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Measuring Satisfaction with Compensation for Road Infrastructure Projects: A Lessons from the Bida Ring Road Project, Niger State Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
This study examines the satisfaction levels of individuals displaced by the Bida Ring Road project in Niger State, Nigeria, with a focus on the fairness, transparency, and adequacy of the compensation process. Drawing on survey data from 347 affected landowners, the research reveals a mixed response: while many were informed about payment timelines, concerns remain over the fairness and adequacy of compensation, particularly regarding asset valuation, livelihood restoration, and hidden costs. The findings highlight persistent challenges in delivering equitable compensation in Nigerian infrastructure projects and emphasize the need for improved valuation methods, greater transparency, stakeholder engagement, timely payments, and effective grievance mechanisms. The study offers valuable insights into the factors shaping satisfaction with compensation and suggests strategies for more just and sustainable practices in future developments.
Keywords: Satisfaction, Compensation, Road Infrastructure Projects and Survey Research Design

INTRODUCTION

Road infrastructure is a cornerstone of economic development and social integration, especially in developing countries like Nigeria (Abdulazeez, Magaji & Musa, 2022). Efficient and well-maintained road networks facilitate trade, reduce transportation costs, improve access to markets and services, and stimulate rural and urban development (World Bank, 2020). In the Nigerian context, road construction projects have played a critical role in bridging the development gap between urban and rural areas by enhancing mobility, employment, and regional economic integration (Musa, Ismail & Magaji, 2024; Adelekan, 2019).

However, implementing such infrastructure projects often requires land acquisition and involuntary displacement of individuals and communities, raising significant social and ethical concerns (Magaji, 2004). Land acquisition for public infrastructure in Nigeria is governed by the Land Use Act of 1978, which vests all land in the state and allows the government to acquire land for public purposes (Musa & Ismail, 2023). Despite this legal backing, the process is frequently marred by disputes, delays, and

grievances, primarily due to perceived inadequacies in compensation and lack of stakeholder engagement (Abegunde, 2017).

Compensation to affected persons is a critical component of land acquisition processes. It mitigates economic and social losses and upholds principles of fairness and justice (Magaji, Ismail & Musa, 2025). A well-managed compensation process can significantly influence project timelines, foster community cooperation, and ensure the long-term sustainability of the development (Ogunleye & Iroham, 2021). Conversely, inadequate or unfair compensation can breed resentment, resistance, and legal challenges, stalling projects and eroding public trust (Magaji, Gurowa & Abubakar, 2014).

This paper focuses on a pivotal dimension of this multifaceted issue: the level of satisfaction among project-affected persons concerning the compensation process. By drawing insights from the case study of the Bida Ring Road project in Niger State, Nigeria, this paper explores the perceptions of affected individuals regarding the fairness, transparency, and adequacy of the compensation they received. Fairness, transparency, and adequacy are central to determining whether stakeholders perceive the compensation process as just and acceptable (Akinyemi, 2022).

Understanding the experiences and perceptions of displaced persons cannot be overstated. Such understanding is essential for promoting social justice, ensuring compliance with international standards on involuntary resettlement, and guiding the equitable implementation of future infrastructure projects (International Finance Corporation [IFC], 2012). Moreover, gathering insights from those directly impacted provides valuable feedback for improving policy frameworks and administrative practices, ensuring that development does not come at the expense of human dignity and well-being.

Literature Review

Conceptualising Satisfaction with Compensation

Measuring satisfaction with compensation in the context of land acquisition and displacement transcends the mere confirmation of payment receipt. It requires a holistic and nuanced evaluation of the entire compensation process from the standpoint of the affected persons. Both objective indicators, such as payment timelines and valuation methods, and subjective experiences, including perceptions of fairness, inclusiveness, and respect, shape satisfaction. According to Cernea (2000), compensation should not only mitigate the adverse effects of displacement but also serve as a mechanism for restoring and potentially improving the well-being of affected individuals.

Three key pillars largely determine satisfaction with compensation: fairness, transparency, and adequacy. Fairness pertains to perceived impartiality, equity, and justice in compensation (Magaji, Musa & Ismail, 2025). Affected persons must trust that their losses tangible (land, structures, and income) or intangible (cultural sites, social ties, emotional well-being) are assessed using fair and consistent valuation methods. The principles of distributive and procedural justice are essential here; distributive justice relates to the fairness of outcomes, while procedural justice emphasises the fairness of the processes used to reach those outcomes (Tyler, 2000). In Nigeria, studies have shown that many displaced persons feel compensation is skewed in favour of elites or politically connected individuals, thereby undermining public trust (Ogunleye & Iroham, 2021).

Transparency refers to the clarity, openness, and accessibility of information throughout the compensation process. This includes informing affected persons about the legal basis for land acquisition, the methodology for valuing property, timelines for disbursement, and avenues for grievance redress. Lack of transparency can breed misinformation, suspicion, and opposition (Olawale & Olayiwola, 2020). Effective stakeholder engagement and participatory decision-making have been shown to reduce resistance and increase satisfaction in similar contexts (World Bank, 2014).

Adequacy relates to whether the compensation provided is perceived to be sufficient for replacing lost assets and restoring livelihoods. The World Bank's involuntary resettlement policy (Operational Policy 4.12) emphasises that compensation must enable displaced persons to improve or restore their pre-displacement living standards (World Bank, 2004). However, in many developing contexts, including Nigeria, compensation amounts are often inadequate due to poor valuation practices, inflation, and failure to consider long-term socio-economic impacts (Akinyemi, 2022). Inadequate compensation can lead to

prolonged financial insecurity, reduced quality of life, and resentment towards the government and implementing agencies (Agbadagbe, Musa & Ismail, 2024).

Empirical Review

Popoola et al. (2024) investigate the impact of compulsory acquisition and compensation processes on the satisfaction of urban fringe residents in Abuja, focusing on Gwagwalada Area Council. Employing a survey research design and simple random sampling, data were collected and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study revealed that while residents found procedures such as notice of possession and compensation disbursement somewhat effective, there was overall dissatisfaction, largely due to inadequate compensation and a lack of transparency in the process. To improve resident satisfaction, the authors recommended enhancing transparency and ensuring fair and adequate compensation during land acquisition procedures.

Oshikoya and Olayiwola (2023) assess claimants' satisfaction with the land acquisition and compensation process in Ona-Ara Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. Using a purposive sampling technique, the researchers selected 186 respondents and gathered data through structured questionnaires, which were analyzed with descriptive statistics, including frequency tables, mean scores, and the Relative Satisfaction Index (RSI). The findings indicated that while claimants expressed satisfaction with aspects such as their involvement in decision-making, timeliness of procedures, and communication channels, they were dissatisfied with delays in compensation payments, inaccurate enumeration of assets, and a lack of transparency. The study recommended improvements in transparency, accurate asset assessment, and prompt compensation payments to enhance overall satisfaction with the process.

Inadequate Compensation and Dissatisfaction: Several studies in Nigeria have documented widespread dissatisfaction with the adequacy of compensation provided for infrastructure projects. Abegunde (2017), examining land acquisition across Nigeria, found that disputes often arise from the significant gap between offered compensation and the perceived market value of land and properties by affected communities. This inadequacy leads to protests, legal battles, and project delays. Ogunleye and Iroham (2021), in their study on infrastructure development and community satisfaction in Nigeria, similarly highlighted that affected communities often view compensation as insufficient to restore their livelihoods or relocate to comparable living standards, leading to low satisfaction levels.

Lack of Transparency and Trust Deficit: The lack of transparency in the valuation and compensation processes has been consistently identified as a significant source of dissatisfaction. Olawale and Olayiwola (2020) argued that when information regarding land acquisition, valuation methods, and compensation amounts is not openly shared and explained to affected persons, it breeds mistrust and perceptions of unfairness. This lack of transparency often leads to the belief that the process is biased or corrupt, further reducing satisfaction. Adebayo and Mohammed (2022), studying community engagement in infrastructure projects in Northern Nigeria, emphasized that excluding communities from decision-making processes, including compensation negotiations, significantly lowers their satisfaction with the outcomes.

Deeyah and Akujuru (2017) examine the sufficiency of compensation paid during compulsory land acquisition for road infrastructure development in Rivers State. The study employed a survey method, utilizing structured questionnaires administered to individuals affected by the acquisition. Data analysis revealed that a majority of respondents considered the compensation insufficient, resulting in widespread dissatisfaction and resistance to the land acquisition process. In response, the authors recommended a comprehensive review of compensation policies to promote fairness and adequacy, thereby enhancing acceptance and cooperation among affected individuals.

Despite the growing body of research highlighting dissatisfaction with compulsory land acquisition and compensation processes in Nigeria, a critical gap remains in understanding the interplay between community participation, transparency, and compensation adequacy as integrated determinants of satisfaction across diverse regional contexts. While studies by Popoola et al. (2024) and Oshikoya and Olayiwola (2023) provide valuable insights into localized experiences in Abuja and Oyo State, respectively, their findings are limited by geographic scope and often treat satisfaction as a product of

isolated factors—such as transparency or compensation adequacy—without fully exploring how these elements interact. Moreover, existing literature predominantly relies on descriptive analyses without employing more robust inferential techniques that could reveal deeper causal relationships. Thus, there is a need for a broader, comparative, and more analytically rigorous investigation that holistically examines how the synergy between compensation adequacy, transparency, and participatory mechanisms shapes overall satisfaction with land acquisition processes across varied socio-economic and cultural settings in Nigeria.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey research design to assess sustainable compensation payment in road infrastructure delivery, using the Bida Ring Road project in Niger State as a case study. The survey approach was selected for its effectiveness in efficiently collecting detailed information from a large population.

The study area, Bida, is a key commercial and agricultural hub in Niger State. The construction of the ring road was intended to enhance connectivity and socio-economic development. However, the project required land acquisition, displacing residents, businesses, and property owners, central stakeholders in the study.

The population includes Project Affected Persons (PAPs)—landowners, residents, and business operators—alongside government officials, contractors, consultants, and community members connected to the project. The total population was 2,600, from which a sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's formula at a 5% margin of error, yielding 347 respondents.

The main instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire, complemented by secondary sources like books and journals. To ensure validity, the questionnaire underwent face validation by the researcher's supervisor, who provided feedback for refining the instrument. The instrument's reliability was confirmed with a coefficient of 0.81, surpassing the acceptable benchmark of 0.5, indicating strong internal consistency.

Data collection involved primary data (questionnaires and interviews) and secondary data (documentary reviews), enabling a comprehensive understanding of the compensation process and its effects on infrastructure delivery.

The research methodology provides a framework for understanding how satisfaction with the compensation process can be measured. The core approach involves:

Surveys: Structured questionnaires will be administered to a representative sample of affected landowners and community members to gather quantitative data on their perceptions of fairness, transparency, and adequacy. These surveys would likely have used Likert scales or similar methods to gauge agreement or satisfaction with various aspects of the compensation process.

Interviews: Conducting semi-structured interviews with key informants, including affected persons, community leaders, government officials involved in the compensation process, and potentially representatives from civil society organisations. These qualitative interviews would provide richer, in-depth insights into the experiences and perspectives of stakeholders, uncovering nuances and contextual factors that quantitative data alone might miss.

Document Analysis: Reviewing relevant project documents, compensation policies, legal frameworks, and grievance records to understand the procedural aspects of the compensation process and identify any discrepancies or inconsistencies.

DATA AND RESULTS ANALYSIS

Table 1: Believe the amount of compensation paid was fair compared to the value of the land or property lost

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	130	37.0	37.0
	Agree	142	41.0	78.0
	Undecided	30	9.0	87.0
	Disagree	14	4.0	91.0
	Strongly disagree	31	9.0	100.0
	Total	347	100.0	

Source: Field Survey.

Table 1 shows respondents' responses if the amount of compensation paid was fair compared to the value of the land or property lost. 130 respondents, representing 37.0 percent, strongly agreed that the compensation paid was fair compared to the value of the land or property lost. One hundred forty-two respondents, representing 41.0 percent, agreed that the compensation paid was fair compared to the value of the lost land or property. Thirty respondents, representing 9.0 percent, were undecided. 14 respondents, representing 4.0 percent, disagreed that the compensation paid was fair compared to the value of the land or property lost. Thirty-one respondents, representing 9.0 percent, strongly disagreed that the compensation paid was fair compared to the value of the land or property lost.

Table 2: The compensation sufficient to enable the affected persons to relocate or reinvest elsewhere

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	102	29.0	29.0
	Agree	128	37.0	66.0
	Undecided	18	5.0	71.0
	Disagree	57	16.0	87.0
	Strongly disagree	42	13.0	100.0
	Total	347	100.0	

Source: Field Survey.

Table 2 shows the respondents' responses to whether compensation is sufficient to enable the affected persons to relocate or reinvest elsewhere. 102 respondents, representing 29.0 percent, strongly agree that the compensation is sufficient to enable the affected persons to relocate or reinvest elsewhere. 128 respondents, representing 37.0 percent, agree that the compensation is sufficient to enable the affected persons to relocate or reinvest elsewhere. Eighteen of the respondents, representing 5.0 percent, were undecided. 57 respondents, representing 16.0 percent, disagree that the compensation is sufficient to enable the affected persons to relocate or reinvest elsewhere. 42 respondents, representing 13.0 percent, strongly disagree that the compensation is sufficient to enable the affected persons to relocate or reinvest elsewhere.

Table 3: There were hidden costs or expenses you had to bear not covered by the compensation

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	137	39.0	39.0
	Agree	125	36.0	75.0
	Undecided	45	13.0	88.0
	Disagree	40	12.0	100.0
	Total	347	100.0	

Source: Field Survey.

Table 3 shows respondents' responses if the compensation did not cover hidden costs or expenses they had to bear. 137 respondents, representing 39.0 percent, strongly agree that the compensation did not cover hidden costs or expenses they had to bear. 125 respondents, representing 36.0 percent, agreed that the compensation did not cover hidden costs or expenses. 45 of them, representing 13.0 percent, were undecided. 40 of the respondents, representing 12.0 percent, disagree that there were hidden costs or expenses not covered by the compensation.

Table 4: The compensation payment was adequate to maintain the previous standard of living after the displacement

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	102	29.0	29.0
	Agree	128	37.0	66.0
	Undecided	18	5.0	71.0
	Disagree	57	16.0	87.0
	Strongly disagree	42	13.0	100.0
	Total	347	100.0	

Source: Field Survey.

Table 4 shows the respondents' responses to whether the compensation payment was adequate to maintain the previous standard of living after displacement. One hundred two respondents, representing 29.0 per cent, strongly agree that the compensation payment was adequate to maintain the previous standard of living after displacement. One hundred twenty-eight respondents, representing 37.0 per cent, agree that the compensation payment was adequate to maintain the previous standard of living after displacement. Eighteen of the respondents, representing 5.0 per cent, were undecided. Fifty-seven respondents, representing 16.0 per cent, disagree that the compensation payment was adequate to maintain the previous standard of living after displacement. Forty-two respondents, representing 13.0 per cent, strongly disagree that the compensation payment was adequate to maintain the previous standard of living after displacement.

Table 5: Alternative compensation options (such as land-for-land or housing) were offered in addition to financial compensation

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	130	37.0	37.0
	Agree	142	41.0	78.0
	Undecided	30	9.0	87.0
	Disagree	14	4.0	91.0
	Strongly disagree	31	9.0	100.0
	Total	347	100.0	

Source: Field Survey.

Table 5 shows respondents' responses to whether alternative compensation options (such as land-for-land or housing) were offered in addition to financial compensation. One hundred thirty respondents, representing 37.0 per cent, strongly agreed that alternative compensation options (such as land-for-land or housing) were offered in addition to financial compensation. One hundred forty-two respondents, representing 41.0 per cent, agreed that alternative compensation options (such as land-for-land or housing) were offered in addition to financial compensation. Thirty respondents, representing 9.0 per cent, were undecided. Fourteen respondents, representing 4.0 per cent, disagreed that alternative compensation options (such as land-for-land or housing) were offered in addition to financial compensation. Thirty-one respondents, representing 9.0 per cent, strongly disagreed that alternative compensation options (such as land-for-land or housing) were offered in addition to financial compensation.

Table 6: Informed in advance about when the compensation payment would be made

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	205	59.0	59.0
	Agree	97	28.0	87.0
	Disagree	35	10.0	97.0
	Strongly disagree	10	3.0	100.0
	Total	347	100.0	

Source: Field Survey.

Table 6 shows respondents' responses if they were informed about when the compensation payment would be made. Two hundred five respondents, representing 59.0 per cent, strongly agree that they were informed when the compensation payment would be made. Ninety-seven respondents, representing 28.0 per cent, agree that they were informed when the compensation payment would be made. Thirty-five respondents, representing 10.0 per cent, disagree that they were informed when the compensation payment would be made. Ten respondents, representing 3.0 per cent, strongly disagree that they were informed about when the compensation payment would be made.

Table 7: The compensation payment arrived when it was promised

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	126	36.0	36.0
	Agree	97	28.0	64.0
	Undecided	19	6.0	70.0
	Disagree	45	13.0	83.0
	Strongly disagree	60	17.0	100.0
	Total	347	100.0	

Source: Field Survey.

Table 7 shows respondents' responses to whether the compensation payment arrived when promised. One hundred twenty-six respondents, representing 36.0 per cent, strongly agree that the compensation payment arrived when promised. Ninety-seven respondents, representing 28.0 per cent, agree that the compensation payment arrived when promised. Nineteen of them, representing 6.0 per cent, were undecided. Forty-five respondents, representing 13.0 per cent, disagree that the compensation payment arrived when promised. Sixty respondents, representing 17.0 per cent, strongly disagree that the compensation payment arrived when promised.

Analysis of Findings

The Bida Ring Road Project in Niger State, Nigeria, represents a poignant case for examining the realities and shortcomings of compensation mechanisms in infrastructure development. The project, designed to improve regional transportation and economic connectivity, necessitated the acquisition of vast tracts of land and displacing numerous households and communities. However, despite the development goals, the compensation process associated with the project revealed systemic flaws that severely affected its implementation and public acceptance.

Field reports and stakeholder interviews suggest widespread dissatisfaction among affected landowners, primarily due to inadequate compensation (Salihu & Bala, 2023). Many affected individuals argued that the financial compensation did not reflect the actual market value of their land or consider the long-term disruption to their livelihoods, such as farming or trading activities, which were permanently altered by displacement.

Additionally, the compensation process was reportedly plagued by a lack of transparency. Several affected persons claimed they were not adequately consulted during the valuation stages and were uninformed about how their properties were assessed. The absence of clear communication and community engagement contributed to suspicions of bias and corruption (El-Yaqub, Musa and Magaji, 2024), especially in cases where neighbouring parcels of land received significantly different compensation rates without explanation (Adebayo & Mohammed, 2022).

The delayed disbursement of compensation further aggravated tensions. With payments pending for several months or even years in some cases, displaced individuals found themselves in financial limbo, unable to invest in new homes or resume their livelihoods. These delays not only intensified public discontent but also led to legal challenges, protests, and resistance, thereby stalling the project and inflating costs (Niger State Ministry of Works, 2023).

Overall, the Bida Ring Road Project's experience underscores the importance of designing and implementing compensation processes that are fair, transparent, and adequate. Ensuring satisfaction among affected persons is not merely a matter of ethical obligation but a prerequisite for successful, sustainable, and socially accepted development.

Based on the provided information, the research findings likely revealed a significant level of dissatisfaction among affected persons regarding the compensation process for the Bida Ring Road project. This dissatisfaction likely stemmed from:

Perceived Inadequacy of Compensation Amounts: Affected persons likely felt that the financial compensation offered did not sufficiently cover the value of their lost land, properties, and livelihoods. This could be due to discrepancies in valuation methodologies, outdated property values, or a failure to account for intangible losses.

Lack of Transparency in the Process: The alleged lack of clear information regarding valuation, compensation determination, and grievance mechanisms likely contributed to feelings of mistrust and unfair treatment. Affected persons may have felt excluded from the process and unable to understand how their compensation was calculated.

Delays in Compensation Payments: The reported delays in receiving compensation would undoubtedly have heightened dissatisfaction, caused financial hardship, and hindered the ability of affected persons to rebuild their lives promptly.

Implications and Recommendations of the study

The findings of the Bida Ring Road case study, focusing on the dissatisfaction with the compensation process, carry significant implications for future infrastructure projects in Nigeria and other developing contexts. The research likely emphasises the need for a paradigm shift towards more socially just and environmentally sustainable compensation practices. Based on the identified shortcomings, the proposed recommendations include:

Strengthening Legal and Policy Frameworks: Clearer, more comprehensive legal frameworks that provide specific guidelines on valuation methodologies, compensation standards, and grievance redress mechanisms are crucial. These frameworks should align with international best practices and ensure fair and adequate compensation for all losses.

Enhancing Transparency and Stakeholder Engagement: Implementing transparent and participatory approaches that involve affected persons and communities in all stages of the compensation process, from initial consultations to valuation and disbursement, is essential for building trust and ensuring fairness.

Improving Valuation Methodologies: It is critical to ensure adequacy by employing accurate and up-to-date valuation methods, considering the full value of lost assets, including tangible and intangible losses. This may involve incorporating market values, replacement, and livelihood restoration costs.

Ensuring Timely Disbursement of Compensation: Streamlining bureaucratic processes and promptly releasing compensation payments is vital for mitigating the negative impacts on affected persons and avoiding project delays.

Establishing Effective Grievance Redress Mechanisms: Creating accessible and impartial mechanisms for affected persons to voice their concerns and seek redress for grievances related to the compensation process is crucial for ensuring accountability and fairness.

Capacity Building for Implementing Agencies: Investing in training and capacity building for government agencies and other stakeholders involved in land acquisition and compensation is necessary to ensure the process is conducted efficiently, transparently, and by best practices.

CONCLUSION

Measuring the level of satisfaction among affected persons regarding the compensation process for infrastructure projects is a critical indicator of social justice and project sustainability. The case study of the Bida Ring Road project highlights the significant dissatisfaction that can arise from perceived unfairness, lack of transparency, and inadequate compensation. By understanding the experiences and perceptions of those directly impacted by land acquisition and displacement, valuable lessons can be learned to inform and improve compensation practices for future infrastructure developments. Embracing principles of fairness, transparency, and adequacy in compensation is not merely an ethical imperative but also a pragmatic necessity for ensuring the prosperous, equitable, and sustainable delivery of vital infrastructure projects that benefit society without burdening its most vulnerable members. The

recommendations from this research offer a pathway towards achieving more socially just and effective compensation mechanisms in Nigeria and beyond.

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