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Assessment of Neighbourhood Charactristics in Suburban and Traditional Areas of Offa, Kwara State

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: This study assessed the neighbourhood satisfaction of residents of two different strata of Offa (Suburban) and traditional.

Methodology: The study administered 25 questionnaires to residents of Olorunkuse Area, Oja-Oba, Popo, and Adesoye College area along Igosun Road. Cross-sectional survey research is the research design utilized in this quantitative investigation. This research, however, is non-experimental and deductive in character because it relies on a field survey that prioritizes accuracy over bias. In order to gather data from respondents and the study area, the research study uses a questionnaire, in-person interviews, and direct observation.

Findings: The study realized that features like communal/neighbourliness, recreational facilities, drainage, communal viability, presence of a market, religious centres, density, schools, and worthy association attract much satisfaction from the respondents in both areas while residents are not satisfied with the refuse dump, serenity, privacy, aesthetics, accessibility, and road quality. For features like land use compatibility, and constancy of electricity, there exists a variation in satisfaction derived in the traditional areas and suburban areas; while residents of suburban areas are satisfied with the above-mentioned features, residents of traditional areas are not satisfied.

Conclusion: Study concluded that neighbourhoods are the smallest units of planning and hence represents the pedestal upon which extensive settlements are laid. Cities, towns, metropolis and megalopolis all sprout up from neighbourhoods and made up of several neighborhoods in the long run. Uneven satisfaction on the other hand is greatly related to communal inequalities hence having the capacity to cause migration and overburdening of facilities in the neighborhoods where residents are satisfied with the features.

Keywords: Neighborhood, Suburban, Traditional Area, Neighborhood Satisfaction, Neighborhood Facilities.

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Introduction

More and more research is showing that planning neighborhoods and communities to encourage physical activity for leisure and commuting has several advantages beyond health, most notably in terms of environmental sustainability and economic performance (Sallis et al., 2015).A neighborhood is a small geographic area, ranging in size from a few houses to thousands of residents, where residents can share access to shared facilities. Stated differently, neighborhoods are sets of spatially based characteristics linked to residential clusters and occasionally to other land uses (Chaskin, 1997; Galster et al. 2001; Park and Rogers, 2015).

The notion of neighbourhood satisfaction emerges from the necessity of ascertaining whether the amenities and features that town planners have suggested to establish sustainable and healthful neighbourhoods are also seen as satisfying and livable by locals (Chapman, 2006). Relocating might occur when a neighborhood's amenities are inadequate. Lovejoy et al. (2010) defined neighborhood satisfaction as the degree to which demands related to residential neighborhoods are satisfied. According to Park and Rogers (2015), neighborhood satisfaction is a crucial life domain that can reveal information on how local features affect overall wellbeing. Two sets of factors determine neighborhood satisfaction: features of individual households and neighborhood quality (Basolo & Strong, 2002).

The Individual household characteristics encompasses socio-demographic factors, including age, gender, race, education, marital status, income, and length of residence. Neighborhood quality characteristics refers to yardsticks to measure the neighborhood's physical environment such as access to places of activity and services, and socio-cultural setting, centrality, quality of infrastructures, space standards, building rules. Etc. (Connerly & Marans,1988 cited in Lee et. al. 2016). Neighborhood utility also transcends the physical environment as it also deals greatly with the social environment, neighborhood cohesion, place attachment as it has been scholarly proven to have a positive relationship with the social capital in neighborhoods as well as foster emotional ties with places of residence. (Shumaker & Tailor, 1983; Williams et.al., 1992; Putnam, 1995; Lewicka, 2010; Liu et.al., 2017; Cao et.al., 2018).

Nigeria now faces challenges in accommodating its expanding population without creating related social and environmental issues, especially in residential areas (Lovejoy et al., 2010). Although residential environments are made up of a variety of elements, some of which may be more important than others, it is impossible to overstate the importance of providing adequate neighborhood necessities like roads, schools, a means of subsistence, and access to higher order activities in addition to neighborhood management (Muhammed et al. 2018).

These are essential to the idea of housing and residential satisfaction because it has been suggested that the main reason Nigerian housing providers have not been able to deliver adequate housing is because they have neglected to provide the essential elements that are necessary to meet users' comfort and aspirations (Waziri, and Roosil, 2013). This situation is relevant to Offa, Kwara state, where it was discovered that several neighborhoods lacked the necessary infrastructure and services. These opinions undoubtedly highlight the need for neighborhood satisfaction research in the effort to create residential communities that satisfy residents' everyday requirements, expectations, and preferences. Accordingly, the degree of neighborhood satisfaction in Offa, Kwara state's traditional and suburban settings was compared in this study.

Statement of the Research Problems

Research frontiers in the past have focused on determining the qualities of ideal neighborhoods (Brower, 1996). Undoubtedly, opinions vary on what makes an area ideal. In other words, preferences vary by neighborhood. One of the most powerful indicators of neighborhood satisfaction is perceived general appearance (Parkes et al., 2002). De Jong, Albin, Skarback, Grahn, & Bjork, 2012; Leslie & Cerin, 2008; Lovejoy, Handy, & Mokhtarian, 2010) have all found that neighborhood aesthetics and greenery are positively correlated with neighborhood satisfaction, whereas issues with physical upkeep, such as

littering in the neighborhood, have been linked to lower levels of satisfaction (Batson & Monnat, 2015; Dassopoulos, Batson, Futrell, & Brents, 2012; Howley, Scott, & Redmond, 2009; Hur & Nasar, 2014).

Research has also shown a substantial correlation between neighborhood satisfaction and feelings of safety from crime (Basolo & substantial, 2002; Bruin & Cook, 1997; Howley et al., 2009; Hur & Nasar, 2014; Leslie & Cerin, 2008; Lovejoy et al., 2010). Leslie and Cerin (2008) discovered a negative correlation between satisfaction and perceived traffic load. It is thought that people, to the extent that they are able, look for neighborhoods that reflect their diverse preferences.

It is unknown, therefore, how successful they are and whether residents of some communities are happier than those in others. The degree of divergence between neighborhood-type desires and the actual neighborhood that people live in is demonstrated by a number of research. Schwanen and Mokhtarian (2004) discovered that while 73 percent and 81 percent of respondents in two suburban neighborhoods had anti-high-density attitudes appropriate for those environments, 76 percent of respondents in urban neighborhoods had pro-high-density attitudes.

Feldman (1990) discovered that 75% of respondents who identified as suburban in preference preferred to live in the suburbs, whereas 71% of respondents who identified as city type preferred to live in the city. According to research by Hummon (1986), respondents' pro-urban versus anti-urban sentiments were 62% in urban areas compared to 8% in suburban communities, 15% compared to 42% in small towns, and 0% compared to 76% in urban neighborhoods.

These findings demonstrated that locations do not correspond with preferences for a sizable minority. These measurements, however, do not provide information about how well the chosen compromises satisfy the demands of the residents. The goal of this study is to determine how well Offa neighborhoods serve the needs of their citizens. When a need or want is met, it might be considered a measure of satisfaction (American Heritage Dictionary, 2000).

Research Methodology

Cross-sectional survey research is the research design utilized in this quantitative investigation. This research, however, is non-experimental and deductive in character because it relies on a field survey that prioritizes accuracy over bias. In order to gather data from respondents and the study area, the research study uses a questionnaire, in-person interviews, and direct observation.

According to NPC web (2016) and National Bureau of Statistics Web (2016), the population of Offa is 120,100. In order to decide the current population of Offa, the 2016 population was projected to 2023 using the population projection formula. The workings are shown below;

The population projection formula

$Pt = Pn (1+r/100)n$

Where, Pt=Projected population

Pn=Present population

r=Growth rate (3.20% was used) (Lawal, 2018)

n=Number of years.

Pn= 2016 population (120,100)

Pt=2023

r = 3.20 (NBS, 2016)

n =7 years

$Pt= 120,100 (1+3.20/100)^7$

$= 120{,}100\ (1+0.032)^7$

$= 120{,}100 \times 1.032)^7$

$= 120{,}100 \times 1.246$

$= 149{,}727$

:. Hence Offa 2023 Projected population for 2023 = 149,727

The research population are the residents of suburban and traditional areas of Offa town, Kwara State. However, since it is impossible to sample all residents of traditional and suburban areas of Offa, the areas of Oja-Oba and Popo were chosen to represent the traditional areas of Offa town while the areas of Olorunkuse and Adesoye College, along Igosun Road were chosen to reflect the suburban areas of Offa town.

The primary data required for this study include data on neighborhood features in suburban areas and traditional areas of Offa, data on satisfaction level of neighborhood features in suburban and traditional neighborhoods of Offa, data on the differences in the neighborhood features associated with satisfaction in traditional and suburban areas of Offa. The primary data for this study was collected mainly through oral interviews, questionnaire administration and fieldworks.

The secondary data were obtained from documented facts of both published and unpublished literature relevant to the study. The secondary data were sourced from published writings and materials on neighbourhood satisfaction and related scholarly discourses. This includes books, articles from journals, periodicals, newspapers, magazines, the internet etc. all data gotten from this source will be properly referenced using the American psychology association referencing style (APA).

Yamane, (1967) postulated a sampling size formula and designed a table for determining sampling size. According to this formula, for a population size of above a hundred thousand >100,000, a sample size of 100 is relevant for effective generalization of finding at a precision level 0f 10%. Thus, 100 questionnaires were administered for this study.

However, since the selected sample size is sufficient to cover the whole of Offa and the areas chosen to represent the traditional and suburban areas of Offa are; Popo, Oja-Oba, Olorunkuse area and Adesoye College area, along Igosun Road; the questionnaires were divided by the total number of areas to be sampled (4), hence 25 questionnaires were administered at each area. Although the area covered was not the whole of Offa; this sample size was selected to give a vast majority of respondents the chance of selection.

This study adopted simple random sampling technique to administer the questionnaires which implies that every resident has an equal chance of selection as the frame is not sub divided or partitioned. This choice was selected to avoid bias and also to give each element or entity in the whole population equal and free chances of getting selected. However, in the case of selecting buildings where residents will be sampled, the systematic random sampling technique was used where every 5th building in the study area were selected and sampled. This will reflect research rigor as well as give the room for a more robust response base.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The Data collected for this study was analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Data inputs was subjected to descriptive and inferential statistical tools and analyses and the results were presented using graphical tools (charts, graphs, frequency tables etc.) to aid easy drawing of inferences, discussion of results and ease comprehension. Furthermore, pictures taken during reconnaissance and data capturing were used as supporting instruments to show existing situation of the study area.

Major Findings

The primary objective of this study is to assess neighborhood satisfaction of residents in traditional and suburban areas of Offa. In other to fulfil the aim of this study, several objectives were set; these objectives are to; examine the neighborhood features associated with suburban versus traditional environments of Offa, determine neighborhood features with higher levels of neighborhood satisfaction among residents of suburban versus traditional neighborhoods of Offa, evaluate the differences in the neighborhood features associated with satisfaction in suburban and traditional environments of Offa and compare relative levels of neighborhood satisfaction among residents of suburban and traditional neighborhoods in Offa. After careful review of literatures and consideration of conceptual and theoretical underpinnings.

The socioeconomic data reveals that majority of the respondents in the suburban and traditional are makes with all respondents residing in Offa and have spent 5-15years in Offa. Furthermore, the study revealed that majority of the respondents in the suburban and traditional areas are traders despite the fact that majority of the respondents are graduates of tertiary institutions.

There exists a degree of variation in land tenure as majority of respondents in traditional areas are living in rented apartments while most houses in the suburban areas are self-owned. As regards monthly income, majority of the respondents in the suburban and traditional areas earn between 20,000-50000 with household sizes of 3-5 people in both areas. In revealing the neighborhood differences in features of the suburban and traditional areas of Offa. The major findings are that majority of the houses in the suburban and traditional areas are Brazillian houses mostly on rentals to students of The Federal Polytechnic, Offa and other tertiary institutions of learning that the town houses. Majority of the houses in both areas have bathrooms, toilets and kitchens with most located indoors. As regards roofing materials, majority of the houses in both areas are roofed with corrugated roofing sheets however, in the traditional areas, houses are mostly roofed with gable roofs while hipped roofs dominate the suburban areas. The prominent window types for both areas are wooden casements however in the suburban areas, there is a slight difference (2%) between aluminium sliding and wooden casement.

Table 1: *Housing types*

Traditional			**Suburban**		
Housing Type	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Housing Type**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Duplex	0	0	Duplex	1	2
Bungalow	5	10	Bungalow	5	10
Brazillian	21	42	Brazillian	23	46
Storey Building	3	6	Storey Building	11	22
Blocks of Flats	2	4	Blocks of Flats	3	6
Traditional Compounds	19	38	Traditional Compounds	7	14
Others	0	0	Others	0	0
Total	50	100		50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Plate 1: Housing Type in Suburban Areas of Offa

Plate 2: Housing Types in Traditional Areas of Offa

Plate 3: Outdoor Bathroom in Traditional area of Offa

As regards presence of facilities, majority of the respondents in both areas opined that roads, drainages, religious centres, schools, fuel stations, postal agency, cemetery, retail outlets are present. However, there is a difference in facilities like fire stations and refuse dumps as they were noticed to be absent and or not functional in the traditional areas but present in the suburban areas. In revealing the neighborhood satisfaction, features like communal/neighborliness, recreational facilities, drainage, communal viability, presence of market, religious centres, density, schools, worthy association attract much satisfaction from the respondents in both areas while residents are not satisfied with refuse dump, serenity, privacy, aesthetics, accessibility and road quality. For features like land use compatibility, constancy of electricity, there exist a variation in satisfaction derived in the traditional areas and suburban areas; while residents of suburban areas are satisfied with the above mentioned features, residents of traditional areas are not satisfied.

Table 2: *Presence of Facilities*

Traditional			**Suburban**		
Facilities	Frequency	Percent	Facilities	Frequency	Percent
Road	45 (50)	90	Road	47 (50)	94
Drainage	27 (50)	54	Drainage	30 (50)	60
Religious Centres	40 (50)	80	Religious Centres	38 (50)	76
Schools	41 (50)	82	Schools	47 (50)	94
Fire Stations	19 (50)	38	Fire Stations	39 (50)	78
Fuel Station	29 (50)	58	Fuel Station	39 (50)	78
Refuse Dump	11 (50)	22	Refuse Dump	22 (50)	44
Postal Agency	37 (50)	74	Postal Agency	40 (50)	80
Cemetary	38 (50)	76	Cemetary	41 (50)	82
Recreational Facilities	34 (50)	68	Recreational Facilities	39 (50)	78
Retail Outlets	33 (50)	66	Retail Outlets	43 (50)	86
Light industries	31 (50)	62	Light industries	29 (50)	58

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Plate 4: Absence of Drainage in Traditional Areas of Offa

Plate 1: Newly Constructed Road and Drainage at Suburban Area of Offa

Plate 6: School in Suburban Area

Plate 7: Police Station at Offa

Plate 8: Recreational and Community Hub

Table 3: *Land Use Compatibility*

Traditional			**Suburban**		
Satisfaction level	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Satisfaction level**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Very high	4	8	Very high	2	4
High	3	6	High	4	8
Moderate	23	46	Moderate	29	58
Low	11	22	Low	9	18
Very low	9	18	Very low	6	12
Total	50	100		50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Recommendation

In line with the major findings of this study, the following approaches are suggested to balance the inequalities and enhance neighborhood satisfaction in the traditional and suburban areas of Offa.

- Review of the Offa Master Plan if it exists and if not an immediate approval of the Offa master plan to guide development.
- Preparation of lower order but detailed map such as district plan and the local plans. It is these that would make for effective monitoring of land use within the scheme.
- New neighborhoods should be laid out according to town planning standards factoring in provision of facilities and their service radius and carrying capacity which will go a long way in enhancing functionality.
- The development control department should awaken to the responsibility of checking change of use through constant control, monitoring and demolition where necessary.
- The state government should employ the use of planning and land use controls to promote the use of zoning controls throughout the estate and also encourage planning and zoning on a regional (joint municipal) basis.
- Attempts should be made to preserve authority in municipal governments parastatals such as town planning authorities; to enact and administer zoning controls.
- Greater usage and upkeep of already-existing recreational facilities should take precedence, as should the promotion of new facilities where it is thought that doing so is essential due to population increase or shifting recreational needs. This could take the form of encouraging new development to reserve recreation sites and open/green space within developments, encouraging neighborhood parks to be located within short driving or walking distance to improve the quality of residential areas, and encouraging community parks to be large enough and have a variety of recreational amenities.
- Rehabilitation should be done particularly in the traditional areas where there are issues of accessibility and housing quality to remediate the current conditions.
- An attempt should be made by the government to balance communal inequalities by providing facilities lacking in the traditional areas or otherwise provide a central facility of equidistance to serve residents of Offa generally.
- Conclusively, the government should endeavor to fund town planning authority and training of personnel especially in the area of human and resources management.

Conclusion

Neighbourhoods are the smallest units of planning and hence represents the pedestal upon which extensive settlements are laid. Cities, towns, metropolis and megalopolis all sprout up from neighbourhoods and made up of several neighborhoods in the long run. Uneven satisfaction on the other hand is greatly related to communal inequalities hence having the capacity to cause migration and overburdening of facilities in the neighborhoods where residents are satisfied with the features. Admittedly, although most traditional areas in Nigeria are older than planning, the burden lies on the government to balance communal inequalities via provision of facilities in traditional areas to match up with their suburban counterparts.

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