

Examination of Users' Housing Satisfaction Among Residents of Owerri Municipal Local Government Area (LGA), Imo State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study sets out to examine user's housing satisfaction among residents of Owerri Municipal Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria. Users in the context of the study refer to tenants and landlords who occupy and use the premises on daily basis. It is a well-known fact that users of residences in the study area often complain of rising rents, especially in the way and manner that landlords raise these rents without recourse to due process. The inadequate provision of basic amenities like electricity, water supply, sanitary facilities, safety measures, security apparatus and housing maintenance, leave much to be desired. The study adopted qualitative and quantitative statistical approaches. A sample size of 100 was adopted. The study found that noise pollution and lack of access to essential services were major factors affecting housing satisfaction in the study area. The study revealed that tenants tend to relocate to other accommodations when confronted with challenges of dissatisfactions. Some of this dissatisfaction comes from noise pollution, landlord or his agent's character, poor neighbourhood character and poor access to basic needs including telecommunication network. It concluded that so many inconsistencies in housing design, construction, location, management and interactions within the neighbourhood of the house raise questions with satisfaction. It recommended that non-governmental organizations and indeed the organized private sector should work with government to provide varieties of affordable housing in the study area.*

Keywords: user, housing, satisfaction, residents, Owerri municipal LGA.

INTRODUCTION

Human needs are many and varied but three have been recognized worldwide as the basic needs. They are; food, clothing and shelter. Around these three revolves security, safety, sanitation, welfare, comfort, accessibility etc. The concept of utility has been subtly considered as the satisfaction one derives from consuming a commodity or service. Housing is a commodity. It is expected to give the user some satisfaction as it is being put to use. Tenants and Landlords (in cases of owner-occupation) are often the end users of a residential building. They are often in the best stead to talk about the utility of a building in line with the common sayings that “he that wears the shoes knows where it pinches” and that “the taste of the pudding is in the eating”.

Aside shelter that a residential building is meant to provide, users may also expect that safety measures are properly catered for, accessibility, affordability, security of life and property, sanitation, availability of utilities/amenities like steady water supply, electricity supply, good and accessible all-season roads, as well as a quiet neighbourhood devoid of ‘dangerous houses’ harbouring criminals and noisome charlatans. The provision and constant maintenance of these elements play huge roles in satisfying the user.

The core roles of housing obviously include safety (protection granted by housing), “comfortability” (availability of facilities and amenities for using the buildings) as well as accessibility (roads, proximity to public services) to public utilities. With the interplay of market forces of demand and supply, the state of the building, its finishing, size, location, design, contents, view and neighbourhood quality play extensive roles in defining the rents passing on the property. Rents paid could be used as a standard for comparison between two or more similar properties located in same neighbourhood. To some extent, the willingness to pay a given amount as rent by a tenant is a reflection of the level of satisfaction of the user of the building, *ceteris paribus*.

It is against this background that this study seeks to examine the users’ housing satisfaction among residents of Owerri Municipal Local Government Area (LGA) of Imo State. This will guide potential users towards making guided choices and would create a basis for standardizing the housing satisfaction in the study area and beyond.

Statement of the Problem

Housing has been identified as one of man’s basic needs aside clothing and food. Over the years, man has been keen to build houses using different types of materials, and the basic concern has often been the provision of shelter from the environment and other environmental elements (flora and fauna). Therefore, protection from rain, sunlight, dust, wild animals, criminals/intruders and rogue elements has stood out in the design and construction of housing. The more sophisticated the society becomes, the more sophisticated the housing design and construction to satisfy the ultimate goal of shelter. Security, safety (health, fire, environmental) and comfort often become needful as users consider the availability of these elements in addition to affordability and

accessibility of the house to school, market, place of work, place of worship etc as priorities. With the advent of sophisticated technologies and the unending incursion of urbanization, housing cosmetics soon became an issue as well. New technologies kind of placed emphasis on ecstasy or cosmetic architecture, albeit, giving way to less durable, fragile building materials.

Users of residential buildings have had reason to contend with the implications of the fragile building material products that have just the merit of beauty to add to the building but lack the other merits of durability. In Nigeria, it is also common to find beautiful houses without good sanitary facilities, pipe borne water, steady electricity supply, all-season access roads, durable roof members, sizeable rooms and spaces etc. Users, especially tenants, have had to endure a whole lot of challenges, simply “managing” what they have, even when they are subjected to pay all manner of rates and taxes regarding the building they occupy. Many studies have been undertaken on user’s satisfaction of commercial and residential buildings in the past but none has examined the user’s satisfaction of residential properties among residents of Owerri Municipal LGA of Imo State, Nigeria. This is why this study is apt and gears towards closing the gap in literature heretofore.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine users’ housing satisfaction in residential buildings of Owerri Municipal LGA, Imo State, so as to proffer solutions to identified challenges. To achieve this aim, the following objectives are set to;

- i. identify users of/and different residential buildings in Owerri Municipal LGA of Imo State, Nigeria,
- ii. identify family and societal norms for measuring housing satisfaction in Owerri Municipal LGA of Imo State, Nigeria,
- iii. examine the extent of satisfaction of users of residential buildings in Owerri Municipal LGA of Imo State, Nigeria,
- iv. examine the factors that militate against users’ satisfaction of residential buildings in Owerri Municipal LGA of Imo State, Nigeria,
- v. examine users’ reaction to housing dissatisfaction of residential buildings in Owerri Municipal LGA of Imo State

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Housing Satisfaction

There have been several literatures on this concept. A few shall be succinctly looked at. According to Nurzafira, Mohamad, Noraliza and Muhammad (2012) and Mohit and AlkhanbashiRaja (2014), residential satisfaction is defined as “the feeling of contentment when one has or achieves what one needs or desires in a house...” Housing satisfaction refers to the degree of contentment experienced by an individual or family with regard to the current housing situation (McCray and Day, 1977 cited in Afolayan, Nubi and Omirin, 2011) or that of deprivation or normative

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deficiency (Parkes, Keans and Atkinson, 2002 cited in Afolayan, Nubi and Omirin, 2011). According to Terzano (2023), “residential satisfaction refers to people’s level of approval with conditions in their residential neighbourhood”. According to Kellrkci and Berkoz (2006), “housing satisfaction is regarded as the difference between residents’ current housing condition and their expected housing condition”.

“Resident satisfaction is not only an important indicator that can be used to measure the quality of life that community residents experience, but the construct is also used by scholars to measure the effects of community renewal” (Gao, Wang and Gu, 2022). Satisfaction is considered as a valid and effective instrument to assess one’s quality of life and wellbeing, whether it is with one’s life as a whole or with particular aspect of one’s life (Marans, 2006 cited in Yang, Zhang, Liu, Li and Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2012). Valuation of interests in residential buildings have had to be influenced, a great deal, by these elements such as accessibility, safety, comfort, ecstasy and availability of amenities. Hence, satisfaction reflects value attached to the residential building by willing, ready and informed tenants (occupiers) or buyers. Brink and Johnson (1979) in OECD (2022) once noted that “...the perception of housing satisfaction is a dynamic process that can evolve over time. In all, an individual’s satisfaction with the area (s)he lives in is a subjective measure and there is no international definition that set out what an affordable house of good quality actually is...” According to Giuliani (2004) “satisfaction of aesthetic needs is a salient component of housing satisfaction with regard to the inside, the outside, and the neighbourhood, and the aesthetic qualities of the living environment are given high importance across age and social groups”. In the opinion of Gifford (2001), “naturally, physical and architectural factors such as house form, architectural style, floor plan and colours affect residential satisfaction, but these should not be considered the sole or even the main source of housing satisfaction”.

One of the ways for understanding the performance of housing projects in meeting the needs, expectations and aspirations of the target population is to investigate the extent to which the beneficiaries are happy with the residential environment...(Byun and Ha, 2016). Josiah and Wokekoro (2018) put it more succinctly thus, “a key element of customer or users’ satisfaction is the nature of the relationship between the users and the service provider”. “The higher the quality of service rendered the higher the level of satisfaction, thus quality of service is an important indicator of customer or users’ satisfaction” (Hoq and Amin, 2009 cited in Josiah and Wokekoro, 2018).

Nature of Residential Buildings in Nigeria

Avika (2021) listed different types of buildings in Nigeria and their features. According to the blog, “buildings in Nigeria come in various styles, forms and shapes – from mansions to bungalows and to terraces”. These different types of houses all have something unique about them. These houses are; bungalow, apartment or flat, terrace, semi-detached houses, detached houses, maissonette, duplexes, apartment blocks, pent house.

Villa Afrika (2020) identified the types of houses in Nigeria (with pictures) and which included; mansion, bungalow, apartments or flats, penthouse, terraced house, semi-detached house, detached house, duplex, traditional houses (made of wood, straw, stones, thatches and mud). According to this blog; “with the advent of smart home technology and improvements in construction technology, the houses of today are arguably as comfortable and stylish as they have never been”.

Factors that Influence Residential Building Satisfaction in Nigeria

Ebiaride and Umeh (2015) undertook a study on the “factors influencing user’s satisfaction in public and private estates in Lagos, Nigeria” and opined that “generally, the private housing estate residents were found to derive better satisfaction from the physical and social elements...Recommendation is that building projects for low and middle-income earners should accord priority attention to shopping malls, educational, recreational, healthcare facilities and other public infrastructure; in addition to routine maintenance of facilities, regular collection of refuse, constant supply of water and electricity...as well as promotion of incremental construction”.

Hur and Morrow-Jones (2008) identified three important factors that influence users’ satisfaction of residential buildings. They include; “neighbourhood environment, affordability and housing unit” and submit that “...safety and social problems were much more significant influences than physical factors in neighbourhood satisfaction in unsatisfactory areas”. In a study by Byun and Ha (2016), factors like safety and incivility factors (SIF), physical factors (PF), facilities accessibility factor (FAF) and equipment factor (EF) were considered to impact the tenants of public and private rental (buildings) in different orders. Mohit, Ibrahim and Rashid (2010) highlighted major factors of housing satisfaction as, “dwelling size, integrity of building structure and neighbourhood cleanliness”. Meanwhile, Theodori (2001) emphasized family size as a useful correlate of housing satisfaction, and Varady, Walker and Wang (2001) considered income level and employment as notable factors that influence housing satisfaction.

Yin, Miao, Geng and Sun (2018) considered common factors, which were useful in creating a standard through a common factor reliability analysis. These factors were established in an index system of housing satisfaction. The factors are; housing physical condition, public facilities, location, property service, value judgment and corporate image. Susilawanti (2002) cited in Josiah and Wokekoro (2018) noted that “a survey of tenant satisfaction should include: willingness to receive suggestions and implement them; appearance and property condition; quality of service management, contract agreement, tenant relationship, renew objectives, property characteristics, and readiness to solve a problem”.

Ukoha (1995) undertook a study to determine “satisfaction with public housing in Abuja Nigeria” and concerned himself with structure types, building features, housing conditions, neighbourhood facilities and housing management. He noted that “privacy within the house had the strongest effect on satisfaction with building features. Interior construction quality had the greatest influence on satisfaction with housing conditions, while cleanliness of neighbourhood had a strong effect on neighbourhood satisfaction and FCDA housing official’s attitudes affected residents’ satisfaction

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development UK with management”. His study made clearly the major areas of housing satisfaction – management, environment/neighbourhood, physical structure, sanitation and housing conditions. Isaac, Habila, Opara and Okoro (2023) noted that “the level of satisfaction with residential units in public housing environments may be determined by many underlying factors. Resident satisfaction can also be traceable to structural issues”.

Housing Deficit Theory

This theory posits that individuals and households judge their housing conditions according to family norms and societal norms associated with cultural standards. If there is any discrepancy between the housing prescribed by the norms and the actual situation identified, the result will be dissatisfaction. This theory was introduced by Morris and Winter in 1975 (Mekebo and Dong, 2021). According to those who propounded the theory, residents (users) respond to this low satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) by making adjustments, including partitions and adding an extension to get the desired accommodation.

On the other hand, an incongruity between the actual housing situation and housing norms results in a housing deficit, which gives rise to residents’ dissatisfaction, leading to some form of housing adjustments that may be either situ, such as revising their housing needs and aspiration in order to reconcile the incongruity or to improve their housing condition through remodeling or else the residents may move to another place to change their housing into conformity with their aspirations and needs (Morris and Winter, 1978 in Mekebo et al, 2021).

This study shall be anchored on this housing deficit theory such that where there is a deficit in the basic requirements or needs for satisfaction – housing management, housing environment/neighbourhood, housing physical structure, safety, sanitation and housing conditions, including age and accessibility – can lead to dissatisfaction when compared or placed *paripasseu* with acceptable societal standards.

RESEAERCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The descriptive survey design shall be adopted for this study. A comparative analysis of the field data collected during the survey shall be made. The primary purpose of descriptive writing is to describe a person, place, thing or phenomenon in such a way that a picture of it is formed in the mind of the reader. This study adopts observation, survey and case study as its method of research.

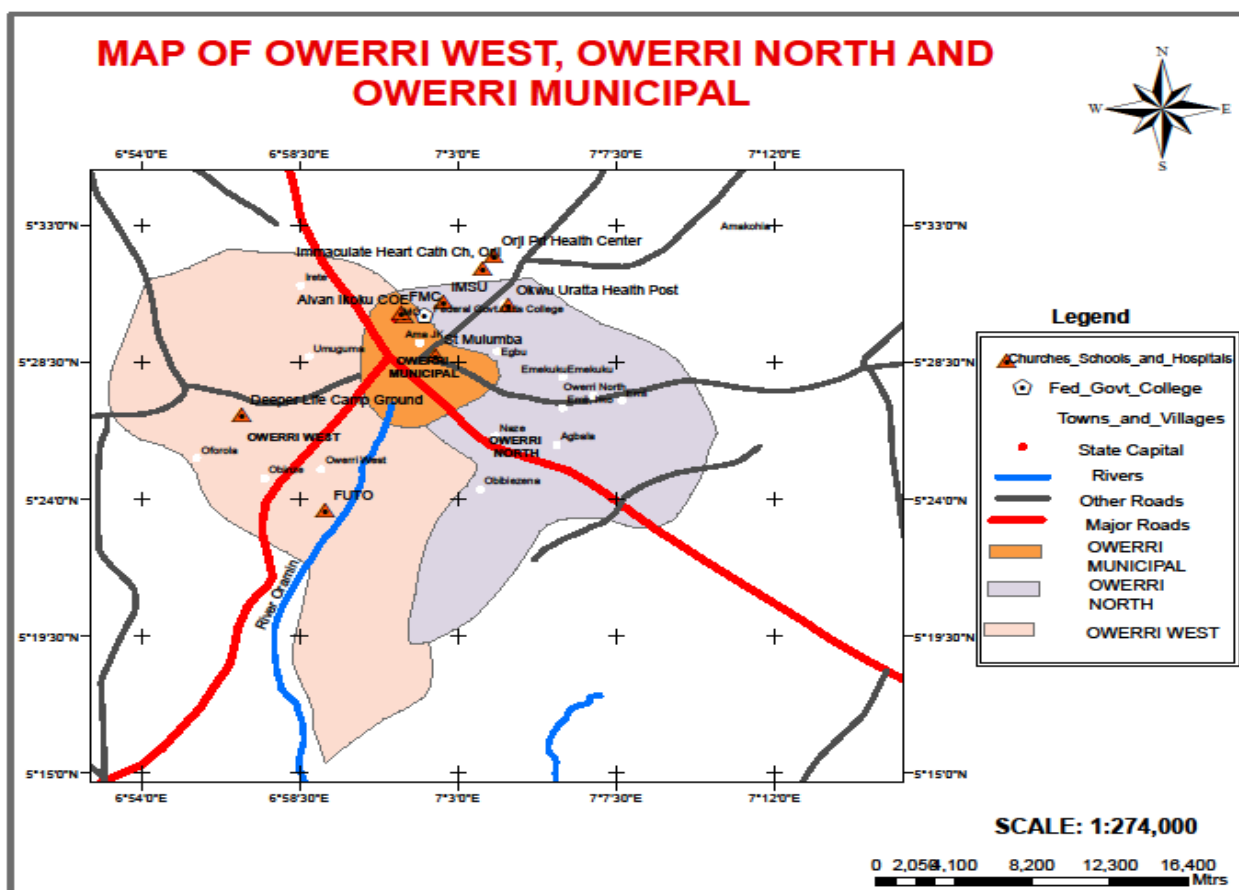
Area of the Study

The area of study is Owerri Municipal LGA (see map in Fig. 1), which is the capital city of Imo State. It sits on longitude 7.0258⁰ E and latitude 5.4763⁰ N; Owerri is a cosmopolitan city with none—indigenes outnumbering the indigenes. It is bounded on the East by Egbu, on the West by Umuguma, and on the North by Orji Uratta. It has two main rivers, the Nworie River and the Otarniri River. The Otamiri River crosses through Owerri to Egbu, a village in Owerri North Local

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development UK Government Area of Imo State. The Eke-ukwu Owerri is the main market found in Owerri Municipal (Apeh, 2021).

Owerri municipal sits in the rain forest and produces many agricultural products such as yam, corn, cassava, palm product etc. The activities of the people range from civil services and other commercial activities that keep the city lively. Many business investment opportunities exist in Owerri and it's the epicenter for all economic, social and religion activities in the State. There are a lot of educational institutions in the area. Two stadia are located in the area where sporting events are held. Christianity is the dominant religion in the area, and also many hospitals and health centres are cited in the city of Owerri (Apeh, 2021)

Owerri municipal consists of mostly commercial properties and it is seen as the Central Business District where high rate of commercial activities are carried out with few residential properties or residential-commercial properties. Some of the roads and streets in Owerri municipal LGA include Whetheral road, Douglas road, Tetlow road, Zander street, Ajoku street, Ejiaku street and Osuji street etc (Investopedia, 2021).



Source: Ime Johnson (2024). GMASKGEO.SPATIAL SURVEY

Population of the Study

Users in the context of this study shall refer to the occupiers of the residential properties in Owerri Municipal LGA. This includes the landlords and tenants who occupy the residential properties/buildings. Given the dearth of statistics in Nigeria in this regard, the population of this study shall be the projected population of Owerri Municipal LGA, projected from the 2006 National Population Census figure- 945,000. According to Macrotrends (2022) “the metro area population of Owerri in 2022 was 945,000, a 4.07% increase from 2021”. Projecting to 2023, the formula below is adopted $PN = PO + N \cdot R$

Where;

PN= Population of Nth year, PO = Population of the base year, N= Number of decades

R= Growth rate, $PN = 945000 + 0.1 \cdot 4.07$ $PN = 945,001$. The population of this study is approximated to 945,000.

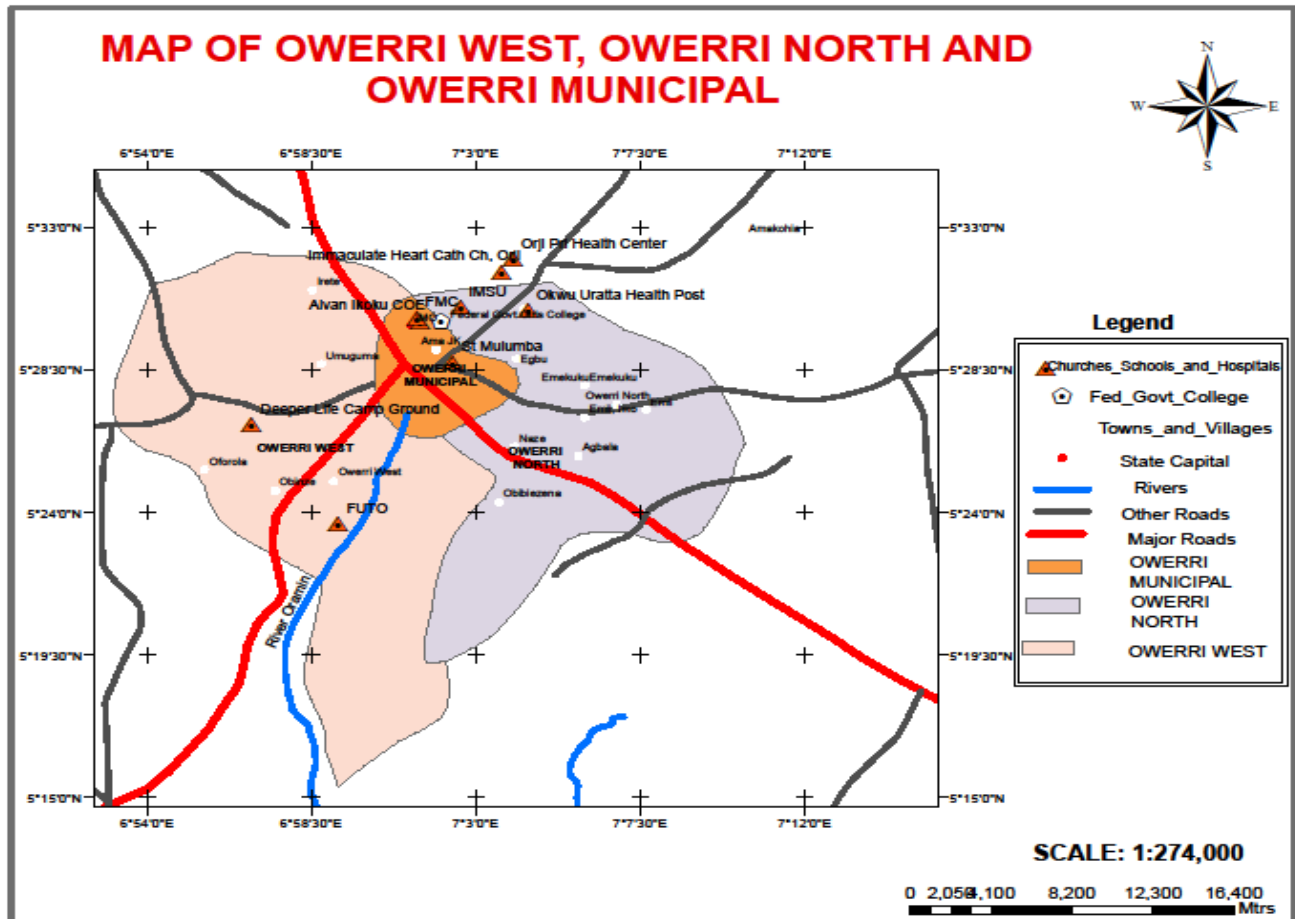


Figure 1: Map of Owerri West, Owerri North, and Owerri Municipal showing how they conglomerate

Source: Surveying and Geo-informatics Office (2023)

Sample Size and Techniques

A sample of 100 respondents was derived using the Taro Yemene formula. Thus;

$$n = N/1+N(e)^2$$

where: n = sample size, N = total population, e = error margin, n = 100, N = 945,000
e = 95% (0.005 error margin). Sample size of 100 has been adopted for this study.

A cluster sampling technique was considered and each of the five villages that make up Owerri Municipal LGA shall be taken into account as clusters. The villages are; Umuororonjo, Amawom, Umuonyeche, Umuodu and Umuoyima. Questionnaires were used to elicit information from the field. Their responses were thoroughly analyzed and conclusion arrived at.

The researchers went to the field themselves to administer the questionnaires on one-on-one basis, and also retrieve same from the respondents in Owerri Municipal LGA for analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis**Data Analysis according to the Objectives**

Objective 1: *Identify users of/and different types of residential buildings in Owerri Municipal Local Government Area, Imo State Nigeria*

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by their Type of Residential Buildings?

Types of Buildings	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Single-family house	17	17.0	17.0	17.0
Apartment	48	48.0	48.0	65.0
Duplex	5	5.0	5.0	70.0
Bungalow	30	30.0	30.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Interpretation

The data in Table 1 illustrates the distribution of respondents by the type of residential buildings they occupy in the Owerri Municipal Local Government Area. The most common type of residence is the Apartment, with 48 respondents (48.0%), indicating a strong preference for this housing option among residents. Bungalows follow, with 30 respondents (30.0%), suggesting that single-story homes are also popular, particularly for those seeking ease of access and space. Single-family houses account for 17 respondents (17.0%), reflecting a smaller segment of the population that prefers standalone homes. Duplexes represent the least common type, with only 5 respondents (5.0%), indicating a lower demand for this type of housing compared to others. Overall, the data reveals a diverse range of residential preferences (see figure 2), with apartments being the predominant choice, likely due to their affordability and availability in urban settings, while

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 bungalows and single-family houses cater to specific needs for space and privacy. Tenants and landlords (or their agents/proxies) were found to be the common users of the properties.

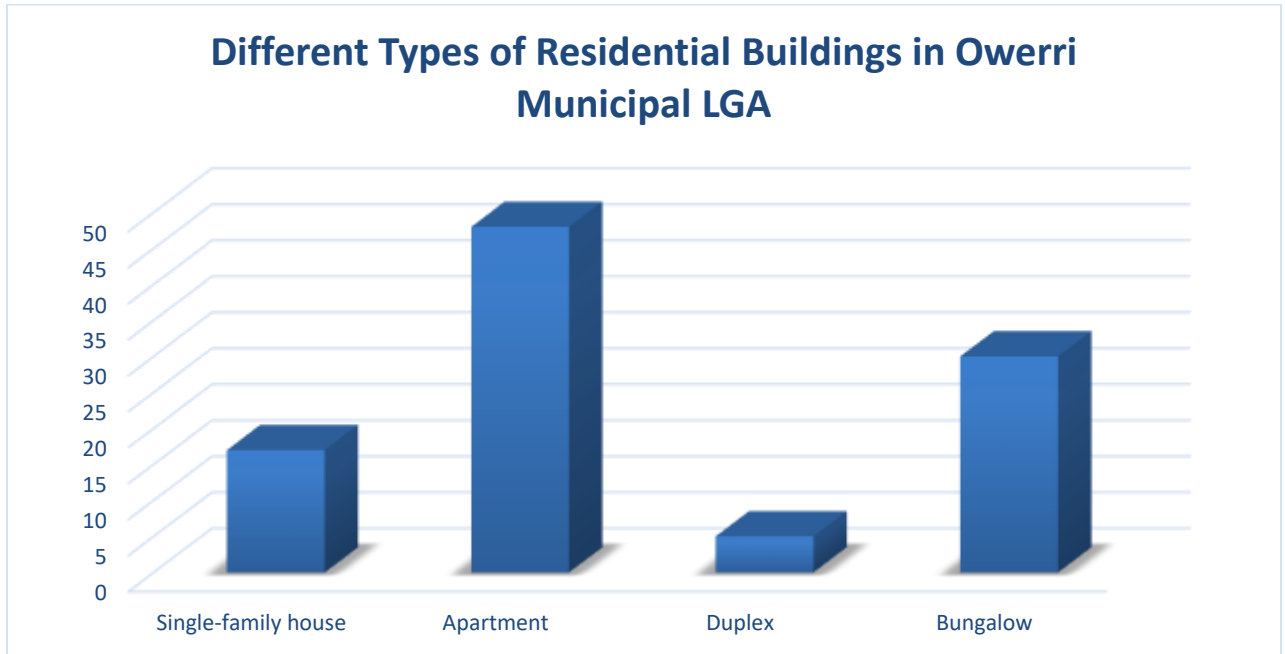


Fig. 2: Bar chart showing different types of residential buildings in Owerri Municipal LGA

Objective 2: *Identify family and societal norms for measuring housing satisfaction in the study area*

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Family and Societal Norms for Measuring Housing Satisfaction

Factors	Not important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Important	Very important
Size of the house	10 (10%)	17 (17%)	0 (0%)	21 (21%)	52 (52%)
Number of rooms	25 (25%)	0 (0%)	17 (17%)	0 (0%)	58 (58%)
Proximity to workplace/school	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	100 (100%)
Safety and security	5 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	95 (95%)
Availability of amenities (water, electricity)	15 (15%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	85 (85%)
Social status associated with the housing type	48 (48%)	6 (6%)	21 (21%)	10 (10%)	15 (15%)
Accessibility (Road condition)	49 (49%)	26 (26%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25 (25%)
Proximity to family and friends	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	100 (100%)

Interpretation

The table reveals key family and societal norms that residents of Owerri Municipal Local Government Area prioritize when measuring housing satisfaction. Proximity to family and friends,

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development UK along with proximity to workplace/school, stands out as the most critical factors, with 100% of respondents rating them as "Very important." This emphasizes the significance of social connections and convenience in daily life as central to housing satisfaction. Safety and security, as well as the availability of essential amenities like water and electricity, are also highly valued, reflecting a societal norm that prioritizes basic needs and security in the housing context. While the size of the house and the number of rooms are important to many, they are less universally critical. Social status associated with housing type and accessibility are considered less important by a majority, indicating that practical and relational factors outweigh considerations of prestige and infrastructure in this community's measure of housing satisfaction (see figure 3).

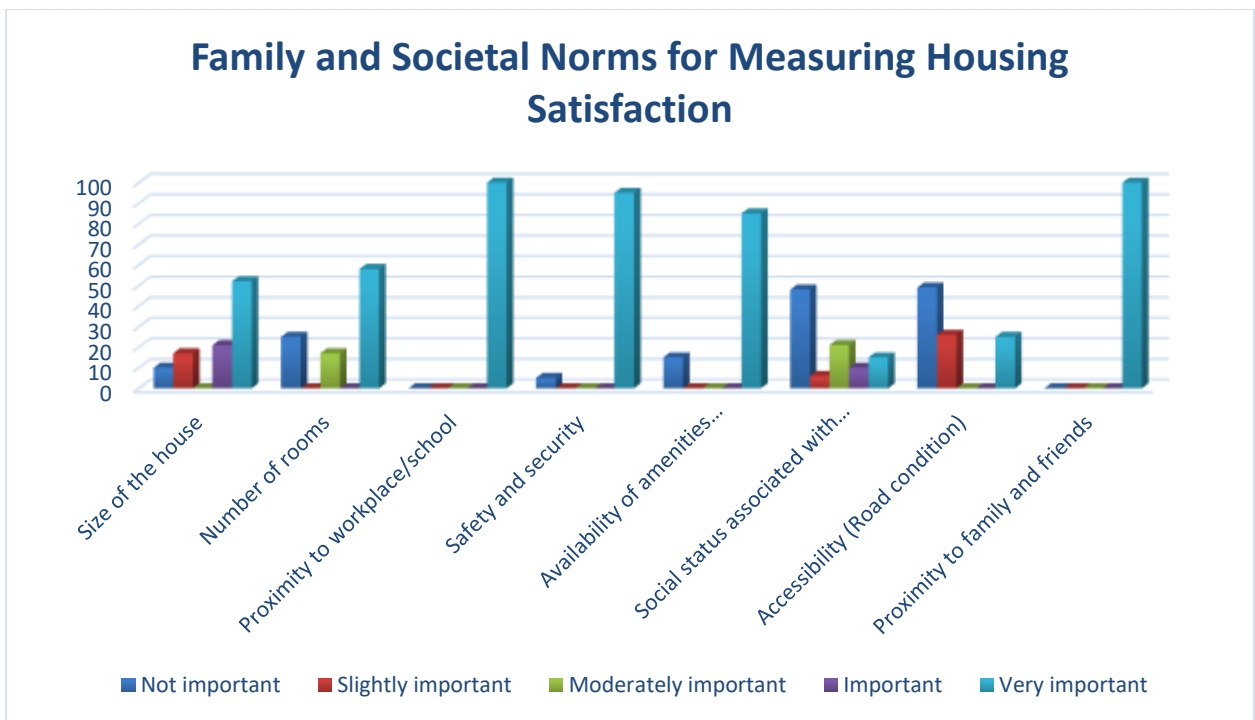


Fig. 3: Multiple bar chart showing Family and Societal Norms for Measuring Housing Satisfaction in Owerri Municipal

Objective 3: *Examine the extent of satisfaction of users of residential buildings in the study area*

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by the Extent of Satisfaction they have in their Residential Buildings

Factors	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Overall size of the house	10 (10%)	0 (0%)	10 (10%)	5 (5%)	75 (75%)
Number of rooms	5 (5%)	10 (10%)	17 (17%)	15 (15%)	53 (53%)
Quality of construction	10 (10%)	0 (0%)	10 (10%)	21 (21%)	59 (59%)
Availability of basic amenities (water, electricity)	10 (10%)	0 (0%)	11 (11%)	10 (10%)	69 (69%)
Safety and security of the neighborhood	5 (5%)	0 (0%)	6 (6%)	26 (26%)	63 (63%)
Proximity to workplace/school	15 (15%)	11 (11%)	0 (0%)	10 (10%)	64 (64%)
Accessibility (Road condition)	6 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (10%)	84 (84%)
Proximity to shopping and other services	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (6%)	94 (94%)
Social environment/neighborhood	33 (33%)	6 (6%)	10 (10%)	0 (0%)	51 (51%)

Interpretation

The table provides a comprehensive overview of housing satisfaction among residents of Owerri Municipal Local Government Area, highlighting the various factors that influence their contentment with residential buildings. A significant majority of residents express high satisfaction with the overall size of their homes, with 75% indicating they are "very satisfied," while only a small fraction (10%) report being "very dissatisfied." Satisfaction regarding the number of rooms is more varied, with 53% very satisfied, but 15% expressing dissatisfaction, suggesting a need for more balanced room distribution. Quality of construction is also a crucial aspect, as 59% of respondents are very satisfied, although 10% remain very dissatisfied, indicating potential areas for improvement. The availability of essential amenities, such as water and electricity, garners high satisfaction from 69% of residents, yet a persistent 10% express dissatisfaction, reflecting ongoing infrastructural challenges. Safety and security are prioritized, with 63% very satisfied, while only 5% report dissatisfaction. Proximity to workplaces and schools elicits mixed responses, with 64% satisfied but 26% dissatisfied, highlighting a need for better accessibility. Road accessibility is notably satisfactory, with 84% very satisfied, while proximity to shopping services is highly regarded by 94% of residents. However, the social environment shows a more divided sentiment, with only 51% very satisfied and a notable 33% dissatisfied, emphasizing the need for enhanced community cohesion and neighborhood dynamics. Overall, the findings underscore the multifaceted nature of housing satisfaction, where practical and relational factors significantly shape the residents' experiences (see figure 4).

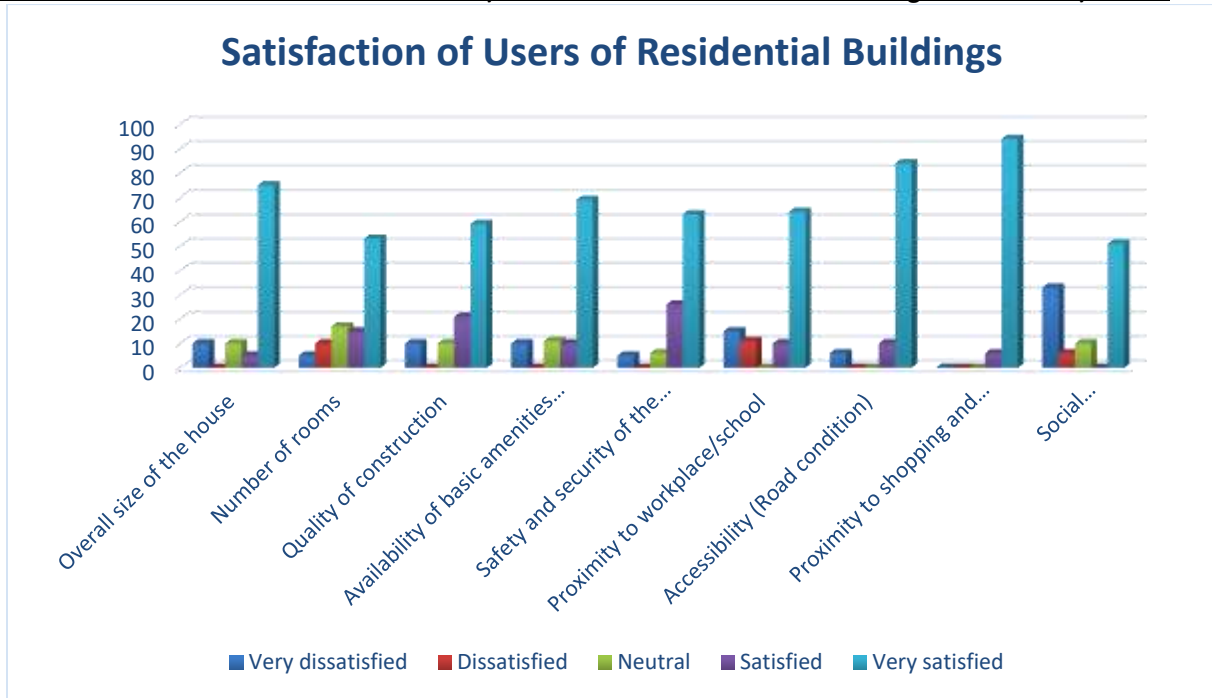


Fig. 4: Multiple bar charts showing satisfaction of users of residential buildings

Objective 4: *Examine the factors that militate against users' satisfaction of residential buildings in the study area*

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Factors that Militate Against Satisfaction of their Residential Buildings

Factors	Not at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a considerable extent	To a great extent
High cost of rent or mortgage	54 (54%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (10%)	36 (36%)
Poor construction quality	53 (53%)	0 (0%)	6 (6%)	21 (21%)	20 (20%)
Inadequate number of rooms	20 (20%)	11 (11%)	28 (28%)	11 (11%)	30 (30%)
Unreliable water supply	15 (15%)	0 (0%)	11 (11%)	28 (28%)	46 (46%)
Unreliable electricity supply	15 (15%)	11 (11%)	5 (5%)	33 (33%)	36 (36%)
Noise pollution	5 (5%)	6 (6%)	21 (21%)	0 (0%)	68 (68%)
Safety concerns	15 (15%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	26 (26%)	59 (59%)
Lack of proximity to essential services	16 (16%)	6 (6%)	0 (0%)	10 (10%)	68 (68%)

Interpretation

The examination of factors that undermine user satisfaction with residential buildings in the Owerri Municipal Local Government Area reveals several critical issues, including high costs associated

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development UK with rent or mortgages (54% dissatisfied), poor construction quality (41% dissatisfied), inadequate room availability (30% greatly dissatisfied), unreliable water (61% dissatisfied) and electricity supplies (61% dissatisfied), noise pollution (68% greatly dissatisfied), safety concerns (59% considerably or greatly dissatisfied), and lack of proximity to essential services (68% dissatisfied), collectively impacting residents' perceptions and experiences of their living conditions, necessitating improved housing policies, better construction practices, and enhanced community services, to foster higher levels of residential satisfaction among the residents of Owerri Municipal Local Government Area (see figure 5).

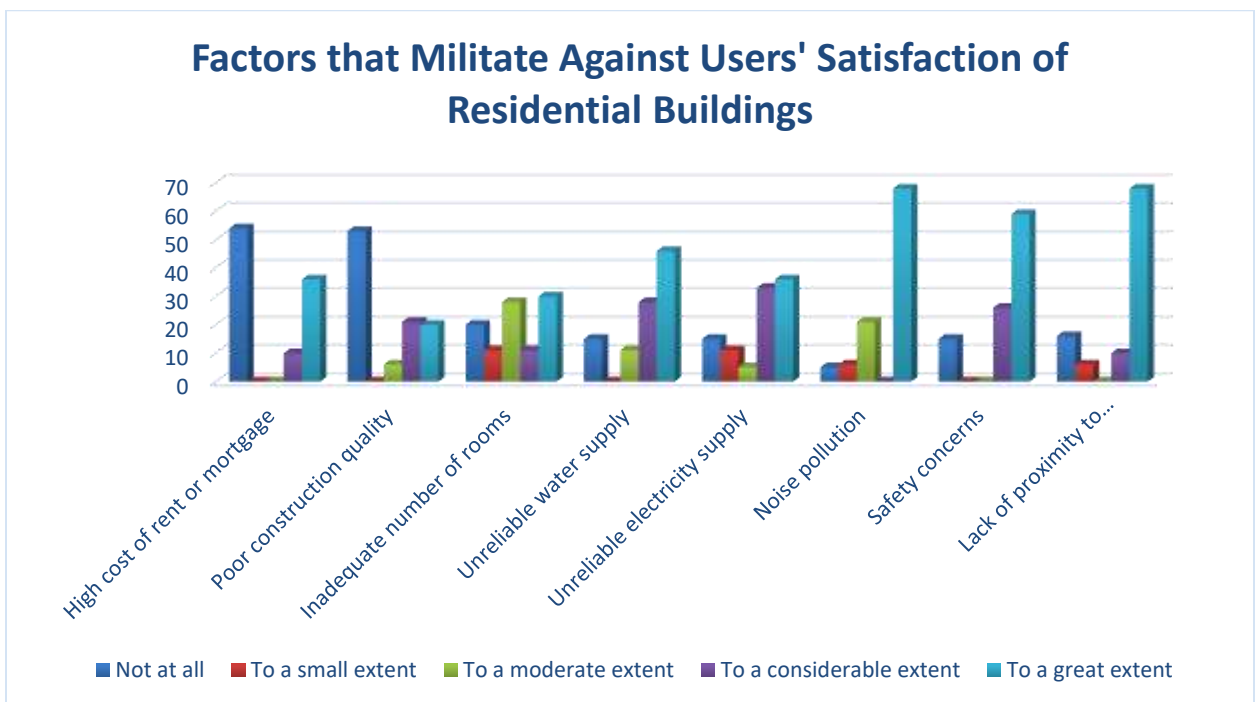


Fig. 5: Multiple bar chart showing factors that militate against users' satisfaction of residential build.

Objective 5: Examine users' reaction to housing dissatisfaction of residential buildings in the study area

Table 5: Multiple Response Distribution of Users' Reasons for Moving Out of their Residential Buildings in Owerri Municipal

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Unrealistic or unfair Increase of rent	42	11.4%	42.0%
High cost of living	62	16.8%	62.0%
Poor living conditions	66	17.9%	66.0%
Safety concerns	64	17.3%	64.0%
Inadequate amenities	52	14.1%	52.0%
Desire for a better social environment	83	22.5%	83.0%
Total	369	100.0%	369.0%

Interpretation

The data presented in Table 5 highlights the various reasons why residents in Owerri Municipal Local Government Area choose to move out of their residential buildings. A significant factor is the desire for a better social environment, with 83 respondents (22.5%) indicating this as a primary reason for their relocation. Poor living conditions also play a critical role, affecting 66 residents (17.9%), while safety concerns are a notable issue for 64 individuals (17.3%), reflecting the importance of security in residential satisfaction. The high cost of living is another significant concern, cited by 62 respondents (16.8%), indicating that economic pressures are influencing housing decisions. Additionally, inadequate amenities are a factor for 52 residents (14.1%), suggesting that access to essential services is crucial for satisfaction. Finally, unrealistic or unfair increases in rent are noted by 42 respondents (11.4%), highlighting the impact of financial burdens on housing stability. Collectively, these findings underscore the multifaceted challenges residents face, emphasizing the need for improved living conditions, safety, and economic feasibility to enhance overall housing satisfaction in the area (see figure 6).

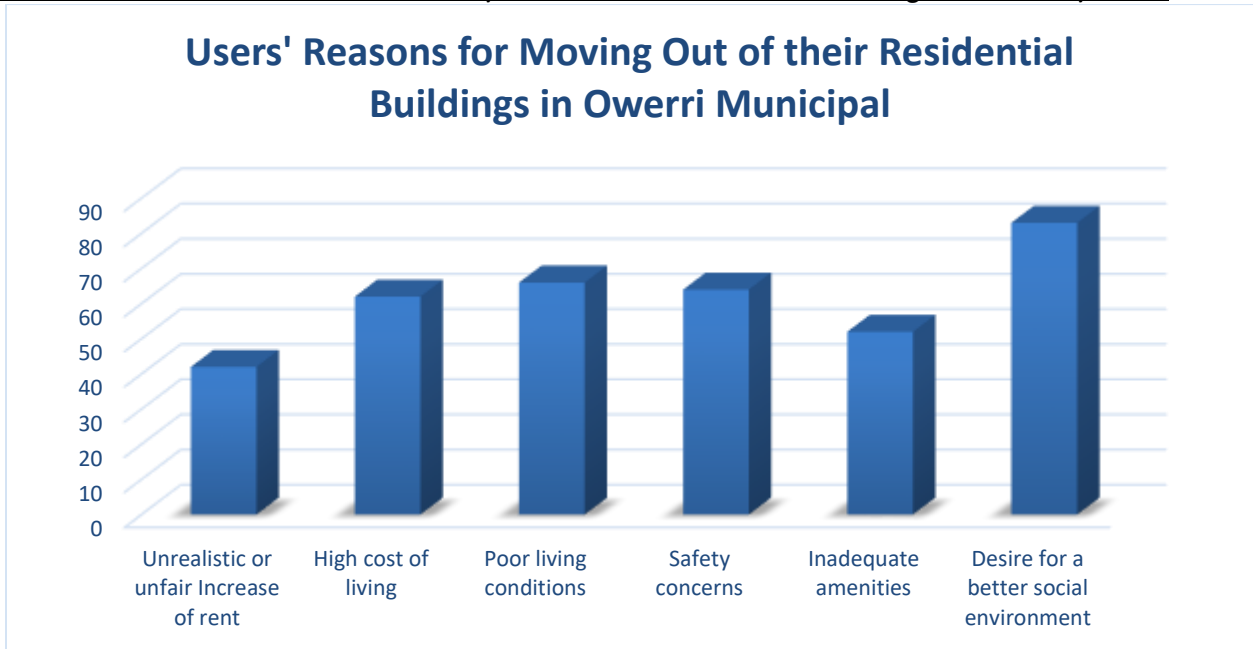


Fig. 6: Bar chart showing users' reasons for moving out of their residential buildings in Owerri Municipal

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study set out to examine user's housing satisfaction among residents of Owerri Municipal LGA of Imo State. It noted the problems users undergo in their quest for shelter in Owerri Municipal LGA of Imo State. Issues surrounding security, safety, sanitation, affordability, accessibility, cosmetics, utility and fragility of building materials were regarded as the core problems that engendered this study. It has been seen that users of properties in Owerri Municipal are tenants in the main, and landlords (or their agents/proxies). Different residential building types abound in the study area including single-family houses, apartments (mostly), duplexes and bungalows. In using these properties, some considerations were made and many respondents were satisfied with their properties/occupations because of their proximity to shopping centres and other services. Accessibility and sizes of rooms also got positive considerations in determining the extent of satisfaction of users of these residential properties.

A lot of factors were considered as militating against satisfaction of users with their premises. Among these factors, noise pollution, lack of proximity to essential services and safety concerns were seen as factors that affect satisfaction to a great extent, in the study area. In cases of dissatisfaction with residential properties, users, especially tenants, respond by quitting their residences. This is usually due to the desire for a better social environment devoid of risks from hoodlums, noise pollution and poor infrastructure. So many inconsistencies in housing design,

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construction, location, management and interactions within the neighbourhood of the house raise
questions with satisfaction.

Recommendations

- i. Non-governmental organizations and indeed the organized private sector should work with government to provide varieties of affordable housing with better social environments.
- ii. government should set minimum standards for commercial housing operators/owners. This standard will incorporate safety, sanitary, security conditions to enable tenants and users enjoy the essence of living in a house – the guarantee of comfort and safety.
- iii. There should be the re-introduction of sanitary officers as they were in the 60s and 70s, to ensure effective health checks of houses in the cities. It is gratifying to note that states like Ebonyi and Lagos are still practicing this.
- iv. Rent control measures should be put in place to check arbitrary increases in rents by landlords.
- v. Untrained property managers including lawyers and common quacks should be restrained from managing houses as they also constitute reasons why costs/rents rise in houses due to illegal impositions that are largely mismanaged and concealed.
- vi. The Owerri Capital Development Authority (OCDA) should shun corrupt practices and ensure that land uses that are incompatible and incongruous with development plans are clearly done away with. This will help check noise pollution and its concomitant hazards.
- vii. Government should improve on the conditions of infrastructure (notably water supply, electricity supply, road network, fire services, sanitation services etc) in Imo State in order to enable people gain access to essential services and needs as well as get satisfaction from the use of their buildings.
- viii. Housing policies, construction practices and enhanced community services should be generally improved on.
- ix. Local content in housing construction should be encouraged – local design, materials, methods, manpower, machines, skills and strategies – to stem the tide of spikes in house rents and make housing affordable.

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