Transforming Inner-City Neighborhoods in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria: A Critical Analysis of Housing Quality and Policy Strategies for Sustainable Urban Development

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Abstract

Inner-city neighborhoods in traditional Nigerian cities are frequently characterized by deteriorating housing conditions that adversely affect residents' quality of life and well-being. In response, this study evaluated the housing quality in selected inner-city areas of Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria, using data from 602 residents obtained through systematic random sampling. The research employed structured questionnaires to assess socio-economic characteristics and perceptions of housing conditions, complemented by field observations of environmental infrastructure. The findings indicated that the majority of respondents were male (61.5%), married (47.3%), and relatively young (58.1%). The "Housing Quality Index" (HQI) revealed significant deficiencies in basic facilities such as road networks (HQI=1.59), waste disposal systems (HQI=1.61), electricity supply (HQI=1.71), and the physical condition of housing units — particularly walls (HQI=1.61), floors (HQI=1.66), and foundations (HQI=1.73). These insights underscore the urgent need for targeted policy interventions. The study proposed actionable strategies, including infrastructure upgrading, improved service delivery, and public education, to enhance the habitability and sustainability of inner-city neighborhoods. By directly linking the observed deficiencies to policy recommendations, the study offered a data-driven foundation for urban renewal and inclusive housing development in similar Nigerian contexts.

Keywords: Housing quality, Indicator, Inner-city neighborhood, Nigeria, Transforming

1.0: Introduction

Urbanization presents both significant opportunities and challenges. While rapid urban growth has spurred political, cultural, and economic development in some nations, it has also led to the emergence of slums in others (Jonathan, Sangeeth, Jan, Nicklas, & Shirish, 2014). These scholars highlight that the world is experiencing the largest wave of urbanization in history, with one of the critical issues being how to accommodate the growing population in global cities. In many developing countries, this rapid urbanization has outstripped the provision of adequate housing, basic amenities, and infrastructure (Osuide & Dimuna, 2005).

A fundamental consequence of inadequate housing provision is the deprivation of decent living standards for many individuals. Omoniyi (2018) emphasizes that decent housing is a fundamental human right, essential for ensuring a reasonable standard of living in every community. High-quality housing should not only provide shelter but also meet the biological, psychological, social, cultural, and economic needs of individuals. However, as

Olatubara (2007) points out, millions in developing countries today live in substandard housing, with many others left entirely homeless.

The urgency of addressing housing quality issues in developing countries cannot be overstated. Olotuah (2006) notes that the deterioration of housing quality worsens daily, particularly due to rapid rural-to-urban migration and insufficient increases in both housing stock and quality. Housing conditions are a key determinant of a person's overall quality of life, a fundamental measure of societal well-being. Research into housing quality, therefore, becomes vital, serving as a reflection of social progress, civilization, and technological development (Mbina, 2007; Adeyeni, Nwobi & Taiwo, 2017).

Despite the recognized importance of high-quality housing, poor housing conditions remain a prevalent issue in both urban and rural areas of developing nations, particularly in Nigeria. Inner-city neighborhoods, in particular, face some of the most severe conditions, with residents often living in overcrowded, inadequate, and poorly maintained housing. These environments pose significant health and environmental risks (Bamidele, 2013; Ogunleye, 2013; Opoko et al., 2016; Yoade et al., 2018; Okewole & Aribigbola, 2006).

Paradoxically, inner-city neighborhoods hold great socio-cultural significance in many developing countries. They are often home to permanent residents as well as visitors participating in various socio-cultural and religious activities (Afon, 1998). These neighborhoods serve as ancestral homes for professionals, scholars, politicians, and wealthy individuals, many of whom retain a strong emotional attachment to these areas. Research in both developed and developing countries has consistently shown that residents of inner-city neighborhoods tend to resist relocation efforts, opposing government policies that may force them to move (Greed, 2011; Kearns & Mason, 2013; Akindele, 2014).

However, a significant gap exists in the literature regarding the housing quality of inner-city neighborhoods in secondary urban centers like Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. While much research has focused on major cities and informal settlements in countries like Germany (Abubakari et al., 2023) and Rwanda (Gubic & Baloi, 2019), as well as in larger Nigerian cities such as Lagos and Abuja (Lanrewaju, 2012; Bukola & Bayo, 2013; Morenikeji et al., 2017), smaller urban areas, which are also experiencing substantial population growth, have received less attention. These secondary cities, which serve as crucial hubs of socio-cultural and economic activity, remain understudied, especially in terms of the effectiveness of policies aimed at improving their infrastructure and housing quality. This study addresses this gap by providing a detailed

evaluation of housing quality in the inner-city neighborhoods of Ado-Ekiti, with the goal of offering localized and actionable policy recommendations.

In light of this, the current research investigates the housing quality in inner-city neighborhoods of Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria, and offers policy suggestions to improve these areas. The study aims to address two key questions: (1) Who are the residents of the inner-city neighborhoods in Ado-Ekiti? (2) What is the current quality of housing in the study area? Answering these questions will help urban planners, policymakers, and designers identify critical housing quality indicators that meet the needs of residents, especially given the existing shortage of financial and human resources.

2.0: Review of Literature

Afon (2000) defined "quality" as a mental or moral characteristic of an object that helps characterize its nature, state, or attributes. Similarly, Olayiwola et al. (2006) emphasized that quality results from subjective judgment, influenced by an individual's perspective on significant features at a given time. However, housing quality is a more complex concept, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. It includes the characteristics of residential units, their immediate surroundings, and the needs of the occupants (Adeyeni, Nwobi & Taiwo, 2017). Housing quality is also context-dependent, shaped by local norms and conditions; what is deemed acceptable in one region may be inadequate in another.

Opoko et al. (2016) pointed out that there is no universally accepted definition of housing quality. They highlighted that housing quality extends beyond the physical dwelling to include the surrounding environment and available facilities. Therefore, a comprehensive definition must account for physical characteristics, internal structure, and the availability of essential services. Accordingly, neighborhoods should offer housing that not only meets minimum health requirements but is affordable and supports high living standards for various household types (Okewole & Aribigbola, 2006). Aderamo and Ayobolu (2010) reinforced this by asserting that housing must be both quantitatively and qualitatively adequate to fulfill its fundamental role, as it significantly impacts residents' well-being, productivity, and lifestyle (Cocker et al., 2008; Jiboye, 2010).

As cities grow and divisions of labor become more pronounced, monetary wealth increasingly becomes an indicator of social status, influencing residential patterns. According to Aderamo and Ayobolu (2010), societal changes lead to the emergence of new social classes, further accentuated by transportation developments, which allow affluent residents to relocate from congested city centers to more exclusive areas. This results in a shift where the middle class occupies former elite residences,

while the poor settle in inner-city slums. Such dynamics are prevalent in many developing countries, including Nigeria. Olotuah (2006) identified several issues symptomatic of poor housing conditions, such as overcrowded and inadequate housing, high population densities, insufficient public services, and environmental degradation.

Research into housing quality in Nigerian cities has underscored various factors that contribute to poor conditions. For instance, Amao (2012) found that housing in Ibadan suffered from inadequate ventilation, lighting, space, and security, among other issues. These findings align with earlier research by Coker et al. (2008), which revealed that much of Ibadan's housing stock was substandard. Similarly, Lanrewaju (2012) highlighted the poor infrastructure and substandard housing in Oshogbo. Rapid urbanization, combined with inadequate urban planning, has exacerbated these issues in many cities, resulting in poorly designed neighborhoods, substandard road networks, and insufficient drainage systems (Adeoye, 2016).

Egbu et al. (2006) proposed a model that suggests effective land use planning can significantly improve housing quality. They emphasized that housing quality reflects not only socio-economic disparities but also the overall living standards of residents. According to Okewole and Aribigbola (2006), housing should meet basic health standards, provide a good living environment, and be affordable for all. To evaluate housing quality, various indicators are used. The European Environment Agency (2005) defines an indicator as a quantitative measure that communicates complex trends, while Donnelly et al. (2006) describe it as a reliable signal offering insights into broader phenomena.

Researchers have employed diverse indicators to assess housing quality. For instance, Aribigbola (2011) focused on structural adequacy, neighborhood safety, access to amenities, and affordability. Similarly, Amao (2012) and Olotuah and Taiwo (2015) highlighted the importance of design, cleanliness, access to essential services, and environmental factors. Neilson (2004) identified five basic housing requirements: livability, modern amenities, energy efficiency, safety, and hygiene. Aderamo and Ayobolu (2010) further detailed specific criteria such as bathroom and toilet facilities, building materials, and lighting sources as key determinants of housing quality.

Given the complexity of housing quality assessment, a multifaceted approach is required. Factors such as water supply, electricity, waste disposal, drainage, road networks, and the physical condition of residential units should all be considered (Morenikeji et al., 2017; Mbazor, 2018). This study seeks to evaluate these

housing quality indicators in a Nigerian traditional city and propose policy actions to enhance the urban living environment.

3.0: Overview of the Study Area

Ado-Ekiti, the capital and administrative center of Ekiti State, is located in southwestern Nigeria. In 1956, the city covered an area of just 2.5 square kilometers, but by 1996, it had expanded to approximately 19.6 square kilometers (Omoniyi, 2018). Today, Ado-Ekiti spans 36.7 square kilometers, reflecting its continued growth. The city lies at latitude 7° 37' 16" North of the Equator and longitude 5° 13' 17" East of the Greenwich Meridian. Since becoming the state capital in 1996, Ado-Ekiti has experienced rapid urbanization and population growth, further cementing its role as a key urban center. Positioned 344 kilometers northeast of Lagos, Nigeria's largest city and the sixth most populous metropolitan area globally, Ado-Ekiti plays an important role in the region's socio-economic dynamics (Taiwo et al., 2015).

According to Mbedi (2010), Ado-Ekiti is situated in a region with a rich history of continuous human habitation spanning thousands of years. Evidence suggests that societies occupied this area as far back as 11,000 years ago. The early inhabitants, considered the ancestors of communities such as Igbon near Ogotun, Erijiyan, Ijero, Ulesun, and Asin (near Ikole), were likely autochthonous, residing in the region from time immemorial. While the precise origins of these settlers remain unclear, Ulesun is notably significant due to its size and the number of subordinate communities, including Aso, Ulero, Isinla, Ilamoji, Ukere, and Agbaun (near Igbemo). Ado-Ekiti is also renowned for its well-organized traditional religion and vibrant annual festivals, contributing to its cultural significance within Ekiti land, as illustrated in Figure 1.

In 2014, Ado-Ekiti's population stood at 308,621, accounting for approximately 12.9% of Ekiti State's total estimated population of 2,384,212 (Dada et al., 2015). Currently, the city's population is estimated to be around 557,000, with a growth rate of 3.92%. Ado-Ekiti is experiencing rapid urbanization, outpacing economic development compared to other emerging Nigerian cities. However, parts of the city's neighborhoods have devolved into slums, marked by overcrowding, deteriorating housing conditions, and high levels of poverty (Awe, 2017).

Despite this rapid urbanization, housing and infrastructure in Ado-Ekiti have seen relatively minimal investment, even with the National Development Plan's urban investment proposals (Olotuah & Taiwo, 2015). The city faces an acute shortage of urban housing and infrastructure, exacerbating living conditions. Therefore, an urban redevelopment program

aimed at upgrading and revitalizing inner-city neighborhoods is crucial to improving both the city's appearance and livability.

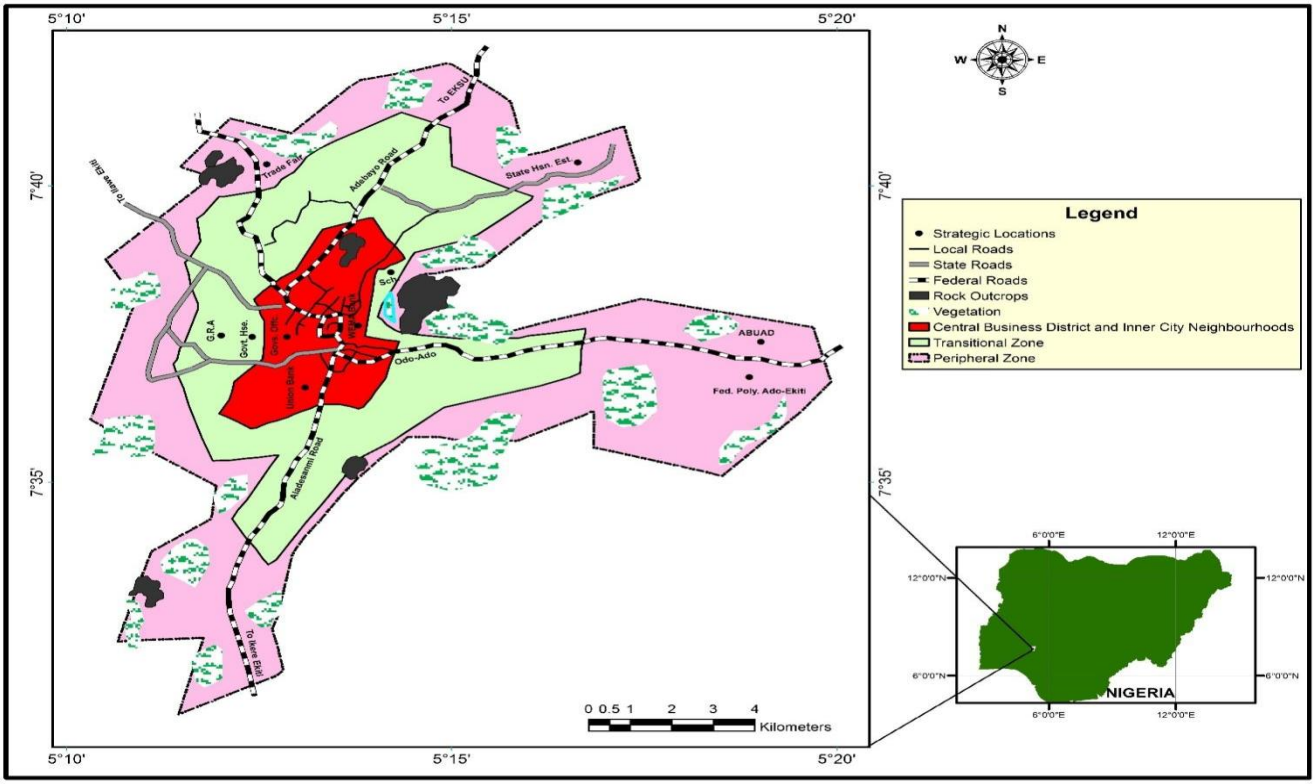


Figure 1: Map of Ado-Ekiti showing the CBD and inner-city neighbourhood relative to other zones.
Source: Ekiti State Ministry of Urban Planning and Physical Development, 2018

4.0: Methodology

Data for this research were collected from residents in the inner-city neighborhoods of Ado-Ekiti using a structured questionnaire and field observations. The study area was stratified into political wards, following the classification used by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for elections in Nigeria. Ado-Ekiti comprises thirteen political wards, five of which were identified as inner-city neighborhoods for data collection: Ado 'D' Ijigbo-Ward, Ado 'I' Dallimore-Ward, Ado 'J' Okesa-Ward, Ado 'K' Irona-Ward, and Ado 'M' Farm Settlement-Ward.

A pilot survey, supplemented by visual analysis of high-resolution satellite imagery on Google Earth, was conducted to identify and manually count the number of distinct building structures within the five wards. This process revealed a total of 12,041 buildings. A systematic sampling technique was employed to select one out of every 20 buildings, beginning with a randomly chosen building selected from the entire pool of buildings identified across the five wards. This resulted in a sample size of 602 buildings, representing 5% of the total. In each of the selected buildings, a household head was chosen for the questionnaire administration.

The questionnaire gathered information on residents' socio-economic characteristics, while housing quality indicators were evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale, where residents rated housing conditions as 'Very Bad,' 'Bad,' 'Fair,' 'Good,' or 'Very Good.' Each rating was assigned a weighted value from 1 to 5, which was used to calculate a Housing Quality Index (HQI). To derive the HQI, the Total Weight Value (TWV) was first computed for each indicator.

The TWV for each housing quality indicator was obtained by multiplying the number of responses in each rating category by its corresponding weight value, and then summing these products. The Housing Quality Index (HQI) was then calculated by dividing the TWV by the total number of respondents who rated that particular indicator. Therefore, for any given indicator i−ji-ji−j, the formula for calculating HQI is as follows:

$$HQI_{i-j} = \frac{TWV_{ij}}{N_{ij}}$$

where:

HQI_{ij} = housing quality index for indicator i-j.
TWV_{ij} = total weight value of indicator i-j.
N_{ij} = resident's rating of each indicator i-j.
For pipe-borne water, for example, an HQI of 2.19 was determined, as follows:
TWV = (335x1) + (37x2) + (52x3) + (133x4) + (45x5)
= 335 + 74 + 156 + 532 + 225
= 1322
N = 602
Therefore, HQI = 1322/602
= 2.19
Every indicator was subjected to this procedure.

5.0: Results and Discussion

5.1 Residents' Socioeconomic Attributes in the Inner-City Neighbourhoods of Ado-Ekiti

The socio-economic attributes of residents in the inner-city neighborhoods of Ado-Ekiti were examined to provide insight into how factors such as sex, religion, marital status, educational qualifications, household size, ethnicity, age, and tenure status might influence housing quality. Previous studies, including those by Olotuah and Taiwo (2015) and Omoniyi (2018), have emphasized the importance of these characteristics in shaping housing conditions.

A summary of the findings, shown in Table 1, indicates that there were fewer female household heads (38.5%) compared to male household heads (61.5%) in the study area. This disparity may reflect traditional gender roles in Nigerian urban centers, where men more often assume the role of household head. Additionally, the age distribution reveals that youth and young adults accounted for a significant portion of the population, with 39.2% of respondents being under 21 years old and 18.9% falling into the young adult category (21-40 years). Combined, this youthful demographic made up 58.1% of the sampled population, which is often associated with being active, working, and likely engaged in the housing market.

Middle-aged adults (41-60 years) constituted 29.2% of the respondents, while older adults (above 60 years) represented 12.6%. These figures suggest that the population in the inner-city neighborhoods of Ado-Ekiti is predominantly young, which may influence housing demand patterns and expectations for housing quality in the area.

The results regarding residents' educational qualifications revealed a significant lack of formal education, with 48.5% of respondents having no formal education. In contrast, 30.9% held tertiary qualifications, including National Certificate in Education (NCE), National Diploma (ND), Higher National Diploma (HND), and university degrees. Additionally, those with primary and secondary school certificates constituted 4.7% and 15.9%, respectively, highlighting a substantial gap in educational attainment among residents.

Table 1: Socioeconomic Attributes of the Respondents in the Inner-city Area of Ado-Ekiti

Socio-Economic Characteristics		(N= 602) F	%
Sex	Male	370	61.5
	Female	232	38.5
Age	21-30 years (Youth)	236	39.2
	31-40 years (Young Adult)	114	18.9
	41-50 years (Middle-aged Adult)	126	20.9
	51-60 years (Middle-aged Adult)	50	8.3
	61 years and above (Old Adult)	76	12.6
Educational Qualification	No formal education	292	48.5
	Primary School Certificate	28	4.7
	Secondary School Certificate	96	15.9
	NCE/ND/HND	107	17.8
	University Degree	79	13.1
Ethnicity	Yoruba	532	88.4
	Igbo	27	4.5
	Hausa	21	3.5
	Efik	1	0.2
	Foreigners	2	0.3
	Others	19	3.2
Marital Status	Single	241	40.0
	Married	285	47.3
	Divorced	24	4.0
	Separated	11	1.8
	Widowed	41	6.8
Housing tenure status	Rental	299	49.7
	Self-ownership	303	50.3

Ethnically, the population in Ado-Ekiti was predominantly Yoruba, with 88.4% of respondents identifying as such. Other ethnic groups included 4.5% Igbo, 3.5% Hausa, 0.3% foreigners, and 0.2% Efik. The predominance of Yoruba residents aligns with expectations, as they are the indigenous people of the area. Respondents from all other ethnic groups combined accounted for only 3.2%.

In terms of marital status, the study identified five categories: single, married, divorced, separated, and widowed. As detailed in Table 1, married individuals comprised the largest group

at 47.3%, followed closely by single respondents at 40.0%. The widowed represented 6.8%, divorced individuals made up 4.0%, and separated individuals accounted for 1.8%. It is noteworthy that the survey specifically targeted household heads, who were predominantly married.

Regarding housing tenure, the study differentiated between two main statuses: rental and self-ownership. These categories correspond to tenants and landlords, respectively. The findings indicated that 50.3% of respondents were landlords, while 49.7% were tenants, reflecting a relatively balanced distribution between ownership and rental arrangements in the inner-city neighborhoods of Ado-Ekiti.

5.2 Housing Quality Indicators in the Inner-City Area of Ado-Ekiti

The housing quality indicators in the study area are presented in two subsections: neighborhood characteristics and the physical characteristics of the dwelling units.

5.2.1 Neighbourhood Characteristics of the Inner-City Area of Ado-Ekiti

According to the Future Health and Wellbeing Report (2015), the quality of a neighborhood's amenities and services directly impacts the well-being of its residents. These amenities play a crucial role in determining overall housing quality within an area. To assess the housing quality of residents in Ado-Ekiti, we employed the Housing Quality Index (HQI), where a higher score, approaching 5, signifies significantly better amenities for residents.

Table 2 summarizes residents' opinions on the characteristics of facilities and services in the study area. The mean scores for water supply, electricity, waste disposal, drainage systems, road network, and noise were 1.76, 1.71, 1.61, 1.74, 1.59, and 1.97, respectively. These scores indicate that, from the residents' perspective, these facilities and services are generally in poor condition, as they are close to the "Bad" rating.

The analysis highlights that the road network is the most problematic amenity in the study area, identified as the critical infrastructure in urgent need of improvement. While some roads were tarred, they were poorly maintained, with many suffering from significant degradation. Observations during the survey revealed that numerous roads were hazardous, filled with craters and potholes, resembling areas afflicted by conflict, as depicted in Figure 2. Residents noted that the poor road conditions frequently forced car owners to seek repairs from mechanics. Additionally, these dangerous roads have become hotspots for criminal activity, with robbers targeting unsuspecting drivers and other road users. As Ebehikhalu (2019) points out, such inadequate road conditions can severely impede economic activities, complicating the transportation of agricultural products and other goods to their destinations.



Figure 2: A tarred road with potholes (left) and an untarred road with pool of water (right) in the study area

The waste disposal system in the inner city of Ado-Ekiti is a significant concern, primarily due to government negligence in providing adequate disposal facilities. As a result, waste is frequently dumped in undesignated areas, indiscriminately thrown into drainage systems, abandoned buildings, or openly burned. These improper waste management practices create breeding grounds for mosquitoes, termites, cockroaches, snakes, and rodents, which can spread diseases such as malaria. Figure 3 illustrates some of the adverse environmental conditions arising from these issues in the study area.

Access to solid waste collection services in Ado-Ekiti is virtually nonexistent, largely due to the local government's failure to provide adequate facilities. The responsibility for managing solid waste falls on the local government council and registered contractors, with residents expected to dispose of their waste at designated collection points. However, many of these sites are inaccessible to waste collection trucks because of the poor road network, leading to a prioritization of only a few accessible locations for waste collection. This limitation significantly contributes to residents rating the local government's waste collection efforts as the least effective method compared to other disposal options in the area.

In addition to waste management challenges, residents in the inner-city neighborhoods of Ado-Ekiti face unreliable electricity supply. Despite being connected to the grid through the Ibadan Electricity Distribution Company (IBEDC), which serves several states including Ekiti, many households experience inconsistent power. Consequently, residents often rely on personal generators, leading to increased fuel

costs and negative impacts on productivity. This reliance on generators also poses health risks due to carbon monoxide exposure and contributes to high levels of noise pollution.

Table: 2 Characteristics of Facilities and Services in the Inner-City Area of Ado-Ekiti

Characteristics of Facilities and Services	TWV	HQI
Water Supply		
Well	1402	2.33
Rain harvesting	775	1.29
Vendor	742	1.23
Pipe borne	1322	2.19
Total	**4241**	**7.04**
Mean	**7.04/4**	**1.76**
Electricity Supply		
Available with constant supply	719	1.19
Available	837	1.39
Connected	1538	2.55
Total	**3094**	**5.13**
Mean	**5.13/3**	**1.71**
Waste Disposal System		
Dumping into the drainage system	1009	1.68
Burning	990	1.64
Dilapidated building	979	1.63
Local government collection	890	1.48
Total	**3868**	**6.43**
Mean	**6.43/4**	**1.61**
Drainage Systems		
Not flooded or liable to flooding	1535	2.55
Well drained	811	1.35
Does not need repair	993	1.65
In good condition	684	1.41
Total	**4023**	**6.96**
Mean	**6.96/4**	**1.74**
Road network		
Tarred	1370	2.28
Graded	1014	1.68
Interlocking	787	1.31
Well maintained	677	1.12
Total	**3848**	**6.39**
Aggregate Mean	**6.39/4**	**1.59**
Noise in the neighbourhood		
Daily Noise	1119	2.88
Occasional Noise	1025	1.70
Seasonal Noise	797	1.32
Total	**2941**	**5.90**
Aggregate Mean	**5.90/3**	**1.97**

The administration's neglect in providing a reliable public water supply further exacerbates living conditions. Most homes lack access to this basic necessity, forcing residents to seek alternative sources such as wells, which frequently dry up during the dry season. As a result, they store water in barrels and gallons whenever it is available from vendors, although this supply remains irregular. The unreliable public water supply makes it impractical for residents to install water pipes in their homes, which they consider a waste of resources. Additionally, rainwater harvesting is seen as inadequate due to its seasonal nature, leaving

many households without a consistent and safe water supply.



Figure 3: Indiscriminate burning (left) and dumping of wastes into drainage systems (right) in the study area

5.2.2 Physical Characteristics of the Dwelling Units in the Inner-City Neighbourhoods of Ado-Ekiti

One major factor influencing residents' satisfaction with their dwelling units is the condition of housing and the surrounding environment (Adeleye et al., 2014; Taiwo & Fajoye, 2022). Table 3 presents residents' perceptions of the structural components of their homes, revealing that critical elements such as the floor, fascia board, foundation, walls, and painting received poor ratings, with mean scores of 1.66, 1.98, 1.73, 1.61, and 1.86, respectively. These findings indicate that residents perceive the overall condition of buildings in the inner-city neighborhoods of Ado-Ekiti as inadequate.

Among the assessed components, the walls were rated the most poorly. The evaluation focused on the presence of cracks, including open cracks that required treatment. It was noted that many buildings either needed significant repairs or were already undergoing treatment due to severe cracking or impending collapse. Numerous structures exhibited exterior cracks that had been treated with a mixture of cement and water. Residents of these affected buildings reported various issues, including infestations of rodents, lizards, snakes, mosquitoes, and termites, leading to discomfort and health risks such as food and water contamination.

The index for cement floors received the lowest rating among the various structural components,

indicating the worst condition. This finding is not surprising, as cement floors often exhibit low compliance with quality standards and frequently require rework (Tang et al., 2004; Heravi & Jafari, 2014). Properly designed cement floors should be sufficiently rigid to support tiles, adhesives, or other coverings (CIOB, 2019). Unfortunately, it has been reported that many buildings have collapsed due to poor-quality cement floors (Borneo Post Online, 2015; The Star Online, 2017). Therefore, the collapse of buildings in the study area can likely be attributed to inadequate cement flooring (see Figure 4).

Table 3: Characteristics of the Dwelling Units in the Inner-City Area of Ado-Ekiti

Physical Characteristics of the Dwelling Unit	TWV	X
Floor		
Floor tiles	1138	1.89
Terrazzo	806	1.34
Cement floor	753	1.25
Mud	1300	2.16
Total	3997	6.64
Mean	**6.64/4**	**1.66**
Fascia Board		
Aluminum zinc	1276	2.12
Wood	1109	1.84
Total	2385	3.96
Mean	**3.96/2**	**1.98**
Foundation		
Firm and not exposed	1544	2.56
Firm but exposed	866	1.44
Hanging	709	1.18
Total	3119	5.18
Mean	**5.18/3**	**1.73**
Wall		
No crack	1278	2.12
Signs of crack	1026	1.70
Open cracks	834	1.39
Needs treatment or on treatment	745	1.24
Total	3883	6.45
Mean	**6.45/4**	**1.61**
Painting		
Painted and shining	1393	2.31
Painted but fading	1033	1.72
Painting peeling off	942	1.56
Total	3368	5.59
Mean	**5.59/3**	**1.86**

Similarly, poor quality was prevalent in the foundations of the buildings, which aligns with the negative ratings residents assigned to their cement floors. A building's foundation is crucial for structural stability, while walls are meant to bear weight. Proper framing of floors, foundations, columns, and beams is essential for ensuring safety and durability. However, inadequate construction practices and insufficient site assessments are likely primary causes of foundation failures and overall building deterioration.

These issues not only affect individual structures but also significantly impact residents' quality of life. The environment has become unpleasant and unsanitary due to widespread deterioration. Poor construction and design errors exacerbate the situation, leading to rainwater accumulation and stagnation. This unchecked decline has contributed to the collapse and abandonment of several buildings in the neighborhood. Figure 4 provides visual examples of poorly maintained, dilapidated, and collapsed structural elements within the study area.



Figure 4: Eroded foundation footing and a collapsed structure (left), and treated cracked wall (right) in the study area

6. Conclusion and Policy Implications

The primary cause of the poor quality of neighborhoods and dwelling units is the inadequacy of environmental facilities and services. These deficiencies can be categorized into two groups: those that should be provided by the government and those for which residents are responsible. It is urgent for the government to enhance the delivery of essential facilities and services, including reliable electricity, water, and road infrastructure, as well as establish a dependable solid waste collection service.

Cost recovery for service provision is crucial for sustainability. The current paradigm, which views waste management services merely as a social good, hinders sustainability efforts. If facilities and services meet residents' minimum satisfaction levels, cost recovery becomes more feasible, as residents are generally more willing to pay for satisfactory services. Research by Tassie and Endalew (2020) indicates that willingness to pay is influenced not only by affordability but also by the quality and quantity of the services provided.

Moreover, residents need education on the environmental and health risks associated with

indiscriminate waste disposal, including practices such as dumping waste in drains, abandoned buildings, and open burning. This information can be disseminated through talks, lectures, workshops, training sessions, and conferences, as well as public awareness campaigns using jingles in local dialects broadcast on radio, television, and social media platforms.

The overall quality of existing dwelling units could be significantly improved through government intervention via compulsory rehabilitation and urban renewal programs. Such initiatives would contribute to the sustainable upgrading of inner-city neighborhoods and enhance residents' quality of life. It is strongly recommended that the government integrate available rural resources with modern facilities to improve housing quality, ensuring that housing development adheres to social, environmental, and economic standards to effectively utilize and promote natural resources.

When neighborhood facilities, services, and essential housing components are sufficiently upgraded, it is imperative for the physical development regulatory agency to intensify development control and monitoring to prevent illegal construction. Buildings must meet minimum standards to receive authorization, and construction should be monitored to ensure compliance with approved plans. Residents should obtain a certificate of fitness before occupying buildings to avoid issues such as cracked walls, poor floor conditions, and damaged foundations. Violators of environmental regulations should face appropriate penalties. For instance, the local government should address open spaces identified as sites for indiscriminate waste disposal, warning owners of imminent compulsory acquisition if these sites continue to be misused. A similar approach should be applied to dilapidated buildings.

Finally, reintroducing sanitary inspectors to monitor neighborhood environments is strongly recommended. Housing extends beyond traditional functions such as protection, security, and privacy; it significantly impacts health, productivity, and overall economic development. Therefore, the policy implications of this study are relevant not only to traditional cities in Nigeria, such as Ado-Ekiti, but also to urban centers in other countries facing varying social, economic, and facility provision challenges in their inner-city neighborhoods.

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