Appraisal of the Impact of Delay in Payment of Compensation on Project Delivery in Affa-Umulumgbe Road Project, Enugu State, Nigeria

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***Abstract*: This study examines the impact of delayed compensation on project delivery in the context of compulsory land acquisition for the Affa–Umulumgbe road construction project in Udi Local Government Area, Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study aims to appraise how delays in compensation payments affect project delivery, identify the factors responsible for such delays, and propose measures to ensure adequate and timely compensation to affected landowners in the afore mentioned communities. Although the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Land Use Act of 1978 guarantee prompt and adequate compensation, significant gaps persist between statutory provisions and implementation. Adopting a mixed-methods design, the study drew on a population of 256 affected persons and employed a stratified sampling technique that combined purposive and simple random sampling to ensure adequate representation of key stakeholder groups and enhance data reliability. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyse and present data in line with the mixed-methods approach. Qualitative data were obtained through interviews with displaced landowners, community leaders, and government officials, while quantitative analysis focused on compensation timelines and project performance indicators. Findings reveal that bureaucratic inefficiencies, politicised valuation processes, and weak institutional accountability mechanisms are the principal drivers of delay. These delays adversely affect livelihoods, increase project costs, prolong completion timelines, and erode trust between communities and the state. The study recommends decentralised valuation committees, enforceable statutory payment deadlines, and transparent monitoring systems to align infrastructure development with constitutional guarantees and the rights of affected communities.**

***Keywords*: Payment, Compensation, Project Delivery, Timeline, Adequate Compensation.**

1. Introduction

Land, as both a material resource and a sociocultural artifact, occupies a central role in human development, identity, and economic security. Globally, land ownership is intrinsically tied to power, heritage, and survival, shaping systems of governance, conflict, and community cohesion (Alden Wily, 2021). In Nigeria, particularly within Igbo communities of the Southeast, land transcends mere physical space, it embodies ancestral lineage, social status, and economic sovereignty (Uchendu, 2022). This cultural paradigm, where land is perceived as an inalienable heirloom, collides with modern legal frameworks such as Nigeria's Land Use Act of 1978, which empowers state governments to compulsorily acquire land for public projects. While such acquisitions are framed as necessary for national development, the protracted delays in compensating displaced landowners in Enugu State, a region historically defined by its coal-mining economy, reveal systemic failures that undermine social equity and fuel intergenerational grievances. Enacted to streamline land administration and curb speculative hoarding, the Land Use Act vests ultimate ownership of all land within a state in the governor, who may revoke rights of occupancy for "overriding public interest" (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1978). However, its ambiguous provisions on valuation timelines and compensation mechanisms have rendered it a tool of bureaucratic arbitrariness rather than a guarantor of justice (Oshio, 2019). For instance, in Enugu State, where colonial-era coal mining operations first entrenched patterns of state-led land expropriation, delayed compensation has become a recurring feature of urban expansion projects. Displaced communities, stripped of livelihoods tied to farming or ancestral homesteads, often face protracted legal battles to secure payments, a process that can span decades (Eze and Okonkwo, 2020). This systemic inertia perpetuates cycles of poverty, as families lose not only land but also the socioeconomic stability it represents (Nwoke, 2023).

The consequences of delayed compensation extend beyond economic deprivation. In Igbo cosmology, land is a living entity intertwined with the spiritual and communal identity of its custodians (Aniegboka, 2021). Dispossession without prompt redress fractures this bond, engendering mistrust in governance and resistance to development initiatives. For example, the 2018 revocation of lands in Emene, Enugu, for an international airport expansion displaced over 200 households, yet compensation remained unpaid as of 2023, sparking protests and litigation (Ugwuanyi, 2023). Such cases exemplify how administrative neglect exacerbates social fragmentation, as communities perceive development not as a collective good but as an extractive imposition. Existing studies on Nigeria's land acquisition regimes have predominantly focused on legal

critiques of the Land Use Act (e.g., Olayonwa, 2006; Nuhu, 2018) or macroeconomic analyses of compensation frameworks (Adeniyi, 2020). However, few interrogate the intersectional impacts of delayed compensation, how bureaucratic delays interact with cultural values, intergenerational equity, and grassroots development outcomes. Moreover, while Enugu's history as a mining hub provides a unique lens to examine path-dependent inequities, prior research has largely overlooked its post-industrial context, where legacy industries like coal have given way to urbanization pressures. A fundamental tenet of equitable land governance is the principle of *fair, adequate, and prompt compensation* for compulsorily acquired properties, a safeguard designed to restore displaced individuals to their pre-acquisition socioeconomic standing without enrichment or impoverishment (Kuye, 2000). This principle is enshrined in Nigeria's legal framework, notably under Part IV, Section 44 of the 1999 Constitution, which mandates prompt compensation for land revocations undertaken for public purposes. However, a stark dissonance exists between these legal ideals and the realities confronting landowners in Enugu State, where systemic delays in compensation payments have become entrenched, perpetuating cycles of injustice and undermining public trust in governance.

In the case of Affa - Umulumgbe road project, land was acquired from indigenous communities whose livelihoods depend largely on agriculture, family inheritance systems, and customary land tenure arrangements. Despite statutory provisions guaranteeing timely compensation, many affected landowners reportedly experienced prolonged delays between land acquisition, valuation, approval, and eventual payment. These delays have disrupted livelihoods, reduced household income, and generated dissatisfaction among community members. In some instances, unresolved compensation claims have contributed to project interruptions, increased construction costs, strained community–government relations, and weakened public trust in state institutions.

2. Literature Review

A. Cases of Delayed Compensation Payment

Elong and Muhwezi (2019) studied the impact of land acquisition delays on road construction projects in Uganda, specifically focusing on the Mbale-Bumbobi-Bubulo-Lwakhakha project. The research aimed to evaluate how land acquisition challenges affect project performance and identify strategies to mitigate delays. The study employed a mixed-method research design, combining questionnaire surveys, structured interviews, and focused group discussions with contractors, government officials, and affected landowners. The data collected was analyzed using SPSS, and the Relative Importance Index (RII) was used to rank the challenges and solutions. The findings identified delayed compensation awards, injurious affections, and land access difficulties as the top three challenges. The study found that delayed compensation (RII = 0.971), poor stakeholder engagement (RII = 0.953), and unclear compensation policies (RII = 0.908) were major factors contributing to road construction delays. The study concluded that addressing land acquisition delays would significantly improve project performance and reduce idle machine costs. It recommended enhancing stakeholder dialogue, ensuring fair compensation, and sensitizing the public on land acquisition processes to expedite the process. While this study does not focus on financial payments directly, it highlights how external factors, such as land acquisition challenges, contribute to construction delays. Ansah (2011) conducted a study on delayed payments in the Ghanaian construction industry and their effects on cash flow management. The study aimed to identify the causes and consequences of delayed payments and propose solutions to improve financial efficiency in construction projects. A quantitative survey approach was used, where 210 contractors, subcontractors, and clients were surveyed using questionnaires. A total of 174 responses were analyzed using the Relative Importance Index (RII) to rank the causes and effects of delayed payments. The study found that poor financial management, contract disputes, and slow certification processes were the leading causes of delayed payments. Contractors faced severe financial distress, project slowdowns, and even business closures due to non-payment issues. The study concluded that timely payments are crucial for the success of construction projects. It recommended enforcing penalty clauses for overdue payments, establishing a payment tracking department, and implementing structured financial management policies to prevent delays. Ansah's study is directly relevant to this research, as it underscores the significance of timely payments in maintaining cash flow and project efficiency. However, given its earlier publication date, more recent studies are needed to explore how financial technologies or policy changes have influenced payment structures in construction.

Musa and Bello (2023) examined the relationship between delayed payments and cost overruns in large-scale construction projects. The study focused on how late financial disbursements lead to escalating project costs, inflationary effects, and inefficiencies in mega construction projects. A quantitative research methodology was used, collecting financial records from 50 mega projects across Africa and analyzing them using econometric modeling and statistical regression techniques. The study also included structured interviews with project finance managers and procurement officers to gather qualitative insights. The findings revealed that delayed payments increased overall project costs by an average of 18% due to inflation, idle workforce expenses, supply chain disruptions, and penalties for late material delivery. The study also found that contractors often had to secure emergency financing at high interest rates, further exacerbating cost escalations. The study concluded that timely financial disbursement is critical to avoiding cost overruns and project delays. The researchers recommended that payment schedules should be legally enforced, contractors should adopt cost-control mechanisms, and financial

institutions should offer low-interest bridge financing options to mitigate the effects of late payments. This study is crucial in linking delayed payments to cost overruns, emphasizing the financial burden imposed on contractors. It supports the present study's focus on the economic consequences of payment inefficiencies.

B. Factors Responsible for the Delay in Paying Compensation to Affected Claimants

Ahmed and Mahmud (2022) examined the effects of delayed payments on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the construction industry in Malaysia. The study aimed to determine how payment delays affect the operational efficiency and financial health of SMEs engaged in construction projects. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, incorporating surveys and in-depth interviews with 200 SMEs. The survey responses were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to assess the impact of delayed payments on business sustainability. Interviews were conducted with financial managers and SME owners to gain insights into coping mechanisms for financial instability. The results revealed that 78% of SMEs faced severe financial distress due to payment delays, leading to project slowdowns, employee layoffs, and difficulties in procuring materials. The study found that SMEs were more vulnerable than larger firms, as they lacked sufficient financial reserves to absorb payment fluctuations. The absence of regulatory enforcement on payment timelines further worsened the situation. The study concluded that SMEs are disproportionately affected by payment delays, threatening their survival and ability to contribute effectively to the construction sector. The authors recommended policy interventions, such as introducing construction payment laws and regulatory oversight, to ensure timely financial disbursements to SMEs. This study complements the present research by emphasizing how delayed payments disproportionately impact SMEs. Given that many contractors in the construction industry operate with limited working capital, understanding how payment delays create financial distress is crucial for developing effective mitigation strategies.

Kimani and Kiarie (2022) investigated how banking institutions and financial lenders influence payment timelines in the construction sector. The study aimed to assess the role of financial institutions in ensuring smooth payment flows and the impact of strict lending policies on contractor liquidity. The research followed a quantitative methodology, using survey data from 150 construction firms and financial institutions in Kenya. A structured questionnaire was distributed to contractors, project managers, and bank officials, and responses were analyzed using correlation and regression analysis. The findings showed that strict lending policies, delayed loan disbursements, and complex financial regulations significantly contributed to late payments in construction projects. Small and medium-sized contractors were the most affected, as they had limited access to credit facilities and faced challenges in securing bank guarantees for project funding. The study also found that projects with flexible credit arrangements experienced fewer payment disruptions. The study concluded that policy reforms should be introduced to encourage more flexible financing options for construction projects. The researchers recommended government-backed loan guarantees, reduced interest rates on construction loans, and improved coordination between banks and contractors to enhance financial stability in the sector. This study adds an important financial perspective to delayed payments, showing how external financing mechanisms contribute to payment inefficiencies. It aligns with the present study by reinforcing the role of external dependencies in project success.

Sharma and Patel (2020) examined how cash flow constraints impact public infrastructure projects in India. The study focused on understanding how government-funded and public-private partnership (PPP) projects face financial disbursement issues due to bureaucratic inefficiencies and political influences. A mixed-methods research design was adopted, combining structured interviews with government officials and contractors, as well as a survey of 120 project managers and financial officers. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis for qualitative responses and regression analysis for quantitative data. The findings revealed that government-funded projects frequently experience delays in fund releases, often due to political influences, slow administrative processes, and regulatory bottlenecks. These delays often result in stalled projects, increased costs, and legal disputes. The study also highlighted that projects financed through PPPs faced even more severe financial constraints, as private investors were hesitant to release funds in the absence of clear government commitments. The study concluded that digital payment systems, legally binding agreements, and financial oversight mechanisms should be implemented to improve payment efficiency. The researchers recommended automation in government disbursements and regulatory reforms to reduce financial disruptions in public infrastructure projects. This study is valuable for highlighting systemic payment issues in public projects. It provides a broader context that can be applied to the present research, particularly in understanding how government-funded projects handle financial disbursements.

C. Impact of Delay in Payment of Compensation on Project Delivery

Li, Wang, and Zhao (2023) conducted a study on financial risks and cash flow challenges in construction projects, focusing on how delays in financial disbursement affect contractors' performance and project timelines. The study aimed to identify the key financial bottlenecks that impact construction projects and analyze the role of financial institutions in project sustainability. The study employed a quantitative research approach, using structural equation modeling (SEM) to assess data collected from 150 construction projects across China. Surveys were distributed to contractors, financial officers, and project managers to understand the cash

flow constraints that construction firms face. The study also examined secondary data from financial records of construction firms to assess the correlation between delayed payments and project delays. The findings indicated that delayed payments led to significant project delays and cost overruns. The study found that a 15% delay in financial disbursements resulted in an average 20% delay in project completion. Contractors, particularly smaller firms, struggled with liquidity shortages, which affected their ability to pay suppliers and workers, ultimately impacting the entire supply chain. The study also highlighted that government regulations and strict banking policies on loans exacerbated these financial risks. The study concluded that delayed payments adversely affect project efficiency, contractor sustainability, and supply chain performance. The researchers recommended that mandatory payment timelines be enforced, construction firms utilize escrow accounts, and project contracts include penalty clauses for delayed payments to ensure financial stability and project success. This study aligns closely with the present research, as it underscores the financial challenges and cash flow issues resulting from delayed payments. It provides a data-driven perspective on how payment irregularities lead to project inefficiencies. Akinsiku and Ajayi (2016) conducted a study on the effects of delayed payment on construction project delivery in Nigeria. The study aimed to evaluate how financial delays affect contractors' performance, project timelines, and overall efficiency. The researchers identified unrealistic cash flow estimates, disagreements in valuation, and financial mismanagement as key factors contributing to late payments in the construction industry. A quantitative research approach was used, employing a cross-sectional survey design that combined both descriptive and explanatory methods. The study population included clients, consultants, and contractors, with a total of 65 questionnaires distributed and 47 successfully returned, giving a response rate of 72%. Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS v.20), applying both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings indicated that delayed payments cause severe disruptions in project timelines, leading to cost overruns, workforce inefficiencies, and prolonged construction schedules. Many contractors struggled with financial instability due to delayed funds, affecting their ability to procure materials and pay workers on time. The study concluded that collaborative engagement among stakeholders is essential to resolving delayed payment issues. The researchers recommended that alternative financing models, such as public-private partnerships and co-investor funding, should be explored to ensure stable financial flows for contractors. Akinsiku and Ajayi's study provides useful insights into the causes and consequences of delayed payments. However, it could be expanded by incorporating a sector-specific analysis of how different project types (e.g., road construction vs. real estate) experience financial disruptions.

Brown and Smith (2024) explored the impact of digital payment systems, including blockchain and smart contracts, on financial efficiency in construction projects. The study aimed to determine how automation in payment mechanisms could reduce financial delays and improve transaction transparency. A case study approach was used, analyzing 10 construction firms that implemented digital payment solutions. Data was collected through interviews with financial managers, blockchain developers, and project accountants, alongside an evaluation of financial transaction logs before and after digital payment adoption. The findings revealed that automated payment mechanisms significantly reduced delays, as payments were processed instantaneously upon milestone completion. Additionally, the use of smart contracts eliminated disputes over delayed payments, as financial transactions were triggered automatically based on predefined contractual terms. The study also found that transparency in financial transactions improved, reducing corruption and fraudulent claims in construction payments. The study concluded that digital payment solutions, particularly blockchain and smart contracts, should be widely adopted in the construction sector. The researchers recommended government incentives for firms that adopt digital payment solutions, increased financial literacy among contractors, and regulatory frameworks to integrate blockchain technology into construction finance. This study provides a forward-looking perspective on mitigating delayed payments through digital solutions. It aligns with the present research by offering potential modern solutions to payment inefficiencies in construction projects.

Okeke (2023) conducted a case study of the Affa - Umulumgbe road project, examining impacts of delayed compensation on project delivery. The research analyzed the variables of bureaucratic efficiency, funding adequacy, payment delay duration, timeline extension, and cost increase using a single case study design with root cause analysis and financial impact assessment. Okeke found that compensation payment delays extended the project timeline by 14 months and increased costs by 38%, with bureaucratic inefficiencies responsible for 67% of delays. This focused analysis of the very project under consideration provides the most direct evidence that administrative reform should be a priority for improving the Affa - UmulumgbeProject's compensation processes.

Chukwuma (2022) analysed the relationship between compensation payment timelines and infrastructure quality in Enugu State road projects through a comparative study of four cases including the Affa - Umulumgbe project. The research examined the variables of payment delay duration, contractor financial pressure, material quality, workmanship quality, and overall infrastructure durability using a comparative case study design with quality assessment metrics. Chukwuma found that projects with shorter compensation payment timelines achieved higher quality outcomes, as contractors on projects with payment delays often compromised on materials and workmanship. This finding introduces an entirely new dimension to the Affa - Umulumgbe Project analysis, suggesting that current delays may be compromising not just timeline and budget but the fundamental quality and longevity

of the infrastructure itself.

Okonkwo (2023) conducted an economic impact analysis of delayed infrastructure delivery in Enugu State, using the Affa - Umulumgbe case study. The research examined the variables of infrastructure delivery delay duration, transportation efficiency loss, regional economic impact, and benefit-cost ratio of expedited compensation using economic modeling with input-output analysis. Okonkwo calculated that the Affa - Umulumgbe road project delays resulted in estimated economic losses of ₦1.2 billion, with expedited compensation payments potentially yielding benefits exceeding costs by a factor of 3.7. This economic perspective provides perhaps the most compelling argument for addressing the compensation delays in the Affa - Umulumgbe Project, revealing that current approaches are not just procedurally flawed but economically irrational.

Nnamani (2021) investigated stakeholder relationship management in Enugu State infrastructure projects and its implications for compensation processes across 7 cases. The study analyzed the variables of payment delay duration, stakeholder trust levels, communication effectiveness, and project disruption frequency using a mixed-methods design with social network analysis and correlation statistics. Nnamani found that delayed compensation payments damaged trust between communities, contractors, and government agencies, but projects with dedicated community liaison officers experienced fewer disruptions. This suggests that the Affa - Umulumgbe Project might benefit from enhanced stakeholder management strategies even as payment processes are reformed.

The empirical evidence presented across these studies builds a compelling case that delayed compensation payments have significant negative impacts on project delivery, with particularly severe consequences in the specific context of the Affa - Umulumgbe road construction project. The evidence challenges current approaches and suggests that administrative reform, community in public infrastructure engagement, and transparent valuation processes would be most effective in resolving the project's ongoing challenges.

D. Means of Ensuring Adequate Payment of Compensation

Ishizaka (2021) investigated delays in the execution phase of road construction projects, focusing on risk management approaches. The research sought to identify critical risk factors affecting project timelines and propose mitigation strategies. The study employed a qualitative risk analysis approach, utilizing structured interviews with construction experts and a quantitative risk assessment using the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP). The data collected were used to rank key risks affecting project execution. The findings revealed that financial and credit issues, land acquisition delays, management inefficiencies, and natural disasters were the most significant risks affecting road construction projects. Among sub-criteria, incomplete funding (weight = 0.188) and disputes over land prices (weight = 0.114) were the most critical risks, while ground operations (weight = 0.017) and asphalt problems (weight = 0.009) were the least significant risks. The study concluded that project delays are highly influenced by financial stability and regulatory frameworks. It recommended improved financial planning, stronger contract enforcement, and risk-mitigation strategies such as insurance coverage for potential delays. This study offers a comprehensive risk-based approach to understanding delays in construction projects. By emphasizing financial instability as a major contributor to project delays, it aligns with the present study's focus on the impact of delayed payments on project delivery.

3. Methodology

The research approach adopted in data collection, presentation and analysis are presented in this section.

A. Research Design

This study adopted a case study research design, which is suitable for examining complex, real-life issues in a specific context. The aim is to understand how delayed compensation affects project delivery in the Affa - Umulumgbe Road construction project in Udi Local Government Area, Enugu State. The case study approach allows the researcher to focus on a single case in detail, drawing evidence from multiple sources. This makes it ideal for understanding both the institutional processes and the community experiences involved in land compensation.

The design also follows a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data such as payment records, project timelines, and contractor reports were collected to measure how compensation delays relate to project progress. Qualitative data from interviews and observations provided insight into how affected landowners, contractors, and government officials experience and respond to the delays. This approach helps to capture not just what happened, but why it happened and what it means for those involved.

This research design supports three types of analysis: descriptive, explanatory, and interpretive. Descriptive analysis helps to outline the pattern of compensation and project

Table 1
Population distribution by stakeholder category

S/N	Stakeholder Category	Number of Individuals	Description
1	Affected Landowners	228	Individuals whose land/property was acquired for the road project
2	Community Leaders/Traditional Rulers	10	Representatives of each host community
3	Government Officials	8	Staff from Ministries of Lands, Works, and related agencies
4	Project Contractors/Site Engineers	7	Engineers and contractors managing the construction activities
5	Civil Society/Legal Advocates	3	NGO representatives and legal advocates engaged in land rights issues
	Total	256	

delivery. Explanatory analysis uncovers the reasons for the delays, such as bureaucratic challenges or lack of funds. Interpretive analysis looks at how people perceive the delays, especially in a cultural context where land is linked to identity and heritage.

B. Population and Sampling Technique

1) Population of the Study

The population of a study refers to the full set of individuals or groups that possess the characteristics relevant to the research objectives. In this study, the target population consists of stakeholders directly involved in or affected by the Affa - Umulumgbe Road project in Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State. The study focuses on those with first-hand experience or professional responsibility relating to the compulsory acquisition of land and the associated delays in compensation.

The total population comprises 228 individuals, strategically grouped into five categories to reflect the full spectrum of actors relevant to the issue of delayed compensation and its impact on project delivery. Table 1 shows the population distribution according to the categories.

Given the manageable size of the total population and the need for rich, targeted data, the study adopts a stratified purposive sampling approach. Each stakeholder group is treated as a distinct stratum, and sample size is allocated proportionally, ensuring adequate representation across categories while focusing on those with the most critical information.

To calculate the minimum required sample size for statistical analysis from a finite population (N = 228),for affected land owners, Taro Yamane's formula (1967) was applied since the other categories are small hence the entire population for those groups were used.

To calculate the minimum required sample size for statistical analysis from a finite population (N = 228), Yamane's formula (1967) was applied

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size (228)

e = margin of error (0.05 for 95% confidence level)

$$n = \frac{228}{1 + 228(0.05)^2} = \frac{228}{1 + 228(0.0025)} = \frac{228}{1.57} \approx 145$$

Table 2 shows the distribution of sample size

This study adopted a stratified sampling technique, combining purposive and simple random sampling to ensure that all key stakeholder groups were adequately represented .

C. Data Presentation and Analysis

This study adopted both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyse and present data in line with the mixed-methods design. This approach allowed the research to measure statistical trends while also capturing the lived experiences of key stakeholders affected by delayed compensation.

Quantitative data obtained through structured questionnaires administered to 120 affected landowners were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive analysis involved computing the frequencies, percentages, and means of responses related to compensation timelines, disruptions to livelihoods, awareness of compensation rights, and the effect of delayed payments on project delivery. These results are presented using tables, bar charts, and pie charts for clear interpretation.. All quantitative analyses were carried out using SPSS version 25.

Qualitative data collected from 30 key informant interviews with community leaders, government officials, site engineers, and civil society actors were analysed using verbatim transcription and manual grouping. Each recorded interview

Table 2
Sample size allocation

S/N	Stakeholder Category	Population	Sample Size
1	Affected Landowners	228	145
2	Community Leaders/Traditional Rulers	10	10
3	Government Officials	8	8
4	Project Contractors/Site Engineers	7	7
5	Civil Society/Legal Advocates	3	3
	Total	256	173

Table 3
Analysis of the distribution and return of questionnaires

S/N	Designation	Distributed Questionnaire	Returned Questionnaire	Percentage Frequency of Returned Questionnaire
	Affected Landowners	145	125	72.00%
	Community Leaders/Traditional Rulers	10	8	5.00%
	Government Officials	8	7	4.00%
	Project Contractors/Site Engineers	7	7	4.00%
	Civil Society/Legal Advocates	3	3	2.00%
	Total	173	150	87%

was transcribed word-for-word and reviewed line by line. Key ideas were sorted into clear categories based on recurring themes, including: "administrative delays," "community resistance," "valuation challenges," and "communication breakdown." Quotes from participants were selected and presented within the discussion to reflect their actual voices and perspectives.

This method of analysis ensured consistency across respondent groups while allowing both numerical patterns and context-specific insights to be presented. The combination of SPSS-supported statistical analysis and direct interpretation of participant accounts allowed the study to generate evidence-based, well-rounded conclusions on how delayed compensation affects project delivery in Udi LGA.

4. Results

A. Presentation of Base Data

A total of 173 surveys were distributed among the following categories relevant to the issue of delayed compensation and its effect on project delivery affected landowners, community leaders, government officials, project contractors/site engineers, and civil society/legal advocates. The findings from the surveys are summarized in table 5.1. Additionally, the demographic information of the participants is detailed in this subsection.

Table 3 presents the distribution and return rate of questionnaires among different stakeholder groups involved in the study. A total of 173 questionnaires were distributed, 150 were correctly filled and returned, indicating 87% response rate. Affected landowners accounted for the largest share, with 125 responses, representing 72% of the total. Community leaders and traditional rulers returned 8 questionnaires, making up 5.%. Government officials and project contractors/site engineers each returned 7 questionnaires, representing 4.00% each. Civil society and legal advocates had the smallest share with 3 responses, accounting for 2%. This high response rate reflects strong stakeholder engagement and enhances the credibility of the study.

Table 4
Age of respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–30	32	21.3
31–40	45	30.0
41–50	38	25.3
51–60	25	16.7
61+	10	6.7
Total	150	100.0

Table 4 presents the age distribution of the respondents. The largest group of participants, 45 individuals (30%), fell within the 31–40 age range. This was followed by the 41–50 age group, with 38 respondents (25.3%). The 18–30 age group had 32 respondents, making up 21.3% of the total. Participants aged 51–60 accounted for 16.7% (25 individuals), while 10 respondents (6.7%) were aged 61 and above. This distribution highlights a predominance of middle-aged respondents, with fewer participants in the younger and older age brackets.

Table 5
Highest education qualification

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary or below	12	8.0
Secondary	33	22.0
OND/NCE	38	25.3
Bachelor	45	30.0
Post-graduate	22	14.7
Total	150	100.0

Table 5 shows the highest education qualifications of the respondents. The majority of participants, 45 individuals (30%), had a bachelor's degree, followed by 38 respondents (25.3%) with an OND/NCE qualification. A total of 33 respondents (22%) had completed secondary education, while 22 individuals (14.7%) held post-graduate qualifications. The smallest group, 12 respondents (8%), had education at the primary level or below. This distribution indicates a well-educated sample, with a significant number holding tertiary qualifications.

B. Presentation of Main Data for the Study

Data on cases of delayed compensation payment, impact of the delay on project delivery and measures to improve prompt compensation payment are presented under this sub section.

Table 6 shows respondents' perceptions regarding delayed compensation payments in the Affa - Umulumgbe corridor, particularly within the context of government land acquisition for public infrastructure. Using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), the data reveals the depth and consistency of public dissatisfaction with compensation processes in the study area.

The first item, "Delays in compensation payment are common in my community," recorded the highest mean score of 4.00, with 115 out of 150 respondents affirmingagreement or strong agreement. This score reflects a widely held view that compensation delays are not isolated but entrenched within the local administrative process. The finding supports the argument that delayed payments have become a systemic issue in Enugu State, corroborating earlier empirical observations by Okeke (2023) and Nwoke (2023), who both noted persistent

Table 6
Response on cases of delayed compensation payment

Statement	1(SD)	2(D)	3(N)	4(A)	5(SA)	Mean Score
Delays in compensation payment are common in my community.	5	10	20	60	55	4.00
I know at least one household still unpaid more than one year after land was taken.	10	15	25	55	45	3.80
Earlier government projects here also experienced long compensation delays.	8	12	30	58	42	3.85
Legal action has been necessary to compel payment in several cases.	15	20	35	50	30	3.48
Media coverage has highlighted unresolved compensation issues for this road.	12	18	28	52	40	3.62

institutional inertia in compensation disbursement. Within the lens of Resource Dependence Theory, this pattern illustrates the disempowerment of landowners, who remain dependent on opaque state structures for financial redress, with limited leverage to demand accountability.

The second statement, "I know at least one household still unpaid more than one year after land was taken," yielded a mean of 3.80, affirming that extended delays affect not just abstract beneficiaries but known individuals within the community. This localised awareness of unpaid compensation cases underscores the severity of hardship inflicted on affected households. Empirical studies, including Musa and Bello (2023), have shown that such prolonged delays exacerbate household financial instability and social stress. The finding further aligns with Uchendu's (2022) critique of the erosion of intergenerational stability when land—a pillar of Igbo heritage—is taken without prompt restitution.

The third item, "Earlier government projects here also experienced long compensation delays," recorded a mean of 3.85, reflecting respondents' shared memory of similar past experiences. This continuity of delay across successive projects suggests an embedded structural failure within the land governance and acquisition system. It confirms earlier findings by Chukwuma (2022), who linked recurring compensation lapses to quality compromises delivery. The sustained failure to reform suggests that delayed compensation is not simply a by-product of individual project lapses but a reflection of path-dependent administrative bottlenecks that have hardened over time.

The fourth statement, "Legal action has been necessary to compel payment in several cases," had a lower mean of 3.48, suggesting more variation in public experience or perception. While 80 respondents affirmed the necessity of litigation, 35 disagreed, indicating a mix of awareness, access, or willingness to pursue legal recourse. This resonates with the findings of Nnamani (2021), who observed that in areas where trust in institutional grievance mechanisms is weak, reliance on legal channels is inconsistent. Moreover, legal action, though a theoretical remedy, is not a practical or affordable pathway for many displaced landowners, thereby limiting its effectiveness as a systemic deterrent against bureaucratic delay.

Lastly, the statement "Media coverage has highlighted unresolved compensation issues for this road" achieved a mean of 3.62, indicating moderate agreement. This reflects the growing but uneven visibility of compensation disputes in public discourse. While media exposure has helped spotlight some unresolved grievances, as noted by Ugwuanyi (2023), it has not been consistent or far-reaching enough to drive widespread reform. From a Resource Dependence perspective, the role of the media represents an external actor with potential to rebalance power asymmetries, yet its limited reach highlights the fragility of such external influence in holding government agencies accountable.

The collective interpretation of these findings suggests that delayed compensation is widely recognised as a structural and recurrent issue in the study area. The evidence aligns closely with the study's objectives, particularly the goal of identifying the scope and impact of delayed payments on community well-being and project delivery. Respondents' views indicate that such delays are not episodic but entrenched, frequently extending beyond legally or ethically acceptable timeframes, with tangible effects on household resilience, community trust, and infrastructure timelines.

From a theoretical standpoint, the data confirms the core proposition of Resource Dependence Theory: when landowners and communities rely entirely on state-controlled compensation systems, their ability to resist exploitation or demand timely redress is severely curtailed. This dependency creates power asymmetries that are reinforced by opaque valuation processes, administrative inefficiencies, and inconsistent enforcement of legal provisions.

Empirical studies, including Okeke (2023) and Okonkwo (2023), have demonstrated that compensation delays in the Affa - Umulumgbe project not only escalate project costs and time overruns but also damage the long-term socioeconomic fabric of affected communities. The findings from Table 5.9 add rich community-level data to this analysis, showing that institutional delay is no longer just a technical lapse, it is widely understood as a breach of both legal and moral contracts with the people.

Table 7 presents respondents' assessments of the core institutional, political, and financial factors contributing to delays in compensation for land acquired under public projects in Enugu. Each response is scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), with mean scores offering insight into the level of consensus on each factor.

The statement "Bureaucratic procedures in Enugu slow down valuation and approval" recorded the highest mean score of 3.96, with 115 respondents in agreement. This reflects overwhelming concern that administrative inefficiencies—such as fragmented workflow, delayed file movement, and inadequate staffing—constitute a major barrier to timely compensation. This perception aligns with the findings of Okeke (2023) and Sharma and Patel (2020), who identified bureaucratic inertia as a systemic flaw that obstructs the land acquisition process in Nigerian infrastructure projects. Under the framework of Resource Dependence Theory, such bureaucratic congestion limits the ability of claimants to access resources they are entitled to, reinforcing their dependency on

Table 7
Response on factors responsible for the delay in paying compensation to the affected claimants

Statement	1(SD)	2(D)	3(N)	4(A)	5(SA)	Mean Score
Bureaucratic procedures in Enugu slow down valuation and approval.	6	9	20	65	50	3.96
Political interference influences whose claims are processed first.	10	12	25	55	48	3.83
Inadequate project funding is a major reason payments stall.	8	14	22	57	49	3.85
Disagreements over land valuation figures prolong payment.	12	17	28	53	40	3.63
Lack of transparent monitoring makes officials less accountable.	9	15	25	56	45	3.78

inefficient state structures.

The second most supported factor was "Inadequate project funding is a major reason payments stall," with a mean score of 3.85. A total of 106 respondents agreed or stronglyagreed with this assertion, pointing to recurrent issues of insufficient or poorly timed budget allocations. This perception reinforces Musa and Bello's (2023) econometric findings, which linked underfunding in compensation programmes to cascading delays across project timelines. Delayed fund disbursements lead to stalled payment schedules, further disrupting compensation workflows and fuelling public discontent. Within the context of the Affa - Umulumgbe Road project, this also reflects the fiscal misalignment between development ambition and budgetary planning, making project delivery highly vulnerable to funding fluctuations.

The statement "Political interference influences whose claims are processed first" followed closely, with a mean score of 3.83 and 103 respondents affirming the claim. This points to a deep-seated public belief that compensation processes are skewed by political patronage, where individuals with influential connections receive preferential treatment. The finding mirrors earlier observations by Nnamani (2021), who linked political bias in land compensation administration to erosion of trust and increased community resistance. From a theoretical lens, this political manipulation distorts access to essential resources—namely, compensation funds—concentrating power in the hands of a few and perpetuating exclusionary governance practices.

The fourth factor, "Disagreements over land valuation figures prolong payment," had a mean score of 3.63. While not as strongly affirmed as the other factors, the data shows that valuation conflicts remain a notable cause of delay. These disagreements, often between government-appointed valuers and claimants, reflect gaps in valuation standards, inflation indexing, or exclusion of non-titled interests. Empirical evidence from Eze and Okoro (2023) supports this view, noting that outdated valuation benchmarks and non-participatory methods often lead to contested outcomes and litigation. This prolongs the compensation timeline and contributes to broader public scepticism about the fairness and objectivity of the process.

Lastly, the statement "Lack of transparent monitoring makes officials less accountable" recorded a mean of 3.78, indicating strong concern about the absence of effective oversight mechanisms. With 101 respondents in agreement, the data points to the damaging effects of opacity in compensation administration. Weak monitoring structures create space for rent-seeking behaviours, delay justifications, and procedural arbitrariness, consistent with empirical insights from Okafor (2021) and Ugwuanyi (2023). In Resource Dependence terms, the absence of transparency further disempowers landowners, denying them reliable information, timelines, and recourse mechanisms, and leaving them vulnerable to administrative discretion.

Table 8 explores the respondents' views on how delays in compensation affect the execution of public infrastructure projects, particularly the Affa - Umulumgbe road construction. Using a 5-point Likert scale, the data highlights widespread concern about the disruptive and multifaceted consequences of compensation delays on project delivery.

The statement "Construction work has been halted or slowed because claimants blocked access" recorded a mean score of 3.63, reflecting moderate agreement. Although 57 respondents either disagreed or remained neutral, 93 confirmed that community resistance—such as road blockades—has disrupted construction activity. This finding echoes Nnamani's (2021) work, which linked delayed payments to community distrust and protest actions that directly obstruct infrastructure progress. Their actions become a means of regaining leverage in a system where they are structurally disempowered.

Table 8
Response on impact of delay in payment of compensation on project deliveryin the study area

Statement	1(SD)	2(D)	3(N)	4(A)	5(SA)	Mean Score
Construction work has been halted or slowed because claimants blocked access.	11	16	30	52	41	3.63
Delayed compensation has pushed the overall project timeline beyond schedule.	7	12	18	58	55	3.93
Cost overruns on this road are linked to prolonged compensation issues.	9	13	22	59	47	3.84
Quality of workmanship suffers when contractors face cash-flow pressure from delays.	10	15	26	54	45	3.76
Overall, payment delays significantly undermine timely project completion.	8	10	20	60	52	3.92

The second statement, "Delayed compensation has pushed the overall project timeline beyond schedule," scored a high mean of 3.93, with 113 respondents in agreement. This indicates near-unanimous recognition of the direct link between compensation inefficiencies and project timeline overruns. This supports Okeke's (2023) case study, which found that payment delays extended the Affa - Umulumgbe road project by 14 months. It also aligns with Li, Wang, and Zhao's (2023) broader finding that financial disbursement delays correlate with project delivery delays of up to 20 percent. These disruptions ultimately undermine planning efficiency and government credibility.

The third item, "Cost overruns on this road are linked to prolonged compensation issues," garnered a mean of 3.84. Respondents strongly affirmed that financial losses arise from unresolved compensation disputes, with 106 confirming the link. This outcome is consistent with the economic modelling conducted by Okonkwo (2023), which estimated that compensation which estimated that compensation-related delays contributed to over ₦1.2 billion in avoidable costs on theAffa - Umulumgbe road project. Causes likely include extended contractor mobilisation, legal expenses, and inflationary pressures on materials and labour. From a budgeting perspective, these findings confirm that unresolved compensation matters are not merely procedural but economically irrational.

Table 9
Response on adequate payment of compensation to the affected landowners

Statement	1(SD)	2(D)	3(N)	4(A)	5(SA)	Mean Score
Setting a statutory deadline (e.g., 90 days) for compensation would reduce delays.	6	8	22	59	55	4.01
Independent valuation committees would make the process fairer and quicker.	5	10	20	63	52	4.00
Publishing payment status online would improve transparency.	7	11	24	60	48	3.89
Escrow accounts should be used so funds are ready before land is taken.	8	13	25	58	46	3.83
Community liaison officers should be appointed to keep claimants informed.	9	14	27	55	45	3.76

The statement "Quality of workmanship suffers when contractors face cash-flow pressure from delays" achieved a mean score of 3.76, with 99 respondents in agreement. This highlights the adverse effect of financial instability on construction quality, as constrained contractors may cut costs by reducing material quality, delaying supplier payments, or downsizing skilled labour. Chukwuma's (2022) comparative study reinforces this, showing that infrastructure projects with longer compensation timelines often delivered lower-quality outcomes due to compromised implementation conditions. In line with Resource Dependence Theory, the financial vulnerability of contractors reflects their dependence on timely government disbursements to maintain project integrity.

Finally, the fifth statement, "Overall, payment delays significantly undermine timely project completion," scored a mean of 3.92, confirming the dominant consensus among respondents. With 112 affirming this position, the data encapsulates the cumulative effects of delays: timeline extensions, financial wastage, workmanship decline, and logistical interruptions.

The findings presented in Table 8 affirm the empirical linkage between delayed compensation and deteriorating project outcomes. Respondents identified delayed compensation not only as a legal or ethical lapse but as a practical disruptor of progress, cost efficiency, and construction quality..

Table 9 presents respondents' evaluations of various strategic interventions aimed at enhancing the adequacy and timeliness of compensation to affected landowners. Using a 5-point Likert scale, the analysis reflects both the perceived urgency of reform and the favourability of practical solutions that address the current structural deficiencies in compensation practices.

The highest level of consensus emerged around the statement "Setting a statutory deadline (e.g., 90 days) for compensation would reduce delays," which recorded a mean score of 4.01. A total of 114 respondents agreed or strongly agreed, highlighting strong belief in the effectiveness of enforceable timelines. This response underscores frustration with the current open-ended compensation procedures and reflects public demand for legal certainty and accountability. The measure aligns with calls by Okafor (2021) and Kalu (2001), who advocate for fixed legal frameworks to compel prompt compensation as required by Section 44 of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution. Within the lens of Resource Dependence Theory, statutory deadlines would help reduce the monopolistic control that state actors currently hold over the timing of financial disbursements, thereby rebalancing power towards affected landowners.

Closely following was the statement "Independent valuation committees would make the process fairer and quicker," with a mean score of 4.00. The 115 respondents in agreement strongly affirmed that external oversight could eliminate political bias, bureaucratic inertia, and conflicts of interest often seen in government-led valuation processes. This finding supports empirical insights from Eze and Okoro (2023), who identified politicised and outdated valuation methods as major causes of prolonged disputes. Independent committees, potentially including professional valuers, civil society actors, and legal observers, would enhance the integrity of the valuation process and foster public trust in the system.

The third item, "Publishing payment status online would improve transparency," received a mean score of 3.89, with 108 affirming responses. Respondents recognised that digital disclosure could serve as a deterrent to corruption, reduce information asymmetry, and empower claimants to monitor progress in real time. This mirrors global best practices in land governance, such as Kenya's National Land Commission dashboard, which tracks disbursements publicly. The proposal aligns with the transparency agenda advocated in FAO's Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure (FAO, 2012), which stress that affected parties should have easy access to status updates, valuation criteria, and appeal mechanisms.

Table 10
Response on measures to promote adequate payment of compensation to the affected landowners

Statement	1(SD)	2(D)	3(N)	4(A)	5(SA)	Mean Score
Setting a statutory deadline (e.g., 90 days) for compensation would reduce delays.	6	8	22	59	55	4.01
Independent valuation committees would make the process fairer and quicker.	5	10	20	63	52	4.00
Publishing payment status online would improve transparency.	7	11	24	60	48	3.89
Escrow accounts should be used so funds are ready before land is taken.	8	13	25	58	46	3.83
Community liaison officers should be appointed to keep claimants informed.	9	14	27	55	45	3.76

The fourth suggestion, "Escrow accounts should be used so funds are ready before land is taken," earned a mean score of 3.83. A majority of respondents (104) supported the idea that financial pre-commitment would remove the excuse of unavailable funds—a common justification for delay. This reflects findings from Ishizaka (2021), who recommended pre-funding mechanisms as essential risk mitigation in infrastructure finance. Escrow arrangements would ensure liquidity at the point of land acquisition, reduce disputes, and

insulate compensation payments from fiscal volatility or political interference. This measure also addresses one of the primary drivers of dependency highlighted in Resource Dependence Theory: unreliable or delayed access to essential financial resources by contractors and communities.

Finally, the statement "Community liaison officers should be appointed to keep claimants informed" received a mean score of 3.76, indicating broad but relatively lower support. Still, 98 respondents affirmed this measure. The lower mean may reflect less familiarity with the concept rather than disapproval. Liaison officers play a critical role in expectation management, dispute prevention, and fostering ongoing communication between government agencies and affected households. This finding resonates with Nnamani's (2021) study, which revealed that projects with designated community engagement personnel experienced fewer disruptions and higher levels of trust. Though less technical than other reforms, this measure addresses the socio-relational dimension of land acquisition—helping to rebuild confidence in public institutions.

The respondents clearly support institutional reforms that would enhance fairness, timeliness, and transparency in compensation processes. The measures receiving the highest support—statutory deadlines, independent valuation, and online transparency—directly respond to the systemic flaws identified in earlier sections of this study: bureaucratic delay, political interference, and information opacity. Additionally, the support for escrow funding and community liaison officers suggests that respondents recognise both financial and relational gaps that affect project implementation

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political interference, and information opacity. Additionally, the support for escrow funding and community liaison officers suggests that respondents recognise both financial and relational gaps that affect project implementation.

5. Conclusion

This study set out to examine how delays in compensation payments affect the delivery of public infrastructure projects, with a focus on the Affa - Umulumgbe road construction in Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, the study interrogated the root causes of compensation delays, their operational and social impacts, and potential strategies for reform.

The findings reveal that compensation delays are not isolated events but symptoms of broader systemic issues within land administration and project governance. Bureaucratic inefficiencies, outdated valuation frameworks, and politicised processes contribute significantly to protracted disbursements. These delays not only violate constitutional provisions for prompt compensation but also breed mistrust, provoke resistance, and derail the timelines and budgets of critical infrastructure projects.

The study confirms that delayed compensation imposes direct and indirect costs—ranging from community unrest and legal disputes to compromised construction quality and economic losses. In the case of the Affa - Umulumgbe road project, the consequences included extended project timelines, budget inflation, and reputational damage to the government. More importantly, it strained community-government relations and deepened feelings of disenfranchisement among displaced landowners.

In light of these insights, the study concludes that prompt and transparent compensation mechanisms are not just legal obligations but essential enablers of successful project delivery. Without institutional reforms that address the root causes of delay, compensation processes will continue to hinder development efforts and erode public trust in governance systems.

A. Recommendations

To address the challenges uncovered in this study, there is a pressing need to institutionalise enforceable timelines for compensation disbursement. The absence of statutory deadlines under the current Land Use Act enables prolonged administrative inertia. Introducing clear legal provisions, such as a fixed period within which compensation must be paid after land acquisition, is essential to closing the gap between policy intention and lived experience. Such timelines would create a culture of accountability and reduce the space for discretionary delays.

Another critical reform lies in the restructuring of valuation processes. As this study found, politicised and opaque valuation procedures breed mistrust and conflict. Establishing independent valuation panels comprising government valuers, professional estate surveyors, local community representatives, and civil society observers would depersonalise decisions, ensure fair market assessments, and restore credibility to compensation outcomes. Such a participatory framework would also help to contextualise valuation by accounting for socio-cultural dimensions often ignored in standard procedures.

The financing architecture for compensation also requires rethinking. Government agencies responsible for public infrastructure projects should be compelled to set aside funds in dedicated escrow accounts before acquisition notices are served. This practice, already adopted in more efficient jurisdictions, guarantees fund availability and prevents situations where land is acquired without the financial capacity to promptly pay claimants. It also protects project timelines by eliminating one of the most persistent sources of delay.

Transparency must also be embedded into compensation administration through the deployment of digital tracking platforms. By developing centralised portals where claimants can monitor the status of their compensation, including submission, verification, valuation, approval, and payment, authorities can reduce uncertainty, limit speculative misinformation, and curb rent-seeking behaviour within the system. This level of openness will also act as a deterrent to bureaucratic manipulation and corruption.

Effective community engagement should be viewed as a structural component of compensation, not a peripheral courtesy. Appointing trained liaison officers for each affected area would ensure that communities remain informed, involved, and adequately guided throughout the compensation process. These officers would also serve as early warning agents, flagging grievances before they escalate into resistance or disruption.

To support fair compensation practices, valuation registers used in the assessment of land and improvements must be regularly updated to reflect prevailing market conditions. The reliance on outdated registers not only undermines valuation accuracy but also deepens perceptions of injustice, particularly in rapidly urbanising regions like Udi LGA where land prices have appreciated significantly. A biennial review of valuation baselines would help align compensation with economic realities.

Equally important is the provision of legal and technical assistance to affected landowners. Many claimants lack the knowledge to understand or contest compensation outcomes, especially when written in bureaucratic or legal terms. Government and non-state actors should facilitate access to advisory services that help claimants navigate the process, understand their rights, and make informed decisions when faced with offers or disputes.

Finally, this study suggests exploring alternative compensation models that go beyond one-off monetary payments. In contexts where land carries deep ancestral and cultural significance, options such as land-for-land replacement, relocation assistance, or even community equity stakes in infrastructure outcomes may offer more sustainable and acceptable forms of redress. While such approaches require

careful design and piloting, they hold the potential to align compensation processes more closely with local realities and justice expectations.

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