institutional frameworks. These challenges hamper effective housing delivery and contribute to the propagation of informal settlements and poor living conditions. The process of acquiring land for housing development in the urban centres is often characterized by prolonged procedures, corruption, multiple claims of ownership, and lack of transparency (Iseh, 2007). This not only discourages private investment in housing but also limits the capacity of government agency to meet growing demand. Accordingly, a large proportion of urban dwellers are left out from formal housing markets and are forced to rely on informal means of accessing land, which results in unplanned developments and environmental degradation (Omirin, 2003). In addition, the high cost of land and building materials, together with inadequate loan and financing systems, has made decent housing too expensive for low- and middle-income households (Agbola & Olatubara, 2007). Housing development continues to lag behind population growth, creating a persistent housing deficit in spite of government interventions. Hence, the problem lies in the limited accessibility to land and ineffective delivery of affordable housing in major urban centres in south-south geopolitical region of Nigeria (Iseh, 2007). In Uyo, Calabar and Port Harcourt metropolis, land access has not been given deserved attention particularly in relation to housing development. Hence, this study aimed at examining the impact of land access on housing development in major metropolis in Akwa Ibom, Cross River and Rivers State, with the following objectives: To identify the problems affecting housing development in the study area; to investigate the land acquisition systems in the study area and to analyse the impact of land access on housing development in the study area. This study is focused on impact of land access on housing development and it is limited to major metropolis (Calabar, Uyo and Port Harcourt) in Akwa Ibom, Cross River and Rivers State, Nigeria. The study identified the several problems affecting the housing development. It also investigated the land acquisition systems and examined the impact of land access on housing development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research design defines the context that guides the researcher(s) in data collection and analysis in any study. Arising from the above, a cross-sectional survey design was adopted in this study. According to NPC, (2006), Akwa Ibom, Cross River and Rivers State had a population of 11,994,594. Hence, the population of Akwa Ibom, Cross River and Rivers State using 2006 census figure at 3.5% growth rate using Exponential Growth Model is projected at about 19,970,999 in 2025. The implication is that rapid population growth can increase the demand for land and housing particularly in the metropolitan areas. The target population for this study include Estate surveyors and valuers in selected major metropolis of the three states in South-South region of Nigeria which are Calabar (Cross River State), Uyo (Akwa Ibom State) and Port Harcourt (Rivers State), as shown in Figure 1. This target population was drawn from the archive of Estate Surveyors and Valuers Registration Board of Nigeria (ESVARBON, 2022), as shown in Table 1. A total of 155 copies of questionnaire were designed, validated and administered to Estate Surveyors and Valuers across the study area to obtain a useful information needed for the study. ANOVA was employed for the analysis.

Table 1. Population of the study

Location	No. of Registered Estate Surveyors and Valuers
Calabar	15
Port Harcourt	120
Uyo	20
Total	155

Source: ESVARBON, 2022.

RESULTS

Table 2 below shows that the most frequently cited key challenge facing the development of affordable housing in the study area is funding constraints as reported by 23.3% of respondents. This underscores the limited access to financial resources both from public and private sectors needed to support large-scale, affordable housing development. Following closely is high construction costs, identified by 19.4% of respondents. This reflects the economic burden of building materials, labour, and associated development expenses that push housing beyond the reach of many low- and middle-income earners. Limited land availability (12.5%) and population growth and urbanization (11.2%) are also of significant concerns. The combination of increasing demand due to urban influx and constrained land supply intensifies competition and drives up housing prices, making affordability a more difficult goal to achieve.

Table 3 presents respondents' perceptions regarding the land acquisition system in Akwa Ibom, Cross River and Rivers State, Nigeria using a 4-point Likert scale. The findings highlight a mix of scepticism and concern regarding the fairness, transparency, and efficiency of the system. Firstly, the transparency of land acquisition processes scores a weighted mean (WM) of 2.4, indicating general disagreement or neutrality from respondents. Similarly, the clarity of government policies on land acquisition fares slightly better (WM = 2.5), but still falls below the threshold of strong agreement, pointing to an overall lack of understanding or trust in policy communication. On a more positive note, the statement "Landowners are adequately compensated during acquisitions" has a relatively high agreement (WM = 2.9), suggesting that compensation processes may be relatively more acceptable compared to other aspects. When it comes to rights protection, the Land Use Act's effectiveness (WM = 2.6) received mixed responses, showing that while some believe it offers protection, others remain unconvinced.

The lowest score (WM = 1.9) was recorded for the statement regarding displacement without adequate resettlement, reflecting strong agreement that people are often displaced unfairly. Awareness and fairness remain areas of concern. Awareness of land acquisition procedures scored low (WM = 2.2), and fair and prompt dispute resolution also ranked poorly (WM = 2.0), emphasizing systemic gaps in transparency and citizen engagement. Interestingly, community consultation and the influence of traditional rulers scored higher WM = 3.1 and 2.9, respectively, showing that informal institutions and community structures remain central in land matters. This is echoed in the perception that corruption significantly affects land acquisition (WM = 3.1), suggesting a deep mistrust in the institutional framework. Respondents also expressed that land is not always used for the stated public purposes (WM = 2.5), and that private investors often benefit more than local

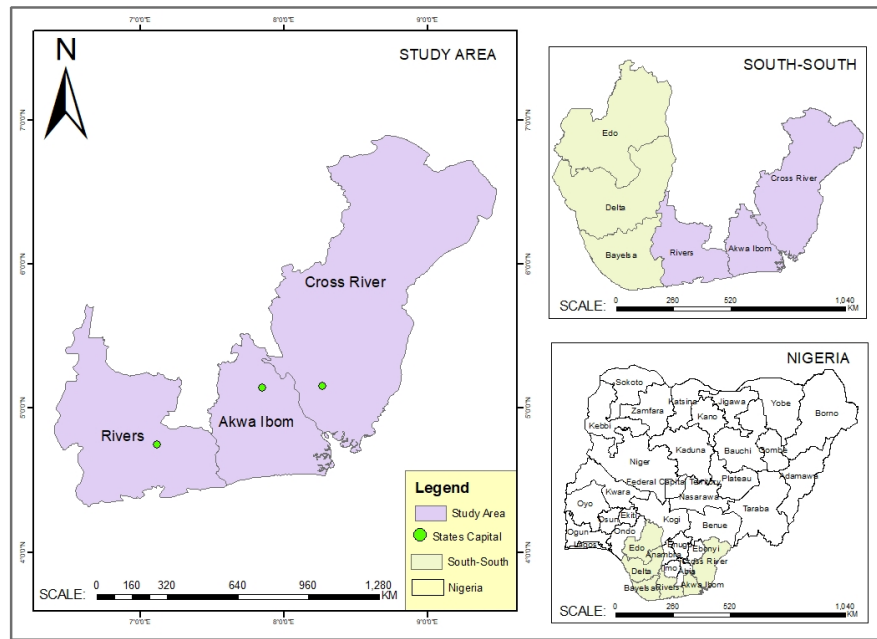


Figure 1. Study area: South-South States

Table 2. Challenges facing the development of affordable housing in the study area

Factors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High construction costs	45	19.4
Funding constraints	54	23.3
Limited land availability	29	12.5
Lack of infrastructure and services	15	6.5
Population Growth and Urbanization	26	11.2
Complexity of zoning regulation & building codes	10	4.3
Government policies and regulations	14	6.0
Social and cultural preferences	16	6.9
Corruption	23	9.9
Total	232	100

Source: Authors' field work, 2025.

Table 3. Identified land acquisition system in the study area

Questions	SA	A	D	SD	Total (%)	WM
The process of land acquisition in the South-South is transparent.	51(22.0)	47(20.3)	76(32.8)	58(25.0)	232(100)	2.4
Government policies on land acquisition are clear and easy to understand.	63(27.2)	51(22.0)	65(28.0)	53(22.8)	232(100)	2.5
Landowners are adequately compensated during acquisitions.	76(32.8)	87(37.5)	48(20.7)	21(9.1)	232(100)	2.9
The Land Use Act adequately protects the rights of indigenous people.	52(22.4)	72(31.0)	63(27.2)	45(19.4)	232(100)	2.6
Disputes over land acquisition are resolved fairly and promptly.	23(9.9)	42(18.1)	83(35.8)	84(36.2)	232(100)	2.0
There is widespread awareness of land acquisition procedures among citizens.	33(14.2)	49(21.1)	86(37.1)	64(27.6)	232(100)	2.2
Community consultation is a key part of the land acquisition process.	91(39.2)	82(35.3)	41(17.7)	18(7.8)	232(100)	3.1
Corruption significantly affects land acquisition in the region.	86(37.1)	95(40.9)	32(13.8)	19(8.2)	232(100)	3.1
Traditional rulers are influential in land acquisition decisions.	71(30.6)	94(40.5)	33(14.2)	34(14.7)	232(100)	2.9
Land acquisition often leads to displacement without adequate resettlement.	23(9.9)	25(10.8)	89(38.4)	95(40.9)	232(100)	1.9
Acquired land is used for the stated public purposes.	54(22.9)	67(28.4)	59(25.0)	56(23.7)	236(100)	2.5
Private investors benefit more from land acquisitions than local communities.	66(28.2)	65(27.8)	47(20.1)	56(23.9)	234(100)	2.6
Legal frameworks guiding land acquisition are effectively enforced.	38(16.4)	43(18.5)	87(37.5)	64(27.6)	232(100)	2.2
There are mechanisms for stakeholders to appeal land acquisition decisions.	58(25.0)	62(26.7)	50(21.6)	62(26.7)	232(100)	2.5
The land acquisition system in the region is due for reform.	65(28.0)	72(31.0)	52(22.4)	43(18.5)	232(100)	2.7

Source: Authors' field work, 2025.

Table 4. Impacts of land accessibility on housing delivery in the study area

Questions	SA	A	D	SD	Total (%)	WM
Land is easily accessible for housing development in the study area.	23 (9.9)	36 (15.5)	98 (42.2)	75 (32.3)	232 (100)	2
The cost of land limits the ability of most residents to build houses.	90 (38.8)	96 (41.4)	27 (11.6)	19 (8.2)	232 (100)	3.1
Inadequate access to land is a major constraint to housing delivery.	41 (17.7)	59 (25.4)	83 (35.8)	49 (21.1)	232 (100)	2.4
Government policies support easy access to land for residential purposes.	15 (6.5)	19 (8.2)	103 (44.4)	95 (40.9)	232 (100)	1.8
Bureaucratic processes hinder timely access to land for housing.	53 (22.8)	67 (28.9)	58 (25.0)	54 (23.3)	232 (100)	2.5
Residents are well-informed about the procedures to acquire land for building homes.	46 (19.8)	52 (22.4)	76 (32.8)	58 (25.0)	232 (100)	2.4
Availability of land directly affects the rate of housing development in the area.	55 (23.7)	70 (30.2)	60 (25.9)	47 (20.3)	232 (100)	2.6
Access to titled land improves residents' confidence in investing in housing.	29 (12.5)	33 (14.2)	97 (41.8)	73 (31.5)	232 (100)	2.1
Limited land supply has led to overcrowding and informal housing developments.	78 (33.6)	93 (40.1)	33 (14.2)	28 (12.1)	232 (100)	3
Access to affordable land should be a priority to improve housing delivery in the area.	96 (41.4)	100 (43.1)	14 (6.0)	22 (9.5)	232 (100)	3.2

Source: Authors' field work, 2025.

Table 5. ANOVA analysis of spatial variations in respondents' perceptions of the relationship between land access and housing development in the study area

Constructs	N	df	F	Sig	Remark
Easy access to land promotes increased housing development in the area.	232	231	22.3	0.00	significant
Inaccessible land contributes significantly to housing shortages.	232	231	18.3	0.00	significant
There is a direct correlation between land affordability and the rate of housing delivery.	232	231	14.4	0.00	significant
Land accessibility is the most critical factor in housing development.	232	231	04.1	0.06	Not-significant
Housing projects often fail due to difficulties in acquiring land.	232	231	02.4	0.21	Not-significant
Government interventions on land access improve housing delivery outcomes.	232	231	23.1	0.03	significant
Residents who can access land more easily tend to build homes faster.	232	231	21.5	0.01	significant
Restrictions in land access discourage private investment in housing.	232	231	20.3	0.00	significant
Efficient land allocation supports sustainable housing development.	232	231	19.2	0.02	significant
Policies improving land access are key to resolving the housing deficit.	232	231	11.4	0.05	significant

Source: Authors' analysis, 2025.

communities (WM = 2.6), hinting at concerns of elite capture and inequity. Lastly, while mechanisms for appeals (WM = 2.5) and enforcement of legal frameworks (WM = 2.2) exist in theory, they appear ineffective in practice. As such, the sentiment that the land acquisition system is due for reform is notably strong (WM = 2.7), indicating a general consensus that current structures are inadequate and require urgent restructuring. Table 4 presents a detailed view of how land accessibility affects housing delivery in the study area. The results reflect a mix of frustration, concern, and a strong demand for reforms in land access, especially concerning affordability, policy efficiency, and public awareness. A large majority of respondents (74.1%) disagreed that land is easily accessible for housing development, with 42.2% disagreeing and 32.3% strongly disagreeing. Only 25.4% felt otherwise. This perception is clearly reflected in the low weighted mean (WM) of 2.0, indicating poor accessibility. When asked about the cost of land, 80.2% agreed (38.8% strongly agreed and 41.4% agreed) that it limits most residents' ability to build houses. Only 19.8% disagreed. This strong consensus is captured by a high WM of 3.1, showing that affordability is a significant barrier. Similarly, inadequate access to land was identified as a major constraint by 43.1% of respondents, while 56.9% disagreed. This moderate level of agreement yields a WM of 2.4, suggesting that while not universally accepted, many do see land access as a housing bottleneck. The role of government policy in facilitating access is viewed critically. A striking 85.3% of respondents disagreed that current policies support easy residential land access, while only 14.7% expressed any agreement. With a WM of 1.8, this is one of the lowest-rated aspects, showing widespread dissatisfaction with policy support. Bureaucracy is also seen as a challenge, with 51.7% agreeing that it hinders timely access to land, while 48.3% disagreed.

The relatively balanced views produce a WM of 2.5, indicating moderate concern about administrative delays. In terms of public awareness, only 42.2% agreed that residents are well-informed about land acquisition procedures, while 57.8% disagreed. The WM of 2.4 suggests that lack of information is an issue, though not as severely criticized as policy failure or cost. The availability of land and its effect on housing delivery is recognized by a majority (53.9%), while 46.2% are less convinced. The WM here stands at 2.6, suggesting a fair understanding of the direct link between land supply and development outcomes. Notably, only 26.7% of respondents agreed that access to titled land improves investment confidence, while a significant 73.3% disagreed. This low confidence in the value of titling is reflected in a WM of 2.1, implying scepticism about how secure or accessible titled lands are.

A strong concern is raised over the consequence of limited land supply, with 73.7% acknowledging that it leads to overcrowding and informal housing. This includes 33.6% who strongly agreed and 40.1% who agreed. The WM of 3.0 confirms this as a major perceived impact. Lastly, there is overwhelming support for prioritizing access to affordable land as a means to improve housing delivery. An emphatic 84.5% agreed (41.4% SA and 43.1% A), while only 15.5% dissented. With a WM of 3.2, this was the highest-rated item in the table, making it the clearest policy recommendation from respondents. Table 5 presents the results of an ANOVA examining spatial variations in respondents' perceptions of the relationship between land access and housing development within the study area. The findings indicate a statistically significant spatial variation ($p < .05$) in most constructs evaluated, reinforcing the notion that perceptions of land access are closely linked to housing outcomes. Notably, the perception that easy access to land promotes increased housing development was highly significant ($F(231) = 22.3$, $p = .00$), suggesting a broad agreement across different spatial units that accessibility enhances housing growth. Similarly, the perception that inaccessible land contributes significantly to housing shortages also showed strong significance ($F(231) = 18.3$, $p = .00$). The belief in a direct correlation between land affordability and the rate of housing delivery was also supported ($F(231) = 14.4$, $p = .00$), reinforcing arguments that affordability is a driver of housing supply (UN-Habitat, 2011). Interestingly, while many respondents agreed that government interventions on land access improve housing delivery ($F(231) = 23.1$, $p = .03$), the construct land accessibility is the most critical factor in housing development did not reach statistical significance ($F(231) = 4.1$, $p = .06$). This suggests that while land access is considered important, other factors may also be perceived as equally or more critical. Similarly, the statement that housing projects often fail due to difficulties in acquiring land was not statistically significant ($F(231) = 2.4$, $p = .21$), indicating a lack of consensus or possibly varying experiences with land acquisition across regions. Constructs such as residents who can access land more easily tend to build homes faster ($F(231) = 21.5$, $p = .01$), restrictions in land access discourage private investment in housing ($F(231) = 20.3$, $p = .00$), and efficient land allocation supports sustainable housing development ($F(231) = 19.2$, $p = .02$) were all statistically significant. These outcomes emphasize the perceived importance of reducing land access barriers to foster sustainable and inclusive housing development. Additionally, the construct policies improving land access are key to resolving the housing deficit was significant at the 0.05 level ($F(231) = 11.4$, $p = .05$), suggesting that policy reforms in land management are widely regarded as pivotal for tackling housing inadequacies.

Overall, the findings suggest a strong spatial variation in the perception of land-related constraints and enablers of housing delivery, supporting existing literature that highlights land access as a fundamental element in addressing urban housing challenges in developing contexts (Payne, 2001; Aribigbola, 2008).

DISCUSSION

The main challenge is the funding constraint, which mirrors broader trends identified across developing contexts where access to capital for affordable housing is limited. According to Oyegbade *et al.*, (2022), the absence of inclusive financing mechanisms such as low-interest loans, housing subsidies, or public-private partnerships has significantly hampered efforts to scale affordable housing in sub-Saharan Africa. In Nigeria, this constraint is compounded by underdeveloped mortgage markets, high lending rates, and an informal economy that excludes a large proportion of the population from formal credit systems (Emmanuel *et al.*, 2024). The study revealed that the issue of high construction costs underscores the rising price of building materials, import dependence, and fluctuating exchange rates that make housing development expensive. Research by Ebekozen *et al.*, (2021), highlights that imported materials and limited support for local alternatives inflate building costs, placing home ownership out of reach for the average Nigerian. Furthermore, the lack of economies of scale in small-scale housing initiatives prevents cost savings that might otherwise be achieved through large, coordinated projects. More so, Limited land availability and rapid urbanization and population growth indicates the spatial and demographic pressures that compound affordability issues in the study area. These findings echo Auwalu and Bello, (2023), observation that rapid urban expansion, especially in cities across south-south geopolitical region of Nigeria creates a high demand for land and housing, often outpacing government capacity to provide planned, serviced land. In effect, urbanization without corresponding infrastructure and housing policy planning drives the proliferation of informal settlements and makes formal housing less accessible. The study also revealed that Corruption also emerges as a notable problem of housing delivery in the study area. As observed by Mabogunje, (2002), rent-seeking behaviours, diversion of housing funds, and manipulation of land allocation processes erode trust and efficiency in the housing sector. Corruption increases the cost of compliance and discourages legitimate developers from engaging in the formal system, thereby reducing the overall housing supply. Further challenges such as lack of infrastructure and services and complex zoning/building codes reflect administrative and structural hurdles. These align with Ikejiofor (1999), who argued that bureaucratic rigidity and outdated planning regulations hinder innovative or cost-saving approaches to housing development.

The land acquisition system: Generally, the findings echo a pattern of mistrust, institutional opacity, and procedural inefficiency, these are findings that are broadly consistent with existing scholarly critiques of land governance. This study unravelled low level of transparency and clarity of government policies which echo Babalola *et al.*, (2025), who argue that land governance in the study area is flawed by opaque administrative processes, poor policy communication, and a disconnect between statutory frameworks and public understanding. These shortcomings create conditions ripe for

mismanagement, elite capture, and conflict. Interestingly, the relatively higher score for adequate compensation diverges slightly from the broader pattern of distrust, suggesting some improvement in this specific area. However, the mixed perceptions of the Land Use Act reinforce long-standing debates about its dual nature, intended to centralize land control for public benefit but often criticized for facilitating dispossession without adequate due process (Hartanto *et al.*, 2025). The Act has been widely described as ambiguous and outdated, granting excessive powers to governors and undermining customary land rights. The strongest agreement among respondents is tied to the issue of displacement without adequate resettlement, highlighting a critical concern that aligns with findings by Daphine (2022). Forced displacements, particularly in urban redevelopment and oil-rich zones, have frequently occurred with limited consultation, inadequate compensation, or no resettlement plans, exacerbating poverty and social fragmentation. Interestingly, informal governance mechanisms such as community consultation and the influence of traditional rulers receive significantly higher scores. This underscores the enduring relevance of customary authorities and indigenous conflict resolution in land matters, as noted by Lundy *et al.*, (2022). These findings reinforce the argument that formal legal structures remain secondary to local practices in many parts of Nigeria, especially where formal institutions lack legitimacy or capacity. The strong perception of corruption in land acquisition further demonstrates systemic failures in institutional accountability. This corroborates Mabogunje (2002), who note that discretionary powers, weak enforcement, and lack of transparency have made land governance vulnerable to corrupt practices and manipulation. The belief that private investors benefit more than local communities suggests perceptions of elite capture—where land ostensibly acquired for public purposes is diverted to private commercial interests.

The study revealed that awareness of acquisition procedures, fair dispute resolution and enforcement of legal frameworks signal institutional inefficiencies and public disengagement in the study area. This reflects the findings of Mbaye (2024), who observed that bureaucratic complexity and inaccessible legal remedies prevent ordinary citizens from effectively navigating or challenging land decisions. Finally, the moderately high agreement on the need for reform aligns with the growing consensus in both policy and academic circles. Scholars and organizations including Auwalu and Bello (2023), have emphasized the need for land governance reform in Nigeria focusing on improved legal frameworks, citizen participation, and institutional capacity building.

Land access and housing development: The study revealed that land is not easily accessible for housing development. This finding resonates with Mabogunje (2000), who argued that in Nigeria, structural barriers such as fragmented land governance and opaque acquisition processes often exclude low- and middle-income groups from the formal land market. The inaccessibility of land undermines the foundational stage of housing development, effectively stalling broader urban development goals. It was also discovered that affordability is a dominant concern confirming that the high cost of land hinders their ability to build homes. This aligns with the conclusions of Gameda *et al.*, (2021), which emphasized that land price inflation often driven by speculative activities and inefficient markets remain one of the most significant obstacles to affordable housing in developing urban contexts.

Similarly, Goldman (2023), noted that affordability issues are compounded by speculative hoarding and an absence of price regulation in urban land transactions. The study identified inadequate access to land as a major constraint to housing, this mixed view may reflect spatial disparities or differences in tenure types across urban and peri-urban areas. Udoekanem *et al.*, (2014), observed that in many African cities, informal settlements evolve as a direct response to such bottlenecks, often without the legal or physical infrastructure to support sustainable housing. In existing government policies, the study highlighted that frameworks for facilitating access to residential land is inadequate. This perception aligns with critiques by Tan (2025), who argues that Nigerian land policies, especially under the Land Use Act of 1978, are often seen as rigid and poorly implemented, failing to bridge customary and statutory landholding systems effectively. The findings also mirror global concerns raised by the World Bank, which noted that land governance in many parts of Africa remains a major institutional constraint to development, marked by inadequate enforcement and limited public trust. It was also shown that administrative bureaucracy concerns moderately hindered land access. Nevertheless, the perception of delays echoes assertions by Asaaga (2021), who highlighted how procedural complexities particularly in obtaining certificates of occupancy or development permits serve as deterrents to both private developers and individuals. Similarly, the study revealed that awareness about land acquisition procedures is low. This gap in public knowledge reflects earlier work by Sitali (2022), who argued that low legal literacy and inadequate civic education contribute to tenure insecurity and weak public participation in land reforms. The study also discovered that limited land availability contributes directly to poor housing outcomes in Akwa Ibom, Cross River and Rivers State. This align with the urban land scarcity narrative in African housing literature (Lategan *et al.*, 2025).

Notably, it was revealed that access to titled land improves investment confidence. This scepticism may stem from persistent issues around fraudulent titles, lack of enforcement, or the prohibitive cost and complexity of titling processes issues that Zhang (2022) argue reduce the perceived value of formal tenure security in many informal contexts. The study moreover unravelled overwhelming support for prioritizing access to affordable land, essential for improving housing delivery. This aligns with Critchley *et al.* (2023) policy emphasis on "land-based solutions" to urban poverty, where secure and affordable land access is seen as a foundational component of inclusive urban development. Lastly, the strong agreement that land constraints lead to overcrowding and informal housing underscores the socio-spatial consequences of poor land policy. This mirrors studies like that of Kamalipour and Peimani (2021), which link urban informality directly to the failure of formal land delivery systems, resulting in marginalization, environmental vulnerability, and poor urban form.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, land access, especially its cost and governance structures, is central to housing crisis. The findings align with a robust body of literature that identifies institutional reform, price regulation, improved titling, and civic education as critical interventions. Without significant changes in these areas, efforts to address affordable housing deficits will remain

inadequate and exclusionary. The findings revealed widespread public dissatisfaction with the land acquisition system. This emphasized the low level in transparency, policy clarity, and legal enforcement in the region. Displacement without adequate resettlement emerges as a major concern, higher scores for community consultation and traditional leadership highlight reliance on informal systems, thus underscore the urgent call for inclusive governance reforms in the region. The findings identified that easy access to land promotes housing development and also reveals widespread dissatisfaction with government policies disagree that they facilitate land access, and concerns about administrative inefficiencies. The overwhelming consensus is that land accessibility is crucial for improving housing delivery aligning with global calls for land-based solutions to urban poverty. Ultimately, this study contributes valuable insights into the intertwined issues of land accessibility, housing development, and institutional reform. The findings offer crucial evidence for policymakers to design strategies that address the systemic barriers limiting housing development, emphasizing the need for comprehensive reforms in land governance, financing, and policy implementation. Arising from these findings, the study recommended the improvement of access to affordable financing for housing and to reduce delay in land acquisition procedures by establishing one-stop centres for land and building approvals.

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