

Article

Evaluating Stakeholder Satisfaction with Land Registration Services in Benin City

Osatohanmwun N. Omoigui¹, Pius E. Chima² and Joshua A. Simeon³

- 1 Department of Estate Management, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, University of Benin, Benin-City, Edo State; noraohiwerei@gmail.com
 - 2 Department of Estate Management, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, University of Benin, Benin-City, Edo State; pius.chima@uniben.edu
 - 3 Department of Estate Management, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, University of Benin, Benin-City, Edo State; joshua.simeon@uniben.edu. orcid 0009-0007-8037-1977
- * Correspondence: noraohiwerei@gmail.com

Abstract

The status of land as a key societal resource demands its proper management. Fundamental to this, is land registration, a critical institutional mechanism for securing tenure, facilitating investment and promoting urban development. The mechanism will be effective if awareness is adequate and challenges minimal, thereby promoting user trust and user satisfaction. The aim of this study is to evaluate stakeholder satisfaction with land registration services in Benin City, Edo State, with the objectives of assessing land owners' and land professionals' awareness level of land registration system in Benin City and evaluating the user satisfaction levels of landowners and land professionals in land registration services in Benin City. The target population comprises landowners and land professionals (surveyors, lawyers, town planners, and estate agents). Employing a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 120 respondents comprising 70 landowners and 50 land professionals selected through purposive and stratified random sampling. Structured questionnaires were administered and data analysed using descriptive statistics, mean rating, and a one-sample t-test. Findings reveal that both groups perceived land registration process as cumbersome, time-consuming, and beset by bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption, and high cost. The mean perception score for landowners ($\bar{x} = 2.14$, $SD = 0.73$) and professionals ($\bar{x} = 2.31$, $SD = 0.61$) on overall process of effectiveness were below the benchmark of 3.0, indicating general dissatisfaction. The t-test results ($t = -8.64$, $p < 0.001$) confirm statistically negative significant perception. The study concludes that stakeholder satisfaction with land registration services in Benin City depends largely on efficiency, transparency, accessibility, cost, and timeliness. It also recommends digitalisation of land records, public enlightenment campaigns, reduction of registration fees, and strengthening of anti-corruption measures to improve the land registration system in Benin City.

Keywords: Landowners, Land professionals, Land registration, Nigeria, User satisfaction

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1. Introduction

Land is a vital economic resource that serves as a bedrock for wealth creation, secures investments, and drives socioeconomic development (Deininger & Feder, 2009). An effective land registration system is fundamental because the registration of land titles and interests is central to the formal recognition of property rights. This, in turn, stimulates long-term investment, facilitates access to credit, and enhances the overall efficiency of land markets (World Bank, 2021). In sub-Saharan Africa, however, land administration systems are frequently characterised by weak institutional frameworks, overlapping customary and statutory tenure systems, and inadequate record-keeping infrastructure (Enemark et al., 2014). In essence: These three weaknesses are mutually reinforcing—weak institutions fail to resolve tenure overlaps, poor records make overlaps invisible, and the resulting chaos further weakens institutional credibility. This creates a high-cost, high-risk environment that discourages formal investment and forces most citizens to rely on informal, community-based arrangements, perpetuating the cycle. In this eventuality, challenges may arise, with consequences for overall effectiveness and user satisfaction.

Nigeria presents a particularly complex land governance landscape. The Land Use Act (LUA) of 1978 nationalised all land, vesting its ownership in state governors and thus creating a uniform system under which individuals hold land through a Right of Occupancy (R of O). Despite this legislative uniformity, the operationalisation of land registration has remained highly fragmented across states, with significant disparities in efficiency, transparency, and accessibility (Mabogunje, 2010; Ayoola, 2019). For example, a major source of fragmentation stems from the structural dichotomy created by the LUA. While it vests land in State Governors, it also preserves land held by the Federal Government. In practice, Lagos State has required holders of former federal land (e.g., in Ikoyi, Victoria Island) to "regularise" their titles by obtaining a state Certificate of Occupancy. However, this process does not legally extinguish the prior federal interest, creating a "hybrid" title where a federal encumbrance could remain active at a federal registry but invisible in a state-level search, creating significant legal uncertainty. Also, the time required to complete land registration varies drastically across states, highlighting a lack of uniform efficiency. For example, obtaining a title can take 3–6 months in Lagos State but can stretch to up to 3 years in Ogun State and 1–4 years in states like Abia, Enugu, and Imo. Benin City, as the capital of Edo State and a rapidly urbanising centre, is characterised with rapid population growth and land commercialisation have intensified demand for formal registration, yet the process is widely regarded as protracted and fraught with obstacles (Orhewere & Erhabo, 2021).

Existing studies on land registration in Nigeria have tended to focus on Lagos (Umezurike, 2018), Abuja (Agbosu, 2016), and Port Harcourt (Nwaneri & Eze, 2020), with comparatively limited scholarly attention directed at Edo State and Benin City specifically. Furthermore, while administrative and policy-level analyses abound, empirical investigation of the extent of satisfaction of primary users of the system — landowners and land professionals — remains sparse. Understanding their experiences with the system is vital because user satisfaction and trust in land administration systems are key determinants of voluntary compliance and system uptake (Chamusha et al., 2021). It is posited that the possibility of variability of user experiences across Nigeria, the dearth of studies on user experiences with registration procedures in general, and Benin City, in particular, constitutes a gap which is worthy of investigation.

This study is critical because citizen satisfaction directly measures governance effectiveness. In Benin-City, where customary/statutory overlaps and poor records plague transactions, evaluating stakeholder feedback exposes operational bottlenecks, corruption hotspots, and trust deficits—providing evidence to reform workflows, reduce disputes, and unlock the economic value of secure land rights

This study, therefore, aims to fill this gap by empirically assessing the satisfaction levels of landowners and land professionals regarding the land registration process in Benin City. Specifically, it examines awareness of registration procedures, perceived accessibility, efficiency, cost, and transparency of the process, and identifies principal challenges encountered.

It is expected that the outcome will contribute to the growing body of literature on land governance in Nigerian cities and provides evidence-based recommendations for reforming the land registration system in Benin City.

1.1 Research Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are to:

- i. Assess land owners' and land professionals' awareness level of land registration system in Benin City.
- ii. Evaluate the user satisfaction levels of landowners and land professionals in land registration services in Benin City.
- iii. Identify the major challenges encountered by landowners and land professionals in the land registration process in Benin City.
- iv. Determine whether or not user satisfaction varies significantly between landowners and land professionals.

1.2 Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the satisfaction level of landowners and land professionals in land registration services in Benin City.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of landowners and professionals on the cost of land registration in Benin City.

1.3 Scope of the Study

The study investigates two broad groups of stakeholders in property registration. The first are landowners, the investors in land. The second group is comprised of the various professionals who offer investment advisory services in the process of buying, developing, managing and selling land. Benin City is the study area, being an environment where property investment is expanding as is the modern infrastructure required for its support and enhancement

2. Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is developed to explain the relationship between the quality of land registration services and stakeholder satisfaction in Benin City. The framework assumes that stakeholders' satisfaction with land registration services is influenced by their perceptions of how effectively, efficiently, transparently and professionally land registration services are delivered. Land registration is an important component of land administration because it provides evidence of land rights, enhances tenure security, supports property transactions and facilitates access to land-related information. Consequently, the quality of registration services can have significant implications for

confidence in the formal land market and the effectiveness of land administration institutions (Chimhamhiwa et al., 2009).

The framework is principally informed by the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988), which conceptualises service quality through five dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. The application of these dimensions to land registration is appropriate because applicants interact directly with registration officials and assess the service based on the accuracy, timeliness, accessibility, professionalism and physical environment associated with the service. Empirical research on land registration has similarly applied these five dimensions to assess users' satisfaction with land registration services (Hermawan et al., 2015).

However, the conventional SERVQUAL dimensions are adapted to reflect the specific characteristics of land registration services in Benin City. The independent variables comprise reliability and accuracy, responsiveness and timeliness, assurance and staff competence, transparency and accessibility, cost and procedural simplicity, and tangibles/digital infrastructure. These dimensions are expected to influence the dependent variable, stakeholder satisfaction.

Reliability and accuracy refer to the ability of the land registration institution to provide accurate, consistent and dependable services. This includes correct preparation and processing of title documents, accurate land records, proper identification of parcels and minimisation of errors. Reliable land information is particularly important because inaccuracies in registration records can contribute to disputes, delays and uncertainty in property transactions. The World Bank's land administration framework similarly emphasises the importance of reliable land records, transparency and effective registration systems.

Responsiveness and timeliness refer to the speed with which registration officers respond to applications, enquiries, complaints and requests for information. Processing time is a critical element of stakeholder satisfaction because prolonged registration procedures can increase transaction costs and delay property transactions. Evidence from land administration reforms demonstrates that improvements in processing times can be accompanied by substantial increases in customer satisfaction.

Assurance and staff competence concern the knowledge, professionalism, courtesy, integrity and ability of land registration officials to provide stakeholders with confidence in the registration process. Stakeholders are more likely to be satisfied when officials demonstrate adequate knowledge of registration requirements, communicate clearly and handle transactions professionally. Recent empirical evidence from land administration services also indicates that assurance can be an important predictor of users' overall satisfaction.

Transparency and accessibility relate to the ease with which stakeholders can obtain information about registration requirements, procedures, fees, processing stages and relevant land records. Transparency reduces uncertainty and can strengthen stakeholders' trust in the registration institution. The World Bank identifies transparency of land-related information and accessibility of information on procedures and fees as important dimensions of effective land administration.

Cost and procedural simplicity constitute another important dimension of the framework. Stakeholders are likely to be more satisfied when registration procedures are simple, understandable and affordable. Complex procedures, multiple administrative requirements and excessive costs can discourage formal registration and encourage informal transactions. The World Bank therefore recommends customer-oriented land administration systems characterised by clarity, simplicity, reasonable cost and timely service delivery.

Tangibles and digital infrastructure refer to the physical facilities, office environment, availability of appropriate equipment and the use of information and communication technologies in land

registration. Digitalisation can improve access to land information, reduce unnecessary physical interaction and enhance the efficiency and transparency of registration processes. In Nigeria, geo-information technologies and electronic land administration have been associated with improvements in the verification of land records and reductions in some forms of corruption.

The dependent variable is stakeholder satisfaction. In this study, stakeholder satisfaction refers to the extent to which users of land registration services perceive that the services received meet or exceed their expectations. Stakeholders may include landowners, property buyers and sellers, Estate Surveyors and Valuers, lawyers, property developers, financial institutions and other professional users of land registration services. Their satisfaction can be assessed through indicators such as overall satisfaction, satisfaction with service delivery, confidence in the registration process, willingness to use the service again and willingness to recommend the service to other users. Previous Nigerian research on land title registration in Akure found that end-users perceived the performance of the land registry as below average, demonstrating the relevance of stakeholder satisfaction as an indicator for evaluating land registration services in Nigeria (Ojo, 2016).

The framework therefore proposes that higher levels of service quality are associated with higher levels of stakeholder satisfaction. Conversely, delays, inaccurate records, inadequate staff responsiveness, lack of transparency, high costs, complicated procedures and inadequate facilities are expected to reduce satisfaction. The relationship is represented as follows:

Independent Variables (Land Registration Service Quality) are:

Reliability and accuracy, responsiveness and timeliness, assurance and staff competence transparency and accessibility, cost and procedural simplicity and tangibles and digital infrastructure,

Dependent Variable

Stakeholder Satisfaction with Land Registration Services are:

Overall satisfaction, satisfaction with processing time, satisfaction with accuracy of documentation, satisfaction with staff conduct, satisfaction with accessibility of information, confidence in the registration process and willingness to use/recommend the service.

The framework is particularly relevant to Benin City because land registration involves interactions among several actors and institutions, meaning that service delivery should be examined from the perspective of the stakeholders who actually use the system. Land administration processes can extend across multiple organisations, making coordination and end-to-end performance important considerations in evaluating service delivery (Chimhamhiwa et al., 2009).

Accordingly, the study assumes that stakeholder satisfaction is not determined by a single characteristic of land registration services but by the combined effect of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, transparency, affordability, simplicity, physical facilities and digital infrastructure. The conceptual framework will therefore guide the development of the research questionnaire, the identification of variables and indicators, and the subsequent statistical analysis of the relationship between service quality and stakeholder satisfaction in Benin City.

Conceptual Model

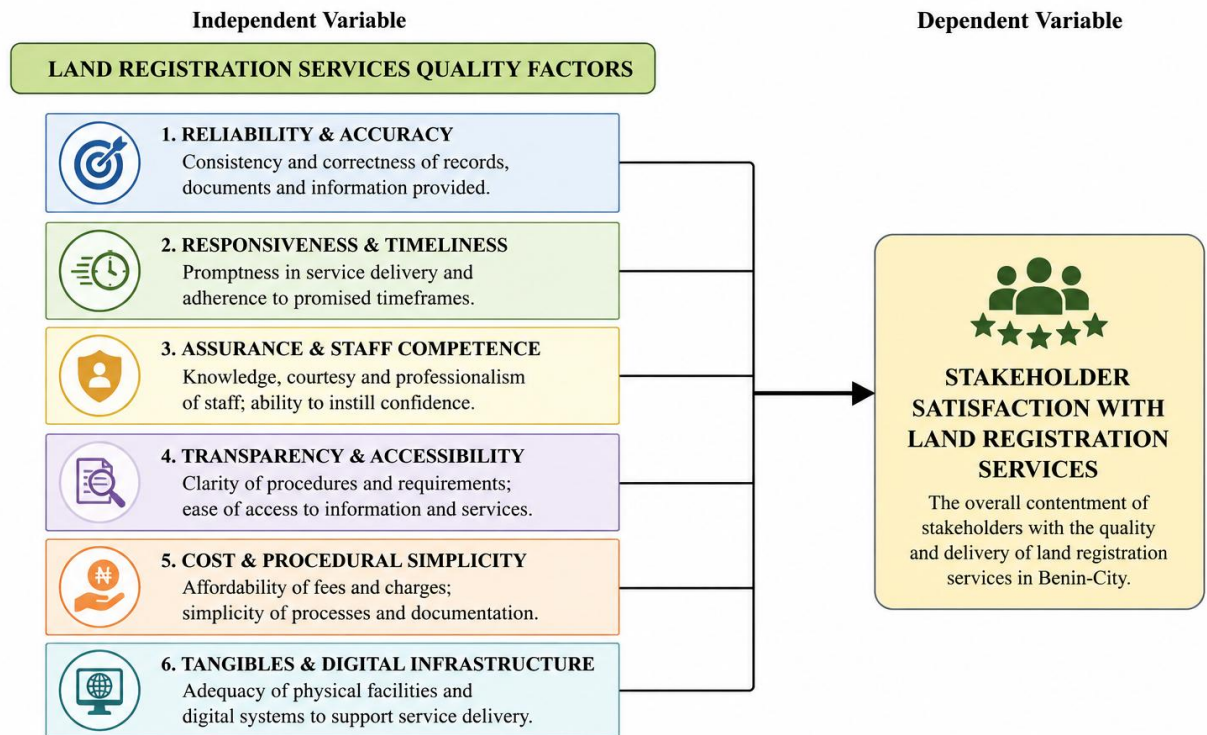


Figure: Conceptual Model for Evaluating Stakeholder Satisfaction with Land Registration Services in Benin-City

2.3 Empirical Studies on Perceptions of Land Registration

Empirical research on land registration in Nigeria and other developing countries indicates that stakeholders' perceptions of registration services are strongly influenced by the efficiency, accessibility, transparency, cost and reliability of the registration process. These studies provide useful evidence for evaluating stakeholder satisfaction with land registration services in Benin City.

Ojo (2016) empirically examined end-users' satisfaction with the land title registration process in Akure, Nigeria. The study adopted a random sampling technique and obtained data from 111 land-related professionals who used land registry services. Data were analysed using frequency distributions, percentages and weighted mean scores. The findings showed that the performance of the land registry was below average, suggesting considerable dissatisfaction among users of land registration services. The study recommended more proactive approaches to land title registration to improve the quality and efficiency of registry services. The relevance of this study to the present research lies in its direct assessment of users' satisfaction with land registration and its identification of service performance as an important determinant of satisfaction.

Similarly, Ghebru and Okumo (2017) investigated land administration service delivery and its challenges in Nigeria using data obtained from 76 service providers, 253 beneficiaries and 172 professionals across eight states and the Federal Capital Territory. The study found that land registration was characterised by substantial delays: nearly 80% of beneficiaries and 41% of professionals reported that registration took more than two years after the initial application. The study further established that land registration information and guidelines were rarely available to the public, making direct interaction with land administration institutions the dominant means of accessing services. Poor coordination among institutions involved in land administration was also identified as a significant challenge. These findings suggest that stakeholders' perceptions of land

registration are likely to be shaped by waiting time, accessibility of information, institutional coordination and procedural complexity..

Oyedemi and Sodiya (2016) examined citizens' satisfaction with land titling policy and regularisation in Ogun State, Nigeria. The researchers argued that citizens' views are often neglected when land regularisation policies are designed and implemented. Using questionnaire surveys among property owners, the study assessed citizens' satisfaction with the state government's land regularisation policy. The study is important because it demonstrates that satisfaction with land administration should not be assessed solely from the perspective of government officials or professionals; rather, the experiences and perceptions of actual landowners and applicants should be incorporated into the evaluation.

In Lagos State, Thontteh and Omirin (2015) examined land registration within the framework of land administration reform. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches and involved land registration officials, lawyers, estate surveyors and valuers. Descriptive statistics, mean item scores and factor analysis were used to identify critical factors affecting land registration. The study found that the introduction of an electronic document management system improved public confidence in property transactions, centralised file storage, facilitated online document search and retrieval, reduced waiting time for obtaining land information and improved managerial efficiency. Nevertheless, the study identified inadequate institutional frameworks, ambiguous legal provisions and inadequate technical skills among staff as important constraints. The findings demonstrate that technological improvements can positively influence stakeholder perceptions, but technology alone may not eliminate institutional and human-resource problems.

A related Nigerian study by Nwokike (2019) examined the effect of introducing a Land Information Management System on land administration in Anambra State. The study obtained responses from land officers, registered estate surveyors and legal practitioners and analysed the data using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings identified the absence of proper procedures for the registration of rural and urban land as one of the major problems affecting land administration. This suggests that stakeholders' satisfaction may depend not only on the outcome of registration but also on whether the procedures are clear, standardised and easy to navigate.

More recently, Adekoya et al., (2025) investigated factors affecting users' satisfaction with the Land Information Management System in Kwara State, Nigeria. The study identified transaction costs, processing time, data security, reduction of bureaucratic encumbrances and ease of transactions as significant factors influencing users' satisfaction. The findings are particularly relevant to the present study because they demonstrate that satisfaction with modern land registration and information-management services is multidimensional. Users evaluate not only the availability of the service but also its affordability, speed, security and convenience.

Afolayan (2026) examined perceptions of service quality in the land registration administrative process in Ilorin, Kwara State. Using the SERVQUAL framework, the study assessed tangibility, reliability, empathy, responsiveness and assurance and compared applicants' expectations with their perceptions of actual service delivery. The findings showed that applicants had high expectations concerning document security, staff competence and prompt service delivery, but actual satisfaction was moderate. Responsiveness and timely completion were among the weakest areas, while significant service-quality gaps existed across the SERVQUAL dimensions, particularly reliability and responsiveness. The study demonstrates the usefulness of service-quality measures in understanding stakeholder satisfaction with land registration services.

Evidence from outside Nigeria also supports the importance of service quality and user perceptions. Ntongani (2024) in a study of the Integrated Land Management Information System in Kinondoni Municipality, Dar es Salaam, found that more than half of respondents were very satisfied with land

registration services under the integrated system. Easy access to information was considered particularly important, while the integrated system was associated with lower transaction costs and processing time and higher service quality and satisfaction. This finding reinforces the argument that accessibility, affordability, speed and information availability are central dimensions of stakeholder satisfaction with land registration.

Relevance to Benin City

The empirical evidence is particularly significant for Benin City because the city has a complex land administration environment involving both formal government institutions and customary land-delivery systems. Agheyisi (2016) found that informal land subdivision and allocation by community-based and customary institutions constitute important channels of land delivery in Benin City. The study linked the persistence of informal land delivery partly to deficiencies in the formal land administration system. Similarly, Agheyisi (2020) showed that customary institutions, including traditional authorities and community development associations, continue to play important roles in land allocation and tenure security in Benin City. The study also noted that elaborate bureaucratic procedures associated with formal land supply can increase the time and cost of land acquisition and encourage people to use informal channels.

Adjekophori et al., 2025 directly supports the need to investigate land registration and stakeholder perceptions in Benin City. A 2025 study on sustainable land accessibility for real estate development in Benin City identified poor land registration systems and delays in title documentation as major factors affecting access to land. The study, which surveyed 236 respondents comprising household/property owners and heads of estate surveying firms, recommended improvements in statutory procedures and regular training for land officers to enhance land documentation and transactions.

Furthermore, the contemporary institutional environment is changing. EdoGIS has been developed as a technology-oriented agency responsible for land administration and property titling in Edo State, while the state has also consolidated land-related agencies within the Built Environment Hub in Benin City. In 2026, the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development specifically recognised EdoGIS for its role in modernising land titling, registration and documentation. These developments make it necessary to determine whether institutional and technological reforms have translated into improved experiences and satisfaction among the actual users of land registration services.

Overall, the reviewed empirical studies establish that stakeholder satisfaction with land registration is influenced by processing time, cost, transparency, accessibility of information, staff competence, responsiveness, reliability, technological infrastructure, procedural clarity and security of land records. However, much of the Nigerian literature has focused on other cities or on broad land administration challenges rather than systematically evaluating the satisfaction of multiple stakeholder groups with land registration services in Benin City. This constitutes an important empirical gap. The present study therefore seeks to evaluate stakeholders' perceptions and satisfaction with land registration services in Benin City, with particular attention to the quality, efficiency, accessibility and reliability of services provided by the formal land registration system.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in the Institutional Quality Theory of land administration (North, 1990; De Soto, 2000), which posits that the effectiveness of land registration systems is a function of the quality of the institutional environment encompassing rule of law, enforcement mechanisms,

bureaucratic efficiency, and trust. De Soto's (2000) seminal argument that formalisation of property rights unlocks the 'dead capital' inherent in informal assets remains particularly relevant: where registration systems are perceived as inaccessible or corrupt, rational actors will avoid formal processes, perpetuating informality and its associated insecurities.

User perception theory (Oliver, 1980) further informs the study's design, recognising that perceptions of service quality are shaped by the gap between expected and actual performance. Applied to land registration, this framework suggests that negative perceptions arise when the system's actual performance in terms of speed, cost, and transparency falls significantly short of users' reasonable expectations. This expectation-performance gap is hypothesised to be particularly acute in Benin City, given the context described above.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, appropriate for systematically collecting data from a large number of respondents and analysing perceptions and attitudes across defined variables (Creswell, 2014). A cross-sectional approach was employed, with data gathered at a single point in time from the study population.

3.2 Study Area

Benin City is the capital of Edo State, located in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria (latitude 6°20'N, longitude 5°38'E). With a population estimated at approximately 1.5 million persons (NPC, 2023 projection), it is one of Nigeria's major urban centres. The city has experienced accelerated urban growth over the past two decades, driven by rural-urban migration, oil economy spillovers, and expanding commercial activity. Benin-city is made up of three Local Government Areas namely, Oredo, Egor and Ikpoba Okha Local Government Areas. Land registration in Benin City are regulated by EDOGIS and the Lands Bureau under the Edo State Ministry of Lands and Survey.

3.3 Population and Sampling

The study population comprised two groups:

- i. landowners who have either undergone or attempted to undergo land registration in Benin City within the preceding five years (2019–2024), and
- ii. land-related professionals - estate surveyors and valuers, legal practitioners specialising in property law and town planners in Benin City.

A sample size of 120 respondents was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula at a 95% confidence level and 9% margin of error, applied to an estimated accessible population of 400 landowners and 150 professionals, yielding required minimums of 74 landowners and 46 professionals. Adjusting for a 10% non-response rate, targets of 80 landowners and 55 professionals were set. Ultimately, 70 landowners and 50 professionals returned usable questionnaires, giving a total of 120 and a response rate of 85.7%.

According to data from Ministry of Lands and Surveys, 2339 landowners applied for registration from the entire state, 400 came from the three Local Government Areas making up Benin-city (Oredo, Egor and Ikpoba Okha). Taking cognizance of the residential density of high, medium and low, 70 landowners were selected (40 from the high dense area such as GRA, 20 from the medium dense area such as Uselu and 10 from the low dense area such Oka).

The professionals consisting of Estate Surveyors and Valuers, legal practitioners and Town Planners were 150 in number. Estate Surveyors and Valuers are 80 in Benin-city, legal practitioners are 170 while Town Planners are 60 in Benin-city. This is according to the Secretariat of the above named professions. Using purposive sampling method, 15 Estate Surveyors and Valuers were selected, 25 legal practitioners were selected while 10 Town Planners were selected to make up the 50 professionals.

Landowners were selected through purposive sampling from three residential density zones in Benin City, namely low, medium and high-density areas represented by GRA, Uselu and Oka, respectively. The selection of these locations was intended to provide spatial representation of different residential environments and socio-economic categories within the study area. Purposive sampling was considered appropriate because the study specifically required respondents who had direct experience with land registration services. Accordingly, landowners who had undertaken land registration, title documentation, land searches, transfers or related land administration transactions were targeted. The inclusion of respondents from the three residential zones enabled the study to examine whether stakeholder satisfaction with land registration services varies across different residential environments in Benin City.

Professionals were selected through purposive sampling techniques from membership lists of the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV), the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) Benin Branch, and the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (NITP) Edo State chapter.

3.4 Instrument of Data Collection

A structured questionnaire with four sections was employed:

- i. socio-demographic characteristics;
- ii. awareness of registration procedures by landowners (5 items); accessibility, efficiency, cost, transparency, and staff conduct each rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree);
- iii. perception of the registration process by landowners and land professionals across five dimensions— accessibility, efficiency, cost, transparency, and staff conduct each rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree); and
- iv. open-ended items on major challenges. The questionnaire was pilot-tested with 15 respondents and yielded a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.81, indicating good internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978).

Data collection was conducted between September and November 2024 through direct administration by trained research assistants. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Benin, and all respondents provided informed consent prior to participation.

3.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected from respondents were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, were used to summarise respondents' demographic characteristics and assess their perceptions of various dimensions of land registration services, such as accessibility, processing time, cost, transparency, reliability, staff responsiveness and technological efficiency. Mean scores were used to determine the overall level of stakeholder satisfaction, while standard deviations were employed to establish the degree of variation in respondents' opinions. Inferential statistics, including correlation, t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA), chi-square and/or multiple regression

analysis, were employed where appropriate to examine relationships, differences and factors influencing stakeholder satisfaction with land registration services in Benin City. The hypotheses formulated for the study were tested at a 5% level of significance ($p \leq 0.05$). Mean ratings were interpreted using a benchmark of 3.0: items with mean scores below 3.0 were considered negatively perceived, and those at or above 3.0 were considered positively perceived (Likert, 1932). An independent samples t-test was conducted to test for significant differences between landowner and professional perceptions at $\alpha = 0.05$. A one-sample t-test was also employed to test whether the overall mean perception scores differed significantly from the neutral benchmark of 3.0. All analyses were performed using SPSS version 27.0.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

- i. Informed Consent: Participants fully understood the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and their right to withdraw, before participating.
- ii. Confidentiality: All personal data and responses were anonymized and stored securely, ensuring no individual can be identified in the study.
- iii. Avoid Coercion: Participation was entirely voluntary.
- iv. Transparency: the research was funded private

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic profiles of the 120 respondents. Among landowners, 57.1% were male and 42.9% female. The dominant age group was 41–50 years (38.6%), and 64.3% held a university degree or higher. Among professionals, 72% were male, with the majority (60%) in the 31–40 age bracket. Estate surveyors constituted the largest professional subgroup (36%), followed by legal practitioners (26%), town planners (22%), and estate agents (16%). The majority of both groups (landowners 71.4%, professionals 82%) had been involved in at least one land registration transaction in the preceding five years, confirming their experiential basis for assessment.

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Landowners (n=70)	%	Professionals (n=50)	%
Gender: Male	40	57.1	36	72.0
Gender: Female	30	42.9	14	28.0
Age: 21–30	8	11.4	12	24.0
Age: 31–40	19	27.1	30	60.0
Age: 41–50	27	38.6	6	12.0
Age: 51+	16	22.9	2	4.0
Education: OND/NCE	11	15.7	0	0.0
Education: HND/B.Sc.	45	64.3	38	76.0
Education: Postgraduate	14	20.0	12	24.0
Prior Reg. Experience: Yes	50	71.4	41	82.0
Prior Reg. Experience: No	20	28.6	9	18.0

Source: (Field Survey, 2024)

4.2 Awareness of Land Registration Procedures

Table 2 presents respondents' level of awareness of key aspects of the land registration process. Findings indicate that awareness is notably higher among professionals than landowners across all five items. The highest awareness gap is observed in knowledge of required documentation (professionals: 88%, landowners: 44.3%) and the sequence of registration steps (professionals: 82%, landowners: 37.1%). Notably, only 34.3% of landowners were aware of the specific fees charged for registration, compared to 76% of professionals. Overall, the majority of landowners (64.3%) described their awareness of registration procedures as 'low' or 'very low,' underscoring a significant information asymmetry between lay users and professionals.

Table 2: Awareness of Land Registration Procedures

Awareness Item	Landowners (n=70) %	Professionals (n=50) %
Aware of stages/steps in registration process	37.1	82.0
Know the required documents for registration	44.3	88.0
Know the duration of registration	28.6	74.0
Aware of fees charged for registration	34.3	76.0
Know relevant government offices to visit	52.9	90.0
Overall: Describe awareness as 'High'	35.7	86.0

Source: (Field Survey, 2024)

4.3 Perception of the Land Registration Process

Table 3 presents the mean perception ratings of landowners and professionals across five key dimensions of the land registration process. For each dimension, a mean score below 3.0 indicates negative perception and at or above 3.0 indicates positive perception.

Table 3: Mean Perception Ratings of the Land Registration Process (Scale: 1–5)

Dimension / Indicator	Landowners $\bar{x}$ (SD)	Professionals $\bar{x}$ (SD)	Grand Mean
ACCESSIBILITY			
The registration offices are easily accessible	2.31 (0.84)	2.58 (0.72)	2.43
Information about registration is publicly available	1.97 (0.91)	2.44 (0.79)	2.17
Online/digital platforms exist and function well	1.84 (0.77)	2.12 (0.81)	1.96
Accessibility Mean	2.04 (0.74)	2.38 (0.72)	2.18
EFFICIENCY			
Registration is completed within a reasonable time	1.76 (0.68)	1.94 (0.71)	1.84
The process involves manageable steps	2.09 (0.81)	2.26 (0.77)	2.16
Processing time matches initial estimates given	1.63 (0.72)	1.88 (0.65)	1.74
Efficiency Mean	1.83 (0.70)	2.03 (0.68)	1.91
COST			
Registration fees are affordable	1.91 (0.87)	2.22 (0.79)	2.05
Official charges are clearly displayed	2.14 (0.91)	2.36 (0.84)	2.24
Unofficial payments are not required	1.69 (0.83)	1.92 (0.76)	1.79
Cost Mean	1.91 (0.82)	2.17 (0.80)	2.03
TRANSPARENCY			

The process is free from corruption	1.73 (0.79)	1.86 (0.71)	1.79
There is accountability in the process	2.06 (0.85)	2.18 (0.77)	2.11
Records are accurate and up-to-date	2.33 (0.88)	2.54 (0.82)	2.42
Transparency Mean	2.04 (0.82)	2.19 (0.75)	2.11
STAFF CONDUCT			
Staff are courteous and helpful	2.49 (0.91)	2.72 (0.83)	2.59
Staff are knowledgeable about procedures	2.61 (0.88)	2.88 (0.79)	2.73
Staff process applications promptly	2.11 (0.84)	2.34 (0.76)	2.21
Staff Conduct Mean	2.40 (0.87)	2.65 (0.79)	2.51
OVERALL MEAN	2.14 (0.73)	2.31 (0.61)	2.22

Note: Benchmark = 3.0; Scores below 3.0 indicate negative perception.

Source: (Field Survey, 2024)

The results in Table 3 reveal comprehensively negative perceptions of the land registration process across all five dimensions for both landowners and professionals. Efficiency registered the lowest grand mean (1.91), followed by cost (2.03) and transparency (2.11). Staff conduct received the least negative though still below-benchmark rating (2.51), suggesting that personnel interactions, while inadequate, are perceived relatively more favourably than systemic attributes.

The item with the lowest mean score overall was 'Processing time matches initial estimates given' (grand mean = 1.74), reflecting a profound disconnect between official timelines and actual processing experience. This finding resonates with Orhewere and Erhabo's (2021) documentation of protracted registration timelines in Benin City and aligns with broader Nigerian evidence (Umezurike, 2018; Nwaneri and Eze, 2020). The item 'The process is free from corruption' also scored critically low (grand mean = 1.79), consistent with Transparency International's assessment of land administration as one of the most corruption-prone sectors in Nigeria (TI, 2023).

The perception gap between professionals and landowners, while consistent in direction (professionals uniformly rating the system marginally less negatively), is relatively modest across most dimensions, with the largest gap observed in accessibility (professionals: 2.38, landowners: 2.04) and staff conduct (professionals: 2.65, landowners: 2.40). This may reflect professionals' greater familiarity with navigating the system, enabling them to extract marginally better service outcomes.

4.4 Major Challenges in the Land Registration Process

Table 4 presents the ranking of major challenges as identified by respondents, ordered by frequency of mention. Bureaucratic bottlenecks (identified by 84.2% of all respondents), corruption and demand for unofficial payments (81.7%), and excessive registration costs (79.2%) emerged as the three most critical challenges. These findings corroborate those of Agbosu (2016) in the FCT and Babatunde (2013) in a national review, positioning Benin City's challenges within a systemic national pattern rather than as idiosyncratic local problems.

Table 4: Ranking of Major Challenges in Land Registration (n=120)

Rank	Challenge	Frequency	% of Respondents
1	Bureaucratic bottlenecks / excessive documentation requirements	101	84.2
2	Corruption and demand for unofficial payments	98	81.7
3	Excessive and unclear registration costs	95	79.2
4	Protracted processing time	93	77.5
5	Inadequate staff knowledge and customer service	78	65.0
6	Lack of digitisation / manual record-keeping	74	61.7
7	Multiple office visits required	71	59.2
8	Difficult access to information about requirements	68	56.7
9	Risk of document fraud or errors in records	62	51.7
10	Lack of feedback mechanisms for applicants	55	45.8

Source: (Field Survey, 2024)

4.5 Inferential Statistical Analysis

To test the research hypotheses, both a one-sample t-test and an independent samples t-test were conducted. Table 5 presents the one-sample t-test results examining whether overall mean perception scores differed significantly from the neutral benchmark of 3.0.

Table 5: One-Sample t-Test Results (Test Value = 3.0)

Group	n	Mean	SD	t-value	df	p-value	Decision
Landowners	70	2.14	0.73	-9.86	69	< 0.001	Reject H_0
Professionals	50	2.31	0.61	-8.02	49	< 0.001	Reject H_0
Combined	120	2.22	0.68	-12.41	119	< 0.001	Reject H_0

Note: Significance level $\alpha = 0.05$.

Source: (Field Survey, 2024)

The one-sample t-test results confirm that the mean perception scores of both landowners ($t = -9.86$, $p < 0.001$) and professionals ($t = -8.02$, $p < 0.001$), as well as the combined sample ($t = -12.41$, $p < 0.001$), are significantly below the neutral benchmark of 3.0. These results indicate that perceptions of the land registration process in Benin City are statistically significantly negative, not merely tendentially so.

Table 6 presents the independent samples t-test results examining whether statistically significant differences exist between landowner and professional perceptions on efficiency (H_{01}) and cost (H_{02}).

Table 6: Independent Samples t-Test: Landowners vs. Professionals

Hypothesis / Dimension	Landowners $\bar{x}$ (SD)	Professionals $\bar{x}$ (SD)	t-value	df	P-value	Decision
H_{01} : Efficiency	1.83 (0.70)	2.03 (0.68)	-1.62	118	0.108	Fail to Reject H_0
H_{02} : Cost	1.91 (0.82)	2.17 (0.80)	-1.79	118	0.076	Fail to Reject H_0
Accessibility	2.04 (0.74)	2.38 (0.72)	-2.57	118	0.011	Reject H_0
Transparency	2.04 (0.82)	2.19 (0.75)	-1.09	118	0.279	Fail to Reject H_0
Staff Conduct	2.40 (0.87)	2.65 (0.79)	-1.68	118	0.096	Fail to Reject H_0
Overall	2.14 (0.73)	2.31 (0.61)	-1.41	118	0.161	Fail to Reject H_0

Note: Significance level $\alpha = 0.05$.

Source: (Field Survey, 2024)

The independent samples t-test results indicate that for the primary hypotheses (H_{01} and H_{02}), there are no statistically significant differences between landowner and professional perceptions of efficiency ($t = -1.62$, $p = 0.108$) and cost ($t = -1.79$, $p = 0.076$) at the 0.05 significance level. Both hypotheses are therefore not rejected. This finding is notable: despite landowners' lower awareness of registration procedures, both groups converge on similarly negative assessments of the system's key functional dimensions. The sole dimension on which a significant inter-group difference is observed is accessibility ($t = -2.57$, $p = 0.011$), where professionals rate accessibility marginally but significantly higher plausibly because their professional knowledge allows them to navigate the system more effectively.

5. Discussion

Despite EdoGIS' reform which has addressed key operational bottlenecks and garnered positive stakeholder feedback, deep-seated issues of cost, tenure security, and institutional inefficiency continue to limit overall satisfaction, suggesting a need for further holistic reforms. The study showed a consistently unfavourable picture of the land registration process in Benin City. The mean perception scores across all dimensions fall substantially below the benchmark of 3.0, reflecting not merely tepid satisfaction but active dissatisfaction with the system's performance. This pattern is consistent with the theoretical expectation-performance gap (Oliver, 1980): users whether landowners or professionals hold reasonable expectations of an accessible, timely, and transparent system, expectations that the current institutional reality systematically fails to meet.

The dominance of bureaucratic bottlenecks and corruption as the most commonly cited challenges resonates with De Soto's (2000) observation that excessive administrative complexity renders formal registration prohibitively costly for ordinary citizens, driving reliance on informal alternatives. Indeed, qualitative responses gathered during the survey (not reported in the tables) indicate that a significant number of landowners described abandoning formal registration and relying instead on informal sales agreements or family witnesses a finding that aligns with Orhewere and Erhobo's (2021) documentation of high rates of informal tenure in Benin City.

The convergence of negative perceptions between landowners and professionals is theoretically significant. It suggests that the system's deficiencies are not merely perceptual artefacts of user unfamiliarity, but reflect genuine institutional shortcomings that are independently verifiable by trained professionals who interact with the system repeatedly. This finding strengthens the case for reform: when even the most informed and experienced users rate the system poorly, it is a clear signal of systemic rather than user-level problems.

The one significant inter-group difference on accessibility warrants specific attention. That professionals perceive the system as marginally more accessible may reflect their social capital and professional networks, which provide access to informal channels, expedited processing, and advance knowledge of procedural requirements. This differential access raises important equity concerns: if the system is navigable primarily for those with professional knowledge or connections, ordinary landowners particularly those from lower-income households are systematically disadvantaged in securing their property rights (Chamusha et al., 2021). This equity dimension underscores the need for demand-side as well as supply-side reforms.

The finding that awareness is markedly lower among landowners than professionals, with less than 40% of landowners aware of the sequence of registration steps or the applicable fees, points to a significant information asymmetry that compounds the system's inherent procedural complexity. This finding is consistent with Zevenbergen et al. (2013) who identified lack of information as a

major deterrent to registration uptake in Uganda, and suggests that public awareness campaigns and simplified information dissemination should be considered alongside administrative reforms.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

This study has provided systematic empirical evidence on the perceptions of landowners and professionals regarding the land registration process in Benin City. The findings unequivocally demonstrate that both groups hold significantly negative perceptions of the system across all measured dimensions: accessibility, efficiency, cost, transparency, and staff conduct with the statistical evidence confirming that these perceptions diverge significantly and negatively from the neutral benchmark. Bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption, high cost, and protracted timelines emerge as the dominant challenges, while awareness of formal procedures remains alarmingly low among ordinary landowners.

These findings contribute to the growing body of empirical literature on land governance in Nigerian cities, specifically enriching the evidence base for Benin City, a context previously underexplored in the academic literature. They provide a robust foundation for targeted policy reform.

The study concludes that stakeholder satisfaction with land registration services in Benin City depends largely on efficiency, transparency, accessibility, cost, and timeliness. Improving digital systems, reducing bureaucratic delays, strengthening institutional accountability, and enhancing stakeholder communication will promote greater satisfaction and improve the effectiveness of land registration services.

6.2 Recommendations

On the basis of the foregoing findings, the following recommendations are advanced:

- i. *Digitalisation of land records and online registration portals*: EDOGIS should accelerate the complete digitisation of all land records in Benin City and introduce a fully functional e-registration platform. Digital systems reduce human discretion, limit opportunities for corrupt practices, and significantly shorten processing times, as demonstrated by Rwanda's experience (Simbizi et al., 2014).
- ii. *Fee rationalisation and transparency*: The Edo State government should conduct a comprehensive review of registration fees, publish all official fees on government websites and at registration offices, and establish a grievance mechanism for users who are solicited for unofficial payments.
- iii. *Anti-corruption measures*: Independent monitoring of land registration offices should be instituted, possibly through civil society partnerships. Whistleblower protection mechanisms should be strengthened and enforced, and performance of registry staff should be tied to transparent, measurable metrics.
- iv. *Public enlightenment campaigns*: Systematic public education programmes delivered through community associations, religious institutions, schools, and mass media should be designed to bridge the awareness gap identified among landowners. Simplified registration guides in local languages (including Edo and Pidgin English) should be produced and widely distributed.
- v. *Decentralisation of registration services*: Satellite registration offices or mobile registration units should be established in high-density peri-urban areas of Benin City to improve physical accessibility, particularly for low-income landowners who bear disproportionate transaction costs in accessing centralised services.

- vi. *Legislative reform*: The Edo State government should consider reviewing provisions of the Land Use Act as they apply to the state, specifically the governor's consent requirement for all land transactions, to reduce the administrative burden and processing time for routine registration applications.

6.3 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study is not without limitations. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inference, and the sample, while adequate for the purposes of the study, was limited to Benin City, restricting generalisability to other Nigerian cities. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to track changes in user perceptions following specific reform interventions, extend the comparative framework to include other Edo State urban centres, and incorporate qualitative in-depth interviews with registry officials to triangulate findings from the user-side.

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