

## Evaluation of Acquisition and Compensation Approaches in Real Estate Development in Delta State, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

The study examines the problem of unclear, delayed, and inadequate compensation practices in compulsory land acquisition for real estate development in Delta State, Nigeria. The objective was to assess acquisition methods, evaluate compensation approaches, and propose strategies for fairer and more efficient outcomes. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted with 250 respondents drawn proportionally from real estate developers, professional valuers, government officials, and community leaders. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analysed with descriptive statistics, multiple regression, and canonical correlation using SPSS version 27. Findings show that compulsory government acquisition is the dominant approach (47.2%), while negotiation and community-based methods remain underused. Compensation is mainly monetary (53.2%), with limited in-kind or livelihood support. 49.6% of affected stakeholders reported dissatisfaction with compensation, citing delays, undervaluation, and lack of transparency. Regression analysis revealed that compensation amount ( $B = 0.47$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), timeliness ( $B = 0.41$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and community engagement ( $B = 0.26$ ,  $p = 0.019$ ) significantly improved project outcomes. Canonical correlation analysis confirmed a strong link ( $r = 0.812$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) between fair acquisition practices and development success. The study contributes by integrating valuation theory with empirical evidence from Delta State to highlight gaps between statutory practice and stakeholder expectations. It recommends amending the Land Use Act of 1978 to include land value, adopting international valuation standards, ensuring prompt and adequate compensation, and strengthening community participation. These steps are essential for restoring trust, reducing disputes, and achieving sustainable real estate development outcomes.

**Keywords:** Acquisition, Land use Act, Development, Estate, Compensation

### 1. Introduction

In Sub-Saharan Africa, land tenure systems mainly consist of both customary and statutory regimes, with around 78% of land parcels governed by customary tenure (Deininger et al., 2016). Customary tenure is essential for supporting agricultural livelihoods, community identity, and environmental care. The resilience and flexibility of negotiated transfers within families and communities are vital for rural economies. The lack of formal legal recognition puts these systems at risk of dispossession, particularly during large land acquisitions (Wegerif et al., 2025). In many African countries, land acquisition often occurs with little community input, weakening legal pluralism and social legitimacy. This exclusion often leads to compensation processes that overlook cultural values, basic needs, and community rights. Affected populations become dissatisfied, leading to resistance, legal disputes, or community protests (German et al., 2013). Conventional compensation models often focus on monetary payments tied to market values, overlooking important non-market values like subsistence use and customary rights. These shortcomings

hinder the complete restoration of displaced households, particularly those reliant on land-based incomes and community support systems (Byamugisha & Dubosse, 2023).

Nigeria's land tenure system is dualistic, consisting of statutory ownership under the Land Use Act of 1978 and established customary rights managed by traditional rulers and family structures (Irori & Akujuru, 2025). The Land Use Act aimed to streamline land administration but has faced criticism for concentrating power with state governors, restricting direct land ownership, and undermining traditional land rights (Raji & Okafor, 2024). This institutional structure often creates ambiguities in acquisition processes, increasing the risk of disputes and conflicts (Popoola et al., 2024; Irori & Akujuru, 2025). Nigerian compensation practices face notable limitations within the statutory framework. Monetary compensation usually includes only "unexhausted improvements" on land, like buildings, crops, and trees, excluding the land itself (Land Use Act, 1978, Sect. 29[4]). This legal provision results in landowners not receiving compensation for essential assets, causing dissatisfaction and disputes (Irori & Akujuru, 2025). Moreover, ongoing payment delays, undervaluation, and varying valuation methods worsen these issues. In Edo State, developers face significant disputes and delays from valuation differences (Oladokun, 2023; Raji & Okafor, 2024). Meanwhile, in Delta State, farmers are unhappy with late payments and inadequate crop valuations (Irori & Akujuru, 2025). Consequently, public trust in government acquisition and governance systems is low, with claimants frequently seeking more transparency and fairness in procedures.

Delta State requires immediate reform to address unclear compensation criteria, corruption, and inadequate stakeholder engagement in land tenure systems. Current statutory provisions lack clarity on valuation standards, causing inconsistent results and unfairness (Salihu et al., 2025). Bureaucratic delays and weak inter-agency coordination further obstruct efficient acquisition. Traditional valuation models frequently ignore cultural land values, which increases community grievances and limits project legitimacy (Byamugisha & Dubosse, 2023). The study examines the impact of various land acquisition methods on real estate development results in Delta State, emphasising the significance of compensation in stakeholder satisfaction. It evaluates government-led, negotiated, and community-based solutions, analysing the adequacy, timeliness, and format of compensation. The study highlights substantial obstacles that impede development and analyses the statistical correlation between acquisition techniques and outcomes to guide reforms for equitable and effective development.

## **2. Theoretical Issues**

Valuation theory offers a structured basis for assessing real estate value in acquisition and compensation contexts. Its foundation draws on economic, legal, and socio-political factors that shape property worth through physical condition, location, environmental quality, and socio-cultural attachments (Fabozzi & Drake, 2009; Appraisal Institute, 2010). Highest and best use guides this assessment by requiring that property value reflect the most productive legally allowed and financially viable use (International Valuation Standards Council, 2022). Sales comparison, cost, and income capitalisation methods support this process and respond to market data, property type, and economic conditions. These methods often fail to capture cultural attachments, ecological benefits, and livelihood dependence, which remain central in regions with informal tenure structures (Ajibola et al., 2012; Egbenta & Udoudoh, 2018).

Compulsory acquisition draws on valuation theory to guide fair restitution, which seeks to restore affected households to their prior economic position (Miceli & Segerson, 2007; Anthony, 2024). Delta State follows the Land Use Act of 1978, which directs valuers to apply the Depreciated Replacement Cost method for compulsory acquisition. The method excludes land value and income loss and focuses on replacement cost after depreciation (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1978). This approach produces compensation levels that fall short of economic and social loss experienced by affected groups, prompting grievances and

prolonged disputes (Egbenta & Udoudoh, 2018). Market-based valuation methods respond more effectively to real property value, although their use in Delta State faces systemic barriers tied to poor transaction records, informal markets, limited professional capacity, and economic instability (Ajibola et al., 2012). These conditions weaken trust in acquisition processes and reduce satisfaction among affected stakeholders.

A more inclusive valuation framework draws on monetary and non-monetary indicators to capture full property value. Contingent valuation methods measure willingness to accept compensation or retain land, offering insight into ancestral ties and livelihood dependence (Deeyah & Akujuru, 2022). Adjusted income-capitalisation methods incorporate environmental risk premiums and support long-term economic projections for industrial zones and contaminated sites (Jackson, 2021). Aligning Delta State valuation practice with international standards demands legislative reform. This action would require amendments to the Land Use Act to recognise land value, include market-based inputs, and embed socio-cultural elements consistent with International Valuation Standards (IVSC, 2022). Strengthening valuer capacity through continuous training and through the use of GIS, remote sensing, and digital land databases raises accuracy and transparency and fosters trust among stakeholders (Uwaegbulam, 2024; ThisDayLive, 2025). Valuation theory guides fair, transparent, and reliable compensation. Evidence from Delta State shows a gap between statutory valuation practice and stakeholder experience. A shift toward inclusive and context-responsive valuation methods strengthens confidence in acquisition outcomes and supports sustainable real estate development.

### 3. Materials And Methods

The study was carried out in Delta State, Nigeria, located in the South-South geopolitical zone. Delta State covers about 17,698 square kilometres and has a population of 5.6 million people (NPC, 2022). The state is divided into 25 local government areas (LGAs), with Asaba as the capital city. Major urban centres include Warri, Ughelli, Sapele, and Agbor. Delta State was chosen because of its high level of land acquisition for public infrastructure and private housing projects over the last decade. Projects such as the Asaba International Airport expansion, the Warri–Effurun road dualization, housing estates in Ughelli, and industrial layouts in Oshimili South and Uvwie LGAs have displaced several households, raising issues of compensation and fairness.

The study adopted a quantitative research design with a cross-sectional survey to investigate land acquisition and compensation practices in Delta State and their effects on stakeholders. This design allowed for data collection across different categories of participants, enabling comparisons of acquisition approaches, compensation methods, and stakeholder responses. The target population consisted of 640 individuals in Delta State who had direct or indirect roles in land acquisition and compensation (Table 1).

Table 1: Population Size and Sample size

Stakeholder Group	Estimated Population (N)	Proportion (%)	Sample Size (n)	Sampling Source
Real Estate Developers	250	39.06	98	REDAN Delta membership list
Professional Valuers	120	18.75	47	NIESV Delta branch register
Government Acquisition Officers	40	6.25	16	Ministry of Lands and Survey staff list
Landowners & Community Leaders	230	35.94	89	Community registers, NPC, and Ministry of Lands records
<b>Total</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>250</b>	

Source: NIESV (2023) and Real Estate Developers Association of Nigeria (REDAN, 2023)

This included: 250 registered real estate developers (REDAN Delta State chapter); 120 professional valuers (NIESV Delta branch); 40 government acquisition officers (Ministry of Lands and Survey, Delta State); and 230 landowning households and community leaders (community registers, NPC, 2022). The sample size was calculated with Yamane's formula:

$$n = N / (1 + N(e^2))$$

Where:

$$N = 640; e = 0.05$$

$$n = 640 / (1 + 640 \times 0.0025)$$

$$n = 640 / 2.6$$

$$n \approx 246$$

To account for non-responses and logistical constraints, 250 respondents were selected as the final sample size. Sampling was conducted in three stages. The first stage was the purposive selection of Delta State. The state was chosen because of its extensive infrastructure and housing projects over the last ten years. Major projects included the Asaba Airport expansion, the Warri–Effurun road dualization, and housing schemes in Ughelli and Oshimili South, all of which required compulsory land acquisition. The second stage was stratified random sampling of stakeholder groups. To ensure proportional representation, 250 respondents were distributed across four groups according to their estimated population share: 98 developers representing 39 percent, 47 valuers representing 19 percent, 16 government acquisition officers representing 6 percent, and 89 landowners and community leaders representing 36 percent. Each stratum was sampled randomly to ensure fairness in representation. The third stage was systematic selection of individuals within each stratum. Developers and valuers were chosen from REDAN and NIESV membership lists by selecting every 10th name. Government officials were selected from the Ministry of Lands and Survey staff list by choosing every 12th officer. Landowners and community leaders were identified from community registers in Oshimili South, Warri, and Ughelli, with every 8th household head selected.

A structured questionnaire with closed-ended and Likert-scale questions was used. Distribution covered physical copies in offices, town halls, and community meetings, as well as electronic copies sent through email and WhatsApp. Field assistants distributed questionnaires in rural areas to ensure coverage. The questionnaire was pre-tested with 20 respondents in Oshimili South LGA, and feedback informed adjustments. Three experts in estate management, valuation, and research methods validated the instrument. Reliability was tested with Cronbach's Alpha, which produced a coefficient of 0.98, confirming internal consistency before full deployment. Data were analysed with SPSS version 27. Descriptive statistics were applied to summarise acquisition methods, compensation practices, and satisfaction levels. Multiple regression analysis was used to test predictors of development outcomes. Canonical Correlation Analysis (CCA) examined the relationship between acquisition practices, compensation, and stakeholder outcomes including satisfaction, disputes, and project delivery timelines. Statistical significance was set at  $p < 0.05$ .

#### 4. Results and Discussion

Table 2 presents respondents' perspectives on acquisition approaches employed in Delta State real estate development. Compulsory government acquisition is the most prevalent, accounting for 47.2% of responses, reflecting the central role of statutory control under the Land Use Act of 1978. Community-based acquisitions make up 17.6%, highlighting the ongoing importance of traditional landholding in peri-urban regions, as noted by Geyer (2025). Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are underused, with only 9.6% participation, largely because of legal uncertainties and institutional limitations. Data indicate that although statutory acquisition is still the primary method, there is a growing dependence on negotiated and customary

approaches. The findings support the need for inclusive and participatory acquisition frameworks to promote sustainable real estate development (Ntakana, 2024).

Table 2: Respondents’ Views on Acquisition Approaches Used in Real Estate Development

Acquisition Approach	Response Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Compulsory acquisition by government	118	47.2
Voluntary negotiation with landowners	64	25.6
Customary/community-based acquisition	44	17.6
Public-private partnership arrangements	24	9.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Computation (2025)

Table 3 indicates that 53.2% of affected landowners receive monetary compensation, making it the most common method. In-kind compensation, like resettlement housing, made up 24.4%, while land-for-land replacement was 14.4%. Both faced challenges in implementation and land availability. Only 8% received support or training for livelihoods, indicating a significant gap in socio-economic rehabilitation policy. The findings highlight the prevalence of cash compensation and the lack of comprehensive, restorative methods, reinforcing the need for inclusive reforms that focus on sustainability and fair recovery as suggested by UN-Habitat (2020).

Table 3: Types of Compensation Received by Affected Landowners

Compensation Method	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Monetary compensation (cash payments)	133	53.2
In-kind compensation (resettlement housing)	61	24.4
Land-for-land replacement	36	14.4
Livelihood support or training	20	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Computation (2025)

Table 4 indicates that almost half of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction (28.4%) or strong dissatisfaction (21.2%) with their compensation, highlighting significant discontent with compensation practices in Delta State real estate development. Only 11.6% reported high satisfaction, 22.4% were moderately satisfied, and 16.4% were neutral. This shows differing perceptions likely influenced by compensation type, transparency, and livelihood outcomes. The findings support Adebisi et al. (2024), highlighting dissatisfaction as a major factor in resistance to land acquisition. These findings highlight the importance of inclusive and clear compensation processes, along with livelihood restoration efforts, to enhance satisfaction and support sustainable development.

Table 4: Level of Satisfaction with Compensation Received

Satisfaction Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Very satisfied	29	11.6
Moderately satisfied	56	22.4
Neutral	41	16.4
Dissatisfied	71	28.4
Very dissatisfied	53	21.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Computation (2025)

Table 5 outlines key challenges in land acquisition and compensation, with 40.8% of respondents identifying delays in compensation payments as the primary concern. Thirty percent of respondents

expressed concerns about fairness and transparency in compensation valuation. Although only 6% of respondents reported it, legal ambiguity and land disputes reflect deeper systemic issues in Delta State land governance, according to Amuda-Kannike et al. (2025). To enhance fairness and efficiency in land acquisition and compensation, our findings emphasise the need for legislative changes, timely payments, wide participation, and coordinated support systems.

Table 5: Perceived Challenges in Land Acquisition and Compensation

Challenge	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Delay in compensation payments	102	40.8
Inadequate compensation valuation	76	30.4
Lack of stakeholder consultation	32	12.8
Displacement without livelihood support	25	10
Legal ambiguity and land disputes	15	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Computation (2025)

Table 6 shows a strong positive relationship ( $R = 0.69$ ) between acquisition and compensation practices and real estate development outcomes in Delta State. An R Square value of 0.482 indicates that 48.2% of the variation in development outcomes is accounted for by these practices, and the adjusted R Square of 0.47 supports the model's reliability. A standard error of 0.589 indicates moderate prediction accuracy. The results show that effective acquisition and fair compensation greatly impact project success, as noted by Tran et al. (2022). The findings align with Patel et al. (2025), highlighting those clear processes improve stakeholder satisfaction. The data highlight the importance of reforming acquisition and compensation frameworks to promote sustainable real estate development.

Table 6: Regression Model Summary on the Relationship Between Acquisition and Compensation Practices and Real Estate Development

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.69	0.482	0.47	0.589

Source: SPSS Computation

Table 7 shows important factors that influence real estate development results. The compensation amount ( $B = 0.47, p < 0.001$ ) significantly positively influenced project success, indicating that sufficient financial compensation is beneficial. Compensation timeliness ( $B = 0.41, p < 0.001$ ) was significant. Distance from the site ( $B = -0.33, p < 0.001$ ) had a negative impact, suggesting that dissatisfaction rises as distance increases. Land tenure type ( $B = 0.29, p = 0.004$ ) and community engagement ( $B = 0.26, p = 0.019$ ) had a positive impact on outcomes. The findings highlight that fair compensation, timely delivery, participatory processes, and tenure security are crucial for sustainable real estate development in Delta State.

Table 7: Coefficients of Predictors Influencing Real Estate Development Outcomes in Delta State

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.74	0.22	—	12.45	0.00
Proximity to Site (km)	-0.33	0.09	-0.28	-3.67	0.001
Type of Land Tenure	0.29	0.1	0.21	2.9	0.004
Compensation Timeliness	0.41	0.08	0.35	5.13	0.001
Community Engagement	0.26	0.11	0.18	2.36	0.019
Compensation Amount	0.47	0.07	0.39	6.71	0.00

Source: SPSS Computation

Table 8 shows the canonical correlation analysis that examines the relationship between acquisition and compensation methods and real estate development results. The first canonical function indicates a strong correlation of 0.812, with Wilks' Lambda at 0.435 ( $F = 4.98$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). It accounts for 67.3% of the variance in acquisition and compensation variables and 61.5% in development outcomes. This indicates a strong connection, implying that acquisition and compensation practices are crucial for development success. The second function, while moderate ( $r = 0.512$ ,  $p = 0.038$ ), contributes by accounting for more variance. The third function was not statistically significant. The findings highlighted the importance of fair, timely, and inclusive acquisition practices for better project outcomes. The findings support the necessity for combined legal, administrative, and participatory changes.

Table 8: Canonical Correlation Analysis between Acquisition & Compensation Approaches and Development Outcomes

Canonical Function	Canonical Correlation	Wilks' Lambda	F-value	p-value	% Variance Explained (Set 1)	% Variance Explained (Set 2)
1	0.812	0.435	4.98	0.001	67.30%	61.50%
2	0.512	0.723	2.14	0.038	21.80%	24.70%
3	0.304	0.893	1.03	0.412	10.90%	13.80%

Source: SPSS Computation

Table 9 displays canonical loadings that illustrate the connections between acquisition and compensation methods and development outcomes. In the first canonical function, negotiation-based acquisition (0.803) and market-based compensation (0.721) had strong positive loadings, whereas government-imposed acquisition had a strong negative loading (-0.632). Participatory and market-driven methods are positively associated with stakeholder satisfaction (0.814) and project timeliness (0.602), whereas coercive approaches lead to more disputes (-0.731). Function 2 reinforces how market-based strategies affect development results, especially in enhancing delivery timelines. Function 3 showed low loadings on all variables and has no meaningful interpretation. The findings align with Amoah and Nkosazana (2023), highlighting the significance of negotiation, community involvement, and fair compensation for successful and conflict-free real estate development.

Table 9: Canonical Loadings of Variables on Canonical Functions

Variable	Function 1	Function 2	Function 3
<b>Set 1: Acquisition &amp; Compensation Approaches</b>			
Market-Based Compensation (A1)	0.721	0.342	0.145
Negotiation-Based Acquisition (A2)	0.803	0.284	0.198
Government-Imposed Acquisition (A3)	-0.632	-0.452	-0.217
<b>Set 2: Development Outcomes</b>			
Stakeholder Satisfaction (B1)	0.814	0.335	0.209
Dispute Frequency (B2)	-0.731	-0.389	-0.248
Timeliness of Project Delivery (B3)	0.602	0.546	0.172

Source: SPSS Computation

Table 10 presents the suggestions from respondents for improving acquisition and compensation practices. Strengthening legal frameworks was the most frequently cited method (25.6%), highlighting the necessity to update outdated legislation like the Land Use Act of 1978. Timely and sufficient compensation payments (23.6%) emphasise the need to address disbursement delays. Community participation has increased by 19.2%, supporting calls for participatory methods that enhance transparency and trust. The adoption of expert valuation standards (17.2%) meets the need for fair compensation. Enhanced monitoring and

assessment (14.4%) highlight the importance of accountability measures. The plans aim to improve equity, efficiency, and sustainability in real estate acquisition and compensation system (UN-Habitat, 2020).

Table 10: Recommended Strategies for Improving Acquisition and Compensation Practices

Recommended Strategy	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Strengthening legal frameworks	64	25.6
Timely and adequate compensation payments	59	23.6
Increased community engagement	48	19.2
Adoption of professional valuation standards	43	17.2
Improved monitoring and evaluation systems	36	14.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Computation (2025)

The study's findings closely match the core principles of valuation theory, especially regarding fairness, utility, and market value assessment. In compulsory acquisition, the reliance on government-set valuations and cash compensation (53.2%) often overlooks the complete social, economic, and emotional value of the land being taken. The widespread dissatisfaction of 49.6% among affected stakeholders shows a gap between theoretical fairness in valuation and its practical use. Timely and adequate compensation are significant predictors of development outcomes and support the principle of fair restitution in valuation theory. The results align with Shehu and Nuhu (2022). Their position stresses the importance of prompt and adequate compensation for preserving real value and restoring affected households to their prior economic position. The study confirms this view through evidence that timely and sufficient payments improve satisfaction levels and strengthen development outcomes in Delta State. The undervaluation of communal and customary land, which often lacks formal title, goes against valuation theory's focus on utility and functional value, leading to increased discontent and disputes. There is a strong link between market-based pay and stakeholder satisfaction (canonical loading = 0.721), highlighting the importance of market value in valuation theory. The significant negative loading of government-imposed acquisition (-0.632) highlights the theory's limitations when valuations lack transparency, participation, and professional standards. The findings support the idea that valuation is not just a financial task but also a social and economic process that needs to consider fairness, transparency, and legitimacy.

## 5. Conclusion

The study explored the impact of land acquisition and compensation practices on real estate development in Delta State. The results indicate that government-led acquisition is still the most prevalent method, even as interest in negotiation and community-based approaches increases. Compensation mainly focusses on money, with little emphasis on resettlement assistance or restoring livelihoods. Many affected individuals feel unhappy, primarily because of delays, poor valuation, and insufficient transparency. Statistical analyses showed that fair, timely, and inclusive compensation leads to significant improvements in development outcomes. Negotiated and market-based methods generally lead to higher satisfaction and fewer conflicts, whereas coercive tactics often cause resistance and delays. To progress, it is essential to update outdated policies, especially the Land Use Act of 1978, to facilitate more inclusive acquisition models. Valuation methods must adhere to consistent professional standards that consider social and economic effects. Prompt compensation, community engagement, and better monitoring will foster trust. Implementing clear grievance redress mechanisms can improve cooperation and lead to fairer, more transparent, and sustainable outcomes in real estate development.

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