



An Assessment of Residents Perception of Urban Livability in the City of Calabar, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study centers on a clear appreciation of residents perception of urban Livability in the city of Calabar, Nigeria. Livability here is explained based on extant literature provisions related directly with the perspective of Quality of Life (QÖL) which hinges squarely on the interaction between society and environment,

From the point of view of problem definition, the study views existing gap in this aspect of knowledge of the people in the envisaged area of study! It S therefore focused on examination of the individual and group perception of their, overall disposition primed on the essence of quality of life (QOL) in the context of place.

The study is deemed to be significant in several respects Such as understanding of the impact of rural-urban migration on the social life of the urban population, knowledge gained from this direction will be contributory in urban environmental planning.

Government policy framework will also benefit by the results of a study of this nature. The objectives follow the essence of (i) appreciation of individual quality of life, (ii) assessment of the residents' economic milieu, (iii) an examination of their satisfaction with the built up environment, etc.

The literature commenced with operationalization of the conceptual tennets of the different explanations of livability by different authorities which led to the conclusion that livability is a relative concept and place-determined. Further on, some critical issues in livability assessment were examined alongside with relevant criteria for livability assessment in the city domain.

Accordingly, the methodology considers (i) the study design, (ii) area of study, (iii) study population/sampling, (iv) instrument/method of data collection and (v) data analysis techniques.

INTRODUCTION

The basic explanation of the concept of urban livability is amorphous circumspect though etymologically it connotes the basic paraphernalia of how good a city environment can be conducive to the livelihood of its residents. Generally, livability is considered holistically on the basis of the environment and its people. The overall interest is viewed from both the perceptible and non-perceptible attributes of the built environment and its people. The original notion of the tennet of livability has been traced to the works of earlier scholars like Vanzerv and Seskin (2011), Van den Hauasel (2013) Mabogunje (1974) and Sule and Mohit (2015). The underlying factor in livability assessfflent is the index of Quality of life (QOL) which has been substantiated to mean the quality of the natural environment and the built up environment and as well as the city or municipal policy frameworks (Sule et al 2018).

Arising from the QOL index, the basis of livability and sustainqbility have censored. In this sense some workers in the field have attempted lending colours to their affirmative/ hence, standard (2013) held that they are multifaceted, dynamic and powerful while Lowe et al (2013) views livability as the foundation of sustainability plan which may produce better living conditions.

A great deal of attention has been paid by scholars in urban planning profession in Nigeria to the livability essence of our urban areas in Nigeria. Mabogunje (1974) has devoted profuse attention to the urban livability essence in different urban areas in Nigeria.

His investigation of urban livelihood forms of city dwellers in t}he fities of

Lagos and Ibadan in the seventies (70s) led to the in cooperation of the concept of "slum" to certain areas of the city occupied by the urban poor and unemóloyed. Stile (1981) in his earlier efforts on the city of Calabar had equally yielded some useful insights into some basic parameters of urban livability criteria.

Essentially, a number of criteria can be enlisted to include (a) urban physical planning, (built environment), (b) urban pristine domains (natural areas) Terrain/topography, (c) economic life (d) neighbourhood aggregation (geodemographic criterion (d) safety and security of the residents. (e) Municipal governance etc.

A new dimension to the livability factor has been identified as the phenomenon of climate change and urban microclimatology (Sule et al 2018).

In Calabar as elsewhere, there is the dire necessity of exploring a wide range of these issues so as to adequately appreciate and isolate the true perspectives of the basic constraints to residents' livability in the area.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Urban livability assessment is of grave necessity in today's burgeoning population of cities caused by their ecological foot prints on their suburbia or periphery. These footprints are witnessed on the wave of inflow or migration material and human resources from the countryside or rural areas to the city domain. Mabogunje (1974) in his analyses of urbanization processes in Nigeria recognized some attendant challenges in this spate of rural-urban interaction which are manifest in unemployment, housing problems and overcrowding, diseases and malnutrition and a whole range of social problems.

Following these earlier efforts of Mabogunje (1974), Sule (1981), Udo (1981), Ojo (1978) and others, interests have been waning by succeeding generation of scholars in the field. The imperative of appreciating the true perspectives of the Quality of life (QOL) scenario in the specific urban context remains a burning challenge. There is also the factor of clearly substantiating how rural-urban imbalance may have instigated the gravitation of rural residents to the urban central place and its attendant implications. Invariably, caused by high ignorance surface, the attraction of the urban locale by the rural migrants and its subsequent repercussion may be allayed through findings of this envisaged study.

JUSTIFICATION

The significance of a study of this nature cannot be diminished in today's world of rural-urban influence of migrants and the burgeoning population of cities. Extant literature have provided prodigious information on the current spate of accelerated urban growth which is occurring at the expense of the rural areas.

This immigration of individuals to urban centres does not go without a price and if left unheeded will result in global population imbalance. A great deal of social maladies do arise which the findings of these studies stand to clarify. Through information derivable from the results of this study, urban development planners will be equipped with the appropriate tools of a paradigm shift in their planning policies.

Significantly, this study stands to broaden the information surface of rural dwellers towards a better understanding of true perspectives of the quality of life

(QOL) assessment in urban locale.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study directs attention to:

- i. A clear appreciation of the individual's quality of life in their urban context
- ii. Assessment of residents perception of their urban Livability conception in the city of Calabar, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

LIVABILITY CONCEPTUALISED

Sule et al (2018) predicated his explanation of livability on Safer et al (2000) position "that livability stands for interaction between the community and the environment. He further stressed that how well a city works is the central focus of livability. Again, he stressed that what naturally brings about the concept of livability is the provision of services for the inhabitants of a city for their Well-being.

The official definition was provided by the centre for livable cities (2011) which held that livability refers to the city with excellent planning that creates lively, attractive and secure environment for the inhabitants to live, work and play. This entails good governance competitive economy, high quality of life and sustainable environment, It is referred to an urban system that provides physical and social wellbeing as well as personal of all inhabitants (Song 2011). It is also said to be presence of an equilibrium between people and the built environment (Dorst 2012).

Essential Criteria for Livability:

It has been proven by extant literature that the concept of livability has gone to an increasing level of debate both in the academic and policy decision making and therefore at best exploratory (Van 2012). The question of Quality of Life, which is central to the idea of livability does not foreclose the absence of disease but rather depends largely on the living environment that encompasses both the built environment and the natural environment (Sule

and Mohit 2015). In line with Timmer and Seymiour (2006) "the ideal characteristics of a livable city should include an attractive, pedestrian-oriented public realm, low traffic speed, volume and congestion, affordable and decent housing, cultural heritage, history and ecology, and human community and interaction"

Viewed from another perspective livability is said to be viewed differently by countries of the world. Whereas in the United States (US) livability is seen from the point of view of overall quality of life and well-being, in the United Kingdom (UK) the center of attraction for livability is mainly on local environment, referring to cleanliness, safety and greenery (Pandey et al 2014). going by this circumstantial explanation of the term it has been concluded that the actual meaning is place determined, time pronged, and based on interest of the assessor and the purpose of the assessment (Pacoine 2003). It is also held that microeconomic activities of a city have a profound influence on livability. Housing affordability was further lent colour by Australian Housing and Research Institute (AHURI 2004) that it is the capacity of a household to meet housing costs while maintaining the ability to meet other basic cost of living. In the city of Calabar it is as yet uncertain to what extent housing affordability is guaranteed among households who occupy rented Property of all categories.

Other aspects of livability which are predicated on housing affordability are very much subject to verification and examination. These are issues such as tenement rates, mobility within and outside the city, services provided, ease of land procurement and land accessibility and many other relevant matters.

Some Critical issues in urban livability:

Here the review focused on some pertinent determinants of urban livability that are crucial to sustainable livelihoods of the city inhabitants. Among these issues are those related (i) housing rentage, (ii) land occupation/property development (iii) general standards of living, bills/tenement rates, mobility and other related livelihood demands.

Rental housing; It has been significantly clarified that rental housing should not be of obfuscated with rent. Rent has rather been described as a fixed amount paid by the lessee to the lessor i.e. by a tenant to the landlord whereas rental housing include payment of the rentage sum in addition to other incidentals such as maintenance cost, utilities, neighbourhood charges, property taxes and so on (Oloke et al 2013). In the above sense, the quality of life (QOL) essence which is crucial to urban livability conception is chequered making the sustainability of occupants a mirage. This scenario is closely knit with the essence of housing affordability precept.

Housing affordability has been viewed from the point of view the percentage income spent on rent. In this sense Feldman (2002) was quoted as saying that "a rental unit is unaffordable if a household has to spend more than 30% of its income on it." In this sense it was reasoned that affordability is confined to households with very limited resources.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The methodology comprises the following:

RESEARCH DESIGN:

This research is an enquiry field design aimed at investigating urban livability among residents in the city of Calabar, Nigeria.

AREA OF STUDY:

Calabar is among the primate urban centres in Nigeria but its corresponding growth alongside with other primate urban hierarchies like Lagos, Ibadan, Port Harcourt and Kano is bedeviled by a combination of historical, political, cultural and geographical antecedents. Among the primate cities, it finds its pride of place as the first administrative headquarters of the then colonial administration in Nigeria in 1905.

Situated on the shores of the Gulf of Guinea facing the Atlantic ocean, it enjoys the prospect of international trade business but due to certain contending political issues it has since been relegated to the background.

Ecologically, its location on the marine coastland with a warm equable onshore air mass provides ample opportunity for adequate rainfall and warm temperature regime. Economically, the residents are predominantly civil Service employees but currently there is a growing drift of interest towards commercial undertaking which is dominated by stranger elements like the Ibos, Yorubas and the Hausas.

Demographically, the population is heterogeneous in its ethnic composition which is typical of all urban centres in Nigeria. The livability dimension is viewed from how activities are organized in the economic space on a daily basis and at individual itinerant levels.

Population of the Study

The study population comprises all adult residents from the ages of 18 years and above. The basis of this selection is informed by the official Nigeria constitutional provision of illegibility to vote and be voted for.

Sampling Technique:

Sampling was carried out in stages such as:

- i Purposive delineation of the entire city domains into city blocks.

- ii Stratification or categorization into: high class, middle class and class residential areas.
- iii Further stratification within the categories into owned residential and rented residential households.
- iv Random selection from the selected categories.
- v Estimated sample size of 750 residents.

Instrument(s) for Data Collection

The basic instruments employed in field data collection is interview questionnaire.

Also image capturing devices was employed.

Additionally, surrogate parameters of measuring livability characteristics of residents was equally applied such as quality of housing, environmental quality, personality outlook etc.

Method of Data Collection

Data was collected based on the following procedure: (I) pre-field sampling of areas.

- i. Areal mapping of data collection destinations
- ii. Field legibility or field penetration strategy of consultation With key
- iii. Persons/leaders of thought in each area to create a proper rapport for the field data embarkation proper.

Method of Data Analysis

Data was analyzed by the technique of one way analysis of variance

Data presentation and Analysis

Urban livability criteria and parameters are depicted on Table i below. The parameters reflect the different dimensions of urban livelihood models which are derived from interviews held with urban residents of various livelihood categories and socio-Economic standing. The individual residents perceptions are captured based on a 4 point rating scale such as: A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree, DA = Disagree, and SD = Strongly Disagree respectively. The perceptions are presented against the socio-economic variables.

Hypothesis I

There is no significant difference in the residents perceptual rating of their livability assessment by the residents in Calabar Nigeria.

Table 1: Urban liveability perception of residents in the city of Calabar, Nigeria

S/No.	LIVABILITY PARAMETERS	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1.	Are you satisfied with your level of income for the family?	130	105	314	174	729
2.	Is the built-up environment good enough for personal comfort?	86	67	242	231	626
3.	Is the urban planning network good enough for the urban traffic	90	86	272	186	634
4.	Is The Governments Urban Policy Good enough for the urban traffic?	79	91	303	189	662
5.	Do you device alternative coping strategies to survive	88	92	316	201	697
6.	Is the gap between the urban poor and urban rich wide?	311	206	92	76	685
7.	Is insecurity prevalent in your residential area?	343	245	62	41	691

Table 1 above conveys individual perception rating of urban livability in the city of Calabar Nigeria. A total of seven hundred and fifty residents drawn different Social and Economic background and the entire geo-economic landscapes were engaged in the interview.

In line with stated hypothesis below, the field data was analyzed statistically based on the analysis of variance (ANOVA TECHNIQUE)

Anova: Two-Factor Without Replication

<i>SUMMARY</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Is the built-up environment good enough for personal comfort?	4	626	156.5	8613.667
Is the urban planning network good enough for the urban traffic	4	634	158.5	7862.333
Is The Governments Urban Policy Good enough for the urban traffic?	4	662	165.5	10830.33
Do you device alternative coping strategies to survive	4	697	174.25	11670.92
Is the gap between the urban poor and urban rich wide?	4	685	171.25	12030.25
Is insecurity prevalent in your residential area?	4	691	172.75	21276.25
130	6	997	166.1667	15636.57
105	6	787	131.1667	5572.567
314	6	1287	214.5	12091.9
174	6	924	154	5848

ANOVA

<i>ource of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
<i>Rows</i>	1146.708	5	229.3417	0.017678	0.999851	2.901295
<i>Columns</i>	22252.79	3	7417.597	0.571762	0.642217	3.287382
<i>Error</i>	194598.5	15	12973.23			
<i>Total</i>	217998	23				

* 0.05 alpha Level

Accept the null hypothesis, since $F_{crit} (2.901295) > F_{cal} (0.017678)$. There is no significant difference in the residents perceptual rating of their livability assessment in Calabar Nigeria.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The study is backed up by the main objectives of investigating individual residents perception of urban livability issues in the city of Calabar, Nigeria. In this Sense, livability is viewed synonymous with the perspective of quality of life (QoL). Perception is a subjective psycho-emotional measure and therefore should vary from individual to individual on the basis of sex, age, socio-economic status, education, phenotype etc. It is in dire recognition of this that the problem identification of this study was contemplated.

Field data collected from questionnaire administration was analyzed statistically in line with the research hypothesis which was formulated in the null hypothesis as: There is no significant difference in the residents perceptual rating of their livability assessment in Calabar, Nigeria. The hypothesis was tested based on "two way" Analysis of variance (ANOVA). Following the result the null hypothesis was rejected indicating that there is a significant variation in the individual rating of their livability assessment in the city of Calabar, Nigeria.

This finding/results typically reflects the true picture of the mosaics of urban life that form that characterize the socio-ecological landscape of every city in the World. Deriving from the existing literature on livability conception provided by scholars such as Mabogunje (1974), Song (2011), Dors (2002), the overall explanation for livability is ideal conducive environment for city dwellers. But as Van (2012) put it. The question of quality of life is central to livability is at best exploratory residents or people at different stations in life. The low class urban poor who live in unplanned make shift environment called slum may or should have different conceptions on livability from the rich aristocratic urban genteel who live in well planned residential areas.

The nature and status of Urban planning and development of Calabar has not qualified in the description of Urban livability for all as provided by Seymour (2006) who held that "the ideal characteristics of livability should include an attractive, pedestrian-oriented urban realm, low traffic speed, volume and

congestion, affordable and descent housing, cultural heritage, history and ecology. Going by the plethora of conditions stated above, Calabar has far less to offer in terms of livability conception.

Another factor in the Calabar livability concept is the trite incidence of housing affordability conception which situates squarely on the criterion of individual and family income level. here, the question of rentage and rental housing has to be clearly substantiated and appreciated for a full of residents subjective conception of livability. In the light of above, Oloke et al (2013) taken steps to streamline the distinction between the two terms rent and rental housing. Accordingly, he held that while rent is a fixed amount paid by a lessee (tenant) to a Lessor (Landlord) rental housing include payment for the rentage sum in addition to other incidentals e.g. Maintenance cost, utilities, neighborhood charges, property taxes etc. This factor rent and rental housing draws in the essence of housing affordability. Caused by the Variegated income levels housing affordability remains a relative considerations. Those of high income bracket may often escape the housing affordability crises, while of the middle income may scarcely and those of low income may not afford at all. Here lies the fissiparous perception of respondents/residents in another sense. This affirmation is conformal with Feldman's (2002) proposition which held that "rental unit is unaffordable if a household has to spend more than 30% of its income on it". He then concluded by inferring that affordability is confined to household with very limited resources. Gleaning from the above statement, there is likely to be a margin of perceptual difference between the high class, opulent residents who are domiciled in the well planned and well belt and highly accessible parts of the city and the low class, urban poor who reside in the unplanned, make shift residential centres with drab, squalid, sordid part of the city with poor supply/provision of the necessary service. These categories occupy the difficult inaccessible terrains with a horde of other ecological vagaries in the form of disease vectors, flooding, land slide, vermins and poor sanitation. These are slum locales earlier designated by Mabogunje in study of Lagos and Ibadan (1974). This colossal social and economic devide cannot justify homogenous perceptual filter amongst its resident. Whereas the former are quite satisfied, the latter are in squalor and penury and economically and physically demobilized.

Going by another conception of livability which devolves the microeconomic activities of a city, Calabar city has less to offer for the good satisfaction of residents except for those of the high residential satellites towns and Federal housing areas. Finally, the question of neighborhood aggregation is a significant consideration in the livability assessment. Ethnic/cultural differences, differences in education/income level, religious affiliation and several other factors are quite significant in the livability assessment which has not been directly captured by the Objective of this study. It is hoped this and several other related frontier can be explored by similar works in the field of urban learning.

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