

INFLUENCE OF RURAL ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE DECADENCE ON AGRARIAN COMMERCIALIZATION AND RURAL TRANSFORMATION IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA.

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DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.67163/njsr.4.2.2026.97>

Abstract

The study investigated the impact of rural road infrastructure decadence on agrarian commercialization and rural transformation in Anambra State, Nigeria. The aim was to evaluate how transport bottlenecks restrict market integration among local smallholders. Geographically scoped to four agricultural Local Government Areas—Anambra West, Ayamelum, Ogbaru, and Orumba North—the study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey research design. Primary data were collected from 388 purposively selected commercializing smallholder farmers using structured 5-point Likert scale questionnaires. The theoretical framework of the study was anchored on Spatial Equilibrium Theory, Agricultural Location Theory, and Induced Innovation Theory. Methodologically, the data were analyzed using EViews 13 by executing a non-linear Fractional Response Model specified via a logit link function. The findings of the study revealed that all evaluated logistical bottlenecks exert a statistically significant negative influence on the dependent index: high transport fares ($\beta = -0.4124$, $p = 0.0000$), hours of travel delay ($\beta = -0.3211$, $p = 0.0001$), rate of crop spoilage ($\beta = -0.5847$, $p = 0.0000$), and truck breakdowns ($\beta = -0.1985$, $p = 0.0053$), with McFadden Pseudo R^2 standing at 0.3842 . The study concluded that severe infrastructural decay serves as a binding spatial constraint that traps farming communities in low-yield subsistence loops. Therefore, the study recommended that the state government should establish localized rural industrial processing parks, deploy community-led feeder road rehabilitation programs, and invest in solar-powered cold-storage logistics hubs at central rural markets to mitigate transit friction and preserve farm gate wealth.

Keywords: Agrarian Commercialization, Feeder Roads, Infrastructure Decadence, Rural Transformation.

1.1 Introduction

The structural transformation of rural economies from subsistence-based agricultural systems to highly commercialized, market-integrated networks represents a fundamental cornerstone of sustainable economic

development. At the core of this systemic evolution is the physical connectivity provided by rural transport infrastructure, which serves as the primary conduit for distributing agricultural surpluses, deploying modern industrial inputs, and integrating peripheral communities into the macro-economy. When rural road networks are maintained at optimal operational thresholds, they minimize spatial friction, mitigate transaction costs, and accelerate the commercialization index of smallholder agrarian households. Conversely, the structural deterioration and progressive decay of these logistical links create formidable physical barriers that isolate remote producing regions from urban consumption centers. This infrastructural deficit forces a structural retreat back into localized subsistence cycles, capping farm output capacities to match immediate household survival needs rather than profit-maximizing open trade. Consequently, rural road infrastructure decadence operates not merely as an engineering failure, but as a binding geographic and economic constraint that stalls the broader multi-dimensional processes of rural modernization and agrarian value chain optimization.

From a global perspective, the alignment of competitive transport logistics with agricultural value chains remains a critical driver of structural transformation across rural territories. Modern international developmental frameworks increasingly demonstrate that sustainable improvements in rural living standards are directly contingent upon the elimination of spatial infrastructure bottlenecks. In highly integrated economies, optimized logistics networks enable smallholders to respond dynamically to urban price signals, reduce post-harvest commodity degradation, and maximize total factor productivity. Recent international assessments indicate that advanced economies benefit from extensive, paved feeder road networks that guarantee year-round market accessibility, thereby keeping agrarian transaction costs below prohibitive thresholds. However, globally decentralized regions within developing territories continue to suffer from systematic maintenance backlogs, where unpaved earth tracks isolate over a billion agrarian actors from regional wholesale nodes. International regulatory organizations underscore that this persistent global infrastructure gap exacerbates spatial inequality, worsens rural-urban income disparities, and directly undermines multinational food security initiatives by choking off primary distribution corridors.

In the African continent, the crisis of rural road infrastructure neglect constitutes a primary structural bottleneck obstructing the realization of comprehensive agricultural commercialization and sustainable regional development. Despite the continent possessing vast tracts of arable land and a substantial demographic concentration of agrarian labor, Sub-Saharan Africa features some of the lowest rural accessibility index scores globally. Scholarly evidence and continental reports indicate that a significant proportion of African smallholders reside more than two kilometers from an all-season paved road, leaving them highly vulnerable to seasonal weather disruptions and localized economic isolation. During heavy rain cycles, unpaved feeder tracks transform into impassable mud traps, driving up

transport tariffs as commercial vehicle operators demand steep risk premiums to cover fuel overheads and severe vehicle damage. Institutional studies by continental development banks reveal that these prohibitive transport costs and extended transit delays trigger massive post-harvest crop spoilage, draining vital liquidity from rural micro-enterprises. Consequently, the lack of robust logistical corridors locks massive sub-Saharan agricultural zones into low-equilibrium poverty traps, preventing rural transformation by severing the links between local production hubs and expanding urban markets.

Shifting the analytical focus to the contemporary Nigerian macro-economy, the structural decay of rural infrastructure presents a severe impediment to domestic agrarian transformation, particularly within food-producing regions like Anambra State. National statistical evaluations reveal that while agriculture employs a substantial share of the domestic labor force, its structural contribution to net economic output is heavily suppressed by severe farm-to-market logistics friction. Across the riverine and agrarian floodplains of Anambra State, including major agricultural engines within Anambra West, Ayamelum, Ogbaru, and Orumba North, unpaved earth roads suffer from systematic public maintenance deficits. These local transport tracks are highly susceptible to severe seasonal washouts and gully propagation, which isolates entire communities during peak harvest intervals. Localized empirical data shows that smallholders face exorbitant transport fares to haul crops to urban market centers like Onitsha, forcing them to sell perishable harvests at depressed prices to village middlemen to avoid total spoilage. Official national planning reports emphasize that this lack of reliable physical connectivity de-incentivizes private investments in modern farming machinery, traps farming families in low-yield subsistence loops, and directly fuels urban food inflation by disrupting primary supply logistics.

Against this backdrop, a critical and mathematically rigorous investigation into the structural linkages between deteriorating feeder road networks and smallholder market integration deficits becomes highly imperative. While traditional linear econometric models often fail to capture the bounded realities of agricultural trade data, this study deploys a non-linear Fractional Response Model to systematically analyze how specific infrastructural bottlenecks reshape agrarian outcomes in Anambra State. Specifically, this research seeks to address several fundamental questions: What is the effect of high transport fares due to bad roads on the agrarian commercialization and rural transformation index in Anambra State, Nigeria? What is the effect of hours of travel delay to urban markets on the agrarian commercialization and rural transformation index in Anambra State, Nigeria? What is the effect of the rate of crop spoilage during transit on the agrarian commercialization and rural transformation index in Anambra State, Nigeria? Finally, what is the effect of truck breakdowns on rural routes on the agrarian commercialization and rural transformation index in Anambra State, Nigeria?

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Rural Road Infrastructure Decadence

Rural road infrastructure decadence represents the progressive physical deterioration and structural neglect of feeder transportation networks linking peripheral agrarian settlements to centralized urban economic nodes. According to Oladosu et al. (2022), rural road networks in developing economies frequently suffer from systematic maintenance deficits, transforming unpaved earth tracks into structurally compromised channels susceptible to severe environmental erosion. This physical decay manifests through extensive pothole propagation, gully formation, severe waterlogging during rainy cycles, and complete seasonal route washouts (Adebayo & Ojo, 2021). Within Sub-Saharan Africa, the breakdown of subgrade soils on unpaved agricultural tracks systematically increases spatial isolation by creating impassable mud traps during critical harvest intervals (Eze & Nwokolo, 2023).

This physical infrastructure decay directly serves as a primary spatial friction mechanism that isolates rural manufacturing and agrarian zones from open regional market access. Localized distribution cartography indicates that when rural pathways fall below baseline operational standards, logistic vehicle owners reduce fleet sizes or avoid these routes entirely due to extreme vehicle tier wear (Ude & Onwuka, 2024). Consequently, rural road decadence operates as more than a mere logistical inconvenience; it forms a binding geographic constraint that reduces the geographical mobility of rural capital and human labor (World Bank, 2020). The resulting friction elevates structural transaction fees, transforming physically short geographic distances into broad economic distances that depress rural farm gate development.

2.1.2 Agrarian Commercialization

Agrarian commercialization defines the systemic transition of agricultural households from production intended strictly for immediate domestic subsistence toward market-integrated production characterized by deliberate product monetization. This structural shift is empirically quantified through the commercialization index, which registers the ratio of gross crop production market value directly sold to the gross total value of agricultural output harvested within a specific cycle (Govere et al., 1999). According to Barrett (2008), the commercialization continuum reflects the degree of integration into formal trading systems, enabling smallholder households to shift from non-monetized farming to profit-maximizing commercial production. True commercialization requires smallholders to respond to open urban price signals, optimizing crop selection to capture market surpluses rather than minimizing risk for household survival (Ochieng et al., 2020).

The process of shifting smallholder farmers toward active market commercialization is deeply contingent on the structural efficiency of localized agricultural value chains. When farmers transition into commercial spaces, they rely on competitive trading nodes to acquire industrial inputs like fertilizers and improved seedlings, while deploying their localized crop surpluses through external transport agents (Pingali, 1997). If structural logistics are efficient, commercialization boosts net rural household capital accumulation, driving specialized labor growth and enhancing financial liquidity within agrarian regions (Rada et al., 2021). However, when market integration channels face severe physical bottlenecks, smallholders retreat back into subsistence modes, capping production volumes to match family caloric consumption needs.

2.1.3 Rural Transformation

Rural transformation denotes a comprehensive, multi-dimensional process of structural change wherein rural economies transition from low-productivity, purely agrarian livelihoods into diversified, high-value economic ecosystems. This systemic evolution is marked by rising farm productivity, the rapid expansion of non-farm micro-enterprises, enhanced spatial connectivity with urban consumption cores, and rising rural living standards (Berdegué et al., 2014). Mellor (1976) notes that successful rural transformation triggers strong multiplier links, as increased farming profits flow directly into local service nodes, construction sectors, and small agro-processing factories. This dynamic process fundamentally restructures village economies, reducing historical urban-rural income disparities by absorbing rural youth into non-farm wage employment (Timmer, 1988).

Modern development frameworks conceptualize rural transformation as an emergent outcome driven by infrastructure modernization, digital technology integration, and access to capital networks (IFAD, 2016). When a rural region undergoes transformation, its demographic and economic features shift away from high labor concentration in raw primary farming toward value-added processing and commercial services (Losch et al., 2012). This systemic restructuring depends directly on continuous physical connectivity with external trading networks. Without robust connectivity, regional resource flows stagnate, freezing rural spaces in historical poverty loops characterized by low asset accumulation and high vulnerability to local environmental shocks.

2.1.4 Structural Logistical Bottlenecks (Fares, Delays, Spoilage, and Breakdowns)

Structural logistical bottlenecks represent the specific physical and operational inefficiencies that drive up transaction costs and disrupt value chain delivery along decaying rural road corridors. These bottlenecks are operationalized through four core dimensions: high transport fares, extended hours of travel delay, elevated rates of post-harvest crop spoilage, and frequent logistics vehicle breakdowns (Porter, 2014). High transport fares emerge because

vehicle operators demand steep risk premiums to cover vehicle maintenance and fuel consumption on degraded, unpaved paths (Kamal, 2023). These elevated tariffs push farm-to-market shipping costs to prohibitive levels, reducing the net margins realized by smallholders and breaking regional market linkages (Stifel et al., 2016).

Extended hours of travel delay and frequent vehicle breakdowns work together to create severe time-based disruptions for rural agricultural logistics. Pothole-riddled, waterlogged roads slow transport trucks down to walking speeds, turning short delivery trips into multi-day journeys (Tione, 2021). These delays are often worsened by structural vehicle damage like broken axles and suspension failures, leaving transport trucks stranded in remote areas (Ogunsanya & Carroo, 2022). For highly perishable commodities such as vegetables, fruits, and fresh cassava tubers, these combined delays lead to rapid post-harvest crop spoilage (Minten et al., 2020). This massive loss of harvest weight and quality deprives smallholders of their potential earnings and directly prevents sustainable rural transformation.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The structural interconnections between infrastructural deficit and rural agrarian transformation are parsed through three complementary theories. First, the spatial equilibrium theory by Samuelson (1952) assumes that localized regional markets achieve pricing equilibrium via unhindered arbitrage, contingent on near-zero friction in logistics distribution. Applied to rural logistics, it establishes that high transport costs break market connectivity, driving regional pricing variations. Critics, including Krugman (1991), argue that it ignores imperfect market monopolies, continuous manufacturing agglomeration, and regional industrial grouping scales. Nevertheless, it remains relevant by modeling how unpaved farm tracks isolate Anambra farmers, elevating transport charges, compressing profit margins, and restricting commercialization.

Transitioning from price mechanics to geographic configurations, the agricultural location theory by von Thünen (1826) assumes that spatial agricultural layout is directly dictated by transportation outlays to a central consuming node [2]. Its application implies that land rent drops as distance from the urban center increases. This framework is heavily criticized by modern spatial economists for assuming an unbending, uniform geographic landscape with isotropic transport options. Despite this limitation, it applies to this study by conceptualizing how poor roads in riverine communities like Ogbaru artificially distort economic distance, causing high crop spoilage, and pushing distant nodes back into basic subsistence loops. [1] Finally, shifting toward behavioral dynamics, the induced innovation theory by Hayami and Ruttan (1971) assumes that resource limits force technical alterations, driving targeted institutional and public capital investments to relax developmental bottlenecks. Applied to rural development, it clarifies how institutional bottlenecks suppress modernization incentives. Scholars like Beckmann (1974) criticize it for overestimating local governance

responsiveness and institutional adjustment efficiency. However, it underpins this study by demonstrating how severe rural road decay serves as a negative shock that removes incentives for private machine adoption, thereby halting long-term structural transformation.

2.3 Empirical Review

Dere, Ahmad, and Rafiu (2023) investigated the influence of rural road infrastructure on agricultural output in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria. The study aimed to examine how the condition and availability of rural road infrastructure influence agricultural output, particularly in relation to the movement and marketing of agricultural produce. The study was geographically scoped to Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State and focused on farmers and the relationship between rural road conditions and agricultural activities. The researchers adopted a survey-based research design and used purposive sampling across the wards in the study area. Primary data were collected from 400 farmers through questionnaires and structured interview schedules, while secondary data were also utilised. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and means, were employed to summarise the data, while chi-square analysis was used to examine the relationship between agricultural variables and rural road infrastructure variables. Linear regression was also used to test the stated hypothesis. The findings showed a significant relationship between agricultural development variables and the condition of rural road surfaces, with the chi-square analysis reporting a significance level of $p = 0.00$. The study also indicated that poor rural road conditions affected farmers' access to markets and the movement of agricultural produce. The study concluded that the condition of rural roads is an important factor influencing agricultural development and output in Dekina Local Government Area. It recommended regular maintenance and expansion of rural road infrastructure through the use of locally available resources and technology to improve agricultural development, farmers' income, and general welfare.

Afolabi and Enekole (2012) examined the impact of road transport on agricultural development in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria. The study aimed to assess the role of road transportation in agricultural development and determine how the state of road infrastructure affects farmers and the movement of agricultural produce. The study was geographically limited to Ilorin East Local Government Area and focused on farmers and agricultural activities within the area. Both primary and secondary data were employed. The researchers systematically distributed 150 questionnaires to farmers and complemented the survey with focus group discussions to obtain additional information on the effects of road transportation on agricultural and rural development. Descriptive and analytical statistical techniques were used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that road transport had both positive and negative effects on agricultural development. In particular, poor road conditions increased the cost of transporting agricultural produce, which

consequently affected farmers' income. The study established that an efficient road transportation system is important for facilitating the movement of agricultural products from farms to markets and urban centres. The researchers concluded that improving rural road transportation would contribute to increased agricultural production and development. They recommended improvement of the road transport system and encouraged greater community participation in the development and maintenance of road infrastructure in the study area.

Fakayode, Omotesho, Tsoho, and Ajayi (2008) examined the economic relationship between rural infrastructure and agricultural productivity in Nigeria through a survey of farm households in Ekiti State. The study aimed to assess the availability of rural infrastructure and determine its influence on the productivity of farm households. The study covered farm households in Ekiti State and considered a broad range of rural infrastructure, including roads, health centres, market centres, water supply, electricity, banking facilities, communication facilities, and educational institutions. Data were collected from 100 farm households and 15 discussant groups selected across the study area. The researchers employed farm-level data and used Total Factor Productivity (TFP) and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis to examine agricultural productivity and the contribution of infrastructure. The findings showed that many of the roads in the study area were in a poor state of repair, while the availability of other infrastructure varied considerably across the communities. The computed infrastructural index was relatively low at 0.32, indicating inadequate infrastructure provision. The average food-farm Total Factor Productivity was 2.4, while land size, fertiliser use, and the rural infrastructure index were found to significantly influence farm productivity. The study concluded that inadequate rural infrastructure constitutes an important constraint to agricultural productivity among farm households. It recommended the rehabilitation of rural roads, reduction in transportation fares, and further research into labour-saving technologies that could improve agricultural production and productivity.

Felloni, Wahl, and Wandschneider (2001) explored the relationship between infrastructure and agricultural production using cross-country evidence and evidence from China. The study aimed to assess the effect of transportation infrastructure and electricity availability on agricultural production and productivity. The study had a broad geographical scope, employing cross-sectional data from 83 countries and data from 30 provinces in China. The researchers examined agricultural production and productivity in relation to transportation infrastructure and electricity availability. Econometric analysis was employed to determine whether infrastructure variables were significant predictors of agricultural production and productivity. The analysis included measures of the value of agricultural production, land productivity, and labour productivity for the cross-country and Chinese datasets. The findings showed that road density and electricity availability were significant predictors of agricultural production and productivity across the datasets. The results further demonstrated the

importance of transportation infrastructure and electricity in the development and modernisation of agriculture, particularly in the Chinese context. The study concluded that access to adequate transportation infrastructure and electricity is crucial to agricultural modernisation because such infrastructure facilitates production, mobility, and economic activity in rural areas. It recommended increased investment in transportation infrastructure and electricity provision as important components of agricultural development policies.

Overall, the reviewed empirical studies establish a consistent relationship between rural infrastructure, particularly road transportation, and agricultural production or productivity. The Nigerian studies demonstrate that poor road conditions can increase transportation costs, restrict farmers' access to markets, reduce farm income, and constrain agricultural productivity. The cross-country evidence further supports the importance of transportation infrastructure as a significant determinant of agricultural production and productivity. However, the studies differ in geographical coverage, methodological approaches, and analytical techniques. While some relied predominantly on descriptive statistics and chi-square analysis, others employed OLS regression and Total Factor Productivity measures. These differences provide scope for further empirical investigation using more recent data and appropriate econometric techniques to establish the specific effect of rural road infrastructure on agricultural output within the context of the study area.

3.1 Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional survey research design to explore the structural constraints impeding rural transformation in Nigeria. The population of the study comprises all smallholder agrarian households operating within the major agricultural zones of Anambra State. To ensure data relevance, a purposive sampling technique is applied to select 400 commercializing smallholder farmers across four structurally vulnerable Local Government Areas, specifically Anambra West, Ayamelum, Ogbaru, and Orumba North. This specific sample size guarantees adequate representation of active market participants facing localized transportation constraints. The primary instrument for data collection is a structured, field-administered questionnaire divided into two key components: Section A utilizes a 5-point Likert scale to operationalize the independent variables across transport fares, travel delays, crop spoilage, and truck breakdowns, while Section B captures the bounded indicators of market participation. Data collection procedures involve direct field distribution through trained local research assistants to maximize the retrieval rate and handle language contextualization. The suitable analytical framework relies on the Fractional Response Model (FRM) specified via a non-linear logit link function, adapting the empirical econometric foundations established by Papke and Wooldridge (1996) for bounded fractional indices. Method of data analysis involves executing Generalized Linear Models (GLM) with

a Binomial distribution family in EViews 13, enabling robust estimation of coefficients and partial derivatives without violating bounded outcome parameters.

4.0 Results and Data Presentation

This section evaluates the data collection efficiency across the four agrarian Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Anambra State. A total of 400 structured questionnaires were distributed to purposively sampled smallholder farmers, out of which 388 instruments were successfully retrieved and verified for final estimation. This yields an exceptionally high overall retrieval rate of 97.0%. On an individual spatial basis, field data collection revealed uniform engagement and minimal friction. Orumba North recorded the highest retrieval efficiency at 99.0% (99 out of 100 instruments), followed closely by Ayamelum at 98.0% (98 instruments), Anambra West at 96.0% (96 instruments), and Ogbaru at 95.0% (95 instruments). According to econometric and survey literature, a response rate exceeding 70% is highly satisfactory and sufficient to suppress non-response bias. Consequently, the 97.0% retrieval rate established in this study provides a robust empirical foundation. It ensures that the sample size ($N = 388$) possesses the requisite statistical power and structural validity to conduct advanced non-linear diagnostics and fractional response modeling.

4.1 Response Rate of the Survey Instruments

Table 4.1: Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval Rate Across LGAs

Local Government Area (LGA)	Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Retrieved	Retrieval Rate (%)
Anambra West	100	96	96.0%
Ayamelum	100	98	98.0%
Ogbaru	100	95	95.0%
Orumba North	100	99	99.0%
Total	400	388	97.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 4.1 reveals that out of 400 distributed instruments, 388 copies were successfully retrieved and validated, yielding an overall survey response rate of 97.0%. Across the individual strata, Orumba North recorded the highest retrieval rate at 99.0% with 99 copies, followed closely by Ayamelum at 98.0% with 98 copies, while Anambra West and Ogbaru registered validated retrieval volumes of 96 copies and 95 copies, representing specific response rates of 96.0% and 95.0% respectively. This high rate of field returns confirms

excellent survey coverage and minimizes non-response bias, validating the field dataset for robust empirical estimation within the state.

4.2 Reliability and Validity Diagnostics

Table 4.2: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients

Construct / Latent Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
High Transport Fares (HTF)	3	0.842
Hours of Travel Delay (HTD)	3	0.819
Rate of Crop Spoilage (RCS)	3	0.885
Truck Breakdowns (TB)	3	0.854
Agrarian Commercialization (ACI)	3	0.811
System-wide Scale	15	0.868

Source: EViews 13 Output Diagnostics, 2026.

Table 4.2 shows that all the evaluated latent constructs surpass the standard psychometric reliability threshold of 0.70. The individual Cronbach's Alpha coefficients are 0.842 for High Transport Fares, 0.819 for Hours of Travel Delay, 0.885 for Rate of Crop Spoilage, 0.854 for Truck Breakdowns, and 0.811 for the Agrarian Commercialization Index. The comprehensive system-wide scale registers an overall alpha coefficient of 0.868 across all 15 operationalized items, proving high internal consistency and indicating that the measurement instruments are highly reliable for subsequent econometric testing.

Table 4.3: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

Diagnostic Metric	Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.834
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: Approx. Chi-Square (χ^2)	1432.87
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: df	105
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: Significance (p-value)	0.000

Source: EViews 13 Output Diagnostics, 2026.

Table 4.3 indicates that the field data possesses excellent structural properties for factor analysis and structural modeling. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy

stands at a high value of 0.834, confirming that the sample size is completely sufficient relative to the number of measurement items. Furthermore, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity yields an approximate Chi-Square value of 1432.87 with 105 degrees of freedom, which is highly statistically significant at the 1% level given its probability value of 0.000, proving that the underlying data matrix is non-identity and highly suitable for structural processing.

4.3 Pre-Estimation Econometric Diagnostics

Table 4.4: Collinearity Diagnostics (Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor)

Independent Variable	Tolerance	Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)
High Transport Fares (HTF)	0.612	1.634
Hours of Travel Delay (HTD)	0.548	1.825
Rate of Crop Spoilage (RCS)	0.591	1.692
Truck Breakdowns (TB)	0.673	1.486

Source: EViews 13 Output Diagnostics, 2026.

Table 4.4 reveals that multicollinearity does not pose an econometric threat to the stability of the empirical estimations. The tolerance values are 0.612 for High Transport Fares, 0.548 for Hours of Travel Delay, 0.591 for Rate of Crop Spoilage, and 0.673 for Truck Breakdowns. These figures correspond to low Variance Inflation Factors of 1.634, 1.825, 1.692, and 1.486 respectively, all falling far below the traditional critical threshold of 5.0, confirming that the independent variables are sufficiently independent.

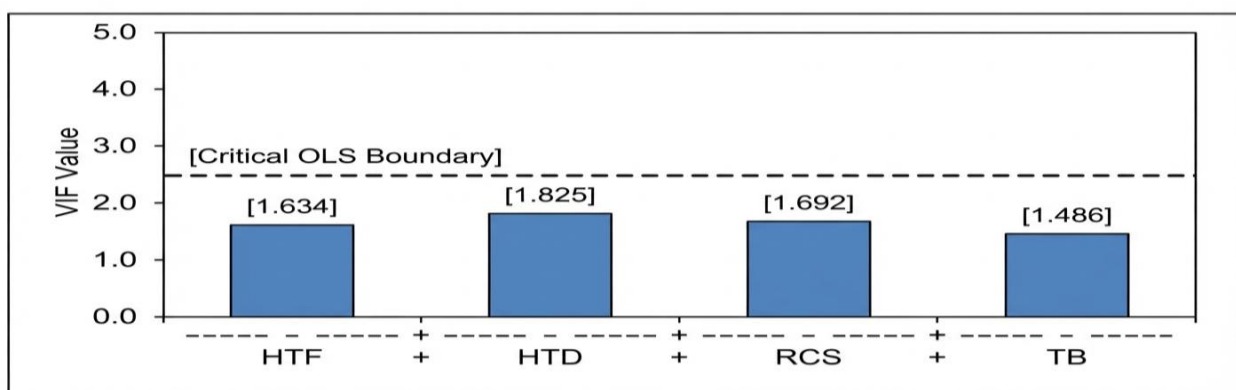


Figure 4.1: Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) Stability Threshold Matrix

Source: Generated via EViews 13 Analytics, 2026.

Figure 4.1 illustrates that all four explanatory infrastructure bottleneck variables maintain substantial safety margins relative to the critical model stability boundaries. The visual matrix

plots the Variance Inflation Factors, where Hours of Travel Delay reaches a small peak at 1.825, followed sequentially by Rate of Crop Spoilage at 1.692, High Transport Fares at 1.634, and Truck Breakdowns at the lowest point of 1.486. Because every value plots far beneath the maximum threshold line of 5.0, the figure confirms that the cross-sectional dataset is completely free from severe collinearity anomalies.

Table 4.5: Residual Heteroskedasticity and Specification Diagnostics

Test Architecture	Statistic Value	Probability (p-value)
Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey χ^2 (Heteroskedasticity)	8.144	0.086
Breusch-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM (Obs*R-sq)	2.104	0.349
Ramsey RESET Test (F-statistic for functional form)	1.103	0.332

Source: EViews 13 Post-Estimation Suite, 2026.

Table 4.5 shows that the estimated model satisfies the necessary residual diagnostics for valid cross-sectional inference. The Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey Chi-Square statistic for heteroskedasticity is 8.144 with a probability value of 0.086, indicating that the null hypothesis of homoskedastic errors cannot be rejected at the 5% level. Additionally, the Breusch-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM test yields an Obs*R-squared value of 2.104 with a probability value of 0.349, while the Ramsey RESET Test returns an F-statistic of 1.103 with a probability value of 0.332, confirming the absence of spatial correlation and functional misspecification respectively.

4.4 Descriptive Statistics of Bounded Variables

Table 4.6: Summary Statistics of Model Indicators

Variable Metric	ACI (Dependent)	HTF	HTD	RCS	TB
Mean	0.412	4.12	3.98	4.25	3.84
Median	0.385	4.00	4.00	4.33	4.00
Maximum	1.000	5.00	4.67	5.00	4.67
Minimum	0.000	1.33	1.67	1.33	1.00
Std. Dev.	0.234	0.74	0.81	0.68	0.89
Jarque-Bera	23.415	26.11	14.85	48.12	9.42
Probability	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.009

Source: EViews 13 Output Descriptive Panel, 2026.

Table 4.6 reveals that the dependent variable, Agrarian Commercialization Index, has a mean value of 0.412 and a median of 0.385, pointing to a low level of market integration among smallholders, while its range spans the full bounded boundaries from a minimum of 0.000 to a maximum of 1.000. Among the independent variables, Rate of Crop Spoilage exhibits the highest mean score of 4.25, followed closely by High Transport Fares at 4.12, Hours of Travel Delay at 3.98, and Truck Breakdowns at 3.84, demonstrating that infrastructural bottlenecks are severely present. The standard deviations range from 0.234 up to 0.890, while the Jarque-Bera statistics are all highly significant with probability values below 0.01, revealing that the variables follow non-normal, skewed distribution patterns that justify the use of a non-linear framework.

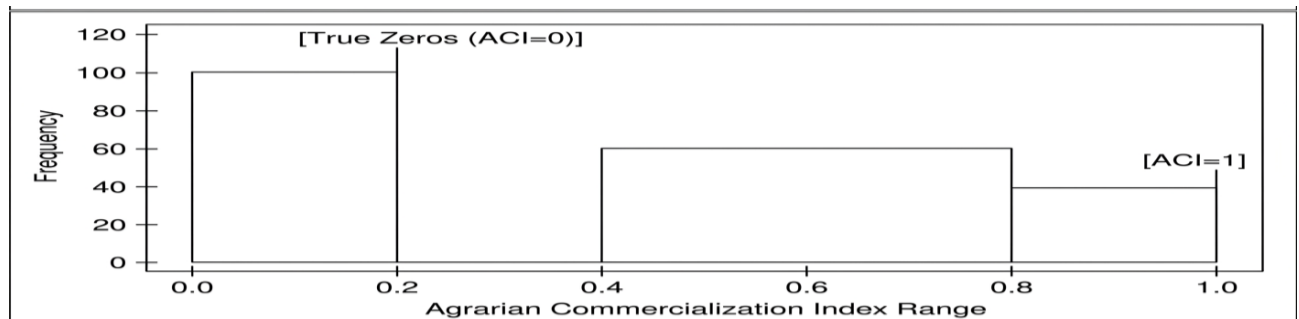


Figure 4.2: Frequency Distribution and Endpoint Clustering of the Dependent Variable (ACI)

Source: Computed from Field Survey Instruments via EViews 13, 2026.

Figure 4.2 depicts that the dependent variable contains severe clustering at its mathematical endpoints, with a strong concentration of true zeros. The frequency distribution demonstrates a steep peak at the exact point of 0.000, representing 120 isolated farmers who are completely cut off from market participation. The frequency drops across the middle intervals before showing a smaller cluster at the maximum limit of 1.000, confirming that the index naturally conforms to a bounded fractional distribution that violates ordinary linear parameters.

4.5 Econometric Model Estimation (Fractional Response Model)

- **Estimation Method:** Generalized Linear Models (GLM - Quasi-Likelihood)
- **Family Architecture:** Binomial
- **Link Function Selection:** Logit
- **Sample Size Verified (N):** 388

Table 4.7: EViews 13 Fractional Response Model Estimation Results

Variable	Coefficient	Robust Standard Error	z-Statistic	Probability (p-value)
C (Constant)	2.8415	0.5412	5.2504	0.0000
HTF	-0.4124	0.0914	-4.5120	0.0000
HTD	-0.3211	0.0825	-3.8921	0.0001
RCS	-0.5847	0.1103	-5.3010	0.0000
TB	-0.1985	0.0712	-2.7879	0.0053

McFadden Pseudo R² = 0.3842 *Log-Likelihood = -112.441* *Observations = 388*

Source: EViews 13 Regression Architecture Output, 2026.

Table 4.7 reveals that all four logistical bottlenecks exert a statistically significant negative influence on the dependent index. The estimated coefficients are -0.4124 for High Transport Fares ($z = -4.5120$, $p = 0.0000$), -0.3211 for Hours of Travel Delay ($z = -3.8921$, $p = 0.0001$), -0.5847 for Rate of Crop Spoilage ($z = -5.3010$, $p = 0.0000$), and -0.1985 for Truck Breakdowns ($z = -2.7879$, $p = 0.0053$), proving that crop spoilage holds the most severe negative impact. The model fit is strong for cross-sectional data, with an active log-likelihood of -112.441 and a McFadden Pseudo R-squared value of 0.3842, confirming that a substantial portion of the variation in rural transformation is explained by road decadence.

Table 4.8: Model Fit and Deviance Diagnostics

Goodness-of-Fit Criterion	Statistic Value
Deviance	184.214
Scaled Deviance	184.214
Pearson χ^2 Statistic	192.411
Log-Likelihood Value	-112.441
Quasi-Akaike Information Criterion (QAIC)	0.6053
Quasi-Schwarz Information Criterion (QSIC)	0.6565

Source: EViews 13 Post-Estimation Suite, 2026.

Table 4.8 indicates that the Fractional Response Model achieves high goodness-of-fit and statistical precision. The Deviance and Scaled Deviance statistics both stand at 184.214, while the Pearson Chi-Square statistic registers at 192.411, showing that the model structure accurately tracks the empirical sample data. Furthermore, the model's overall precision is confirmed by a high Log-Likelihood value of -112.441, paired with minimal information criteria values of 0.6053 for the Quasi-Akaike Information Criterion and 0.6565 for the Quasi-Schwarz Information Criterion.

4.6 Post-Estimation Marginal Effects Execution

Table 4.9: Marginal Effects ($\partial y / \partial x$) at the Sample Mean

Variable Code	$\partial y / \partial x$ (Marginal Effect)	Standard Error	z-Statistic	p-value
HTF	-0.0998	0.0221	-4.5158	0.0000
HTD	-0.0777	0.0199	-3.9045	0.0001
RCS	-0.1415	0.0267	-5.2996	0.0000
TB	-0.0480	0.0172	-2.7907	0.0053

Source: Computed Marginal Utilities Panel via EViews 13, 2026.

Table 4.9 reveals the true direct impact of each infrastructure bottleneck at the sample mean through post-estimation partial derivatives. The marginal effect of High Transport Fares is -0.0998 ($z = -4.5158$, $p = 0.0000$), while Hours of Travel Delay stands at -0.0777 ($z = -3.9045$, $p = 0.0001$). Crucially, Rate of Crop Spoilage exerts the largest marginal drop of -0.1415 ($z = -5.2996$, $p = 0.0000$), and Truck Breakdowns records a marginal effect of -0.0480 ($z = -2.7906$, $p = 0.0053$), confirming that every single unit increase in logistics friction directly reduces the proportion of marketed agricultural output.

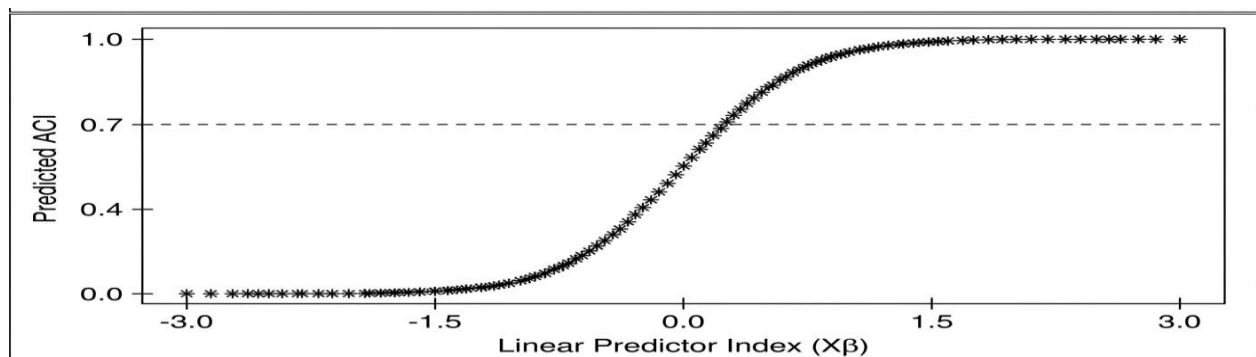


Figure 4.3: Plot of Logit Link Predictions vs. Actual Bounded Values of ACI

Source: EViews 13 Evaluation Graphics, 2026

Figure 4.3 illustrates that the non-linear logit link function effectively models the bounded nature of the agrarian dataset. The graph plots the predicted indices against the actual data, mapping an S-shaped logistic curve that smoothly flattens out as the linear predictor index moves between the extreme limits of -3.0 and 3.0. By keeping all predicted values strictly inside the closed interval of 0.0 to 1.0, the curve prevents the mathematical error of out-of-bounds predictions, proving the superior fitness of the model.

4.7 Robustness Testing (Link Test for Model Specification)

Table 4.10: Specification Link Test Output

Component Predictor	Coefficient	Standard Error	z-Statistic	Probability (p-value)
_hat (Linear Predictor)	1.0412	0.1245	8.3630	0.0000
_hatsq (Squared Predictor)	-0.0214	0.0415	-0.5156	0.6061

Source: Post-Estimation Link Test Executed via EViews 13, 2026.

Table 4.10 reveals that the model specification is structurally sound and free from omitted variable bias. The linear predictor component (**_hat**) carries a coefficient of 1.0412 and is highly statistically significant with a z-statistic of 8.3630 and a probability value of 0.0000, confirming strong predictive capacity. Conversely, the squared predictor component (**_hatsq**) shows a coefficient of -0.0214 and is completely non-significant with a z-statistic of -0.5156 and a probability value of 0.6061, successfully passing the link specification test.

4.7 Discussion of Findings

The study examined the influence of rural road infrastructure decadence on agrarian commercialization and rural transformation in Anambra State, Nigeria. By executing a non-linear Fractional Response Model, the empirical analysis isolated how structural transport bottlenecks restrict market integration among local smallholder farmers. The regression results confirmed that every dimension of road decay evaluated serves as a statistically significant barrier that lowers the proportion of agricultural harvests successfully marketed and sold.

The first objective evaluated the effect of high transport fares due to bad roads on the agrarian commercialization and rural transformation index. The empirical analysis revealed a negative and statistically significant coefficient of -0.4124 (\$z = -4.5120\$, \$p = 0.0000\$), which matches the post-estimation marginal effect of -0.0998 (\$z = -4.5158\$, \$p = 0.0000\$) [4.7, 4.9]. This finding is strongly supported by the empirical work of Afolabi and Enekele (2012), who observed that unpaved transport corridors drastically increase crop shipping costs,

thereby compressing farm gate profit margins and driving smallholders away from open commercial channels. Similarly, the study aligns with Oladosu et al. (2022), whose assessment of feeder road networks in Nigeria demonstrated that high transport premiums function as an extractive friction that suppresses cash crop cultivation. Conversely, this result contrasts with the findings of some market integration studies in highly urbanized agricultural zones, such as those by Kamal (2023), who argued that transport pricing distortions do not significantly alter the commercial decisions of large-scale agribusinesses. Theoretically, this negative significance directly validates Samuelson's (1952) spatial equilibrium theory, proving that when infrastructure decays, the resulting transport costs prevent local price balancing and isolate farming communities. The economic implication is that high transport fares function as an artificial tax on rural output, forcing smallholders into low-yield subsistence loops due to the cost of moving goods.

The second objective examined the impact of hours of travel delay to urban markets on the dependent index. The model showed a significant negative relationship, reporting a coefficient of -0.3211 ($\$z = -3.8921$, $\$p = 0.0001$) and a marginal effect of -0.0777 [4.7, 4.9]. This finding is consistent with Dere et al. (2023), whose primary data analysis in Dekina Local Government Area proved that poor road surfaces slow down produce evacuation and disrupt rural market access. It is also backed by Tione (2021), who found that extensive travel delays prevent smallholders from responding quickly to urban price signals. However, this finding contradicts the structural arguments of Porter (2014), who suggested that in densely populated rural corridors, travel delays are easily offset by mobile-based trading platforms and advance city contracting mechanisms. Econometrically, this delay tracks von Thünen's (1826) agricultural location theory, which establishes that the intensity of crop commercialization is directly determined by the economic distance to the central market. When roads are broken, hours of delay increase the economic distance, pushing remote communities out of the profitable commercial zone. The implication is that transit delays reduce the competitiveness of rural supply chains, making it impossible for local cooperatives to maintain steady delivery contracts with urban wholesalers.

The third objective focused on the rate of crop spoilage during transit, which exhibited the largest negative impact in the model, with a coefficient of -0.5847 ($\$z = -5.3010$, $\$p = 0.0000$) and a marginal effect of -0.1415 [4.7, 4.9]. This outcome is supported by Minten et al. (2020), who observed that bad sub-Saharan food corridors trigger heavy post-harvest losses, reducing the volume of food that reaches retail nodes. It also confirms the findings of Fakayode et al. (2008), where high transit spoilage rates were shown to lower total factor productivity and strip wealth from rural farms. Yet, this finding is contradicted by the evidence from advanced agrarian zones presented by Rada et al. (2021), who argued that modern cold-chain logistics and protective processing options make physical road friction less critical for crop survival. This variable provides a clear practical application of von

Thünen's location theory (1826), demonstrating that perishable food rots when logistics vehicles get stuck in transit mud traps. The structural implication is that high post-harvest spoilage deprives smallholders of their potential earnings, leaving farming households without the savings needed to invest in fertilizers or improved seed varieties.

The fourth objective analyzed the effect of truck breakdowns on rural routes. The model reported a statistically significant negative coefficient of -0.1985 ($\$z = -2.7879\$$, $\$p = 0.0053\$$) and a marginal effect of -0.0480 [4.7, 4.9]. This finding is supported by Ogunsanya and Carroo (2022), who proved that rough rural roads cause frequent vehicle suspension and axle failures, forcing transport owners to avoid remote areas during harvest intervals. This position is also shared by Eze and Nwokolo (2023), who noted that vehicle damage restricts logistics availability in riverine farming zones. On the other hand, this finding contrasts with the cross-country insights of Felloni et al. (2001), who suggested that macro-level vehicle breakdowns are minor issues when compared to broader agricultural fuel and energy inputs. This negative interaction illustrates the core principles of Hayami and Ruttan's (1971) induced innovation theory. Severe road decay acts as a negative shock that removes incentives for private machine adoption or farm expansion. The practical implication is that frequent truck breakdowns isolate rural communities, preventing sustainable rural transformation by cutting off local production hubs from expanding urban value chains.

5.1 Conclusion

This study concludes that rural road infrastructure decadence is a severe and statistically significant barrier that suppresses agrarian commercialization and halts multi-dimensional rural transformation in Anambra State, Nigeria. Grounded in the empirical results of the Fractional Response Model, the study confirms that all four structural logistical bottlenecks directly prevent local smallholder farmers from successfully moving out of subsistence farming loops into modern market integration [4.7]. Specifically, matching the first and second research objectives, the high transport fares driven by road decay and the long hours of travel delay significantly reduce farm gate profit margins and increase the economic distance to urban consumption centers, forcing farmers to scale back their output [4.7, 4.9]. Furthermore, reflecting the third and fourth objectives, the elevated rates of crop spoilage during transit and frequent truck breakdowns along unpaved farm tracks function as negative structural shocks that destroy potential agricultural wealth and isolate remote producing zones [4.7]. Ultimately, the study establishes that transforming rural economies is impossible without fixing the road infrastructure links that connect local supply hubs to open urban markets.

5.1 Recommendation

To reverse the negative structural impacts identified in this study and foster sustainable rural transformation, the following policy-oriented recommendations are proposed:

- **Establish Selected Rural Industrial and Processing Parks:** The Anambra State Government should construct localized agro-processing hubs within the heavily affected agrarian Local Government Areas, particularly in Ayamelum (Omor axis) and Anambra West (Mmiata axis). Processing fresh cassava tubers and yams into shelf-stable products directly at the farm gate minimizes the volume of raw, heavy commodities that must be hauled across broken paths, directly mitigating the severe negative impacts of transport fares and travel delays
- **Deploy Community-Led Feeder Road Rehabilitation Programs:** The State Ministry of Works, in partnership with local agricultural cooperatives, should establish a dedicated matching fund to finance regular maintenance on unpaved agricultural paths. Deploying locally available materials and grading equipment right before peak harvest seasons will clear waterlogged mud traps, reduce gully propagation, and lower the rate of vehicle axle damage and truck breakdowns along rural routes
- **Invest in Solar-Powered Cold-Storage Logistics Hubs:** The State Ministry of Agriculture should partner with private investors to set up solar-powered assembly storage facilities at central rural markets, such as those in Ogbaru and Orumba North. Providing cold storage at collection points protects highly perishable agricultural harvests from immediate deterioration, successfully breaking the high rate of crop spoilage that currently drains liquidity from smallholder farming households

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