



**Post-Occupancy Evaluation of Low-Cost and High-Cost Housing Projects in Lagos: A Study of FESTAC Town**

**Anjorin Quam O.<sup>1</sup>, Christian T. Odefadehan<sup>2</sup>, Alagbe Faithfulness Ifeoluwa<sup>3</sup> & S. Adedeji Daramola<sup>4</sup>**

[quam.anjorin@calebuniversity.edu.ng](mailto:quam.anjorin@calebuniversity.edu.ng), [\\*faithfulness.alagbepg24@calebuniversity.edu.ng](mailto:*faithfulness.alagbepg24@calebuniversity.edu.ng)

**ABSTRACT**

*Housing provision remains a major challenge in rapidly urbanizing cities in developing countries, particularly Nigeria, where many governments controlled social housing projects struggle to respond to residents' long term functional needs. This study examines the post occupancy performance of social housing in Lagos State through a Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) of Festac Town, a landmark planned housing estate originally developed in the 1970s. The research investigates whether the architectural design of the estate adequately meets residents' functional and socio economic needs over time or primarily reflects aesthetic and planning ideals conceived at the point of development. A case study research design was adopted, employing a mixed method approach that combined quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. Data were obtained through electronic questionnaires administered to residents, semi structured interviews, and direct site observations. Questionnaires were distributed, of which sixty-five responds were retrieved and sixty were valid for analysis. In depth interviews were conducted with ten residents to gain deeper insight into housing use patterns, resident satisfaction, and reasons for building modifications. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically to support and explain observed trends. The findings reveal a high level of resident driven modification within the estate, with 72% of respondents reporting alterations to their housing units. Common modifications included shop extensions and additional rooms, primarily motivated by income generation, increasing family size, security concerns, and the need for modernization. Residents' satisfaction with housing units was generally moderate to low, with dissatisfaction linked to space inadequacy, aging infrastructure, and limited flexibility of the original housing layouts. While Festac Town remains successful in terms of overall planning structure, location and historical context its long term functional performance has relied heavily on residents' adaptive interventions. The study concludes that Festac Town illustrates the gap between architectural intent and lived experience in social housing developments. It highlights the importance of incorporating flexibility, socio economic responsiveness, and continuous post occupancy evaluation into housing design and policy to ensure long term functionality, resident satisfaction, and sustainability in urban housing projects.*

**Keywords:** Architectural Performance, Building Modification, Festac Town, Housing Satisfaction, Post-Occupancy Evaluation, Social Housing, Lagos

**INTRODUCTION**

Housing is one of the most fundamental indicators of social welfare, urban development, and architectural responsibility in rapidly growing cities. In developing nations such as Nigeria, the challenge of providing adequate and affordable housing has remained persistent despite numerous government interventions and large-scale housing schemes (UN-Habitat, 2022; World Bank, 2021). Lagos, Nigeria's economic capital and one of the fastest growing megacities in the world, faces an acute housing deficit driven by rapid urbanization, population growth, and increasing socio-economic inequality (World Bank, 2021; Ibem & Aduwo, 2021). As a result, several government-led housing projects have been developed over the decades with the aim of providing functional, affordable, and socially responsive living environments for residents.

One of the most ambitious and historically significant of these housing schemes is Festac Town, a planned residential estate developed in the 1970s to host participants of the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC 77). Conceived as a model modern housing estate, Festac Town

was designed to reflect the ideals of modernist planning, incorporating organized zoning, standardized housing units, pedestrian circulation, green buffers, and integrated social infrastructure (Adebayo & Adebayo, 2020). After the festival, the estate was converted into public housing and became a symbol of Nigeria's post-independence optimism and commitment to mass housing delivery. However, decades after occupation, the lived reality of Festac Town presents an opportunity for critical reflection. Like many large-scale housing developments in Lagos, the estate has undergone significant physical, social, and infrastructural transformations. Residents have modified housing units, infrastructure has aged, and the original planning intentions have been altered by changing socio-economic conditions (Ibem, Opoko, & Adeboye, 2021). These transformations raise a critical architectural question: Do social housing designs in Lagos truly meet the functional needs of users, or are they largely aesthetic and symbolic solutions that fail to sustain long-term user satisfaction? Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) provides a framework for answering this question. POE is a systematic method of assessing buildings after they have been occupied to determine how well they perform in relation to user needs, functionality, comfort, and long-term adaptability (Hassanain, Ibrahim, & Al-Sherif, 2020; Adewale, 2022). Through POE, architecture is examined not only as a design product but as a lived environment shaped by human behavior, maintenance practices, and socio-economic realities (Adewale, 2022).

This research therefore focuses on a Post Occupancy Evaluation of low-cost and high-cost housing projects in Lagos, using Festac Town as a case study. The study seeks to critically examine whether the estate's design has successfully met the functional and social needs of its residents over time. It explores the relationship between architectural intent and lived experience and investigates whether the estate represents a functional housing solution or an aesthetic vision that has struggled to adapt to long-term urban realities. By analyzing user satisfaction, spatial adaptability, infrastructure performance, and patterns of resident modification, this research contributes to the broader discourse on architectural criticism and social housing in developing cities. Ultimately, the study aims to generate insights that can inform future housing policies and architectural strategies in Lagos and similar rapidly urbanizing contexts.

### **Problem Statement**

Large public housing estates in Lagos are often judged by the number of housing units they provide rather than by how effectively those homes perform for the people who occupy them (Ibem & Aduwo, 2021). Once construction is completed and residents move in, little attention is given to how these buildings function over time. As a result, many housing estates gradually evolve in ways that were never anticipated in the original design. In Festac Town, widespread building modifications, changes in land use, infrastructure decline, and increasing density are now clearly visible. Residents have altered their homes to create additional space, generate income, and respond to changing family needs (Ibem, Opoko, & Adeboye, 2021). These continuous adjustments suggest that the original housing designs may not have fully matched the realities of everyday living in Lagos.

The major problem is that most housing projects in Nigeria are evaluated primarily at the design and construction stages but rarely assessed after occupation. Without Post-Occupancy Evaluation, it is difficult to determine whether these housing schemes truly satisfy functional needs or merely appear successful at the planning stage (Hassanain et al., 2020). This lack of post-occupancy assessment has created a gap in knowledge regarding the real performance of social housing in Lagos. There is limited understanding of how residents experience these spaces, how buildings adapt to social and economic pressures, and whether the original design intentions remain relevant decades later. This research therefore seeks to address this gap by carrying out a Post-Occupancy Evaluation of Festac Town to determine whether the estate functions as a user-centered housing solution or whether its design success was largely theoretical.

### **Aim of the Study**

The aim of this study is to critically evaluate the functional performance of Festac Town as a social housing project in Lagos, using Post Occupancy Evaluation to determine whether its design genuinely meets residents' needs or falls short due to overly aesthetic or idealized planning intentions.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- I. To examine the original planning and design intentions of Festac Town in relation to social housing delivery in Lagos.
- II. To assess residents' level of satisfaction with their housing units and the overall estate environment.
- III. To examine the performance of infrastructure and shared facilities within the estate over time.

#### **Research Questions**

- I. What were the original design intentions behind the development of Festac Town as a social housing project?
- II. How satisfied are residents with their housing units and the general living conditions within the estate?
- III. What types of physical modifications have residents made to their homes, and what are the main reasons for these changes?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Concept of Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE)**

Housing plays a critical role in shaping the quality of life, health, and overall wellbeing of urban residents. In rapidly urbanizing cities such as Lagos, the provision of housing has intensified in response to population growth, rural urban migration, and increasing housing deficits. However, the effectiveness of housing delivery should not be evaluated solely by the quantity of units produced or their visual appeal, but by how well these housing developments perform in use and meet the functional needs of occupants. This concern has drawn increasing attention to Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) as a methodological tool for assessing building performance after occupation.

Post Occupancy Evaluation is defined as the systematic process of evaluating buildings after they have been occupied for a period of time, with the objective of determining how well they support user needs and intended design functions. Preiser, Rabinowitz, and White (1988) describe POE as a feedback mechanism that assesses technical performance, functional efficiency, and user satisfaction. Although this work predates 2015, it remains foundational and continues to inform contemporary POE studies due to its conceptual relevance. Further reinforcing this perspective, Preiser and Vischer (2005) argue that POE enables designers and policymakers to identify discrepancies between design intentions and actual building performance, thereby improving future housing outcomes. In the context of housing, POE is particularly important because residential buildings are continuously inhabited and directly influence occupants' daily activities, comfort, and social interactions. In Lagos, housing provision has largely focused on addressing numerical shortages, often neglecting qualitative performance. UN-Habitat (2016) notes that housing challenges in Lagos extend beyond inadequate supply to include poor construction quality, functional deficiencies, and declining living conditions. Consequently, many housing projects are considered successful once construction is completed, without systematic evaluation of how residents actually experience and use the spaces provided.

Empirical studies on housing performance in Lagos consistently show that user satisfaction is strongly influenced by functional attributes rather than aesthetic qualities alone. Ibem, Opoko, Adeboye, and Amole (2013) found that spatial adequacy, ventilation, building services, and neighborhood infrastructure play a significant role in determining residents' satisfaction levels. Although this study was conducted prior to 2015, it remains relevant and widely cited in later housing research because its findings reflect persistent issues in Lagos housing developments.

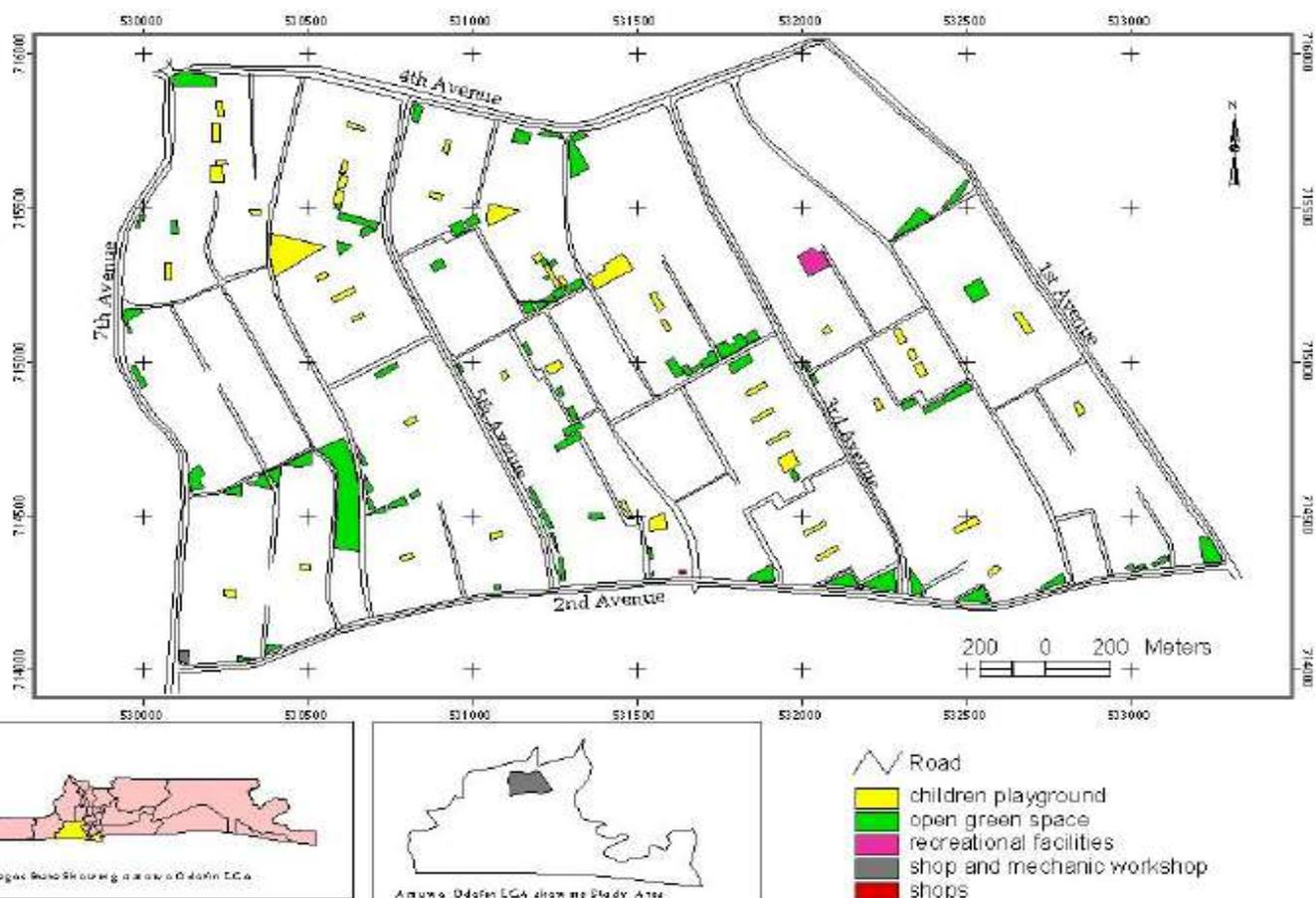
Low-cost housing, which is primarily targeted at low-income households, has been a major component of public and private housing initiatives in Lagos. While affordability is a key objective, several studies reveal that cost-reduction strategies often result in compromised spatial quality and functionality. Jiboye (2010) observed that occupants of public housing estates in Lagos expressed dissatisfaction with room sizes, kitchen layouts, sanitary facilities, and ventilation systems. These deficiencies frequently prompt residents to modify their housing units after occupation. Supporting this view, Ibem and Aduwo (2013) argue that many low-cost housing projects in Nigeria prioritize rapid delivery and reduced construction costs over user-centered design, leading to buildings that fail to adequately support occupants' daily needs.

High-cost housing developments in Lagos, on the other hand, are largely driven by market forces and often emphasize aesthetics, luxury finishes, and architectural expression. Adegun and Adedeji (2017) note that the visual appearance and market value of high-income housing frequently take precedence over functional performance and climatic responsiveness. Despite the higher construction costs associated with these developments, POE studies suggest that functional challenges persist. Ibem, Alagbe, and Owoseni (2015) found that residents of high income housing estates in Lagos reported issues related to inefficient space utilization, poor thermal comfort, and high energy consumption. These findings indicate that increased housing cost does not necessarily translate into improved functional performance or user satisfaction.

Housing functionality is also closely linked to socio-cultural factors and household characteristics. In Nigeria, extended family structures, home-based economic activities, and strong social interactions significantly influence spatial requirements. Olotuah and Bobadoye (2009) argue that standardized housing designs often fail to reflect these socio-cultural realities, resulting in dissatisfaction and widespread post-occupancy adaptations. Afon (2006) similarly notes that residents frequently modify housing units to improve privacy, increase space, and adapt buildings to changing family needs. Although these studies predate 2015, they are particularly important for understanding housing adaptation patterns in planned estates such as Festac Town.

Festac Town, originally developed as a planned mass housing estate, provides a unique context for examining post-occupancy performance. Over time, the estate has undergone significant physical and functional transformations, largely driven by resident led modifications. Afon (2006) documented extensive alterations in Festac Town, including the enclosure of balconies, extension of living spaces, and conversion of residential units for mixed uses. More recent studies on housing satisfaction in Lagos indicate that such modifications are primarily responses to functional inadequacies rather than aesthetic dissatisfaction. Ilesanmi (2012) found that residents' satisfaction is strongly influenced by internal space quality, functionality, and environmental comfort, reinforcing the relevance of POE as an evaluative framework.

#### Old Zoning Map of Festac Town



Source: (<https://sl.bing.net/fUbNHC5ldH2>)

### Present Day Map of Festac Town



Source: (<https://sl.bing.net/hLgNAqdM9PE>)

The tension between functionality and aesthetics remains a recurring theme in housing literature. Vischer (2008) emphasizes that functional performance is the primary determinant of building success from the user's perspective, arguing that aesthetic quality alone cannot compensate for poor usability. In Lagos, both low-cost and high cost housing developments exhibit a tendency to prioritize visual appeal over functional and environmental performance, resulting in buildings that require significant post-occupancy adaptation (Adegun & Adedeji, 2017; Ibem et al., 2015).

Although recent research emphasizes that residential satisfaction in housing developments is fundamentally shaped by multiple interrelated determinants, extending beyond internal building design to include neighborhoods conditions, socioeconomic factors, and infrastructure performance. A 2025 study synthesizing peer-reviewed research from 2021 to 2025 reveals that residential satisfaction is multidimensional; it is influenced not only by physical dwelling attributes such as structural integrity and spatial comfort, but also by broader neighborhoods features including access to amenities, environmental quality, and safety. Socioeconomic variables like income level, educational attainment, and tenure status further mediate satisfaction, often exacerbating inequalities in housing outcomes when residents lack adequate resources or tenure security (Akindele et al., 2025). Empirical evidence from Lagos and similar urban contexts demonstrates that dissatisfaction with housing often arises from insufficient space allocation, poor quality services, and inadequate infrastructure facilities. A recent assessment of residential satisfaction within public housing estates in Lagos shows that a majority of residents were not content with space allocation, service quality, and the condition of essential infrastructure such as drainage and sewage systems. These dissatisfaction patterns were significantly linked to physical and functional aspects of housing environments rather than purely economic or aesthetic factors, indicating that structural and service deficiencies directly undermine occupants' sense of adequacy and usability (Taiwo et al., 2025). A few related to POE research, studies focusing on housing quality, infrastructure, and residents' satisfaction have highlighted specific design and environmental concerns that undermine functional performance. For instance, a 2025 investigation into housing conditions across selected estates in Nigeria found that many residential buildings suffer from poor ventilation, inadequate maintenance, limited parking space, and compromised external environments (including poor road conditions, waste disposal challenges, and power supply instability). These factors were significantly associated with reduced housing satisfaction, underscoring that physical performance and service provision are central to how residents experience their homes and neighborhoods (Housing Quality et al., 2025). Some other researches pointed residents' modification behaviors as reflections of unmet functional needs within formal housing. A 2025 study on housing modifications and occupant satisfaction in Ikorodu, Lagos, highlights how renters adapt their living

spaces especially bedrooms, living rooms, and kitchens in response to functional inadequacies. These modifications, driven by economic considerations and neighbor's characteristics, often occur without regard to safety or comfort norms, suggesting a regulatory gap in ensuring that housing designs facilitate long-term usability and inhabitant well-being (Pius et al., 2025).

A closely and broader POE related insights from residential satisfaction research confirm that housing design elements such as space adequacy, access to facilities, and environmental comfort are among the strongest predictors of overall satisfaction. While factors like aesthetic quality and estate appearance influence residents' initial impressions, they tend to be secondary to substantive functional attributes that shape daily lived experience. For example, a study on housing satisfaction determinants found that proper management, proximity to essential facilities, interior spatial quality, and availability of functional spaces such as private rooms and adequate lighting were key predictors of satisfaction, overshadowing aesthetic concerns alone (Okoye, 2025).

Overall, the literature indicates that although housing provision in Lagos has increased in both low-cost and high-cost categories, many developments fail to adequately respond to users' functional needs (Ibem & Aduwo, 2021; Adebayo & Adebayo, 2020). Persistent challenges such as spatial inadequacy, environmental discomfort, limited flexibility, and weak infrastructural support have resulted in widespread post-occupancy modifications by residents (Ibem, Opoko, & Adeboye, 2021; Olotuah & Taiwo, 2022). While the relevance of Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) in assessing housing performance is well established in the literature, its systematic application within the Lagos housing context remains limited (Hassanain, Ibrahim, & Al-Sherif, 2020; Adewale, 2022). Notably, there is a clear gap in studies that adopt POE as a comparative analytical framework for evaluating both low-cost and high-cost housing within the same planned estate.

This gap provides a strong justification for the present study, which employs Post-Occupancy Evaluation to critically examine whether housing designs in Festac Town genuinely meet users' functional needs or function primarily as aesthetic solutions. These findings reinforce the argument that housing performance cannot be adequately understood through visual appeal, formal expression, or delivery metrics alone (UN-Habitat, 2022). Instead, residential satisfaction and post-occupancy quality emerge from a complex interaction between physical performance, spatial organization, neighborhood context, infrastructural adequacy, and socioeconomic realities (World Bank, 2021; Ibem & Aduwo, 2021). This body of evidence underscores the necessity for rigorous POE-based approaches that integrate both objective performance indicators and subjective user experiences, thereby informing more responsive housing design, planning decisions, and policy formulation in Lagos and comparable urban contexts (Adewale, 2022; Hassanain et al., 2020).

## **Research Gap**

Many studies on housing in Lagos have focused on housing shortages, affordability, urbanization, and government housing policies. Researchers have also examined the physical planning and development of large housing estates such as Festac Town, often highlighting their historical significance and their role in Nigeria's mass housing delivery. However, most of these studies concentrate on housing provision at the planning and construction stages rather than on how these estates perform after people begin to live in them. As a result, there is limited research that critically evaluates the long-term functional performance of these housing projects from the perspective of the residents.

Existing literature also tends to focus on housing quantity and policy issues, with less attention given to the relationship between architectural design intentions and the everyday experiences of users. The ways residents modify their homes, adapt spaces, and respond to changing social and economic realities remain underexplored in architectural research. While Festac Town has been widely discussed as a landmark housing estate, there is a lack of studies that examine it through the lens of architectural criticism and Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE). Few studies have critically investigated whether the estate's modernist planning ideals have translated into long-term user satisfaction and functional performance. This research therefore addresses this gap by applying a Post-Occupancy Evaluation approach to Festac Town in order to critically examine the relationship between design intention and lived experience. By doing so, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how social housing in Lagos performs over time and provides insights that can inform future housing design and policy.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a case study research design supported by a Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) approach. The case study method is considered appropriate because it enables an in depth examination of a real life housing environment and allows for a critical understanding of the relationship between architectural design decisions and residents' lived experiences. Through this approach, the study is able to interrogate how housing performs over time, rather than relying solely on original design intentions or policy objectives.

Post Occupancy Evaluation focuses on the systematic assessment of buildings after occupation in order to determine how effectively they meet user needs. In this study, POE is employed to evaluate functional performance, user satisfaction, spatial adequacy, adaptability, and long term usability of housing units and their surrounding environments. This approach makes it possible to move beyond aesthetic considerations and architectural intent, providing insight into how housing is actually used, adapted, and experienced by occupants in everyday life. The case study strategy is particularly suitable for this research because the objective is not to generalize findings to all housing estates in Lagos, but rather to conduct a detailed and critical analysis of a single, significant housing development. By focusing on one planned estate, the study is able to reveal nuanced relationships between design quality, functionality, and post-occupancy realities. Festac Town offers a rich context for examining both the strengths and limitations of social housing design within the Lagos metropolitan environment.

To achieve a comprehensive evaluation, the research adopts a mixed method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative data are collected through structured questionnaires administered to residents in order to measure levels of satisfaction, functional performance, and housing adequacy. Qualitative data are obtained through interviews and direct observation, enabling a deeper understanding of residents' experiences, patterns of use, and post occupancy modifications. The integration of these methods strengthens the validity of the findings by allowing user perceptions to be analyzed alongside observable physical conditions. The study area for this research is Festac Town, located in Amuwo-Odofin Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. The estate was developed in the mid-1970s by the Federal Government of Nigeria to accommodate participants of the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC '77). Following the conclusion of the festival, the housing units were converted into permanent residential accommodation for public use.

Festac Town was originally conceived as a comprehensive and self-contained residential estate, incorporating residential districts, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, commercial areas, open spaces, and an organized road network. The estate comprises a variety of housing types, including flats, terrace houses, and detached units, designed to serve different income groups and household structures. Festac Town was selected for this study for several key reasons. First, it is one of the largest and most recognizable planned housing estates in Lagos. Second, it represents a major example of government led social housing in Nigeria. Third, the estate has been continuously occupied for several decades, making it particularly suitable for post occupancy evaluation. Finally, the presence of visible physical alterations, informal extensions, and infrastructure changes provides an opportunity to critically assess the gap between original design intentions and current user needs. These characteristics collectively make Festac Town an appropriate and relevant case study for examining the long term functional performance of low cost and high-cost housing, as well as the extent to which architectural design responds to users' evolving needs within the Lagos context.

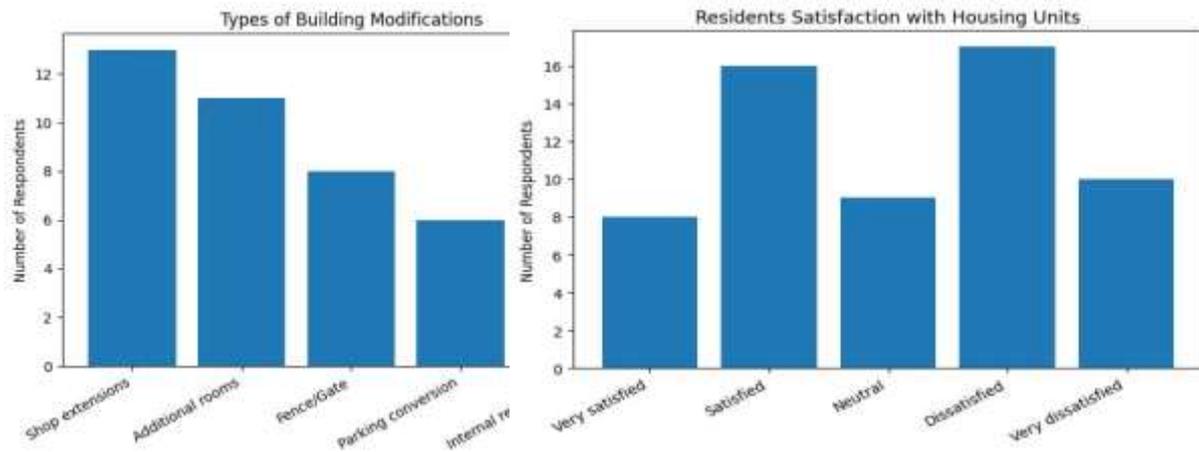
### Data Presentation and Discussion of Findings

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data obtained for the study on residential building modifications and residents' satisfaction. The data were collected through the use of a structured electronic questionnaire (Google Form) distributed to residents of the study area Festac Town. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed electronically through social media platforms and residents' online community groups. However, only 65 completed responses were retrieved, representing a 65% response rate.

The retrieved questionnaires were carefully screened and found suitable for analysis. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools such as frequency tables, percentages, charts and graphs, and the results are presented in figures for clarity.

The chapter is organized into the following sections:

- Socio-economic characteristics of respondents
- Building modification practices
- Residents' satisfaction with housing units
- Reasons for property modifications



**Bar chart 1, 2:** Analysis of answers from the residents of Festac Town

**Gender Distribution of Respondents:** The gender distribution of respondents revealed that males constituted the majority of the participants in the survey. Out of the 65 respondents, 37 (56.9%) were male, while 28 (43.1%) were female. This outcome suggests that males were more available or willing to participate in the survey. This finding is not unusual in property and housing studies within Nigeria, where household heads who are predominantly male are often the primary decision makers regarding housing modifications and property matters.

**Age Distribution of Respondents:** Analysis of respondents' age shows that the majority fall within the economically active age bracket. Respondents aged 41–50 years constituted the largest group with 30.8%, followed by those aged 31–40 years (27.7%). Respondents aged 51 years and above accounted for 23.0%, while the 21–30 years age group recorded 18.5%. The implication of this distribution is that most respondents are mature adults who are financially active and directly involved in household decision making. This makes their responses reliable for assessing housing modification practices and satisfaction levels.

**Occupation of Respondents:** The occupational structure of the respondents indicates a diverse economic background. Traders constituted the largest group (27.7%), followed by civil servants (23.1%). Artisans accounted for 18.5%, while private sector employees and other occupations each represented 15.4% of the respondents. This distribution confirms that the study area is inhabited by middle- and low-income earners, which helps explain the prevalence of income-driven building modifications observed in the area.

**Building Modifications by Residents:** The study revealed that a significant number of residents have carried out various forms of building modifications. Among the different types identified, shop extensions were the most common (30.2%), followed by construction of additional rooms (25.6%). Other forms of modification included fence/gate construction (18.6%), conversion of open spaces to parking areas (14.0%), and internal replanning (11.6%). The dominance of shop extensions indicates increasing commercialization of residential properties, which is a common trend in Nigerian urban neighborhoods. Residents often adapt their buildings to accommodate small-scale businesses in order to supplement household income.

**Residents' Satisfaction with Housing Units:** Residents' level of satisfaction with their housing units was assessed to determine whether the original building design met their needs. The results show that only 13.3% of respondents were very satisfied, while 26.7% indicated satisfaction. However, a larger proportion

expressed dissatisfaction, with 28.3% dissatisfied and 16.7% very dissatisfied. Additionally, 15.0% of respondents remained neutral. This finding indicates that a significant proportion of residents are not fully satisfied with their housing units. This dissatisfaction likely contributes to the widespread modifications observed in the study area.

**Reasons for Property Modification:** The reasons for modifying residential properties were also investigated. The most prominent reason was the need for additional income (33.3%), followed by increase in family size (25.0%). Other reasons included security concerns (16.7%), modernization of buildings (13.3%), and improvement of privacy (11.7%). The findings clearly show that economic survival is the primary driver of building alterations. Many residents modify their properties to create rental spaces or business outlets. Family growth also plays a major role, as households expand beyond the capacity of the original housing design.

Our findings from the survey provide useful insight into how residents of Festac Town interact with their housing units and whether the original social housing design meets present user needs. The gender distribution of respondents showed that both male and female residents actively participated in the study, suggesting that housing performance affects the entire household and is not gender specific. This strengthens the reliability of the responses, as the data reflects the experiences of a broad user group. The age distribution also revealed that the majority of residents fall within the economically active age group. This indicates that most occupants are working adults with evolving family structures and lifestyle needs. The implication is that housing units designed several decades ago are now accommodating residents whose needs may differ from the original design assumptions. This generational shift helps explain the increasing rate of building modifications observed in the study.

Occupational data further supports this argument. A large proportion of residents are engaged in business, civil service and private sector employment. This suggests that many households now combine residential and income-generating activities. The original housing scheme in Festac Town was designed primarily for residential purposes, yet present day economic realities have introduced mixed-use functions within homes. This mismatch between original design intention and present use highlights a key performance gap in the housing scheme. One of the most significant findings of the study is the high level of building modification among residents. A large percentage of respondents confirmed that they had altered their housing units after occupancy. This trend strongly indicates that the original design did not fully satisfy long-term functional requirements. Post occupancy changes are therefore acting as user driven design corrections.

The types of modifications carried out by residents further reveal the nature of these functional deficiencies. The most common alterations include extensions, additional rooms, shop conversions and changes to internal layouts. These changes suggest that the initial housing units were perceived as spatially inadequate and not flexible. Residents appear to be redesigning their homes to accommodate growing family sizes, economic activities and contemporary lifestyle demands. Residents' satisfaction levels also provide critical insight. While some occupants expressed moderate satisfaction with their housing units, a significant proportion indicated dissatisfaction with space provision, flexibility and adaptability. This suggests that the visual or aesthetic qualities of the houses may have been achieved, but the functional performance of the buildings has not kept pace with user needs over time. The reasons provided for property modification reinforce this conclusion. The dominant motivations include insufficient space, the need for income generation, changing family size and the desire for improved comfort. These reasons clearly demonstrate that residents are prioritizing functionality over original design intent. The modifications therefore represent an attempt by users to bridge the gap between architectural design and lived reality. And there for, the findings suggest that the Festac Town housing estate performs better as an aesthetic, historical and planning solution than as a long term functional housing model. The widespread modifications observed across the estate indicate that the original social housing design did not fully anticipate the dynamic socio-economic conditions of residents.

From an architectural criticism perspective, this study reveals a fundamental issue in social housing delivery the tendency to priorities standardized design and visual order over long term adaptability and user centered functionality. The evidence from Festac Town demonstrates that residents ultimately become co-designers of their homes through post occupancy modifications. The study therefore confirms that post occupancy evaluation is essential in assessing the true success of social housing projects in Lagos.

## Summary

This study examined the post-occupancy performance of low cost and high cost housing projects in Lagos State, using Festac Town as a case study. The research was undertaken to evaluate whether the architectural design of social housing effectively meets the functional needs of residents over time or whether it primarily reflects aesthetic and planning ideals conceived at the design stage. The study adopted a Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) approach in order to understand how residents interact with, adapt to, and perceive their housing environment after prolonged occupation. The study was guided by three specific objectives: to examine the original design intentions of Festac Town as a social housing development; to assess residents' levels of satisfaction with their housing units and the overall estate environment; and to identify the types of modifications carried out by residents as well as the reasons for such alterations. These objectives provided a structured framework for investigating the relationship between architectural design, user needs, and long term housing performance within a planned residential estate. A mixed method research approach was adopted for the study. Data were collected through electronic questionnaires, semi structured interviews, and direct site observation to ensure both quantitative and qualitative perspectives were captured. One hundred questionnaires were distributed electronically to residents of Festac Town, out of which sixty-five were returned, with sixty properly completed and analyzed. In addition, ten residents were selected for interviews to gain deeper insights into residents' experiences, perceptions, and motivations. Descriptive statistical tools, including tables, percentages, and bar charts, were employed to analyze quantitative data, while qualitative responses were used to support and contextualize the analysis. The scope of the study was limited to selected residential units within Festac Town, Lagos, focusing on housing design, resident satisfaction, and physical modifications within the estate. By applying Post Occupancy Evaluation to a historically significant social housing project, the study provides a structured assessment of how planned housing estates perform over time in response to changing socio-economic conditions. The findings of this research form the basis for conclusions and recommendations aimed at improving future social housing design, policy, and management in Lagos State and similar urban context

## CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that the post-occupancy performance of social housing in Lagos State is strongly influenced by the extent to which architectural design responds to the evolving functional needs of residents. Using Festac Town as a case study, the research revealed that while the estate was originally conceived as a model social housing development with clear planning ideals, its housing units have become less responsive to contemporary social, economic, and spatial realities over time.

The findings show that residents' satisfaction with their housing units is generally moderate to low, largely due to space inadequacy, aging infrastructure, and limited flexibility of the original designs. As a result, a significant proportion of residents have modified their housing units to accommodate income generating activities, expanding family sizes, security concerns, and changing lifestyle expectations. These adaptations highlight a clear disconnect between the original architectural intentions and the lived experiences of occupants.

The study further concludes that housing units in Festac Town have evolved from purely residential spaces into multifunctional environments that support both domestic and economic activities. This transformation reflects broader urban realities in Lagos, where housing often serves as a critical resource for economic survival. However, the largely informal nature of these modifications raises concerns about building safety, aesthetic coherence, and long-term sustainability of the estate.

Overall, the study underscores the importance of incorporating flexibility, adaptability, and user centered principles into the design and management of social housing. It also confirms the value of Post-Occupancy Evaluation as an effective tool for assessing real-life housing performance and informing future housing policies and architectural practice. By aligning design intentions with users' long-term needs, social housing developments can achieve improved functionality, higher resident satisfaction, and greater sustainability.

## REFERENCES

Adebayo, P., & Adebayo, A. (2020). Urban housing development and planning challenges in Lagos metropolis. *Journal of Urban Management*, 9(2), 181–192.

- Adewale, B. A. (2022). Post-occupancy evaluation as a tool for assessing housing performance in Nigerian cities. *Journal of Building Performance*, 13(1), 45–56.
- Hassanain, M. A., Ibrahim, A. M., & Al-Sherif, A. (2020). Post-occupancy evaluation of residential buildings: A systematic approach to improving building performance. *Sustainability*, 12(9), 3723.
- Ibem, E. O., & Aduwo, E. B. (2021). Assessment of residential satisfaction in public housing in Nigeria. *Frontiers of Architectural Research*, 10(1), 1–15.
- Ibem, E. O., Opoko, A. P., & Adeboye, A. B. (2021). Evaluating user satisfaction in public housing estates in Nigeria. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 36(2), 589–608.
- Olotuah, A., & Taiwo, A. (2022). Housing quality and residential satisfaction in urban Nigeria. *International Journal of Housing Markets and Analysis*, 15(4), 735–750.
- UN-Habitat. (2022). *World Cities Report 2022: Envisaging the Future of Cities*. United Nations Human Settlements Program.
- World Bank. (2021). *Nigeria Housing Sector Diagnostic Report*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Adewumi, T. (2017). Housing policies, programmes and delivery in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Architecture and Planning*, 9(1), 5–29.
- Akanbi, P., & Yusuf, M. (2023). Urbanization and housing crisis in Lagos State. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 45(2), 152–171.
- Akintoye, A. (2020). Urban development and infrastructure decay in Lagos: The case of planned estates. *Lagos Planning Review*, 8(1), 67–83.
- Akinola, O. (2017). Housing supply in Lagos: Patterns, challenges and prospects. *African Journal of Development Studies*, 5(1), 21–38.
- Alabi, M. O., & Ogunsanya, A. O. (2018). Festac Town: Historical development, planning and sustainability challenges. *Journal of Urban and Regional Planning*, 10(2), 45–59.
- Alexander, C. (1979). *The timeless way of building*. Oxford University Press.
- Anifowoshe, T., & Adeniyi, F. (2021). Residential environment and quality of life in Nigerian satellite towns. *Journal of Social Housing*, 13(3), 89–108.
- Bello, S. A., & Nwosu, C. (2019). The evolution of Festac Town: From model estate to mixed-use neighbourhood. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 34(4), 123–140.
- Brand, S., & Smith, J. (2016). *Post-occupancy evaluation in architecture: A practical guide*. Routledge.
- Cole, R. J., & Brown, Z. (2018). Evaluating building performance: Theory to practice. *Architectural Science Review*, 61(5), 387–400. <https://doi.org/10> .
- Ejoh, N., & Umoh, J. (2020). Residential satisfaction and adaptation in Nigerian low-income housing. *Habitat International*, 94, 102115. <https://doi.org/10> .
- Federal Government of Nigeria. (2023). *Housing sector performance report*. Ministry of Works and Housing.
- Ibrahim, D., & Olajide, O. (2018). Modifying the dwelling: Resident adaptation in urban housing estates. *Property Management*, 37(2), 221–238. <https://doi.org/10> .
- James, P., & Akande, A. (2022). Occupant behaviour, housing performance and modification in Lagos suburbs. *Journal of Housing Research*, 15(1), 74–96.
- Lagos State Government. (2022). *Lagos urban housing policy*. Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development.
- Lynch, K. (1960). *The image of the city*. MIT Press.
- Mustapha, A. R. (2019). Challenges of social housing provision in Nigeria. *Journal of Housing and Community Development*, 6(4), 199–216.
- Oladele, O. I., & Adebayo, R. (2021). The role of informal practices in housing transformations: Evidence from Lagos metropolis. *International Journal of Urban Planning*, 12(2), 58–76.
- Preiser, W. F. E., & Vischer, J. C. (2005). *Assessing building performance*. Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Rashid, M., & Zain, R. (2019). User satisfaction and built environment assessment: A post-occupancy evaluation review. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 64, 36–49. <https://doi.org/10> .