

IMPACTS OF LAND MANAGEMENT ON THE EFFICIENCY OF PUBLIC LAND ACCESSIBILITY IN
OWERRI, IMO STATE

Emenike B. Obani & Chinelo P. Igwe

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Abstract

Land accessibility is the means by which individuals or groups obtain rights to use, control and transfer land or landed property. This study examined the impact of land management on the efficiency of public land accessibility in Owerri West Local Government Area, Imo State. The study focused extensively on the land management systems in the study area with a view to establishing the impacts it has on the efficiency with which public lands are accessed. The population of the study consists of the land owners in the study area, as well as the staff of the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Physical Planning, Owerri, Imo State. The research adopted the survey and case study methods using data collection instruments viz: structured questionnaires, personal interviews and observations. A total number of ninety-five thousand five hundred land owners (95,500) and one hundred and eighty-five (185) staff of ministry of lands housing and physical planning constitute the population of study. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane Formula and questionnaires were employed to extract information. The data collected were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistical test. A 5-point Likert scale was adopted to measure the weight of respondents' views. The hypothesis on the relationship between land management system and efficiency of public land accessibility in the study area was analysed using the Principal Components Analysis (PCA) and One-Sample T-Test statistical techniques were applied. The study revealed that there are significant challenges associated with the accessibility of public land in Owerri West, and that these challenges in turn exert negative influence on the efficiency of public land accessibility. The study concluded that the implementation of effective land management systems would go a long way in alleviating these challenges encountered in the process of accessing public lands and enhancing the efficiency of public land accessibility in the study area. The study recommended that federal, state and local government authorities should ensure that the management of public land is the sole and maximum responsibility of the government through its relevant agencies so as to enhance the efficiency of public land accessibility in the study area which will in turn ensure sustainability towards social equity, economic development and environmental protection.

Keywords: Land accessibility, land management, land owner, environmental protection

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Introduction

The concept of land has consistently occupied a central place in the annals of all human societies sequel to the enormous role it has played and is playing in the existence of man as a living and social creature (Okorobia, 1996). In every society, the issues of land stir up a very strong feeling not only among individuals but also among groups of persons. Presently, it has been identified as a significant hindrance to efficient housing in our urban centers. For those in the informal sector, the significance of accessibility to land goes beyond the need for housing (Bello, 2007). In order to access funds and credit facility (for business growth) from government scheme and financial institutions, they need landed property as collateral security. Accessibility to land according to Omirin (2003) is therefore very important especially in improving the quality of life as it plays a vital role in poverty reduction and human development among residents. Land accessibility is defined as the processes by which people (individually or collectively) gain rights and opportunities to occupy and utilize land primarily for productive purposes and other economic and social purposes, whether on a temporary or permanent basis (Cotula, Toulmin and Quan, 2006). In other words, access to land is the opportunity or capacity to own, hold, use, manage or control land (Nichols, Crowley and Komjathy, 1999). Moreover, access to land is a promising strategy for increasing productive capacity resulting in the promotion of human development and poverty reduction (World Bank, 2003). According to Oladehinde, Fatusin and Daramola (2017), land is either not available, or when available it may not be accessible, and when accessible it may not be usable for a particular use depending on the land tenure and ownership system of the given society.

In Nigeria, the debate has continued to rage as to the domicile of ownership within the land management arrangement in the country, particularly with promulgation of the Land Use Act in 1978. There is dichotomy among scholars, jurist and stakeholders as to where ownership lies in land matters; that is, whether it is in the State or in the individual citizen. Though it has been said that; ‘ownership of land per se is irrelevant, it is however incontestable that ownership of land confers indelible rights and opportunities of the holders of the ownership rights. With respect to land, ownership refers to the right of the owner of land to possess, use, or otherwise benefits from, as well as disposes of, the land (Qin, 1994). It is the largest right that can exist in land. Ownership vests in the claimant an immediate or mediate right to possession of land that is not restricted or curtailed by any superior right vesting in another person (Olawoye, 1974).

Land management is focused on implementing decisions that have been made on the use of land resources geared toward ensuring regulatory and supervisory role between land administration and land policy. Terrafrica (2005) defined land management as “the adoption of land use systems that, through appropriate management practices, enable land users to maximize the economic and social benefits from the land, while maintaining or enhancing the ecological support functions of the land resources”. Land management can be seen to play a coordinating role between land policy and land administration. Its objectives are to fulfill the environmental, economic, and social goals of land policy by planning, promoting and controlling efficient land use through the process of land administration. According to Dale and Mclaughlin, (1988), it is important to note that, diverse methodologies utilized in explaining the synergy connecting “*land management, policies and administration*” do exist, as land management is seen to incorporate land administration and land policy. An effective land management system ensures that the land administration tools such as land registration and

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valuation, cadastre, land use information system are properly handled so as to ensure the appropriate implementation of the various land policy instruments ranging from improving land tenure security, regulation of land market, etc. to land taxation and land use planning and control. As such land management is strategized toward ensuring sustainability towards social equality, economic development and environmental protection in order to solve the problems of land inaccessibility.

Land cannot be treated as an ordinary asset controlled by individuals and subject only to market forces, rather should be used in the interest of society to achieve social goals like decreasing inequalities in access to land and tenure, land registration and administration and improve development quality. This was the basis upon which the Land Use Act of 1978 was enacted by the Federal Government of Nigeria in March 1978, by simply transferring the ownership of land to the state, to hold in public interest, and leaving the individual/citizens or corporate bodies with only possessory rights so as to ensure sustainability in the use and management of land. However, our land management practice is repugnant to the existing law of sustainable land practices as access to, ownership and control of land is still biased in nature. The traditional land management system gives space for a small extent of land made accessible for use, and characterized by circumstances where a few interests subsist on a small parcel of land, as some interests cannot have access to land as a result of gender, age, ethnicity, status and so on, and this has led to inefficiency in land accessibility which is not just a real danger to food security in the nation but also a risk to rescuing the poor and ensuring land sustainability in the nation. The Land Use Act of 1978 that was enacted to rescue the situation has been discovered wanting in guaranteeing that land is made accessible to all individuals, as the way of land rights in the nation necessitated by the Act is viewed as being responsible for the unavailability and inefficient accessibility of land. That being the case, there is need for appropriate management of land as the city can only develop effectively when relevant land management procedures are efficient and consistent. Hence this work examined impacts of land management on the efficiency of public land accessibility in Owerri, Imo state.

Access to Land in Nigeria

Land is the primary means of generating a livelihood and a main vehicle for investing and accumulating wealth (Deininger 1999). The need to access land according to Omirin (2003) is therefore very important especially in improving the quality of life in rural area as it plays a vital role in poverty reduction and development among rural residents (especially small scale farmers). Land accessibility as defined by Cotula, Toulmin & Quan (2006) is the processes by which people (individually or collectively) gain rights and opportunities to occupy and utilize land primarily for productive purposes and other economic and social purposes, whether on a temporary or permanent basis.

According to Agwu, Amasiatu, & Onuoha, (2010) access to land refers to the means and ways by which individuals or groups obtain rights to use, control and transfer land (property). Rural poor access to land is regularly constructed to a great extent with respect to the general population's standards and augmentation; while the urban population rely so much on social position to gain land access. There are particular frameworks laid out by Agwu, Amasiatu and Onuoha (2010) by which individuals' access land, which include:

1. Outright Purchase
2. Access land through Lease (payment of rents are paid to the allodia owner)

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3. Share cropping (the user plants the land however the output is shared equitably between the user and proprietor of land).
4. Inheritance by offspring.
5. Squatting unlawfully on land.
6. Systematically through land policies.
7. Adverse ownership (by obtaining of rights through ownership for a recommended timeframe).
8. Compulsory acquisition (by government)
9. Traditional means.

Hunching down is an unlawful way by which individuals access land. In Nigeria, this is basic in most urban areas like Abuja, Lagos, and Port Harcourt, etc. Population weight in urban area constraining interest for settlement to be far above supply is one variable noted to be in charge of this lawlessness. Such improvements result in squalor or shanty towns as with Maroko in Lagos, Gwagwalada in Abuja, Riversides in Port Harcourt, etc. Before the 1978 Land Use Act, the conventional land residency framework banned numerous persons from accessing land as just individuals from land owning families could get access to Land in Nigeria. Mandatory securing by government as engineered by the Land Use Act of 1978 has empowered access to land in Nigeria by government, and of people through government. In a few conditions of the organization, the state governments secure field of prolific land and after that parcellate them for agriculturists to grow crops. This is generally done to energize nourishment security.

Concept of Land Management

Land management, was defined by United Nations (2006) the activities associated with the management of land as a resource from both an environmental and an economic perspective towards sustainable development. It is the process by which the resources of land are put to good effect (Cagdas, Gur, & Kurt, 2003). It entails the processes which allocate land resources over space and time according to the needs, aspirations and desires of man and within the framework of his technological inventiveness, his political and social institutions, and his legal and administrative arrangements

Relationship between Land Management, Land Policy and Land Administration

While some experts have viewed land management as encompassing land policy and land administration (Dale and McLaughlin, 1988), some have seen it as distinct from land policy and land administration (Steudler and Williamson, 2002). Yet others see land administration as a key component of land policy (Molen, 2001; Williamson, 2001). The three concepts – land policy, land management and land administration have been placed in a hierarchical scheme by Dale and McLaughlin (1999). From a system performance perspective, Steudler and Williamson (2002) describe a hierarchical “land business” structure with three management levels:

Land policy level – Land policy is concerned with the definition of the rule of law and the use and ownership of land, that is, the objectives of the land business.

Land management level - Land management is about controlling the processes that put land resources to good effect, that is, land business strategy.

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Land administration level - Land administration includes the functions involved in implementing land policy, that is, land business operations.

This scheme, represented in figure 1, provides a good description of the relationship between land policy, land management and land administration.

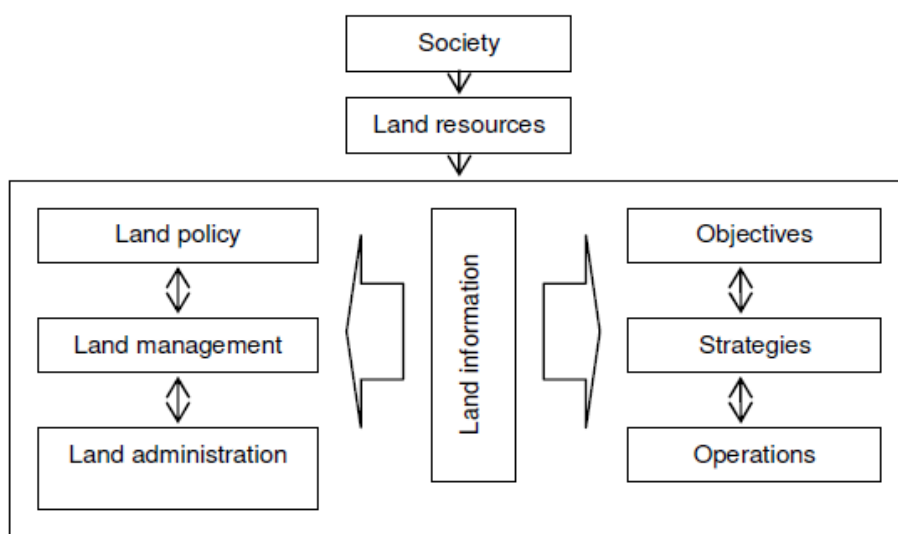


Figure 1: Management levels in Land Business (Stuedler & Williamson, 2002)

Land Policy

This is a piece of the national policy on promoting objectives, for example, economic development, social justice and political security (Aribigbola, 2008). It is a constant balancing of the interests of the government, the land-owning class as well as the landless class (Eze, 2014). Land policy fluctuates, yet in many nations they incorporate poverty reduction, manageable agriculture, sustainable settlement, economic development, and value among different groups in the society (Enemark, 2004). The implementation of land policy has a lot to do with institutional arrangements such as the organizational framework of land administration, enforcement of land laws and the allocation and monitoring of land administration mandates in the public sector.

Land Administration

Land administration is a coordinated framework for tackling land related issues. According to Eze & Alozie (2016), land administration is the process whereby the resources of land are put to good effect. That is, it entails decision making as well as the implementation of decision about land. The key components of land administration are land ownership, land use, land valuation and land information management. In appraising the important role of land administration, a critical look has to be taken of the two components of land administration

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which are the human element and the physical element (Emoh, 2004). The latter is the land component while the earlier is the entrepreneurial and managerial resources. The main challenge of land administration system is to support the implementation of land policy. It makes use of various tools to operationalize land policy instruments. The essence of a land administration is its land information system. The completeness, accuracy and currency of the information in the system determine how well the land administration system will serve the society. Numerous nations, in any case, seem to extricate tenure system from land use openings, neglecting their ability to connecting planning and land use controls with land values and the operation of the land market. These issues are regularly exacerbated by poor managerial and administration systems that fail to deliver required service. Hence, sound land administration as indicated by Williamson, Enemark, Wallace & Rajabifard (2010), needs operational procedures to actualize land strategies in far reaching and manageable ways.

Land Management

Land management is focused on implementing decisions that have been made on the use of land resources geared toward ensuring regulatory and supervisory role between land administration and land policy. It includes the formulation of land policy, the organization of land administration arrangements and the management of land information. According Cagdas, Gur & Kurt (2003), the land management framework needs an incorporated and illuminated land policy implementations which rely upon how access to land and land advancement are distributed, as well as governments direct land-related exercises, including holding rights to land, supporting the economic parts of land, and controlling the utilization of land and its advancement. It also needs a sound land administration system revolving these regulatory patterns so as to encourage the usage of land policy in the broadest sense, and in efficient frameworks, convey great governance and sensible land management. From the explanations, land management can be seen to play a coordinating role between land policy and land administration. Hence, an effective land management system ensures that the land administration tools such as land registration and valuation, cadastre, land use information system are properly handled so as to ensure the appropriate implementation of the various land policy instruments ranging from improving land tenure security, regulation of land market, etc. to land taxation and land use planning and control. As such, land management is strategized toward ensuring sustainability towards social equality, economic development and environmental protection in other to solve the problems of land inaccessibility.

Problems and Obstacles of Effective Land Management in Nigeria

Problems of public land management arise mainly because of the inability of public bodies responsible for management of public land to cope with the intensity and diversity of urban problems arising from rapid population growth due as much to natural growth as to migration (Dattatri, 1994). In Nigeria, public land management is bedeviled by socio-political and bureaucratic problems. Some land's division of the ministry of works, lands, survey and town planning lacked a complete and comprehensive list of allottees of government plots (Ogbuefi, 1995). He noted that the instrument for land management in the country, which is the Land Use Act of 1978, impinges on land management as follows:

1. The emergence of 'public land speculators'

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2. The back-dating of land transactions to precede the commencement of the Act
3. Long process and time involved in the issuance of certificate of occupancy
4. Emergence of induced developmental assignment
5. The persistence of land speculation, illegal land transactions, and the introduction of irrevocable power of attorney by land vendors to purchasers.

Nzioki (2002) recognizes the general lack of land information and inappropriate land information management systems as major constraints to the achievement of effective urban land management. He cited the gap in land related data and information collected by a wide range of government and non-government agencies and the difficulty in maintaining it and distributing it to stakeholders as the major obstacles to effective land management. Uche (2010) stated the following to constitute obstacles to effective public land management:

1. Delay in obtaining titles and registering land transactions,
2. High cost of obtaining title and transaction.
3. High land tax rates: When land taxes are high there is bound to be lots of informal transactions. In other words, pressure is placed on the system at which properties are valued in order to reduce their value so as to avoid high taxes.
4. Large numbers of administrative and court cases involving conflict of claims over the same parcel of land, overlapping titles, boundary disputes etc.
5. Lack of land data base.
6. High growth of fake titles
7. Lack of trust by investors and public on the system of land registration.

The aforementioned poses a threat to a highly inefficient and inequitable land market in the country with serious implications on land management. Corruption is also a factor militating against effective public land management (Uche, 2010). The illicit misappropriation of public land has great implications on its management. Poor public land management by government has very large implications on improvement of the economy, eradicating of poverty, the environment, the nations peace and security. They engage in unethical practices of land disposal and land conversion, misusing the instrument of compulsory acquisition for undercover purposes, and official land speculation. Hence, without competent and corrupt free civil service, efficient management of public land would be a mirage.

RESEARCH METHOD

Survey and case study design were utilized. The objectives were achieved using the qualitative and quantitative method. Questionnaires were administered on Land owners and Staff of Ministry of Lands, Housing and Physical Planning. The respondents' views were used to form opinions and bring to light their views on land management as a tool for efficient public land accessibility in Owerri West, Imo State. A percentage of their responses to the questions were taken to measure the weight of their views.

Land owners, as well as staff of the Imo State Ministry of Lands, Housing, and Physical Planning constitute the population of the study. Yamane (1967) formula for determining sample size was adopted for the study. The sample sizes used for this study were 330 land owners, and 123 staff of the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Physical Planning. The simple random sampling technique was used to select the staff of the Imo State Ministry of Lands, Housing and Physical Planning, as well as the land owners in the study area. Primary and secondary sources

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Primary sources of data were collected through the administration of questionnaires, interviews and observations with land owners in the study area, as well as staff of the Imo State Ministry of Lands, Housing and Physical Planning. Secondary sources of data were taken from various journals, seminar papers, textbooks and some other published and unpublished documented materials. Frequency tables and percentage techniques were used in to present and analyse data collected. Principal Components Analysis (PCA) and One-Sample T-Test was used to test the hypothesis

Result and Discussion

Hypothesis: There is no relationship between land management system and efficiency of public land accessibility in Owerri West L.G.A., Imo State.

This hypothesis was tested by running a Principal Components Analysis using the responses of the land owners on the impacts of the land management system. The results are presented and explained in Table 1 and 2.

Table 1: Principal Components Analysis (PCA) of the relationship between land management system and efficiency of public land accessibility in Owerri West L.G.A., Imo State. (Total Variance Explained)

Comp onent	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	6.033	67.035	67.035	6.033	67.035	67.035	5.274	58.602	58.602
2	1.971	21.901	88.936	1.971	21.901	88.936	2.146	23.846	82.448
3	.460	5.116	94.053	.460	5.116	94.053	1.044	11.604	94.053
4	.214	2.383	96.436						
5	.148	1.645	98.081						
6	.086	.955	99.035						
7	.063	.702	99.737						
8	.024	.263	100.000						
9	- 3.997 E-15	-4.441E- 14	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The table of total variance explained shows the loadings of the PCA; that is how many components that the PCA has been able to extract. Each component has variables and their loadings under it. From the table, it can be seen that three components were loaded; component one explained 58.602 percentage of the overall variance, component two explained 23.846 percent of the total variance while component three explained 11.604 percent. The total variance explained is 94.053 percent. The various loadings of the components are presented in the next table.

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Table 2: Rotated Component Matrix

	Component		
	1	2	3
It reduces the rate of fraudulent land dealings	.947	.193	.217
It reduces the incidence of land speculation	.940	.193	.204
Land management has reduced land scarcity as more layouts are made available	.910	.176	.168
It increases chances of accessing land	.906	.181	.230
It enhances equal distribution of land (equitability in land accessibility)	.895	.221	.245
It reduces difficulties in land accessibility	.878	-.172	.236
It provides a reliable land data base.	.153	.981	-.026
It increases security of tenure	.128	.979	-.027
It reduces illegalities in land transactions	.483	-.088	.871

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.^a

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

From Table 2, it can be seen the first component has six (6) variables whose loadings are greater than 0.40; these variables were loaded highly by component one. The second and third components loaded two variables and one variable respectively. The variables are as follows:

Component One

- a. Reduction of the rate of fraudulent land dealings,
- b. Reduction of the incidence of land speculation,
- c. Land management has reduced land scarcity as more layouts are made available,
- d. Increase in chances of accessing land,
- e. Enhancement of equal distribution of land (equitability in land accessibility), and
- f. Reduction of difficulties in land accessibility

Component Two

- a. Provision of a reliable land data base, and
- b. Increase in security of tenure

Component Three

- a. Reduction of illegalities in land transactions

Therefore, since the impacts were not equally loaded, it means that land management system has a direct relationship with the efficiency of public land accessibility in Owerri West L.G.A., Imo State.

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Conclusion and Recommendations

The implementation of an effective public land management system will go a long way in alleviating the challenges encountered in the process of public land accessibility. This is so because, with the help of the Land Use and Allocation Committee which is the body responsible for the administration and management of land in the study area, public land management system will improve to a great extent together with the efficiency of public land accessibility in the study area

Individuals should desist from land parcellation as that is the sole responsibility of the relevant government agencies. Government should create more layouts, as that is the most effective means of land availability and accessibility. Measures should be put in place to further checkmate land speculations and illegal land transactions. Government authorities should ensure that the management of public land is the sole and maximum responsibility of the government through its relevant agencies, as this will go a long way in enhancing the efficiency of public land accessibility which will in turn ensure sustainability towards social equity, economic development and environmental protection.

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