

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS AND RESIDENTIAL SATISFACTION IN ARGUNGU TOWN, KEBBI STATE NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined some aspects of the housing characteristics and residential satisfaction in Argungu town of Kebbi State using a questionnaire survey. Five wards were systematically selected for the study and a total of one hundred respondents were administered with the questionnaire. Simple random sampling technique was employed in each of the identified wards to determine the household respondents who were involved in the survey. Simple descriptive statistical technique was used for the data analysis. The result of the survey shows that 42% of the households live in traditional compound. This means members of the extended families comprising of several family units, share certain basic housing facilities such as toilets, kitchen and courtyard. It also shows that only 27% of the residential apartments were built with local building materials adopting traditional architecture. Four variables were measured to determine residential satisfaction among respondents; electricity, water supply, medical facilities and waste collection and disposal system. Result further shows that on average, respondents expressed satisfaction with the provision of all the measured variables. This however varies with the type of variables measured; for example, 78% of respondents are satisfied with the provision of water supply while only 55% are satisfied with the provision of medical facilities.

KEYWORDS: residential satisfaction, variables, questionnaire, neighbourhood

INTRODUCTION

Housing is one of the basic human requirements most families aspire to meet especially in the developing countries. However, the relative absence of mortgage finances, the exorbitant cost of building materials and the inadequate government interventions make residence ownership relatively difficult (Taylor, 2000). Furthermore, the effects of poverty, inflation and unemployment had combined to make cost of living high thereby reducing savings meant for housing development very low especially in urban centers (Sada, 1984). Majority of the low-income and lower middle-class are feeling the pinch of inflation as rent and prices of consumer goods have gone beyond their reach. The overall effect of this is that individual's access to decent housing accommodation is seriously affected. Despite this, many families struggle to meet their daily needs concurrently with home building initiatives.

Consequently, households come up with many strategies and ways to enable them acquire a house; wealthy families usually contract out the housing project, some acquire houses through built and sold while others adopt incremental housing initiative and what Turner (1972) called 'self-help housing program'. This is because housing project is capital intensive, therefore it is generally the level of income of the household that determines the nature and type of facilities and utility services that are provided by the residential unit. Housing characteristics in most neighborhoods are directly determined and to a large extent influenced by the level of the financial commitment into the housing development project. Furthermore, residential satisfaction is ultimately influenced by the

availability and quality of facilities inherent in the residential unit such as the number of rooms, toilet facilities, and availability of courtyard, ventilation and kitchenette.

Residential satisfaction is defined as the feeling of contentment when one has or achieves what one needs or desires in a house (Mohammad *et al.*, 2010). Besides the general aspiration to possess a permanent residence, households eventually realize that not all residential units measure up to their expectations. This is in terms of the attributes of housing parameters such as the availability of space, quality of built structures and housing externalities. Some households are quick to discover this while others may find out only after a long period of occupation. Husna and Nurijan (1987) in a study that measures residential satisfaction among residents of public low-cost houses in Kuala Lumpur found that 41% of the respondents were dissatisfied with the characteristics in the dwelling unit, 85% wanted to have a dining space and 82% wanted a separate bathroom and toilet in their dwelling units. All these are reasons for households to express satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their residences.

Galster, 1987; Rossi, 1955 and Lu, 1999 have shown that residential satisfaction theoretically measures the experiences of households and their expectations of their housing/dwelling units. This is because empirical studies have shown that quite a number of residents have noted a serious deficit in housing satisfaction. Such deficits are observed in situations where the actual housing satisfaction is incongruous with the cultural norms; this will usually leads to residential dissatisfaction.

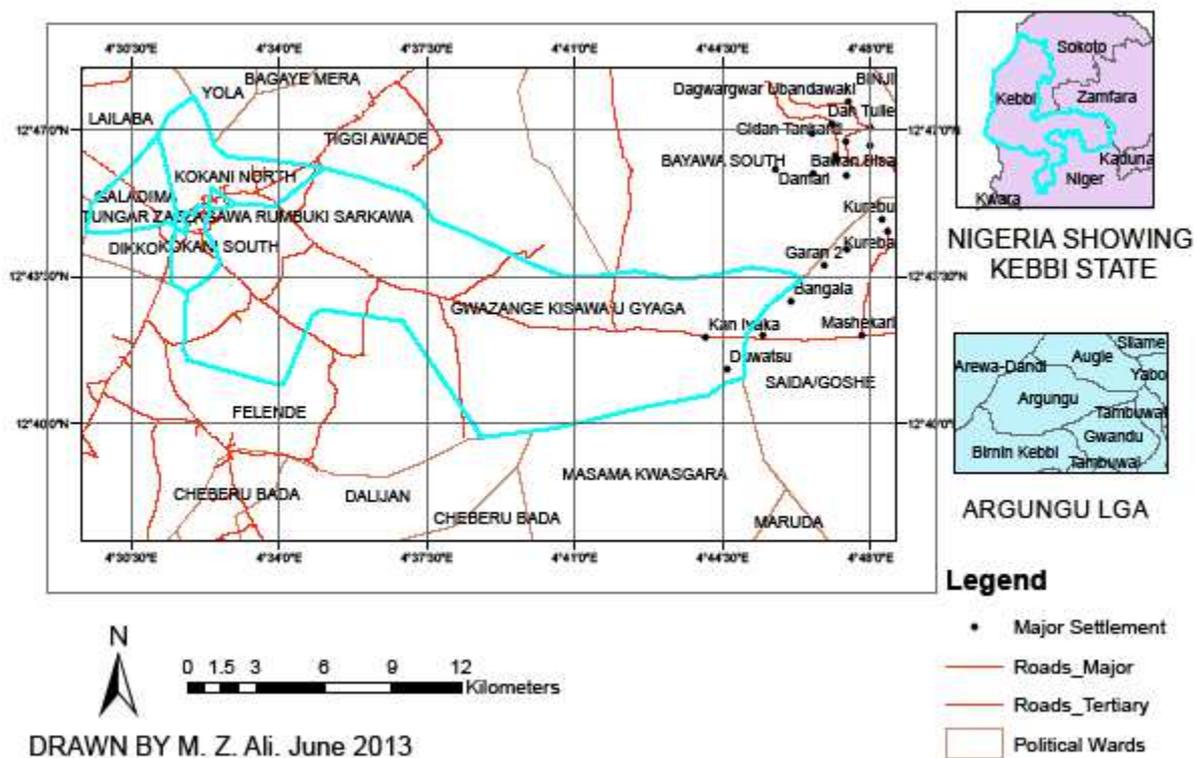
Morris and Winter (1978) further observed that where housing deficit exists, there is a tendency for the households to either review their housing aspirations or to necessarily improve their housing conditions in order to reconcile between the housing needs/aspirations and actual housing condition. In most situations, households often chose the later by remodeling the housing conditions for example, erection or demolition of some structures and in extreme situations, by relocating to another place in order to bring into conformity their housing with their needs /aspirations.

This study was conducted to determine housing characteristics and measure residential satisfaction among the households of Argungu town. The objectives of the study are to find out the type and nature of residential structures that predominates in the study area and determine the dominant housing characteristics. It will also

measure residential satisfaction among the households.

THE STUDY AREA

Argungu is one of the famous settlements in Kebbi State; being home to the world prominent fishing festival. The town lies on latitude 12° 74' N and longitude 04° 52' E (figure 1) and enjoys a tropical wet and dry climate classified AW under Kop pen's classification (Davis, 1982). The climate is generally determined by the interplay of two different air masses originating from the Sahara commonly known as the continental air mass (CT) and the other from the Atlantic Ocean known as the maritime air mass (MT). To a greater extent, it is the meeting point of these two air masses that determines the seasons of the year in the study area, and indeed in the entire West African sub-region.



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Figure 1: Map of Argungu Local Government Showing Study Sites

On the economic front, Argungu is blessed with a vast area of land that is fertile and very suitable for agricultural production and the river offers opportunities for fishing to a reasonable number of people. It has a population that is dominantly made up of Kabawa tribal origin followed by the Hausa/Fulani and some few concentrations of other tribal groups from different parts of Nigeria. The study area thus represents a diversity of culture and works of arts and crafts; famous among these are weaving, sculpturing,

carving, and knitting. Through these various crafts, items such as domestic utensils, agricultural tools, decorative materials and fishing equipment are produced for local and commercial consumption.

RESEARCH METHOD

Structured questionnaire was administered to five selected wards from different parts of Argungu; these include Kokani South, Kokani North, Galadima, Gwazange and Matan Fada.

A simple random sampling technique was used to select the residential units that were included in the survey. Heads of households in the sampled residential units were identified as respondents to the questionnaire. In each of the wards identified, a total of twenty (20) respondents were used. Thus, one hundred (100) copies of the questionnaire were administered in the five wards. The data collected was analyzed using simple descriptive statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result shows that majority of the households who participated in the study fall within the age category of 40-59 years of age (41.9%) as illustrated in Table 1. This is an important variable in assessing the level of residential satisfaction because what satisfies a young resident may not necessarily satisfies an elderly person, even when both are living within the same residential area. In other words, residential satisfaction varies with the age of residents.

Table 1: Age Category of Respondents

Age Category	Percentage (%)
30-39	29.4
40-59	49.1
60-79	17.6
80- Above	3.9
Total	100

Source: Field Work 2012

Data analysis further reveals that majority of the households that took part in the survey are Civil Servants (41%), closely followed by farmers (33%). The remaining respondents fall in to other occupational classifications and crafts such as petty trading, tailoring and mechanics. Thus following the data analysis, it can be affirmed that Argungu has a reasonably high concentration of salary earners among its residents.

Housing Characteristics

Housing characteristics is one of the parameters this study attempts to explore in the study area; the data revealed that most of the respondents live within compound family (42%). This refers to a situation where many families live within a large compound consisting of brothers usually from the same parental background with each family having its separate apartment within the main compound. It is usual for the families to share certain common facilities such as toilets, kitchen, courtyard and entrance. The spirit behind the compound family structure lies in the cooperative and self-help approach usually

adopted that supports the entire members of the extended families especially on the economic and social fronts. The compound family typified the traditional rural family of northern part of the country and is common among the Hausa communities.

Although Argungu may not be described as rural from the demographic and functional perspectives, the compound family system was observed to be the dominant social structure among the households as represented in Table 2. The table further shows that other respondents in the survey live in houses that are of traditional architecture; built with simple and local materials and housed single families (27%). The remaining households that responded to the questionnaire indicated that they live in modern houses built with cement blocks and are cement plastered with European type of architecture (31). This is because of the differential income among the households; as earlier noted more than 40% of the residents are civil servants and therefore have stable income that could allow them to generate some savings, which made it possible for them to afford improved housing condition.

Table 2: Housing units of the respondent

Housing units	Percentage (%)
Traditional house	27
Family compound	42
Modern houses	31
Total	100%

Source: field work 2012

One of the housing characteristics is its quality, usually measured from the facilities available in the residential units. The availability of toilet facilities is considered one of the essential services required in a decent housing. Wherever this is not provided, the tendency is for residents to defecate outside especially in areas reserved as waste dumping site. In Argungu, data analysis has shown that majority of the households use pit latrines (53%). Others (41%) of the respondents use water closet and 6% have no

toilet facilities in their residences. This shows that the incidence of defecation in the open and public places is not very common in the study area.

The size and availability of bedrooms is also one of the characteristics of a housing unit; this is because households with large families measure their comfort by the extent to which members are conveniently accommodated in their residences.

This study found out that respondents have different number of bedrooms in their residential units, 32% are living in only one-bedroom apartment. Households with access to two-bedrooms accounted for 30%, those accommodated in three-bedrooms accounted for 26% and the remaining live in houses with more than three-bedrooms. It has been noted however that how comfortable the family may be with the number of bedrooms is dependent on the size of the family; the larger the family the less comfortable they are likely to be with fewer number of bedrooms.

Furthermore, to determine the quality of neighbourhood as well as the dwelling units, access to reliable source of electricity is often taken into consideration in studies of residential satisfaction. Evidences from data analysis have shown that majority of the respondents (85%) are depending on the national grid (PHCN) as their major source of power. Field observations further revealed that Argungu enjoys a relatively stable power supply that was rationed. It was observed that the light is provided for five hours and interrupted for another five hours before it is returned; this accounts for an insignificant number of people (14%) using Generators to provide electricity.

Residential Satisfaction

In order to measure residential satisfaction among households in the study area,

respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the provision of certain basic services in their dwelling areas. The variables used to measure this include access to source of power, water supply, medical facilities and waste collection and disposal. There is no doubt that the availability of these services influence individual's level of satisfaction with his residence. Therefore, on the provision of reliable and stable source of power in Argungu, we have earlier indicated that most of the households in Argungu depend on the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) for their source of electricity. In fact, the relatively insignificant number of respondents (14%) that use Generators as their source of electricity is a manifestation of the satisfaction of the households with source of power in the area. Thus it was not surprising that 67% of the respondents were satisfied with provision of electricity as described based on the ration policy.

Similarly, when the respondents were prompted on satisfaction with water supply, the result shows that majority are generally satisfied with level of provision of water supply in their residence (78%) and those that are not satisfied (22%). Most of the residents depend on pipe-borne water supplied by the Water Board in the town. The table below clearly shows the responses.

Table 3: Satisfaction with Water Supply

Satisfaction level	Percentage (%)
Unsatisfied	22
Fairly satisfied	39
Satisfied	32
Very satisfied	7
Total	100%

Source: fieldwork 2012

On the issue of medical facilities, the result of the study shows that while a reasonable number of respondents (45%) expressed dissatisfaction, the majority of the respondents are satisfied with

the level of provision of medical facilities in the area. The detail of the breakdown of the satisfaction levels is contained in table 4.

Table 4: Satisfactions with Provision of Medical Facilities

Satisfaction Level	Percentage (%)
Unsatisfied	45
Fairly satisfied	37
Satisfied	18
Very satisfied	0
Total	100%

Source: fieldwork 2012

The system and method of waste collection and disposal operated in a given neighbourhood is often one of the parameters used to measure the quality of the urban environment. This goes a long way to influence household's satisfaction with their residence. This is one of the variables used to assess residential satisfaction in Argungu, the data analysis has shown that most of the respondents are fairly satisfied with the

method of waste collection and disposals; this constitutes about 71% of the respondents. Although the Municipal Waste Disposal Agency has not provided sufficient waste disposal Bins in the town, the dedicated dumping sites are on regular basis being cleared. Although only 27% of the respondents have expressed dissatisfaction, the levels vary significantly as shown in table 5 below.

Table 5: Satisfaction with Waste disposals System

Waste disposals	Percentage (%)
Unsatisfied	27
Fairly satisfied	51
Satisfied	18
Very satisfied	2
Total	100%

Source: fieldwork 2012

The result of the study also indicated that most of the respondents were satisfied with provision of electricity; only (33%) are not satisfied (table 6). This level of satisfaction expressed is not surprising because of the arrangement that

rationed supply of electricity in the area. Because of the rationing, residents are assured of supply for specific periods daily. Therefore, they know when to expect electricity supply and so plan its utilisation accordingly.

Table 6: Satisfaction with Electricity

Electricity satisfaction level	Percentage (%)
Unsatisfied	33
Fairly satisfied	58
Satisfied	9
Very satisfied	0
Total	100%

Source: fieldwork 2012

CONCLUSION

Housing in Argungu is predominantly characterized by structures made up of local building materials adopting traditional designs typical of the Hausa traditional architecture. Only 31% of the entire respondents live in houses that are described as European style architecture. In the same vein, it has been observed that majority of the households have sufficient number of bedrooms in their dwelling units. In fact, only 30% of the respondents use apartments with less than two-bedrooms. On the aspect of residential satisfaction, four variables were measured; electricity, water supply, medical facilities and waste collection and disposal system. Data analysis revealed that on average, residents are satisfied with the provision of all services. The highest level of satisfaction expressed is with water supply (78%) while the least level of

satisfaction is with provision of medical facilities (55%). These levels of satisfaction however vary with the type of neighbourhood and the household income. The paper recommends that government and community based organizations should jointly pursue the provision of other infrastructure and basic social services especially health care delivery to meet the satisfaction of members of the public. This is on the background of the realization that the task is becoming enormous for government to handle especially in the light of dwindling resources and increasing pressure on the government. Equally important is the need for the government to tackle the issue of poverty in the society through the economic empowerment programmes of the federal government to enable households meet their basic obligations including the provision of decent housing accommodation.

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