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Drivers of Land Accessibility: A Narration From Residents in Rural Border Communities of Nigeria

Gbenga John Oladehinde[a],*

[a] Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Faculty of Environmental Design and Management, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Nigeria.
*Corresponding author.

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Abstract

The study investigates the drivers of land accessibility in rural border communities of Nigeria with a case study of border communities of Ipokia and Yewa North Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria. The study adopted the use of multistage sampling techniques in the selection of 331 respondents from the study area. Data that were obtained through questionnaire administration were analysed using descriptive (frequency table, percentages, bar, and pie charts) and inferential (T-test, binary logistics regression) statistics. Through the use of binary logistics regression, the study discovers that traditional beliefs, social connection, availability of land, tenure practices, gender, purpose of land acquisition, financial condition, and cost of acquiring land were the significant drivers of land accessibility in rural border communities of the study area. The study recommends that the government and stakeholders in land administration and management should put more effort into reducing the effects of the drivers influencing land accessibility by formulating and implementing flexible policies that can encourage secure access to land in the study area.

Key words: Drivers; Land; Accessibility; Rural; border Communities; Nigeria

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1. INTRODUCTION

Land, throughout history, is observed as a major source of wealth, power, and social status, providing the basis for food, clothing, shelter, and economic activities as well as the provider of employment opportunities in the global society (Food and Agriculture Organisation [FAO], 2017). Land is recognized by the United Nations (2006) as an economic resource that is vital in the formation of individual and collective identity as well as in the existence of man. The role of land could be linked to social, political, and economic relations and is the most important factor of production in rural communities (Bello, 2007; Ajayi & Adebayo, 2017). Access to land as observed by Omirin (2003) is highly essential particularly in the improvement of quality of life as it plays basic roles in housing, poverty reduction, and development, especially among residents in rural areas.

Policymakers and scholars have for a long time recognized the essence of secure access to land and land tenure for productivity-enhancing investment, operation of land markets with easy land transfer, and sustainable land management (Besley & Ghatak, 2010). Although, this has given rise to different forms of interventions to regularize and formalize land access in almost all the regions of the world while countries in Sub-Saharan Africa in many ways remain an exception (Deininger, Savastano & Xia, 2017). One of the major reasons for this is that customary institutions in countries of Sub-Saharan Africa particularly Nigeria provide some level of access to land to encourage investment in land. However, land access in most of the institutions is guided by customs and traditions which undermine the security of tenure and have not been able to provide easy and secured access to land, especially for the vulnerable landholders with secondary land rights such as women, non-indigenes, and migrants (Oladehinde, 2016; Oladehinde, Olayiwola & Popoola, 2018).

Land in rural communities of Nigeria is still accessible through the customs and traditions of the land (Oladehinde

et al., 2018). Land, under the custom, belongs to all the people and is held by families, communities, and individuals. All the people have equal rights of access to land while the chief or head of the family is the trustee who holds the land for the use of the people. Access to land under the custom is normally through a grant by the chief of the community or head of the family. Alienation, transfer, or terms of the grant are restricted to strangers who are women, migrants, or non-indigenes. Rural residents who are strangers are therefore less privileged and may likely experience unfairness in the struggle to have access to land due to the inherent and supposed natural dominance of indigenes who control land rights (Department for International Development, (2007). In order to ensure easy access to land, the Nigerian government at the federal level in the past has made different efforts. One of the efforts is the introduction of land laws, especially the Land Use Act of 1978 in addressing the issue of land access. Despite this, the problems that are attributed to land accessibility still persist as issues of land rights, discrimination, land disputes, and conflict are still occurring. This in the long run has brought about cases of insecure land rights and little or no access to credit facilities that can encourage investment in land, especially among vulnerable groups. It has also subjected most of the vulnerable groups to access few benefits related to land. This in turn has brought about insecure access to land which is one of the major threats to food security particularly in rural communities of Nigeria and has led to an increase in the number of rural poor in the country.

In an attempt to address this issue, several studies in the literature have documented different factors of land accessibility in Sub-Saharan Africa (Adadayo, 2018, Gbadegesin et al., 2016, Uluocha, 2007; Ishe, 2007; Omirin, 2002; Ba-an et al., 2022; Oladehinde et al., 2023). For example, Uluocha (2007) observed that availability of the land, physical location of the land, affordability of the land, demand for land, land policy, and availability of information were factors influencing land access while issues of affordability, security of tenure, procedural, personal attributes and availability of land were discovered by Omirin (2003), Ishe (2007), Gbadegesin et al (2016), Oladehinde et al. (2023). However, most of these studies were limited to urban communities while rural border communities were not considered. Some studies also exist on land accessibility in rural border communities (Oladehinde et al., 2017; Oladehinde et al., 2018). Most of these studies were limited to land accessibility characteristics and constraints of land accessibility among migrants. Despite the existence of these studies, drivers of land accessibility among residents in rural border communities were not examined.

The importance of land accessibility cannot be over-emphasized. This is because secure access to land can automatically mitigate the problems of homelessness, and unsafe living. It can also play a vital role in poverty reduction and development. Furthermore, access to land is a promising strategy for increasing productive capacity which could result in the promotion of human development and poverty reduction among vulnerable groups in rural communities (United Nations Centre for Human Settlement (UNCHS), 1999; World Bank 2016). In support of this, Habitat Agenda (1996) asserted that secure access to land and tenure security are strategic prerequisites for the progressive integration of the rural poor and the development of humans.

In spite of the importance of land accessibility, secure access to land in rural border communities still constitutes a major challenge in Nigeria. This has brought about the need in this study to have an empirical examination on the drivers of land accessibility in rural border communities of Ogun State, Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that this study examines the drivers of land accessibility in rural border communities of Nigeria with a case study from selected rural border communities of Ipokia and Yewa North Local Government Areas in Ogun State. The focus of this study is to empirically examine the drivers of land accessibility with the purpose of formulating policies that could be used to guide land use planning in the study area as well as areas with similar socio-economic conditions. This study attempts to provide answers to the following questions. 1) what is the nature of land accessibility in rural border communities? and 2) what are the drivers of land accessibility in the study area?

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

2.1 Study Area

The study was carried out in Ogun State, one of the fastest-growing states in Nigeria. Ogun State is located between the longitudes 3.0^0E and 5.0^0E and Latitudes 6.2^0N and 7.8^0N of the Greenwich Meridian. The state shares boundaries with Oyo State on the North and on the West of Benin Republic. It shares boundaries with Lagos State and the Atlantic Ocean on the South while Ondo State is to the east. The strategic location of Ogun state favours its access to major developed regions in Nigeria.

Out of the 20 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Ogun State, only 3 LGAs share a boundary with the other country. The LGAs include Ipokia, Yewa North, and Imeko/Afon. Accessibility of these LGAs from other countries like Togo, Ghana, Liberia, Benin Republic, and Sierra Leone, on the coast of West Africa has made Ogun State to be called a 'Gateway' to Nigeria. Some of the major economic activities in the LGAs include farming, fishing, and trading.

2.2 Methods

A multistage sampling method was used in the selection of respondents in the study area. The first stage was the random selection of Ipokia and Yewa North Local

Government Areas from the 3 identified LGAs that share a boundary with another country. The next stage was the identification of rural border communities in Ipokia and Yewa North LGAs. There were several rural communities in the two LGAs, however, those that were closer to the Nigeria international border were randomly selected for the study. For example, rural communities such as Ago Egun, Idabata, Paagbon, Bode ase, and Idolosa were randomly selected in Ipokia while Pedepo, Gbokoto, Ijoko, and Abule idi were selected in Yewa North. The third stage was the selection of residential buildings in each community. A systematic sampling method was used. The first building was selected randomly while the subsequent unit of the selection was every fourth building in the study area. A questionnaire was administered to a household in each selected residential building. Using the procedure, a total of three hundred and thirty-one (331) questionnaire was administered on the residents.

2.3 Data analysis

Descriptive (such as frequency table, percentages, and charts) and inferential (such as mean, one sample t-test, and logit regression) were used in the analysis of data obtained from the respondents. Information on the nature of land accessibility and the drivers of land accessibility were elicited through questionnaire administration. Variables such as methods of land accessibility, existing land tenure system, and level of land accessibility were examined under the nature of land accessibility through the use of frequency tables, percentages, and charts while variables such as tenure practices, cost of acquiring land, financial conditions, gender, length of stay, social connection, traditional belief on land, availability of land, purpose of acquiring the land, proximity to other uses, duration of land usage were rated on a five-point Likert scale of 'strongly agree - 5', 'agree - 4', 'just agree - 3', 'disagree - 2' and 'strongly disagree - 1' under the drivers of land accessibility through the use of mean, and one sample t-test to know the significance of the drivers of land accessibility. Moreover, logit regression which is based on the cumulative probability function was adopted to determine the drivers of land accessibility in the study area. The regression is a uni/multivariate method that is used to estimate the probability of an event that might either occur or not, through the prediction of a binary dependent outcome for a set of independent variables (Akeju et al., 2018; Adebayo, 2018). To determine the drivers of land accessibility, respondents' responses to the question of the level of access to secured land were regressed against drivers of land accessibility such as tenure practices, cost of acquiring land, financial conditions, gender, length of stay, social connection, traditional belief on land, availability of land, purpose of acquiring the land, proximity to other uses, duration of land usage. The mathematical function of logit regression is specified as follows:

Where Y = responses of household heads on their level of land accessibility which is either 1 for Yes and 0 for No

Z = 0 11 22. 1010
1 = tenure practices
2 = cost of acquiring land
3 = purpose of acquiring land
4 = proximity to other uses
5 = financial conditions
6 = gender
7 = length of stay
8 = social connection
9 = duration of land usage
10 = traditional beliefs on land
11 = availability of land
12 = property right

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Nature of land accessibility in the study area

In any studies on land accessibility, analysis on the nature of land access is very essential. These sub-sections, therefore, focus on the nature of land accessibility in the study area. The variables that were considered, include access to secured land, method of land access, and tenure practices in the study area.

Method of land access: Presented in Table 1 are the common methods of accessing land in the study area. it was observed that most of the respondents accessed the land through rent (31.7%). This is followed by the respondents who access their land by leasehold (22.5%), community allocation (12.9%), inheritance (10.6%), property market (10%), sharecropping (7.1%), and through gift (5.1%). This shows that most of the respondents accessed the land through annual rent in the study area. The result of this study is in line with the findings of Velez-Guerra (2004) and Oladehinde et al. (2017) who identified multiple ways of accessing land, especially in the border communities. It could be inferred that informal means of land access was the basic source of accessing land in the study area.

Table 1
Methods of land access

Methods of land access	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Access through inheritance	87	10.6%	27.3%
Access through gift	42	5.1%	13.2%
Access through the property (land) market	82	10%	25.7%
Access through sharecropping	58	7.1%	18.2%
Access through Leasehold	184	22.5%	57.7%
Access through community allocation	105	12.9%	32.9%
Access through rent	259	31.7%	81.2%
Total	*817	100.0%	*256.1%

Note: * Higher than the total survey because of multiple responses

Existing land tenure system in the study area: Information on the existing land tenure system is presented in Figure 1. It was recorded that leasehold system (49.8%) was the common land tenure system in the study area. This was followed by communal land tenure system (24.2%), freehold system (23.6%), and others (2.4%). It could be inferred that leasehold system was the common tenure system that is practiced in the study area.

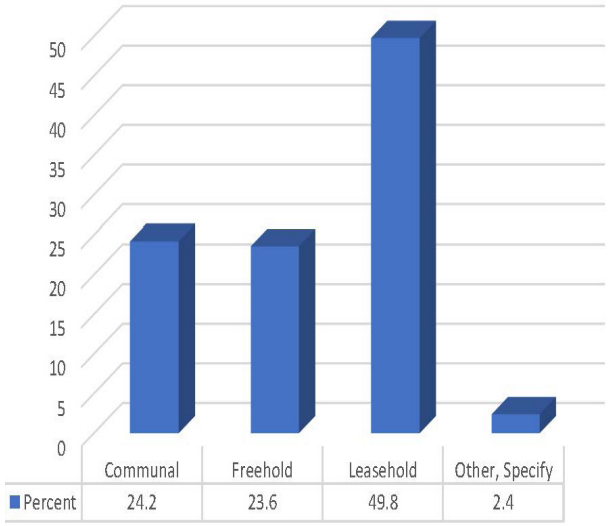

Figure 1
land tenure system in the study area

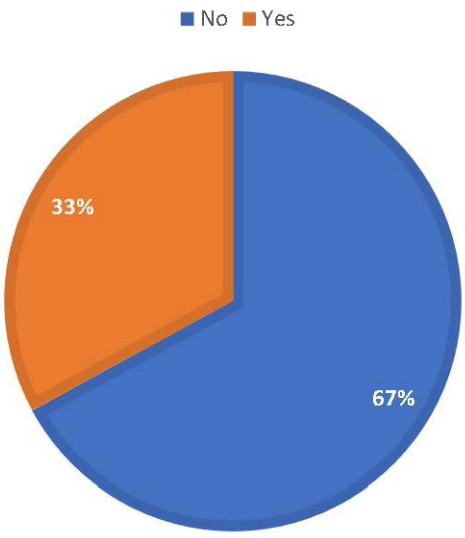

Figure 2:
level of secured access to land in the study area

Level of secured access to land: Information in Figure 2 shows the findings on the level of secured access to land. The Table shows that more than half of the respondents (67.1%) did not have secured access to land while 32.9% of the respondents have secured access to land. This means that the majority of the respondents do not have secure access to land. So many drivers may affect their security of land access in the study area. That most of the respondents do not have security on the land does not mean that they do not have access to land. This finding supports the submission of Oladehinde et al. (2017) who noted that land may not be accessible and when accessible it may not be usable based on the existing land tenure security for the particular use. Security of land tenure is essential in land access. It also corroborates the observation of UN-Habitat (1996) that secure access to land and tenure security are strategic prerequisites for the progressive integration of the rural poor and the development of humans.

3,2 Drivers of land accessibility

Studies by Famakinwa et al. (2017) and Gbigbi (2018) have identified different factors of land accessibility among rural dwellers. These factors range from land tenure practices, traditional beliefs, social connection, proximity to other uses, availability of land, duration of land usage, gender, length of stay, purpose of acquiring the land, financial conditions, property rights, and cost of land acquisition. These drivers were considered to understand the extent and order of the influence on land accessibility in the study area. Out of the overall mean value (30.37) of all the parameters of land accessibility drivers, the result in Table 2 shows that each of the drivers is statistically significant based on the difference from the group mean value at 0.05 level of significance. It was discovered that the cost of acquiring land has the highest t-value and mean of 54.93 and 3.76 respectively while the second most important driver of land accessibility with a t-value and mean value of 52.17 and 3.34 respectively is social connection. This is followed by traditional belief which is the third most important driver of land accessibility with a t-value and mean value of 51.11 and 3.23 respectively. The next to these drivers in their order of influence include land tenure practices (t-value = 46.19 and mean value = 3.15), purpose of acquiring land (t-value = 43.93 and mean value = 2.73), availability of land (t-value = 43.31 and mean value = 2.67), financial condition (t-value = 41.70 and mean value = 2.46), gender (t-value = 36.76 and mean value = 2.05), length of stay (t-value = 35.92 and mean value = 2.03), proximity to other uses (t-value = 35.31 and mean value = 1.83), property right (t-value = 32.62 and mean value = 1.61), and duration of land usage (t-value = 31.95 and mean value = 1.46). This finding implies that the cost of acquiring land, social connection, traditional belief, land tenure practices, purpose of acquiring the land, availability of land, financial condition attached to the land, and gender have a strong influence on land accessibility while length of stay, proximity to other uses property right and duration of usage were the least drivers of land accessibility in the study area. This study agrees with the findings of Ishe (2007), Nwuba (2017), Oladehinde et al. (2018), and Oladehinde et al (2023) who noted that most lands were difficult to access due to the high cost of acquiring the land.

Table 2
One sample t-test of the drivers of land accessibility

Drivers	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Cost of acquiring land	331	3.7613	1.24577	0.06847	54.931	330	.000
Social connection	331	3.3444	1.16611	0.0641	52.179	330	.000
Traditional Belief (Cultural practices)	331	3.2356	1.15157	0.0633	51.119	330	.000
land tenure practices	331	3.1541	1.24212	0.06827	46.198	330	.000
Purpose of acquiring the land	331	2.7341	1.40842	0.07741	43.936	330	.000
Availability of land	331	2.6798	1.12554	0.06187	43.316	330	.000
Financial condition	331	2.4683	1.22155	0.06714	41.705	330	.000
Gender	331	2.0514	1.16791	0.06419	36.762	330	.000
Length of stay	331	2.0363	1.1356	0.06242	35.924	330	.000
Proximity to other uses	331	1.8399	0.93178	0.05122	35.318	330	.000
Property right (Bundle of rights)	331	1.6103	0.6668	0.03665	32.623	330	.000
Duration of usage	331	1.4622	0.63789	0.03506	31.955	330	.000

Presented in Table 3 is the information on the drivers of land accessibility which was examined through the use of Logit regression. The diagnostic statistic reveals that the chi-square value (LR-statistics) for the model is significant at 1% significant level which means that the explanatory variables jointly influence land accessibility in the study area. The Pseudo R squared means that 53.1% of the variance was explained by the independent variables. The signs reveal the direction of change in the probability of drivers influencing land accessibility in the study area. A positive sign shows that increase in the probability of driver of land accessibility which negatively explains the converse.

The analysis shows that traditional beliefs, social connection, availability of land, tenure practices, gender, purpose of land acquisition, financial condition, and cost of acquiring land were the significant drivers that influenced land accessibility in the rural border communities at 0.01 and 0.05 level while proximity to other uses, property right, duration of usage and length of stay does not statistically influence the drivers of land accessibility. The result of this regression is in agreement with the submissions of Oladokun (2010), Bamidele (2012), Oladehinde (2016), and Tsegaye (2017) who noted different factors affecting land accessibility. The result also corroborates the findings of Adebayo (2018), Omirin (2003), and Bobade (2002) that land accessibility is a product of different factors such as financial consideration, land availability, traditional belief, and tenure system.

Moreover, the availability of land is statistically significant and negatively signed. The negative sign indicates that land may not be available for different purposes in the study area. In other words, land may be available but it may not be accessible due to different interacting variables that often limit the amount of land that could be available for different purposes. These interacting variables such as population, land tenure system, and stage of community development could limit the amount of land that women, non-indigene, and vulnerable farmers can access. For example, most of the land may not be available for the plantation of tree crops (like cocoa, banana, mango, and orange among others), especially among the respondents who access the land through rent. Also, the available land may be limited in size for this group. It therefore goes a long way to influence the size of land that can be accessed in the study area. This agrees with assertions from Oladehinde et al. (2023), Babatunde (2012), and Omirin (2003) that the availability of land is among the factors affecting land access. Similarly, the tenure system of the border communities is significant in driving land accessibility of the respondents. The reason for the negative significance is probably due to the fact that the land tenure system has a strong influence on land accessibility. For example, it determines who has access to a secure land and who does not have access to a secure land. It also determines who is more secure in the study area. Gender is significant and negatively signed as a driver of land accessibility among the respondents. The negative sign indicates that male respondents are more likely to access more land than female respondents. For example, female respondents are expected to access land through their husbands. This is the common practice in the border communities except if the woman is a widow within the community. This assertion agrees with the observation of Aluko et al. (2006) that most decisions on land access, use, and control are generally undertaken by men while women are likely to be excluded from the decision-making on land-related matters. It also corroborates the submission of Duncan et al. (2004).

The purpose of land acquisition is negatively signed and statistically significant at 0.01 level. The purpose of acquiring the land tends to drive land accessibility among the respondents. The negative sign indicates that the nature of land accessibility of respondents is dependent on the purpose of acquiring the land. Reasons for land

acquisition could vary from the cultivation of food crops or cash crops, as well as the construction of houses, among others. The reasons for land acquisition tend to determine the duration of land usage and the size of the land. Land access through rent among the respondents is often restricted to some uses. In most cases, land may not be accessed by respondents with the intention to acquire land for the plantation of tree crops. It is generally believed that whoever wants to acquire land with the purpose of planting tree crops intends to claim full ownership of the land. On this basis, land is not given to strangers who intend to use the land for the purpose of planting tree crops. Plantation of tree crops can only be encouraged when the person is the real owner of the land. This study agrees with the views of Oladehinde (2019), Oladehinde et al. (2023). Other drivers of land accessibility are financial conditions and the cost of acquiring the land. The financial condition and cost of acquiring the land are positively signed and statistically significant at the significance level of 0.01. This means that financial condition and cost of acquiring the land are strongly part of the drivers of land accessibility in the rural border communities. The cost of land acquisition and the financial conditions attached to land may be unbearable or too costly for what intended land users can afford. Before accessing land, affordability is the first consideration. When the land is not affordable or when the cost of acquiring the land is unbearable then land accessibility may not be possible. This agrees with the view of Omirin (2003) that accessibility to land has to do with affordability and convenience with which the cost of the land can be paid without undue financial constrain. It also corroborates the submission of Gbadegesin et al. (2016) and Oladehinde et al. (2023) that the cost of acquiring land is one of the major factors of land accessibility.

Table 3
Drivers of Land accessibility in the study area

Variables	Coef.	Std. Err.	Z	P>z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Traditional believe	.9589315	.2735336	3.51	0.000***	.4228154	1.495048
Social connection	.5992869	.1419713	4.22	0.000***	.3210284	.8775455
Proximity to other uses	.0736867	.0786109	0.94	0.349	-.0803879	.2277613
Availability of land	.2727019	.080029	-3.41	0.001***	-.4295558	-.1158481
Tenure practices	.7017731	.2654942	-2.64	0.008***	-1.222132	-.181414
Gender	.0241302	.1007312	-0.24	0.011**	-.2215598	.1732993
Purpose of land acquisition	.3520925	.0697975	-5.04	0.000***	-.4888931	-.215292
Property right	.0756662	.0742128	1.02	0.308	-.0697882	.2211207
Duration of usage	.0755379	.068398	1.10	0.269	-.0585198	.2095955
Financial condition	.7452913	.288185	2.59	0.010***	.1804591	1.310123
Length of stay	.1554846	.0971693	-1.60	0.110	-.3459329	.0349638
Cost of acquiring the land	.9183517	.293213	3.13	0.002***	-1.493039	-.3436648
_cons	.3903984	.3941668	0.99	0.322	-.3821543	1.162951

Number of observations =331; Pseudo R2 = 0.5312; LR Chi-Square (12) = 106.08; Prob> Chi2 = 0.0000; Log likelihood = -176.35231
**** Significant at 1% level, **significant at 5% level*

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study has examined the drivers of land accessibility in rural border communities of Ogun State, Nigeria. The study discovered that traditional beliefs, social connection, availability of land, tenure practices, gender, purpose of land acquisition, financial condition, and cost of acquiring land were the significant drivers of land accessibility in rural border communities of the study area. On the other hand, proximity to other uses, property right, duration of usage, and length of stay does not statistically influence the drivers of land accessibility. The study also observed that most of the lands were accessed through rent while other methods of access were Through leasehold, community allocation, inheritance, property market, sharecropping, and gift. The study recommended that the government and stakeholders in land administration and management should put more effort into reducing the effects of the drivers influencing land accessibility by formulating and implementing flexible policies that can encourage secure access to land in the study area.

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