



Evaluation of End-Users' Satisfaction on Land Title Registration Process in Akure, Nigeria

By

Ojo, Babajide. (B.Sc, Ph.D. ANISV, RSV)

Estate Management Department
Federal University of Technology, Akure
bojo@futa.edu.ng or jidebabsojo@yahoo.com,

Abstract: Land title registration facilitates secured land ownership right while also aiding property transactions in transparent atmosphere. A stable and efficient land registration system is a cornerstone for creation of free movement of interests in land. The provision of ready access to up-to-date land information relating to registered land encourages credible dealings in property and exchange of rights. The aim of this empirical study is therefore to evaluate the end-user's satisfaction on land title registration process in Akure, Nigeria. Using random sampling technique, data were collected from one hundred and eleven (111) land-allied professionals as consumers of land registry services through structured questionnaires. Data analysis was done using frequency distribution, percentage and weighted mean score. The result of the analysis revealed that the performance of the land registry is below average and it is recommended that more proactive approaches be put to land title registration.

Key Words: Development, land market, Land registry, Service.

1.0 Introduction

Land is germane to both physical and economic development processes and its accessibility is vital to achieving sustainable development. Unconstrained access to land is a tool against poverty and homelessness. Accessibility to land comprises availability of usable land, affordability of such land, ease of transaction with that land and security of the ownership right (Omirin, 2002). It is pertinent to note that

creating a land title registry is a bold step towards making land ownership right accessible to all. However, ensuring good performance of the registry is much more important if the goal of setting it up is to be achieved in the least degree. Prior to the colonial era in Nigeria, land administration was through customary rule which was later considered inadequate in creating access to land for all citizens for obvious shortcomings such as insecurity

of tenure, incessant rancour and litigation, fraudulent land sales and marginalization of non-land holding family members, among others. In 1976, the UN-Habitat conference held in Vancouver recommended public land management as a way of achieving equitable and cheap access to land for either public or private developments based on non-commercial criteria. This led to the promulgation of Land Use Act of 1978 in Nigeria with the aim of creating equal, cheaper and easier accessibility to land for all Nigerians, irrespective of their social status.

However, Omirin (2002) while reflecting on the Land Use Act of 1978 observes that the Act guarantees equal accessibility to land only in concept. Bello (2007) opined that the extensive powers of control granted to State Governors could, if appropriately applied, guarantee land availability to all citizens based on non-market criteria using the bureaucratic land allocation machinery. It has however been noted that public land management, as contained in the provisions of Land Use Act of 1978, gives the government cheap control of much land but the allocation criteria are so exclusionary as to provide access only to a very small proportion of upper income earners particularly the

educated elites, the politically influential people and military personnel. Omirin (2002) in another reaction opines that while indeed land has become easier and cheaper for public use under the Land Use Act of 1978, access to land for private development appears to have become even more difficult than ever before. Aluko (2003) examined land policies in Nigeria and found out that land policy is counter-productive and has failed to guarantee equitable distribution of land among the citizenry.

According to Ukaejiofo (2007), the current land registration process in Nigeria is characterized by ordinary filing system, information card system, manual procedures, insecurity of data stored and vulnerability to destruction by termite or fire, slow and laborious processes, lack of integrity and gross administrative inconsistencies in 34 out of the 36 States in the federation. In the year 2011 World Bank ranking of nations' property title registration, Nigeria ranked 180th out of a total of 183 countries assessed (World Bank, 2011). The assessment also revealed that the Nigerian States have an average of twelve (12) procedures, spanning an average of eighty-two (82) days, costing an

average of 16% of the property value, involved in land title registration process. No doubt, the general difficulty being experienced in land accessibility is a function of many factors. However, a major problem is that of absence of Geographical Information System (GIS) in most States.

Land registration process in Ondo State is not significantly better than that of other States of the federation as the process is still substantially analogue in operation and the archival infrastructures are manually processed. Bisiriyu (2008) identified problems such as poor cadastral maps, physical equipment and technical facilities, uncertainty on land record, overlap and multiplicity of functions among government agencies, bureaucratic bottleneck and unnecessary delay in the release of land information among others. In line with the aim of this study which is to evaluate the end-users' satisfaction on the land title registration process in Akure, the capital of Ondo State, the following questions shall be focused viz: What is the satisfaction level of end-users on the land title registration in Akure? What are the factors determining end-users' level of satisfaction? What is the cost implication of land title registration in Akure?

Majorly, this research is justified on the need for empirical evidence, on issue of land accessibility in the Nigerian urban centres and level of end users satisfaction on the process but with particular attention to Akure, the capital of Ondo State. In Nigeria, many studies have been carried out with respect to land accessibility and title registration. These studies serve as a foundation for a more comprehensive research being proposed in this study. Omirin (2002) confirms that much attention has been devoted to housing problem but not enough attention is paid to the land accessibility vis-a-vis a satisfying land title registration process. Omirin and Antwi (2004) argue that empirical studies that enhance understanding of formal and informal urban land delivery are relatively scarce. Ikejiofor (2004) shares a similar opinion that there have been little in-depth researches on new institutional approach to land management than could improve accessibility to land which was a call for more satisfying approaches to land title registration. Against the backdrop of gross land inaccessibility, insufficient relevant empirical research and the need to improve the economy of Nigeria, this study is set to evaluate the end-users' satisfaction of the land title registration process in Akure, Ondo State. The remaining sections covers literature review, the methodology adopted, data analysis, discussion of results and conclusion.

2.0 Empirical studies

Land registries create and maintain precious resources on property rights. They also secure land tenure, facilitate land transactions and provide important land information that is needed for a successful land market transaction (Dale and McLaughlin, 1988; Zenenbergen, 2002). The poor understanding of the significance of land information as a bedrock for prosperous land market development is a major barrier for proper development of land registry in Africa. One way of developing the land registry is by making information available and more accessible to a potential user. Land Information on ownership, parcel information, and transaction information that are created in the land registry are significant data on which transparent land market transactions and performance depends on for good governance. Land registries are in possession of land information that should be made available for decision and policy makers but are rarely communicated to potential users because of the way and manner in which these information are stored. Decision makers are often not aware of the importance of land registries'

information and tend to take their decisions on ad hoc basis.

In contrast to developed economies, the land registries in Nigeria are not yet well developed. Majority of Nigerian land registries are lacking in digital cadastral databases (DCDBs), spatial data infrastructures (SDIs), geographic information system (GIS), Web mapping services and spatial enablement (Arnot and Meadoius (2006). They equally observed that a number of the land registries surveyed by them in most of the states in Nigeria were found to be unsecured physically and could easily be destroyed by water, fire or even insect attack. These registry were equally observed to be unsecured from attack by unscrupulous individuals who wished to destroy, alter or simply steal documents. The methods of storing landed information are through ordinary file system, information card system and sometimes by microfilms system. These methods of storage and retrieval of land information are done manually. With the exception of Lagos and Abuja land registries, the way and manner in which land information as well as documentation is managed in other states of the federation could best be described as being analogue and retrogressive

(Oboli, 2007). Resulting from this mode of operation is slow and labourious land management operations. This procedure makes data and requisite information to be difficult to access. The consequence of this is slowing down the rate of administering land matters. This most often leads to lack of integrity, openness and trust on land transactions.

The poor development of Land Registry was one of the factors identified for underdevelopment of the real estate market development in Nigeria. (Ojo and Oladele, 2008). The urban land market lacked the incentives for promotion of democratic, transparent and accountable access to a robust financial institutions development. The uncertainty regarding the states of land documentation and delays in the process slowed down the development of land and property markets.

Oruwari (2004) observed that lack of reliable information on land remains one of the most significant problems in land management throughout Nigeria. The existing land administration process manifests uncoordinated record keeping systems and duplication of efforts by several other agencies. Efficient and standardized

systems of land registry are rare to come by. The entire country has not been completely mapped. The existing maps in most cases are pre-independence and lack current description of present situation in semi-urban and urban centres. The implication of this is that the country cannot boast of having a clear picture of land use and optimal changes in urban land use pattern

Nigerians are beginning to realize the investment potentials of its landed property. Most often, the vast majority of the properties are still operating in informal sectors and need to be brought under formal operation. Over the years, due to more enlightenment campaign and government incentives, property owners are now more aware of the need to make use of their asset to secure access to credits in form of collateral for further economic activity. The need for modern land information system entails effective land records keeping on land registrations and transfer processes in a transparent manner to ensure effective land market development.

Land market is created from marketing abstract land rights and complex commodities, in addition to land itself (Wallace and Williamson, 2004). The organization of the land rights

(rights, restrictions and responsibilities) and complex commodities such as land registration, and accurate spatial identification constitute the component of land market development. Modern land market demands more integrity and reliability of information on land rights.

Akure land market is presently characterized by lack of access to complete information, lack of access to information about available land sale, lack of documentation of oral traditions to assist in knowing the genuine owners of native lands. Resulting from this is social cost such as lost of man hour in chasing fake land; litigation on fake land purchase; and violence from land owning communities- 'Omo-oniles' Omirin (2009). With this background, the paper intends to evaluate the end-users satisfaction on land title registration process in Akure, Nigeria.

3.0 The Study Area

Akure is a traditional Nigerian city and like other traditional Yoruba towns in the country, it exists before the advent of the British Colonial rule in the country. Akure, the capital city of Ondo state is located in South Western part of Nigeria and one of the 36 states of Nigeria. It lies approximately on latitude $7^{\circ}17'$ North of the Equator and longitudes $5^{\circ}14'$ East of Greenwich Meridian. The population of the city according to the census conducted in 2006 was 353,211 (NPC, 2006). The population is made up of civil servants, professionals, artisans, traders', farmers and students. Being a state capital, Akure is the hub of economic, social and political activities in Ondo state. The Akure land registry is situated at the Ministry of Lands and Housing of state. Figure 1 shows the geographic location of Akure city.

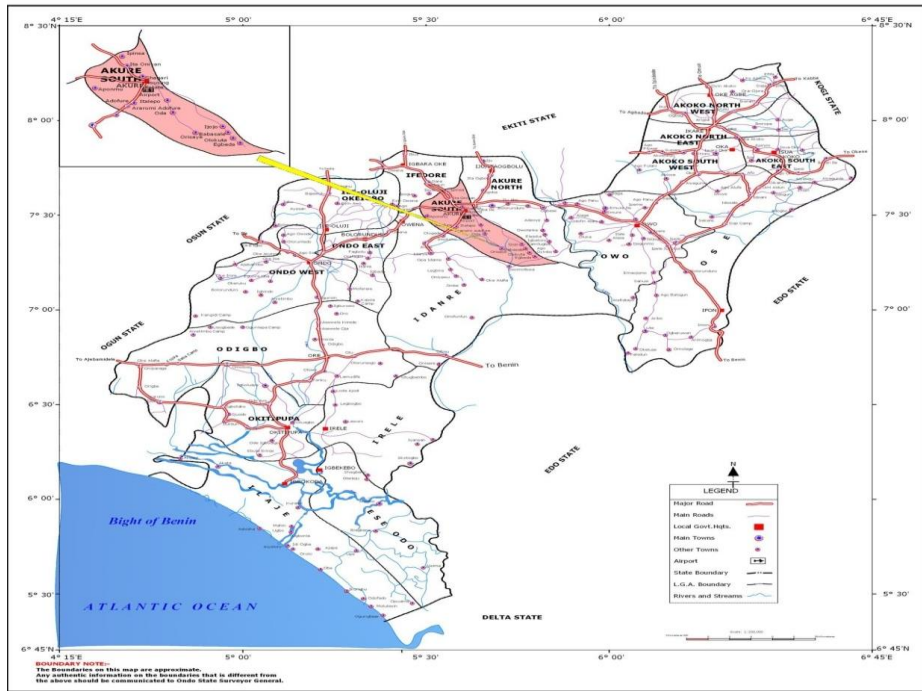


Fig.1: Map of Ondo State Showing Position of Akure

Source: Abuja Geographic Information System, Maitama, Abuja.

4.0 Methodology

Survey research design was applied which involved the administration of questionnaires to the target population so as to extract necessary information for the study using Ondo State Land Registry as the case study. The study focuses on the evaluation of end-users' satisfaction on the land title registration process in Akure, the Capital City of Ondo State, Nigeria. The data required for the study comprised mainly of primary data. The target population is the land-allied professionals practicing in the study area who are end-users of

Ondo State Land Registry services. The professionals were targeted because they act as agents between their clients and the land registry. Adopting random sampling technique, structured questionnaires were administered on One hundred and fifty (150) professionals out of which only One hundred and eleven (111) were retrieved and found suitable for analysis (Asika, 1991). The professionals are made up of Twenty (20) Architects, Seventeen (17) Estate Surveyors and Valuers, Twenty-five (25) Land Surveyors, Six (6) Town Planners and Forty-three (43)

Lawyers. The questionnaire, which was put on a 5-point Likert scale, contains factors for rating satisfaction level in land title registration process together with the demographic characteristics of the professionals. The questionnaire was developed based on the findings of past researches in the area of land title registration and accessibility. A likert scale with mid-point (5-point Likert Scale) was chosen since it allows the respondents an option when they are not sure of their response. Data were analyzed using frequency distribution, percentage and weighted mean (See Equation I).

$$WM = \frac{5n_5 + 4n_4 + 3n_3 + 2n_2 + n_1}{n_5 + n_4 + n_3 + n_2 + n_1}$$

-- Equation I

Where n_5 = number of responses for "Very satisfied", n_4 = number of responses for "Satisfied", n_3 = number of responses for "Not sure", n_2 = number of responses for "Dissatisfied", n_1 = number of responses for "Very Dissatisfied".

5.0 Data analysis and discussion

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the overall satisfaction level on the land title registration process in Ondo State Land Registry.

Table1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Category		Frequency	Percentage
Profession	Architect	20	18.0
	Estate Surveyor and Valuer	17	15.3
	Land Surveyor	25	22.5
	Town Planner	6	5.4
	Legal Practitioner	43	38.7
	Total	111	100.0
Education Qualification	Higher National Diploma (HND)	2	1.8
	Bachelor Degree (B.Sc/B.Tech/B.Arch/B.Eng)	4	3.6
	Master Degree (M.Sc/M.Tech/M.Arch/M.Eng)	10	9.0
	Post-graduation Professional Qualification	46	41.4
	Others	49	44.1
	Total	111	100.0
Work Experience	1 – 5	5	4.5
	6 – 10	26	23.4
	11 – 15	32	28.8

	16 – 20	30	27.0
	21 – 25	15	13.4
	26 – 30	3	2.7
	Total	111	100.0

Source: Field survey (2013)

The demographic characteristics of the professionals surveyed in this study are as presented in Table 1. It shows that the end-users (professionals) are mostly Legal Practitioners (38.7%) followed by Land Surveyors, Architects, Estate Surveyors and Valuers and Town Planners representing 18.0%, 15.3% and 5.4% of the respondents respectively. This result reflects the true patronage pattern observed in Akure land registry which has more lawyers patronage than other allied professional. The educational qualifications of the professionals as presented in the table reveals that 41.4% of the sampled professionals possess post-graduation professional qualification which makes them legally competent to carry out professional services in their respective fields. This qualification is also tantamount to being associate members of a

related professional body. There were other higher academic qualifications among the respondents such as LLB and PhD representing 44.1% of the total respondents. With regards to the work experience of the professionals, the table shows that the mode category is 11 – 15 years representing 28.8% of the respondents followed by 16 – 20 category which is 27.0% of the respondents. Also, 23.4% had on-the-job work experience of between 6-10 years while 13.5% had between 21-25 years of working experience. The least categories are those with work experience in between 26 – 30 and 1 – 5 with 2.7% and 4.5% respectively. The implication of this is that the majority of the information is from experienced professionals who are in this business for not less than 10 and 15 years and are with wealth of experiences.

Table 2: End-users’ overall satisfaction on land title registration process

S/n	Factor	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Not sure	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Weighted mean
1	Cost of service provided	66(59.5)	41(36.9)	1(0.9)	1(0.9)	2(1.8)	4.51

2	Mode of payment for service provided	64(57.7)	43(38.7)	4(3.6)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	4.54
3	Time taken to obtain required service	1(0.9)	2(1.8)	25(22.5)	34(30.6)	49(44.1)	1.85
4	Friendliness of staff and management	1(0.9)	12(10.8)	29(26.1)	34(30.6)	35(31.5)	2.19
5	Professionalism and implementation	1(0.9)	7(6.3)	30(27.0)	38(34.2)	35(31.5)	2.11
6	Capability and competence of the staff	14(12.6)	14(12.6)	30(27.0)	27(24.3)	26(23.4)	2.67
7	Quality and reliability of information provided	2(1.8)	3(2.7)	29(26.1)	41(36.9)	36(32.4)	2.05
8	User friendliness of service/data provided	1(0.9)	4(3.6)	31(27.9)	34(30.6)	41(36.9)	2.01
9	Accessibility to land services through modern technology	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	19(17.1)	30(27.0)	62(55.9)	1.61
10	Procedures and policies of land title registration	19(17.1)	18(16.2)	30(27.0)	27(24.3)	17(15.3)	2.95
11	Level of transparency in land registration process	1(0.9)	2(1.8)	27(24.3)	36(32.4)	45(40.5)	1.90
Overall mean							2.58

Source: Field survey (2011)

Note: The figures in bracket represent percentages.

Very satisfied=5, Satisfied=4, Not sure=3, Dissatisfied=2, Very dissatisfied=1

The end-users’ overall level of satisfaction on the land title registration process as being carried in the Ondo State Land Registry is reported in Table 2. Out of the Eleven (11) factors used as points of satisfaction measurement, only two (2) of

them possess weighted mean in the range of “Satisfied”. As presented in the table, the responding professionals are satisfied with the land title registration process in the areas of “Mode of payment for service provided” and “Cost of service provided” with weighted

averages of 4.54 and 4.51 respectively. The reasons for this are not far-fetched. Given the modern e-banking system in Nigeria, the stress associated with payment for various services, including land-related services, has been reduced drastically, which has made “Mode of payment for service provided” to be satisfactory to the respondents. Also, since the clients are mostly urban residents with income, the professionals did not express dissatisfaction with the “Cost of service provided” which implies that the clients who actually bear the cost of land services being provided can still afford the cost as required by the case study land registry.

The table further reveals that the respondents are grossly dissatisfied with land title registration process of the case study land registry in the areas of “accessibility to land services through modern technology”, “time taken to obtain required service” and “level of transparency in land registration process” as reflected in their low weighted averages of 1.61, 1.85 and 1.90 respectively. It was discovered that the land registry is yet to adopt modern information technology in the ways of doing its business which has made land service accessibility to be difficult.

Since most undertakings are still being carried out manually, the time taken to obtain required land service is unduly long, hence the dissatisfaction of the respondents. The dissatisfaction of the respondents with the level of transparency in land title registration cannot be unconnected with many procedures involved which are in most cases undefined, ambiguous, shady and irregular. Also, from the table, the respondents express dissatisfaction with other areas involved in the land title registration process. On the overall, the respondents are dissatisfied with the land title registration process of the case study land registry as reflected in the overall mean of 2.58 which is out of the “satisfied” range assessment scale.

6.0 Conclusion and recommendations

In recent time, there is an increasing demand for land and real estate property related data and services by the economy. The land registries that are depository for these land data are facing challenges in fulfilling the drive for data and new services provision. Evaluation of the end-users’ satisfaction on the land title registration process in Akure, Nigeria is the focus of this study. Targeting land-allied

professionals as end-users of land services, a survey was conducted to extract data on their level of satisfaction. As indicated in the data analysis, most of the indicators for assessing data and services provision on land were found to be unsatisfactory to the end-users in Akure Land Registry. In overcoming these challenges, the paper recommends as follows:

- The land registry should broaden her activities by extending data contents, offering new services and providing transparent procedures. This can be achieved if land information/data are organized in a way to adopt service oriented approach by using appropriate modern tools to reduce transaction cost, increase transparency, and quick access to land information by users.
- The observed analogue paper-based service provision must be replaced with electronic services through massive investment in IT infrastructure. Service provision should be via

internet, in addition to its being manned by professionals that have sufficient knowledge to manage and co-ordinate e-land services.

- Operation units must be divided and manned by appropriate professionals. Duties must be specified for each unit with specific time frame for each activity so as to ensure optimum performance.
- The land registry should be financially empowered so as to make decisions and be able to quickly respond to challenges.
- The land registration process should be tailored towards adopting service oriented approach which will make for better customer satisfaction and quality control. Land officers and other staff should be trained on quality service delivery and customer care so as to make land services more satisfying.

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