

A Study on Compliance Rates of Landowners with Building Regulations and Plan Approval Procedures in Imota, Ikorodu

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62154/ajesre.2025.019.01014>

Abstract

This study investigates the compliance rates of landowners with building regulations and plan approval procedures in Imota, Ikorodu, Lagos State. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the research combines quantitative data from 284 respondents with qualitative insights to analyze adherence to building control regulations. Despite a high level of awareness, findings indicate that only 60% of respondents complete the full building permit process, which includes submitting documents, paying fees, and obtaining legal titles. While 75% engage in land registration and acquire architectural and structural drawings, bureaucratic inefficiencies, financial constraints, and communication challenges with regulatory bodies hinder full compliance. The study emphasizes the need for streamlined procedures, improved public education, and digital platforms to enhance compliance rates. These insights contribute to urban governance discourse and support policy reforms aimed at promoting safer and more sustainable urban development.

Keywords: Building Regulations, Permit Compliance, Landowners, Urban Planning, Urban Development, Imota.

Introduction

This section lays the foundation for the research by presenting the context, relevance, and focus of the study. It highlights the importance of building regulations in guiding orderly and sustainable urban development, introduces the selected study area Imota in Ikorodu, Lagos State and outlines the challenges associated with compliance. Imota, a rapidly developing peri-urban settlement, has become a hotspot for landowners and developers due to its affordability and increasing access to urban infrastructure (Uroko, 2020). However, as physical development continues to surge, a concerning pattern of non-compliance with building regulations and formal plan approval processes has emerged, raising issues related to safety, environmental impact, and urban disorder.

Building regulations, enforced by key government agencies such as the Lagos State Physical Planning Permit Authority (LASPPPA) and the Lagos State Building Control Agency (LSBCA), are designed to promote structural safety, environmental sustainability, and the efficient use of land for organized urban growth (Akinbile, 2019; Obi, 2021). Despite

these frameworks, implementation and adherence in areas like Imota remain inconsistent due to weak enforcement, limited awareness, and socio-economic challenges. This section also discusses the study's scope and its significance to stakeholders, including urban planners, developers, regulatory bodies, and the broader community, as part of ongoing efforts to improve urban management and development in Lagos State.

Despite the existence of regulatory frameworks, many landowners in Imota proceed with construction activities without obtaining approved building plans or adhering to required regulations, resulting in irregular developments, infrastructural deficiencies, and, in some cases, building failures (Uroko, 2020). Key factors contributing to non-compliance include lack of awareness, the perceived complexity and bureaucracy of the approval process, high associated costs, and inadequate enforcement by relevant authorities (Akinbile, 2019).

This study examines the compliance levels of landowners in Imota regarding building regulations and plan approval procedures. It investigates their awareness of legal requirements, identifies prevalent knowledge gaps, and evaluates how these gaps influence compliance behaviors. Additionally, the research assesses the effects of non-compliance on construction practices and proposes practical strategies to enhance public education, improve stakeholder communication, and strengthen regulatory enforcement mechanisms. Imota is selected as the case study area due to its rapid urbanization and the challenges it exemplifies, which are common in many peri-urban communities across Lagos State.

Despite the presence of building regulations designed to ensure safe and orderly urban development, compliance among landowners in Imota, Ikorodu, Lagos State, remains inconsistent and inadequate. Although there is some awareness of these regulations, many landowners continue construction activities without obtaining the necessary approvals or adhering to established legal frameworks, leading to irregular developments, infrastructural deficiencies, and increased risks of building failures that undermine both safety and sustainable urban growth. Previous studies have identified challenges in enforcing building regulations in rapidly urbanizing areas, citing bureaucratic inefficiencies, high compliance costs, and a lack of public awareness as key obstacles. However, there is limited empirical evidence specifically examining the compliance behaviors of landowners in peri-urban settlements like Imota, where rapid development often surpasses regulatory oversight. To address this gap, this study systematically investigates the compliance rates, awareness levels, and factors influencing landowner behaviors in Imota, aiming to uncover the root causes of non-compliance and assess their impacts, ultimately providing practical recommendations to improve regulatory adherence, strengthen urban governance, and promote safer community development.

The aim of this study is to assess the compliance rate of landowners in Imota with building regulations and plan approval procedures, identify key factors influencing compliance, and highlight knowledge gaps that may hinder adherence to regulatory frameworks.

The Objectives are to:

- i. To assess the compliance rate of landowners in Imota with building regulations and plan approval procedures;
- ii. To identify the factors influencing landowners' adherence to or deviation from building regulations in Imota; and
- iii. To identify knowledge gaps and misconceptions among landowners regarding legal and procedural requirements for building plan approval.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide valuable insights for policymakers, urban planners, construction professionals, and local residents. By highlighting the challenges and drivers of regulatory non-compliance, the findings can guide the development of targeted policies and interventions to enhance compliance. These may include streamlining the building plan approval process, raising public awareness of regulatory requirements, and reinforcing enforcement mechanisms to ensure adherence (Obi, 2021). Enhancing compliance not only mitigates risks associated with unsafe construction practices but also supports the development of safer, more resilient, and better-organized communities. This research contributes to academic discourse while offering practical insights for promoting sustainable urban development in emerging settlements like Imota.

Literature Review

The construction sector is pivotal to national development, contributing significantly to economic growth and urban transformation. However, in Nigeria, the sector continues to face persistent challenges, including inadequate planning, weak regulatory enforcement, and substandard construction practices, leading to frequent building collapses that pose severe risks to public safety and urban sustainability. Prior to 2006, Nigeria lacked a unified national code governing building design, construction, and maintenance, resulting in fragmented and often unsafe practices. Building regulations are fundamental to ensuring safety, health, and environmental sustainability, guiding how buildings are designed, constructed, and used, while building control encompasses the enforcement of these regulations through processes such as permit approvals and site inspections. The absence of standardized regulations during this period led to inconsistencies and widespread non-compliance, making the sector vulnerable to structural failures. Recognizing these issues, Lagos State introduced a significant reform in 2010 through its Urban and Regional Planning and Development Law, which aimed to address the fragmented regulatory landscape by establishing three key authorities: the Lagos State Physical Planning Permit Authority (LASPPPA), responsible for granting planning permits; the Lagos State Building Control Agency (LASBCA), charged with enforcing building standards through inspections and monitoring; and the Lagos State Urban Renewal Agency (LASURA), tasked with urban renewal and slum improvement. This legal framework was intended to separate planning functions from construction oversight, streamlining responsibilities and improving

regulatory clarity (Akinbile, 2019; Obi, 2021). However, despite these advancements, enforcement remains inconsistent, and many developers bypass regulatory procedures. Even after the 2010 reform, the intended improvements have not been fully realized, as studies have shown that limited technical capacity within regulatory bodies, corruption, and low public awareness continue to hinder effective enforcement (Akinbile, 2019). For instance, Uroko (2020) notes that landowners often perceive the approval process as overly bureaucratic and expensive, leading to widespread non-compliance, and this perception, coupled with inadequate enforcement, has contributed to ongoing issues of poor construction quality and building collapses in Lagos State. A critical analysis of existing literature reveals a gap between policy frameworks and practical implementation, as building regulations theoretically establish clear safety and quality standards, yet enforcement mechanisms are often weak. For example, the frequency of site inspections remains low, and the lack of digital integration limits efficiency and transparency (Obi, 2021). Additionally, the reform's emphasis on separating planning from building control has not entirely eliminated overlaps and ambiguities in the roles of LASPPA and LASBCA. Given the persistent issues of non-compliance, particularly in peri-urban areas like Imota, it becomes essential to investigate how landowners perceive and respond to building control regulations. This study seeks to fill a critical gap by examining the factors influencing compliance rates, including socio-economic barriers, bureaucratic challenges, and awareness levels, while also exploring how improving regulatory practices can mitigate risks associated with unsafe construction practices. To enhance building regulation effectiveness, it is crucial to address both structural and procedural shortcomings by streamlining the building approval process, increasing public awareness, and integrating digital platforms for permit applications and inspections. By focusing on Imota as a case study, this research aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on urban governance and sustainable development, proposing practical solutions to bridge the gap between regulatory intentions and actual compliance.

Conceptual Framework

This thesis investigates the level of awareness and compliance among landowners in Imota, Ikorodu, Lagos State, concerning building registration and plan approval processes. It seeks to identify knowledge gaps, common challenges, and the underlying reasons why many landowners commence construction without obtaining proper authorization. Key barriers identified include high permit costs, procedural complexity, lack of accessible information, weak enforcement mechanisms, and limited community engagement. The study also examines how demographic factors such as age, education level, income, access to information, and prior experiences influence landowners' understanding and adherence to regulatory requirements. Additionally, it explores the various channels through which landowners receive information—ranging from official government communication and

local community meetings to digital platforms—and emphasizes the importance of community participation in raising awareness and improving compliance. Grounded in the framework of existing building control laws in Lagos State, the research critically evaluates the effectiveness of current systems and proposes actionable recommendations, including simplifying approval procedures, improving communication strategies, and implementing training and outreach programs. The conceptual framework guides the formulation of survey questions that probe landowners' awareness, experiences with the permit process, and perceived barriers, thereby linking theoretical concepts directly with data collection and interpretation. Ultimately, the study aims to contribute to safer construction practices and foster more sustainable and orderly urban development in rapidly expanding peri-urban communities like Imota.

Conceptual Framework:

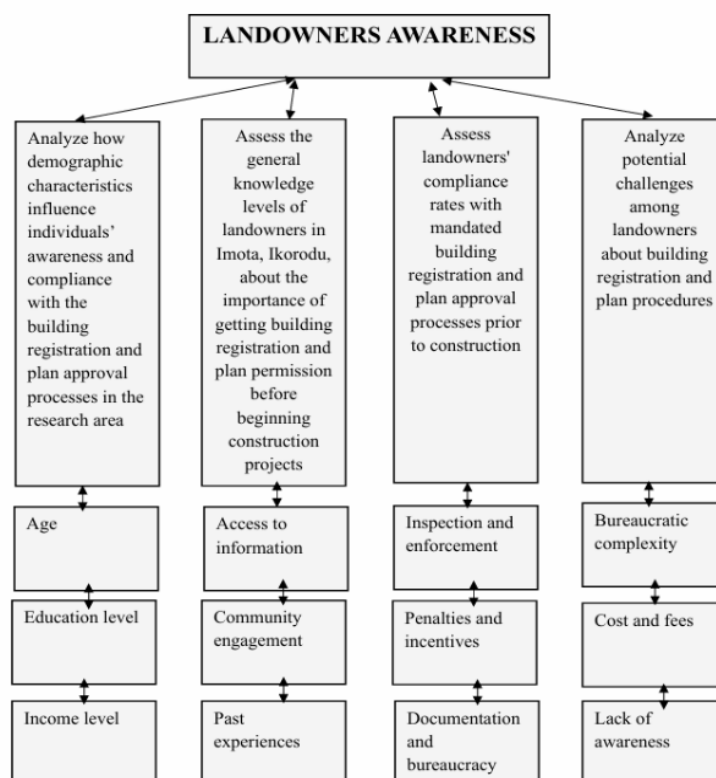


Figure 1: Conceptual Development Framework

Source: Research Fieldwork (2024)

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on several theoretical frameworks to analyze landowner compliance with building registration and plan approval processes in Imota, Ikorodu. Urban Planning Theory underscores the significance of aligning development with zoning laws and land use policies, guiding the study's investigation into how Imota's urban expansion affects

compliance behavior. To capture this dynamic, the questionnaire includes items addressing respondents' understanding of zoning laws and their perceptions of urban planning regulations. Governance Theory emphasizes the role of policy implementation and good governance in ensuring compliance, informing questions related to landowners' experiences with regulatory agencies and their views on the efficiency and fairness of enforcement practices. Public Awareness and Participation Theory focuses on the impact of community engagement and education on understanding construction laws. In line with this perspective, the study incorporates questions about landowners' knowledge sources, including community meetings, government announcements, and digital information, helping to determine whether the lack of awareness stems from inadequate communication or limited community involvement. Legislative and Regulatory Compliance Theory explores how legal knowledge affects adherence to building regulations, shaping the survey's focus on respondents' familiarity with specific building codes and their understanding of procedural requirements. Finally, the Socioeconomic and Cultural Theory examines how factors like income levels, educational background, and community norms influence compliance behaviors, with the survey capturing these variables to assess how socioeconomic status correlates with compliance rates. By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the research framework not only guides data collection but also shapes the interpretation of results, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the interplay between knowledge, perception, and compliance behavior among landowners in Imota. The linkage between theory and data interpretation ensures that the analysis addresses both the structural and perceptual dimensions of building regulation adherence.

Empirical Review

Despite the recognized benefits of land titling, less than 20% of land in Sub-Saharan Africa was titled as of 2008, with West Africa recording an especially low rate of just 2.3%. In Nigeria, the process of land title registration remains expensive, complex, and time-consuming, particularly for low-income individuals, thereby limiting access to formal land ownership. The challenges are exacerbated by outdated manual procedures, insecure data storage systems, and a lack of transparency and integrity across many state land registries. A study by Ojo (2014) in Akure highlighted widespread dissatisfaction with the land title registration process, citing lengthy processing times, limited transparency, and inadequate technological infrastructure, although users viewed the cost of registration favorably. In a related assessment, Thontheh and Omirin (2015) evaluated the Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) in Lagos State, which succeeded in improving tenure security and reducing processing times but did not resolve land disputes, significantly increase the number of processed applications, or enhance government revenue. As of now, title registration in Nigeria can still exceed 120 days due to persistent issues such as high

registration fees, limited technical capacity, excessive land taxation, and an ambiguous legal framework.

Ekemode et al. (2017) investigated factors affecting land title registration in Osun State and identified high costs and corruption among registry staff as major barriers, while organizational structure and personnel competence had a comparatively lesser impact. Similarly, Udo (2017) in Akwa Ibom State highlighted issues such as the lengthy and cumbersome nature of the process, high registration costs, and poor coordination among land administration institutions, recommending fee subsidies and the adoption of computer-aided systems to enhance efficiency. Ojo and Olukolajo (2019) documented challenges in Akure, including bureaucratic delays, outdated procedures, and inadequate facilities, and proposed the integration of modern Land Information System (LIS) and Geographic Information System (GIS) technologies to improve the registration process. In Uyo, Nwanekezie and Mendie (2019) identified costly fees, vague timelines, and poor inter-agency cooperation, recommending measures such as delegating the Governor's consent and reducing charges to accelerate registration. Reflecting these systemic issues, the World Bank's 2011 assessment ranked Nigeria 179th out of 183 countries for property title registration, underscoring the inefficiencies of the system. Notably, in states where the Governor's consent has been delegated, the registration process is significantly faster. While these studies shed light on the multitude of challenges surrounding land title registration in Nigeria, there remains a lack of comparative research examining registration rates between informal markets and government land allotments, as well as limited exploration of gender disparities in access to land registration.

Gaps in Literature

This section identifies the research gaps in studying compliance rates of landowners with building regulations and plan approval procedures in Imota, Ikorodu, Lagos State. While there are broader studies on building regulations, they fail to address the unique context of Imota, leaving key gaps in understanding local dynamics.

- i. **Limited Empirical Studies in Imota:** There is a lack of localized research focusing on landowners' awareness of building regulations in Imota, despite broader studies on building laws (Adepegba, 2014; Akinradewo & Oladinrin, 2018).
- ii. **Localized Context:** Existing studies overlook the unique socio-economic, cultural, and geographical factors of Imota that affect compliance. Imota's distinct community dynamics have not been fully explored in relation to building regulations (Oduwobi, 1999; Jensen & Schnack, 1997).
- iii. **Policy Understanding:** There is insufficient research on how landowners in Imota understand and are impacted by current building policies. Understanding the effectiveness of existing policies in Imota is crucial for sustainable urban development (Ojo & Olukolajo, 2019).

- iv. Barriers to Compliance: Challenges like delays, costs, and lack of information, which hinder compliance, remain underexplored. Addressing these barriers is essential for improving compliance rates in the region (Ekemode et al., 2017; Udo, 2017).

This study aims to fill these gaps by focusing on local dynamics, policy impacts, community participation, and compliance barriers.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative-dominant mixed-method approach to assess landowners' compliance with building regulations and plan approval procedures in Imota, Ikorodu, Lagos State. Structured questionnaires with both closed- and open-ended questions were used to gather measurable data on landowners' awareness, experiences, and challenges, with stratified random sampling ensuring demographic diversity, resulting in 284 valid responses from a calculated sample size of 324. To complement the survey data, informal interviews and focus group discussions were conducted, providing contextual insights. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) to illustrate compliance patterns, and inferential statistics, such as correlation and regression, to examine the relationships between demographic variables and compliance behaviors. The regression analysis assessed the influence of factors like age, education, income, and prior experience on compliance. Reliability of the data was ensured through clear, unbiased questions, personalized instructions, and repeated reminders, with a reliability test conducted using Cronbach's alpha to confirm the internal consistency of the survey instrument. The results revealed moderate compliance: 53.2% of respondents had registered their land, but only 37% had acquired title documents; 65.5% possessed survey plans, and over 67% had architectural or structural drawings. However, only 44.4% submitted their documentation to district offices, and 45.8% paid the required government fees. These findings underscore ongoing challenges, particularly in documentation submission and financial obligations, and emphasize the need for improved public awareness, streamlined procedures, and potential financial support to foster full compliance and enhance enforcement of building regulations in Lagos State.

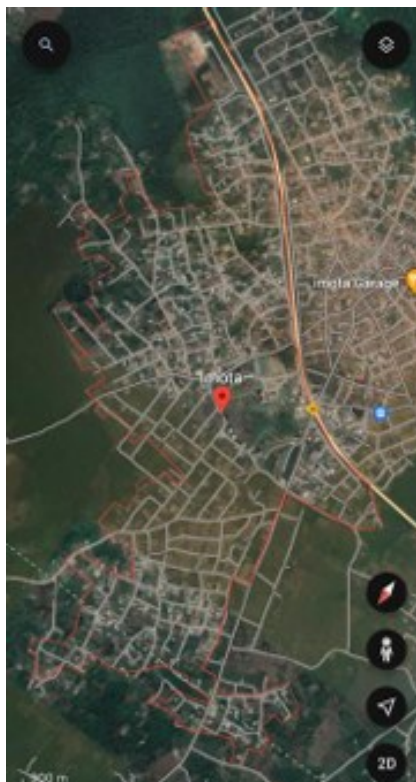


Figure 2: Site Layout map of Imota, Lagos State

Source: Google Earth (2024)

Results and Discussion

Demography of Respondents

In this survey, the findings indicate that while many landowners in Imota, Ikorodu, are relatively aware of the importance of building regulations and plan approval procedures, there remains a substantial gap between awareness and full legal compliance. Out of 284 respondents, 64.08% were male and 35.92% female, with the majority aged between 46–55 years (46.8%). Most participants were well-educated, with 44% holding a B.Sc./HND, 37.3% an M.Sc., and 12% a Ph.D., and many were employed in either government or private sectors. Despite 53.2% of landowners having initiated land registration and over 65% acquiring architectural and structural drawings, only 37% had obtained a valid title document or clearance letter. Furthermore, only 44.4% had submitted required documents to the district office, and just 45.8% confirmed that government fees had been paid following plan approval. This shows that while a significant number of respondents are engaging with some regulatory steps, full adherence to all necessary procedures remains low. Contributing factors include fragmented access to information, reliance on informal sources like friends and family, and limited use of digital or formal media channels. The study highlights that non-compliance is not necessarily due to a lack of education or awareness, but is largely driven by institutional and systemic challenges. Key barriers include bureaucratic bottlenecks, inconsistent communication from government agencies,

unfriendly or inaccessible staff, financial burdens, and long delays in obtaining approvals. Additionally, concerns about corruption and unclear land ownership titles further discourage landowners from completing the regulatory process. Although 40.8% had paid land use charges and 39.4% had gone through building permit processes, many had not completed the full chain of legal documentation and approvals. To improve compliance, agencies like LASPPPA and LASBCA must lead coordinated awareness campaigns at the community level, simplify and digitalize procedures, and introduce subsidized payment plans where necessary. Training staff in customer service, enhancing transparency, and actively addressing corruption would also restore trust in the system. Future research could explore compliance trends across other regions, track changes over time, and assess the impact of digital solutions in streamlining building control processes. Ultimately, the findings underscore the urgent need for a more transparent, accessible, and efficient regulatory framework to promote safer and more sustainable development in Imota and similar communities across Lagos State.

Table 1: What is your gender?

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Female	102	35.92%
Male	182	64.08%

Author's Fieldwork (2024)

Table 2: What age range do you fall under?

Variable	Frequency	Percent
26 – 35	5	1.8%
36 - 45	25	8.8%
46 – 55	133	46.8%
56 - Above	92	32.4%
Below 25	29	10.2%

Author's Fieldwork (2024)

Table 3: What is your highest academic qualification?

Variable	Frequency	Percent
B.SCE / H.ND	125	44.0%
M.SC	106	37.3%
PH.D	34	12.0%
SSCE	19	6.7%

Author's Fieldwork (2024)

Table 4: What is your employment status?

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Employed	172	60.6%
Retired	24	8.5%
Self-employed	88	31.0%

Author's Fieldwork (2024)

Presentation of Results and Discussion by Objective

In this study on the compliance rates of landowners with building regulations and plan approval procedures in Imota, Ikorodu, both descriptive and inferential statistical methods will be used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics—such as means, frequencies, and percentages—will offer a clear overview of the levels of awareness and compliance among landowners, helping to quantify how many are actively engaging with required building regulations and approval protocols (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Inferential statistics, such as correlation and regression analysis, will help identify relationships between key variables like demographic characteristics, education levels, employment status, and access to information, and how this influence compliance behaviour (Field, 2018). To ensure data accuracy, strategies will be employed to minimize both response bias and non-response bias. Survey questions will be crafted to be clear, neutral, and non-leading, incorporating Likert-scale options for more nuanced insights (Bryman, 2016). To address non-response bias, reminders will be sent, and efforts will be made to ensure accessibility for respondents from different demographic backgrounds (Fowler, 2014). Additionally, personalizing the survey to reflect the specific concerns of landowners in Imota will improve relevance and encourage participation (Converse & Presser, 1986).

Data collection was carried out using a structured questionnaire with two main sections: one focused on demographic details and the other on building regulation awareness and compliance. Of the 284 respondents, 64.08% were male and 35.92% female, with most aged 46–55 (46.8%) or 56 and above (32.4%). The sample was well-educated, with 44% holding a B.Sc./HND, 37.3% an M.Sc., and 12% a Ph.D. Employment status revealed that 60.6% were employed, 31% self-employed, and 8.5% retired, with 46.1% working in the government sector. Regarding property tenure, 33.5% had owned their properties for 6–10 years, and 95.8% owned residential buildings. For information sourcing, 59.9% relied on government offices, 26.1% on friends and family, and only a few accessed print media (3.9%) or online platforms (2.1%). While 53.2% reported undergoing the land registration process, only 37% had successfully obtained title documents or clearance letters. However, 65.5% had secured their land survey plans, and a similar percentage had acquired architectural (65.5%) and structural drawings (67.3%).

Despite progress in acquiring technical drawings, compliance with administrative and financial requirements was inconsistent. Only 44.4% of respondents confirmed submitting the necessary documents to the district office, while 38% had not and 17.6% were unsure.

Similarly, just 45.8% reported paying required government fees post-approval, with 36.3% not having paid and 18% uncertain. These findings suggest that while awareness of technical requirements like survey plans and drawings is moderately high, significant gaps remain in legal documentation, fee payment, and document submission—likely due to procedural complexities, unclear communication, and financial constraints. The results point to the need for clearer, community-based awareness campaigns, streamlined approval procedures, improved staff responsiveness at district offices, and possibly subsidized regulatory fees. Strengthening these areas can enhance overall compliance and promote safer, more structured urban development in Imota and similar communities in Lagos State.

Sticking to the Required Building Registration and Plan Approval Processes Before Starting Construction

Table 12: To what level did you comply with Lagos State land registration process?

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Compliant	103	36.6%
Neutral	43	15.1%
Not Compliant	30	10.6%
Slightly Compliant	24	8.5%
Very Compliant	84	29.6%

Author's Fieldwork (2024)

Table 13: To what level did you comply with the payment of land use charge?

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Compliant	94	33.1%
Neutral	38	13.4%
Not Compliant	30	10.6%
Slightly Compliant	6	2.1%
Very Compliant	116	40.8%

Author's Fieldwork (2024)

Table 14: To what level did you comply with Lagos State Physical Planning Permit Authority (LASPPPA)?

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Compliant	106	37.3%
Neutral	46	16.2%
Not Compliant	30	10.6%
Slightly Compliant	11	3.9%
Very Compliant	91	32.0%

Author's Fieldwork (2024)

Table 15: To what level did you comply with Lagos State building permit and plan approval processes?

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Compliant	112	39.4%
Neutral	49	17.3%
Not Compliant	18	6.3%
Slightly Compliant	23	8.1%
Very Compliant	82	28.9%

Author's Fieldwork (2024)

Table 16: To what level did you comply with Lagos State Building Control Agency (LASBCA)?

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Compliant	110	38.7%
Neutral	57	20.1%
Not Compliant	18	6.3%
Slightly Compliant	18	6.3%
Very Compliant	81	28.5%

Author's Fieldwork (2024)

Table 17: To what level did you comply with Lagos State Urban Renewal Agency (LASURA)?

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Compliant	69	24.3%
Neutral	125	44.0%
Not Compliant	37	13.0%
Slightly Compliant	5	1.8%
Very Compliant	48	16.9%

Author's Fieldwork (2024)

Table 18: To what level did you comply with control standards performance standards?

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Compliant	79	27.8%
Neutral	76	26.8%
Not Compliant	42	14.8%
Slightly Compliant	17	6.0%
Very Compliant	70	24.6%

Author's Fieldwork (2024)

Table 19: Challenges Faced in Lagos State's Building Registration and Plan Approval

Barrier	Highly Influenced	Influenced	Moderately Influenced	Not Influenced	Slightly Influenced
Poor communication between the planning office and developers	75 (26.4%)	106 (37.3%)	50 (17.6%)	47 (16.5%)	6 (2.1%)
Lack of transparency in approval process	89 (31.3%)	85 (29.9%)	63 (22.2%)	41 (14.4%)	6 (2.1%)
Unfriendliness of staff of building registration and control agencies	69 (24.3%)	108 (38.0%)	59 (20.8%)	30 (10.6%)	18 (6.3%)
High cost of tax clearance	131 (46.1%)	81 (28.5%)	35 (12.3%)	30 (10.6%)	7 (2.5%)
High cost and extended period for letter of consent / C of O	159 (56.0%)	71 (25.0%)	24 (8.5%)	24 (8.5%)	6 (2.1%)
High cost of paying professionals (EIA officials, architects, etc.)	105 (37.0%)	107 (37.7%)	18 (6.3%)	35 (12.3%)	19 (6.7%)
Design plan not meeting control guidelines	59 (20.8%)	112 (39.4%)	71 (25.0%)	35 (12.3%)	7 (2.5%)
Land title and ownership dispute	82 (28.9%)	88 (31.0%)	44 (15.5%)	29 (10.2%)	41 (14.4%)
Corruption and bureaucracy	135 (47.5%)	64 (22.5%)	43 (15.1%)	29 (10.2%)	13 (4.6%)
Limited access to financing	96 (33.8%)	86 (30.3%)	32 (11.3%)	42 (14.8%)	28 (9.9%)
No time to go to office, would prefer online process	116 (40.8%)	77 (27.1%)	36 (12.7%)	42 (14.8%)	13 (4.6%)

Author's Fieldwork (2024)

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study investigated the compliance rates of landowners with building regulations and plan approval procedures in Imota, Ikorodu, Lagos State. Findings indicate a significant disparity between awareness and full compliance, with many landowners only partially fulfilling the requirements for legal construction. While some had engaged with certain aspects—such as land registration or obtaining architectural drawings—few completed the entire process, including document submission and fee payment. The study attributes this gap to bureaucratic challenges, unclear government communication, negative public perception of regulatory agencies, financial limitations, and concerns about corruption and land disputes. Notably, the demographic characteristics of respondents (most of whom were educated and employed) suggest that the issue is less about capacity and more about systemic inefficiencies and institutional mistrust. Without comprehensive compliance, risks such as building collapses, legal penalties, and unsafe development continue to threaten the built environment in the region.

To improve landowner compliance with building regulations and plan approval procedures in Imota, a multi-level reform strategy is essential. First, regulatory bodies such as the Lagos State Physical Planning Permit Authority (LASPPPA) and the Lagos State Building Control Agency (LASBCA) should intensify grassroots awareness campaigns through local community engagements, radio programs, and digital outreach. Simplifying the approval process and providing online platforms for submission and tracking of documents will reduce stress and enhance transparency. Financial incentives, including phased payments or discounts for early compliance, could further encourage adherence. Equally important is the need to train regulatory agency staff on customer service ethics to foster a friendlier, more responsive administrative environment. Lastly, future policy efforts should target systemic inefficiencies and corruption, ensuring that the regulatory framework is accessible, fair, and efficient. By implementing these measures, Lagos State can foster safer, more regulated urban development and build greater public trust in the planning system.

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