

Physical Planning as a tool to Address Declining Urban Residential Quality and Quality of Life in select Neighbourhoods in Yenagoa City

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ABSTRACT

Residential quality has become a fundamental determinant of quality of life in urban settlements. The study aims to assess the impact of declining residential quality and quality of life in Yenagoa City, Nigeria. The objectives are to identify residential quality indicators of QoL used to assess these impacts of residential quality indicators on QoL and identify sustainable physical planning measures to improve residential quality and QoL of residents of the study area. The study adopted a quantitative research approach employing a descriptive research design. The study employed a simple random technique for the selection of 6 neighbourhoods. Three hundred ninety-six (396) respondents were obtained by applying the Taro Yamane formula at a 5% precision level and proportionately distributed across sampled neighbourhoods. The study found that the declining residential quality affects physical, social and economic domains of life as residents are living more in rooming housing and blocks of flats with an average of 4-6 households and 2-3 households, with mostly 4-6 persons per household occupying 2-3 rooms and 1 room. More than 60% of the buildings in the neighbourhoods needed more water supply and mainly had untarred access roads without drainages. The findings further showed that some neighbourhoods lacked secondary school facilities. The study found that the prevalence of crime and violence has caused injury, property loss and life in the study area. The study found that a substantial percentage of residents are unemployed, with the average earning of the employed being less than N60,000 monthly. The study revealed that the contributions of the indicators used for assessing demonstrated from the rating of perceived QoL of the neighbourhoods as "unsatisfactory" and "satisfactory". However, to improve these conditions, the following measures are proffered including urban renewal schemes should be carried out in the neighbourhoods, government agencies involved in physical planning, development control and management should strictly enforce existing physical planning policies, regulations and standards, develop a Participatory Planning Approach (PPA) framework were members of the neighbourhoods and the city development agencies will collaborate in the decision-making process and halt urban sprawl and leapfrog development in the city to prevent informal settlements formation.

Keywords: Physical Planning, Residential Quality, Quality of Life, Neighbourhood

Introduction

The transformation of settlements from rural to urban areas has become a contemporary trend in recent decades. The transition of Yenagoa from rural to urban settlement in the mid-1990s from the pronouncement as the capital of Bayelsa State increased the population, triggering the investment and development of urban infrastructure and services. This action changed the morphology of the neighbourhoods in the city through the attraction of physical development and human activities affecting the residential quality and quality of life (QoL) of the neighbourhoods. Residential quality encompasses attributes that give a sense of well-being in a living environment, including food, housing, and its accompanying elements, as well as safety and security [1]. [2] also supported the description of residential quality as an element that makes a residential neighbourhood ideal for habitation for the residents who live in that neighbourhood.

However, poor physical planning and management trigger distortions in neighbourhoods, affecting the residential quality and the perceived QoL lived in the environment. This phenomenon may lead to sprawl development and informal settlement formation in an urban environment [3]. Poorly serviced neighbourhoods without essential neighbourhood infrastructure and services spur questions about the residential quality and how people feel about their QoL in the environment

they live. In assessing residential quality to achieve improved QoL, some indicators were employed to analyse inherent challenges in the neighbourhoods to help in decision-making in housing and neighbourhood preference [4]. Some indicators to assess residential quality proffered by [5] include ecology, facilities, security, quality of peripheral facilities, kitchen and bathroom facilities, children-friendly, entertainment, room quality, engineering quality, building performance, and maintenance were used to assess residential quality in Beijing, China. These indicators used to evaluate the residential quality of a neighbourhood will translate to the perceived QoL of the residents. Residential quality evaluation of urban residences is a fundamental part of urban residents' health and social well-being that contributes to urban sustainable development [5]. This requirement is crucial in assessing the QoL as it cuts across urban life's physical, social and economic aspects.

The city of Yenagoa is witnessing an increase in population size and densification, and incrementally multiplying in the development of neighbourhoods needs to be improved in the provision of infrastructure and services, as well as the quality of housing provision to her teeming population. The opportunities provided by the city master plan of 2004 to coordinate physical planning and provision of essential infrastructure and services have not been met by the government and its agencies. This condition threatens the residential quality of the

neighbourhoods thereby jeopardising the QoL of residents and the entirety of the urban environment. The defacing environment of the neighbourhoods presents declining attributes that affect residential quality, QoL, and the well-being of residents in several ways. This study aims to assess the declining residential quality and QoL of residents of neighbourhoods in Yenagoa City, which will help to understand the dynamics of neighbourhoods and promote a sustainable urban environment.

Statement of the Problem

Residential areas are places for community bond and social integration, which engenders socio-economic growth and development and the QoL of residents who inhabit the area. Observations indicate that the residential quality of some neighbourhoods in Yenagoa City, Bayelsa State, is declining. This decline has deteriorated residential quality's physical, social and economic aspects, affecting residents' QoL. This condition is accentuated by poor housing conditions, inadequate provision of neighbourhood facilities and services, and an increasing poverty rate in the neighbourhoods. Furthermore, poor urban planning and management of neighbourhoods also highlight these conditions. The absence of these conditions will further increase the impacts on the physical, social and economic aspects of the neighbourhoods and reduce the residential quality and overall QoL of the residents in Yenagoa City. Against this drawback, the study assesses the decline in residential quality as it affects the QoL of residents of Yenagoa City and provides sustainable measures to halt the decline in residential quality and improve the QoL of residents of these neighbourhoods.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study aims to assess the impact of declining residential quality and residents' quality of life in Yenagoa City, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study are as follows:

1. Identify residential quality indicators of QoL in Yenagoa City;
2. Assess the impacts of residential quality indicators on QoL in the study area and
3. Identify sustainable physical planning measures to improve residential quality and QoL of study area residents.

Scope of the Study

The Geographical scope of the study covers Yenagoa City LGA in Bayelsa State, Nigeria (see Figure 1). The content scope covers identifying residential quality indicators of QoL in Yenagoa City; assessing the impacts of residential quality indicators on QoL in the study area; and identifying sustainable physical planning measures to improve residential quality indicators and QoL of residents of the study area.

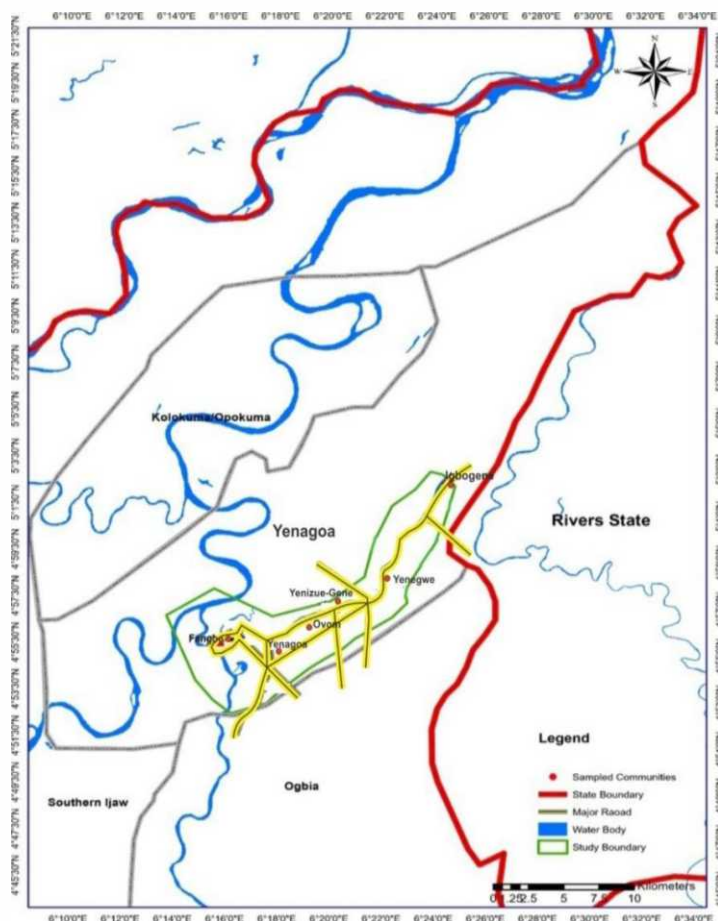


Figure 1: Yenagoa City LGA showing Studied Neighbourhoods Source: [19]

Literature Review

Residential Quality and Neighbourhoods

[6] defined urban and regional planning as the art and science of ordering land use and the character and siting of buildings and communication routes to secure the maximum practicable degree of economy, convenience, beauty and safety. From consensus definitions, urban and regional planning is the arrangement of various land uses and human activities in an environment to achieve the maximum degree of aesthetics, economy, convenience and health. From these descriptions, the scholars have displayed the organisation of human settlements, irrespective of the hierarchy, as functional in that the inhabitants can reside, work and recreate. The land use arrangement for residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, transportation, institutional, and other human activities should improve the living conditions and well-being of people residing in the environment.

One fundamental concern urban and regional planning activities have is providing a living environment such as ideal neighbourhoods fit for liveability and sustainability for today's people and the future.

It can be achieved by adequately providing the necessary infrastructure and services to make living conditions worthwhile and improve the QoL of residents in the neighbourhoods. Neighbourhoods and their characters play pivotal roles in shaping cities and towns' urban form and structure. Ideally, neighbourhoods complement one another to benefit and contribute to the physical development of the urban environment, promoting human existence [7]. Neighbourhoods are defined as geographical units that serve as residential areas for human habitation [8]. These neighbourhoods go beyond providing homes for human accommodation; they encompass other elements such as infrastructure, facilities, and services that accompany them, enhancing social interactions and community bonds, a sense of community, and an improved local economy and QoL. Therefore, well-designed and developed neighbourhoods provide a setting for residents to develop a strong sense of belonging, promoted by their interactions with one another and create unique identities that project the images and uniqueness visible in character. Some of the characteristics of neighbourhoods as specified by the [8] include:

- i.** Physical condition of housing units;
- ii.** Opportunities for social interaction;
- iii.** Careful and strategic placement of retail uses and other appropriate non-residential uses within the neighbourhood area;
- iv.** Continued investment in public and private property to stabilise property values;
- v.** High level of owner-occupancy of dwelling units;
- vi.** Condition of public facilities and infrastructure serving the area;
- vii.** A sense of community and belonging among residents; and
- viii.** Access to public open space areas.

These characteristics cut across physical, social, and economic domains of human lives and further indicate the level of satisfaction with which individuals and the community perceive the residential quality of the neighbourhoods. This character presents the visual image in terms of residents' forms and psychology, including visitors to the neighbourhoods.

Residential Quality and Quality of Life

Various domains of human life are used to assess and determine the QoL in urban areas, especially in neighbourhoods whether in developed or developing countries [9] [10]. These domains are used to determine individuals' satisfaction and well-being based on life circumstances, taking cognisance of subjective and objective ratings that are predetermined by internal and external factors within their environment [9]. The domains are used to generate indicators to serve as a framework and guideline for assessing and rating the QOL of individuals and households in a particular living area to have a general rating of

subjective (individuals) and objective (experts) opinions [11]. These domains and indicators are used to build a neighbourhood's residential quality and characterise QoL perceived by residents of these neighbourhoods they are living in.

Residential quality and QoL are interwoven concepts, which, if not considered in urban planning and management affairs, transit into urban degradation as the neighbourhoods will be perceived as not good enough for living. This situation might affect the physical, social and economic spheres of life in the urban environment, leading to scenarios similar to the "Broken Window" theory. Physical elements such as housing conditions, access roads, drainage systems and water supply often fall into disrepair, leading to increased risks of flooding, waterborne diseases and environmental pollution, which breeds informality [12]. Furthermore, social challenges such as increased crime rates reduced social cohesion and well-being, and limited access to essential services such as healthcare and education became eminent [13]. Also, it decreased property values and disinvestment, thereby discouraging property owners from maintaining or improving their properties. This decline in property values further limits access to affordable housing and exacerbates economic inequalities within neighbourhoods as a result of unemployment and poverty caused by a deteriorating local economy [14]. These conditions impede urban growth and development, threaten sustainable urban development, and jeopardise the residential quality and QoL of neighbourhoods in urban areas.

Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative research approach employing a descriptive research design. The study employed a simple random technique. Primary and secondary data were collected for the study. Primary data was obtained from residents in the neighbourhoods of the study area through questionnaire administration (closed and open-ended questionnaires) and physical observations to assess the impact of residential quality decline on the QoL of residents of neighbourhoods of Yenagoa City. The study identified 29 communities in the study area, and 6 communities (neighbourhoods) representing 20% were randomly selected for sampling in the study, specifically Famgbe, Yenagoa, Ovom, Yenizue-Gene, Yenegwe and Igbogene communities. Moreover, to determine the sample size, five (5) persons per household were used to determine the sample population to select respondents (household heads) who participated in the study [15]. A total of 396 respondents were achieved and selected for the study, applying the [16], which was proportionately spread across sampled neighbourhoods selected for the study. The study used a simple random sampling technique to select respondents who were interviewed in the study (see Table 1).

Table 1: Determination of Sample Size for the Study

| Sampled Neighbourhoods | 1991 Population | 2023 Population (Projected Using 6.5% Growth Rate) | No. of Households (HH) (5 Persons per HH) | No. of Households Sampled in the Neighbourhoods |
|------------------------|-----------------|--|---|---|
| Famgbe | 5,229 | 39,218 | 7,844 | 81 |
| Yenagoa | 8,723 | 65,423 | 13,085 | 136 |
| Ovom | 6,320 | 40,400 | 8,080 | 84 |
| Yenizue-Gene | 2,086 | 15,645 | 3,129 | 33 |
| Yenegwe | 473 | 3,548 | 710 | 7 |
| Igbogene | 3,536 | 26,520 | 5,304 | 55 |
| Total | 26,367 | 190,754 | 38,152 | 396 |

Source: NPC, 1991[17]; NPC, 2018 [18] [15]; Researchers' Computation, 2023

Results and Discussions

Identified Residential Quality Indicators of QoL in Yenagoa City

Several indicators are used to determine the residential quality of neighbourhoods that impact on QoL of the residents. These indicators cut across physical, social and economic domains of life, which other authors have used to determine the perceived QoL in the living environment, including Gandelman et al. (2012)[11] and Martinez-Martin et al. (2012)[10]. The study has identified indicators according to physical, social and economic domains, including the following:

Physical Indicators

The physical indicators identified and used for assessing the residential quality of the neighbourhoods include building type, building ownership, number of households in the building, water supply, electricity supply and access road condition. The data in Table 2 indicated that more than 78.3% of building types are rooming housing and blocks of flats, as revealed in the neighbourhoods of the study area. However, standalone bungalows, semi-detached bungalows, storey buildings (detached) and storey building (semi-detached) buildings were found in these neighbourhoods. The data obtained from the field revealed that 63.9% of building occupants are renters, while 32.3% of occupants of buildings are owner-occupiers. The remaining respondents were squatters occupying the buildings in the neighbourhoods. It was such that most of these buildings were occupied by an average of 4-6 households and 2-3 households, accounting for 33.3% and 29.8% of the responses, respectively, while many buildings were occupied by 7-9 and 10+ households, reflecting high densification per hectare in the study area. The average number of persons per household indicated in the neighbourhoods is 4-6 persons per household, which is the prevailing household size in many urban areas in Nigeria. Habitable spaces occupied in buildings by households, as revealed in the study in communities, are mostly 2-3 rooms and 1 room, which is very low for a household of 6 persons and above (see Tables 3, 4, 5 & 6).

Table 2: Building Type

| Building Type | No. | % |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Rooming house | 190 | 48 |
| Block of flats | 120 | 30.3 |
| Bungalow (standalone) | 42 | 10.6 |
| Bungalow (semi-detached) | 10 | 2.5 |
| Storey building (detached) | 6 | 1.5 |
| Storey building (semi-detached) | 4 | 1 |
| Others (specify) | 4 | 1 |
| NA | 20 | 5.1 |
| Total | 396 | 100 |

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2023

Table 3: Ownership of Building

| Building Ownership | No. | % |
|--------------------|------------|------------|
| Owner-occupier | 128 | 32.3 |
| Renter | 253 | 63.9 |
| Other (specify) | 3 | 0.8 |
| NA | 12 | 3 |
| Total | 396 | 100 |

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2023

Table 4: Number of Households in Building

| Number of Households in Building | No. | % |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| 1 | 44 | 11.1 |
| 2-3 | 118 | 29.8 |
| 4-6 | 123 | 33.3 |
| 7-9 | 53 | 12.6 |
| 10+ | 37 | 9.3 |
| NA | 21 | 5.3 |
| Total | 396 | 100 |

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2023

Table 5: Number of Persons in Household

| Number of Persons in Household | No. | % |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|
| 1 person | 22 | 5.5 |
| 2-3 persons | 89 | 22.6 |
| 4-6 persons | 198 | 50.1 |
| 7-9 persons | 55 | 13.8 |
| 10+ persons | 21 | 5.3 |
| NA | 11 | 2.8 |
| Total | 396 | 100 |

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2023

Table 6: Habitable Spaces (Rooms) Occupied by Households in Building

| Habitable Space (Room) Occupied | No. | % |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|
| 1 room | 114 | 28.8 |
| 2-3 rooms | 203 | 51.4 |
| 3-4 rooms | 33 | 8.3 |
| 5-6 rooms | 12 | 3 |
| 7+ rooms | 13 | 3.3 |
| NA | 21 | 5.3 |
| Total | 396 | 100 |

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2023

Thus, Table 7 displays physical domain indicators such as water supply used to determine residential quality in the study area. The table showed that 72% of the respondents indicated no water supply in the building they are occupying, while 22.9% affirmed that they do not have water supply in their building. The data significantly showed that water supply is an unavailable amenity in the neighbourhoods studied, affecting the residential quality of the neighbourhoods in Yenagoa City. Another vital indicator, electricity supply, used for the assessment showed that many households have electricity in the buildings they occupy, accounting for 89.6% of the responses, as indicated in Table 8. However, 6.6% of the households attest not to have such a service in their building. Accessibility, a crucial indicator in the physical domain, revealed from data in Table 9 that the condition of access roads in the neighbourhoods from the modal responses are earth, tarred and concrete roads accounted for 50%, 19.2% and 28.5%, respectively. This condition demonstrates that more earth roads need solid motorised surfaces in the studied neighbourhoods. The access roads conditions reflect the availability of drainages in the streets of the neighbourhoods as the data presented in Table 10 showed that more than half of the respondents, amounting to 60.1% of the responses, indicated there is no drainage in their streets in the neighbourhood since the access roads are not tarred or in concrete form.

Table 7: Water Supply in Building

| Water Supply | No. | % |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Yes | 91 | 22.9 |
| No | 285 | 72 |
| NA | 20 | 5.1 |
| Total | 396 | 100 |

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2023

Table 8: Electricity Supply in Building

| Water Supply | No. | % |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Yes | 355 | 89.6 |
| No | 26 | 6.6 |
| NA | 15 | 3.8 |
| Total | 396 | 100 |

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2023

Table 9: Access Road Condition

| Access Road Condition | No. | % |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|
| Tarred | 113 | 28.5 |
| Concrete | 64 | 16.2 |
| Earth | 198 | 50 |
| Others (specify) | 0 | 0 |
| NA | 21 | 5.3 |
| Total | 396 | 100 |

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2023

Table 10: Availability of Drainage in Street

| Availability of Drainage | No. | % |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|
| Yes | 138 | 34.8 |
| No | 238 | 60.1 |
| NA | 20 | 5.1 |
| Total | 396 | 100 |

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2023

Social Indicators

Social indicators for assessing residential quality have major connectivity in measuring the liveability of neighbourhoods. Some identified social indicators were used to rate residential quality including healthcare services, access to primary and secondary schools, and crime and violent activities. Data in Table 11 indicates where households access healthcare services in the study area. Data showed that 67.9% of the households interviewed acknowledged that their households access healthcare service within the neighbourhoods they are residing, 27.8% of the respondents affirmed that their households access healthcare service outside the neighbourhoods they are living but within Yenagoa and 0.5% said they access healthcare service outside Yenagoa. The data in Table 12 further showed the same trend for household access to primary school in the study area. Data revealed that 64.2% of the households access primary school within the neighbourhoods sampled in the study area, as 16.5% responded that their households access primary school outside the neighbourhoods but within Yenagoa while 1.5% of households access primary school outside Yenagoa. The respondents further indicated that 43.1% of households access secondary school within the neighbourhoods they live followed by 16.8% that access secondary school outside the neighbourhoods but within Yenagoa while 2.5% of households access secondary school outside Yenagoa as shown in Table 13. Social issues such as crime and violent activity were considered for assessing residential quality. The data in Table 14 indicates that 35.8% of the respondents affirmed that crime and violent activity often occur in their neighbourhoods while 32.6% said these activities always occur in the neighbourhoods they reside within the study area. These statistics showed that over 68% of the respondents acknowledged considerate occurrences of such activities in their neighbourhoods. The criminality and violent occurrences have caused issues that have affected the perceived residential quality of the neighbourhoods. As indicated in Table 15, the activity has caused loss of injury, property and life accounting for 45.3%, 36.5% and 18.2%, respectively from the responses of people interviewed.

Table 11: Household Access to Healthcare Service

| Household Access to Healthcare Service | No. | % |
|--|------------|------------|
| Within the neighbourhood | 269 | 67.9 |
| Outside the neighbourhood but within Yenagoa | 110 | 27.8 |
| Outside Yenagoa | 2 | 0.5 |
| NA | 15 | 3.8 |
| Total | 396 | 100 |

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2023

Table 12: Household Access to Primary Education

| Household Access to Primary Education | No. | % |
|--|------------|------------|
| Within the neighbourhood | 254 | 64.2 |
| Outside the neighbourhood but within Yenagoa | 65 | 16.5 |
| Outside Yenagoa | 6 | 1.5 |
| NA | 71 | 17.8 |
| Total | 396 | 100 |

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2023

Table 13: Household Access to Secondary Education

| Household Access to Secondary Education | No. | % |
|--|------------|------------|
| Within the neighbourhood | 171 | 43.1 |
| Outside the neighbourhood but within Yenagoa | 66 | 16.8 |
| Outside Yenagoa | 10 | 2.5 |
| NA | 149 | 37.6 |
| Total | 396 | 100 |

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2023

Table 14: Frequency of Crime and Violent Activity in Neighbourhood

| Frequency of Crime and Violent Activity | No. | % |
|---|------------|------------|
| Always | 129 | 32.6 |
| Often | 142 | 35.8 |
| Uncertain | 15 | 3.8 |
| Rarely | 63 | 15.8 |
| Not at all | 1 | 0.3 |
| NA | 46 | 11.8 |
| Total | 396 | 100 |

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2023

Table 15: Loss from Crime and Violent Activity in Neighbourhood

| Loss from Crime and Violent Activity | No. | % |
|--------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Life | 126 | 18.2 |
| Injury | 314 | 45.3 |
| Property | 253 | 36.5 |
| Others (specify) | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 693 | 100 |

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2023

Economic Indicators

Economic indicators determine the household's economic value, taste and purchasing power in every society. These economic indicators were applied to determine the residential quality in the study area, including respondents' employment status and income level. Table 16 shows respondents' employment status in the neighbourhoods as the data revealed that 52.6% of respondents are employed while 38.1% are unemployed. This indicator showed that a large proportion of the population is unemployed, which significantly affects their taste and purchasing power to meet the daily needs of households. Furthermore, the employment status of the respondents in the neighbourhoods translates to the incomes of the respondents. The data in Table 17 showed that 26.8% of respondents' monthly income is less than N18,000, the highest closely followed by 22.8% representing those earning between N 18,001-N30,000 and 17.3% representing those earning between N 30,001-N 60,000. The data reflects that about 67% of the respondents earn less than N60,000 monthly.

Table 16: Employment Status of Respondents

| Employment Status | No. | % |
|-------------------|------------|------------|
| Employed | 208 | 52.6 |
| Unemployed | 151 | 38.1 |
| Retired | 12 | 3 |
| NA | 25 | 6.3 |
| Total | 396 | 100 |

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2023

Table 17: Monthly Income of Respondents

| Monthly Income (₦) | No. | % |
|--------------------|------------|------------|
| Less than ₦18,000 | 106 | 26.8 |
| ₦18,001-₦30,000 | 90 | 22.8 |
| ₦30,001-₦60,000 | 69 | 17.3 |
| ₦60,001-₦90,000 | 30 | 7.5 |
| ₦90,001-₦120,000 | 19 | 4.8 |
| ₦120,001-₦150,000 | 7 | 1.8 |
| ₦150,001-₦180,000 | 6 | 1.5 |
| ₦180,001-₦210,000 | 2 | 0.5 |
| ₦210,001-₦240,000 | 1 | 0.3 |
| ₦240,001+ | 1 | 0.3 |
| NA | 65 | 16.5 |
| Total | 396 | 100 |

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2023

Assessed Impacts of Residential Quality Indicators on QoL in the Study Area

The study revealed that most of the households in the neighbourhoods assessed the physical condition of their neighbourhoods and had mixed feelings regarding their rating such as "good" and "bad" (see Table 18). The rating of the QoL in the neighbourhoods from the listed residential quality indicators employed in the study area showed that 34.6% and 33.3% of respondents said unsatisfactory and satisfactory in the

rating of QoL in the neighbourhoods they live in representing over 67% of the responses. However, some respondents said uncertain accounting for 12.3% while 11.8% and 8% of the respondents said very unsatisfactory and very satisfactory, respectively with a rating of QoL in the neighbourhoods they live in the study area (see Table 19). The level of satisfaction with residential quality defines a neighbourhood beyond the building occupied but other facilities and services that will contribute to the QoL of the residents living in the neighbourhood [7].

Table 18: Rating of Neighbourhood Condition

| Rating of Neighbourhood Condition | No. | % |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Very bad | 12 | 3 |
| Bad | 114 | 28.8 |
| Uncertain | 47 | 11.8 |
| Good | 161 | 40.6 |
| Very good | 39 | 10 |
| NA | 23 | 5.8 |
| Total | 396 | 100 |

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2023

Table 19: Respondents Rating of QoL in Neighbourhood

| Rating of QoL | No. | % |
|---------------------|------------|------------|
| Very unsatisfactory | 47 | 11.8 |
| Unsatisfactory | 137 | 34.6 |
| Uncertain | 49 | 12.3 |
| Satisfactory | 132 | 33.3 |
| Very satisfactory | 31 | 8 |
| Total | 396 | 100 |

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2023

Conclusion

The declining nature of neighbourhoods in Yenagoa City connotes unsustainability in the urban environment. However, the study has assessed declining residential quality and its effects on the QoL of residents in Yenagoa City, Nigeria. The study has used indicators to assess the residential quality that are within physical, social and economic domains of human existence. The study revealed that physical indicators indicated rooming housing and block of flats occupied by an average of 4-6 households with 4-6 persons per household occupying 2-3 rooms and 1 room averagely. More than 50% of the buildings do not have water supply but having the presence of electricity supply. The roads conditions were mostly earth surface while some are tarred and concrete surface without drainages. The social indicators reflect that facilities such as healthcare services and primary schools are accessed within most neighbourhoods studied, but there is a deviation in access to secondary schools, which are accessed in other neighbourhoods by households. The study revealed that crime and violent activity frequently occur in the neighbourhoods, causing injury, property loss and life. The economic indicators revealed from the study findings that over 50% of the respondents are employed, though a substantial percentage are unemployed (38.1%). These residents earned an average of less than N60,000 monthly. The study revealed that the contributions of the indicators used for assessing the neighbourhood condition from ratings reflect mixed feelings of "good" and "bad" from the residents. This is also demonstrated in their rating of QoL perceived in the neighbourhoods as "unsatisfactory" and "satisfactory". These ratings indicated that perceived residential quality is in a declining direction and that it is affecting the QoL of residents in the study area. From the investigation, there is a need to enhance the assessed indicators that are perceived as inefficient and inadequate to halt the declining residential quality and QoL in the neighbourhoods and propel sustainability and liveability in the study area. Hence, the study suggests sustainable urban planning and

management measures to improve residential quality and residents' QoL in the study area.

Recommendations

1. As a priority, urban renewal schemes should be carried out in the neighbourhoods to enhance residential quality domains and indicators by providing and upgrading existing infrastructure and services to improve QoL in neighbourhoods;
2. Government agencies involved in physical planning and management should strictly enforce existing physical planning policies, regulations and standards to enhance physical, social and economic conditions of the neighbourhoods to improve the QoL of residents;
3. Develop a Participatory Planning Approach (PPA) framework where members of the neighbourhoods and the city development agencies will collaborate in the decision-making process to plan and re-plan neighbourhoods in the study area; and
4. Urban sprawl and leapfrog development should be curtailed with sustainable and efficient physical planning and development control measures to control, guide and manage urban growth and development in the city to prevent informal settlement formation.

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