

Research article

HOUSING CONDITIONS INDICATOR OF LIVEABILITY OF CITIES; CASESTUDY OF ENUGU, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT:

Housing can be seen as an embodiment of social services and utilities that make a community (neighbourhood) worth living, (Smith, 1971). Housing therefore is not only shelter, but the totality of living environment where man lives, works and in fact does everything, (White, 1979). That means that housing is a composite social good which is not produced or consumed piecemeal. Housing can be in the rural or urban centres (cities). There seems to be better housing condition in the urban centres than in the rural areas, therefore the city is seen as where man lives the good life. For the city to support that good life, it must be liveable with sustainable infrastructures, utilities and services. Liveability of cities is a current phenomenon used in grading (ranking) cities including but not limited to item heads like infrastructure, education, culture and environment, healthcare and stability, (The Economist, 2014). In most cities in Nigeria, there are codes in operation that ensures a minimum condition necessary for a building to be habitable, (White, 1979). This study used only infrastructure and the physical conditions of the building, part of liveable conditions and a pointer to liveability of cities.

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KEYWORDS: Condition, Housing, Indicator, Infrastructure, Liveable, Services, Urban.

Introduction

Pre colonial period (before 1960), Nigerians lived in mud houses with thatched roof. The Igbos occupying the eastern part of the country lived in their homes made of Sun-dried mud wattle and daub, etc with thatched roof, (Dmochowski, 1990). With time the mud homes were transformed into beautiful edifice, people began building with plans made by architects for rooms like living room, bedroom, kitchen and toilets and some with structural plans for storied buildings.

Traditional house types vary with geographical locations. In the coastal region the walls and roofs are made from raffia palm that abounds in the region. Rectangular mud homes with thatched roof are found in the middle belt. In the savannah region, homes are round mud buildings with sloppy grain thatched roof while the mud roofs appear in the drier areas of the extreme north, (Dmochowski, 1990, Schreckenbach). More recently mud houses are covered with layers of cement as plaster when not made entirely with cement blocks. These house types promoted liveability among the populace. These houses were cheap to build and maintain. They were environmentally friendly, the building materials and their technique of erection were locally available and accessible.

With the advent of more modern materials, often imported from overseas countries over long distances, the house types changed considerably, reflecting those of the countries from where the materials were imported. Their construction techniques became more sophisticated and their impact on the environment deleterious. The house types and the conditions of the housing environment affect how liveable the modern cities are.

Housing is a basic necessity of life especially to human beings. The problem of adequate shelter has been of immense concern to individuals and government alike. Housing is inseparable from the social, economic and political development of humankind. It reflects the social status of man, showing how well placed a man is, his economic and income level, in fact, it aids the social stratification often seen and experienced in the society.

The housing conditions in Enugu generally are experiencing various forms of infrastructural deterioration and social stratification. Some basic infrastructures are not provided in some houses from design, some are partially provided while others although provided are not maintained so may not be meeting the required needs of the residents.

The main aim of this study is to examine the housing types and conditions of the facilities and utilities as provided for the populace in Enugu, Nigeria. To achieve the above the following objectives are postulated: To observe different types of housing in Enugu, to examine the housing conditions in this urban town and then to find out the facilities provided in the different house types.

The importance of this study is aimed at directing and improving the standard of housing in the urban centres taking cognisance of the basic amenities provided and inculcating good maintenance culture in the citizens and government at large. This study will aid the policy makers by providing the much needed data on facilities and utilities for formulation of policies. It will also enlighten the occupants of the different house types on their rights to certain amenities be it from government or their landlords.

Research Methodology

The research employed survey research method which utilized observation and questionnaire in collecting data. The questionnaire comprises two sections; Section A elicits data on the respondents' demography which provides background information and confirms the suitability of respondents for the study. Section B provides information on the basic infrastructure (roads, drainages, water supply, electricity supply, waste disposal, etc) and physical conditions of the housing types.

The Concept of Housing

Housing can be defined as a physical structure that man uses as shelter. Shelter is basically for providing protection from the elements and enemies, animals inclusive. Housing however is beyond ordinary shelter; it is seen as a bundle of services by WHO definition(), which incorporates the physical structure, land facilities, access to employment and economic activities. It is also said to be a product and a process, (Duruzoechi, 1999). A product which is bulky, durable and permanent. Housing is permanent because it must be used where it was built and cannot be moved around. It is a process because of the interacting entities that need to be available for it to function properly. Such things as water, electricity, sewage, roads, etc which brings us back to the definition by WHO, about 'land facilities'. These things need to be present for housing to be called housing not to talk of it being liveable. This study focuses on those land facilities (road, water, electricity, waste collection and drains) that make a city liveable.

Housing is grouped in categories and types depending on the functions of the buildings. There are institutional buildings (hospital, school, office, etc), residential buildings, commercial buildings, industrial buildings, etc. This study concentrates on the residential house type. There are various types of residential houses in Enugu such as single tenement rooms which are mainly bungalows and in some cases a single storey high with a common utility space for all occupants. A typical house is made up of a row of rooms. Each room being occupied by one family unit irrespective of the household size and for the more affluent family can occupy two rooms. Other utility spaces such as the kitchen, lavatory, etc are shared by the entire family units within the building. There is also the single family house type which is usually occupied by one family with all the facilities/conveniences attached. There is the block of flats which can be of 2-bedroom, 3-bedroom, or even 4-bedroom in a flat with the basic utility spaces attached. The duplex type of housing is also for a single family but usually on two floors. In some cases, it could be semi-detached, (Izomoh 1997). There is the studio apartment type which is gaining much popularity especially among the youths (unmarried young men and women) because of its cheapness and privacy within the normal tenement houses. This is an offshoot of boys quarters (B/Q) type of housing. It is made up of a bedroom, living room, convenience and kitchenette.

The Study Area:

The study area is Enugu Metropolis which is the capital of Enugu state. Enugu lies on latitude 6'27" north of the equator and longitude 7'29" east of Greenwich meridian (Emenike, 2014). Enugu Metropolis is an old colonial town that started with the finding of coal in commercial quantities in the hills of Udi. This informed Enugu being known as the 'Coal City'. The terrain of Enugu is characterized by hills and valleys in an undulating manner.

The Study

The study was carried out in Enugu Metropolis. Some areas (layouts) of the metropolis were selected randomly where the questionnaire were administered to randomly selected respondents. This is because the house types, the age of the layout and their density were taken into consideration. The layouts chosen included Uwani, Abakpa, Independence, Trans Ekulu and Asata. Uwani was one of the oldest layouts in Enugu and had mixed density (medium and high). Abakpa is in the newer part of Enugu, came about to decongest the inner city, it is mostly high density. Independence layout is low density, Trans Ekulu is a medium density layout while Asata is high density layout. Fifty (50) questionnaires were distributed within each layout, table 1 showed the distribution of the questionnaires.

Findings

This study revealed on table 1 that 250 questionnaires were distributed and only 208 were returned, representing 83.2%. The study set out to answer the following research questions;

1. What are the types of houses available in these urban layouts?

2. What are their present conditions?
3. What are the facilities provided for in the different house types?

Table 2 showed the various types of houses available in Enugu metropolis as was obtained from the questionnaires in response to research question one. (59)28.37% were single tenement rooms, (38)18.27% were studio apartment type, (46)22.11% were duplex, (22)10.58% were single family mansion and (43)20.67% were blocks of flats. A critical look at the table revealed that the type of house indicates the type of density of the layout, for instance Independence layout which is for low density and Trans Ekulu layout for medium density, did not have single tenement room house type.

Table 3 addressed the issue of conditions of the houses, thus focusing on the second research question which sought to the present condition of the houses.

Walls: It was revealed that (24)11.54% of the walls were very sound, (44)21.15% sound, (78)37.59% not so sound, (41)19.71% bad and (21)10.1% very bad.

Roof: The roofs of the houses under review showed that (42)20.19% were very sound, (64)30.77% sound, (67)32.21% not so sound, (21)10.1% bad and (14)6.73% very bad.

House Environment: The environment of where the house were sited were also examined and the results showed that (13)6.25% were very sound, (50)24.04% sound, (82)39.42% not so sound, (29)13.94% bad and (34)16.35% very bad. The details of the responses as it pertains to the individual layouts are shown on that table 3. It can be seen that if put on graph paper that it peaks at the situation of not so sound/not so bad (the two can be interchanged) being a normal curve.

Table 4 showed responses on facilities available in the houses which addressed the third research question. This will be taken item by item.

Roads: The result showed that (42)20.19% said the facilities were available and adequate, while (109)52.41% said they were available but not adequate, (42)20.19% said they were not available and (15)7.21% were undecided.

Water: showed that (35)16.83% said that it was available and adequate while (110)52.88% said it was available but not adequate, (49)23.56% said it was not available and (14)6.73% are undecided.

Electricity: showed that (26)12.5% said that it was available and adequate, while (131)62.98% said it was available but not adequate, (31)14.90% said it was not available and (20)9.62% were undecided.

Waste Collection: showed that (25)12.02% said that waste collection was available and adequate while (105)50.48% said it was available but not adequate, (64)30.77% said it was not available and (14)6.73% were undecided.

Gutters/Drains: This aspect revealed as follows; (36)17.31% said that they were available and adequate while (123)59.13% said that they were available but not adequate (41)19.71% said they were not available and (8)3.85% were undecided.

Having gone through all the tables and the responses as recorded it can be seen that generally, tables 3 and 4 showed a kind of equilibrium where things are available but not adequate or working as expected which means there is a lot to be done to bring up the standard of Enugu to that of a liveable city. The situation of these being available but not adequate does not make for a liveable environment and a lot needs to be done in all aspects.

Implications for Planning

The lopsided nature of the results has a serious implication for planning. It is one of two things; either our planning laws are not being implemented or they are behind development that is the laws are not proactive. The planning authorities should device ways of implementing layout plans by creating good design, preserving and restoring them through solid maintenance culture. Simply put, they have to make out a sustainable way of maintaining and managing the city through the provision of amenities and making sure that those amenities work in the face of ever increasing population (ever expanding urbanisation).

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APPENDIX

TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF QUESTIONNAIRE.

LAYOUT	NO. GIVEN OUT	NO. COLLECTED BACK	%age
UWANI	50	45	90
ABAKPA	50	40	80
INDEPENDENCE	50	43	86
TRANS EKULU	50	42	84
ASATA	50	38	76
TOTAL	250	208	83.2

Source: Researcher' field work 2015.

TABLE 2: HOUSE TYPE.

LAYOUT	SINGLE TENEMENT ROOM	SELF-CON	DUPLEX	FAMILY MANSION	BLOCKS OF FLATS	TOTAL
UWANI	20	11	0	0	14	45
ABAKPA	21	5	4	3	7	40
INDEPENDENCE	0	8	12	14	9	43
TRANS EKULU	0	8	23	5	6	42
ASATA	18	6	7	0	7	38
TOTAL	59	38	46	22	43	208
%age	28.37	18.27	22.11	10.58	20.67	100%

Source: Researcher' field work 2015.

TABLE 3: CONDITION OF HOUSE.

LAYOUT	ELEMENT STATUS	VERY SOUND	SOUND	NOT SO SOUND	BAD	VERY BAD	TOTAL
UWANI	Walls	4	8	10	15	8	45
	Roof	5	10	15	9	6	
	House Envt.	3	8	16	11	7	
ABAKPA	Walls	3	4	10	13	10	40
	Roof	2	9	18	5	6	
	House Envt.	0	2	6	7	25	
INDEPENDENCE	Walls	11	10	20	2	0	43
	Roof	10	18	15	0	0	
	House Envt.	5	18	17	5	0	
TRANS EKULU	Walls	4	12	20	6	0	42
	Roof	20	15	5	2	0	
	House Envt.	4	18	17	3	0	
ASATA	Walls	2	10	18	5	3	38
	Roof	5	12	14	5	2	
	House Envt.	1	6	26	3	2	
TOTAL	Walls	24 (11.54%)	44 (21.15%)	78 (37.5%)	41 (19.71%)	21 (10.1%)	208
	Roof	42 (20.19%)	64 (30.77%)	67 (32.21%)	21 (10.1%)	14 (6.73%)	
	House Envt.	13 (6.25%)	50 (24.04%)	82 (39.42%)	29 (13.94%)	34 (16.35%)	

NB. Very Sound = 5, Sound = 4, Not So Sound = 3, Bad = 2, Very Bad = 1. Source: Researcher' field work 2015.

TABLE 4: FACILITIES TO HOUSE

LOCATION	AMENITIES	AVAILABLE /ADEQUATE	AVAILABLE/ NOT ADEQUATE	NOT AVAILABLE	UNDECIDED	TOTAL
UWANI	Roads	15	20	10	0	45
	Water	16	18	6	5	
	Electricity	11	25	6	3	
	Waste C/D	3	30	10	2	
	Gutter/Drains	5	35	5	0	
ABAKPA	Roads	0	18	21	1	40
	Water	3	25	12	0	
	Electricity	2	30	8	0	
	Waste C/D	0	6	32	2	
	Gutter/Drains	0	9	28	3	
INDEPENDENCE	Roads	15	18	4	6	43
	Water	8	22	8	5	
	Electricity	6	25	5	7	
	Waste C/D	15	20	5	3	
	Gutter/Drains	18	21	4	0	
TRANS EKULU	Roads	10	25	2	5	42
	Water	5	15	20	2	
	Electricity	2	26	5	9	
	Waste C/D	3	28	4	7	
	Gutter/Drains	5	30	2	5	
ASATA	Roads	2	28	5	3	38
	Water	3	30	3	2	
	Electricity	5	25	7	1	
	Waste C/D	4	21	13	0	
	Gutter/Drains	8	28	2	0	
TOTAL	Roads	42 (20.19%)	109(52.41%)	42 (20.19%)	15 (7.21%)	208
	Water	35 (16.83%)	110 (52.88%)	49 (23.56%)	14 (6.73%)	
	Electricity	26 (12.5%)	131 (62.98%)	31 (14.9%)	20 (9.62%)	
	Waste C/D	25 (12.02%)	105 (50.48%)	64 (30.77%)	14 (6.73%)	
	Gutter/Drains	36 (17.31%)	123 (59.13%)	41 (19.71%)	8 (3.85%)	

Nb. Available/Adequate = 4, Available Not Adequate = 3, Not Available = 2, Undecided = 1.

Source: Researcher' field work 2015.