

ASLI QoL2015, Annual Serial Landmark International Conferences on Quality of Life  
ASEAN-Turkey ASLI QoL2015  
AicQoL2015 Jakarta, Indonesia. AMER International Conference on Quality of Life  
The Akmani Hotel, Jakarta, Indonesia, 25-27 April 2015  
*"Quality of Life in the Built & Natural Environment 3"*

## Liveability and Low-income Housing in Nigeria

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### Abstract

This study examined the quality of life against the backdrop of the existing environment in the public low-income housing estates. Based on the desktop literature the study used both subjective and objective measurements to investigate the liveability of the selected housing estates. Home environment, neighbourhood amenities, economic vitality, social environment and civic protection were examined. The stratified random sampling was used in distributing questionnaire to household heads in all types of homes. Data were analysed with descriptive statistics and structural equation modelling (SEM). This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in liveability studies in terms of model construct.

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Peer-review under responsibility of AMER (Association of Malaysian Environment-Behaviour Researchers) and cE-Bs (Centre for Environment- Behaviour Studies, Faculty of Architecture, Planning & Surveying, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia).

**Keywords:** Liveability; low-income; quality of life; structural equation modelling (SEM)

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### 1. Introduction

The term liveability is nebulous in meaning and as a result it becomes a multi-faceted phrase that different researchers perceived differently. In most cases, the prefix such as city, urban and neighbourhood have been added in various studies. Liveability connotes the ability of a living place to support well-being or quality of life. Literally the word "Liveable" means a place or a building fit for living. Liveability is a concept that describe the existing

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conditions of a particular area or a city in relation to what ought to be and the reality of the situation of the inhabitants.

As the city grows, the population pressure persists, and more house units are required to cater for the city dwellers. Therefore in discussing city liveability, housing is a major key indicator. Housing as one of the three most essential needs of man (UN-Habitat, 2006) can be described as an integral part of a human frame which should respond to the need of its inhabitants. It encompasses all the auxiliary services and living environment facilities, which are necessary to human well-being. The right to a safe, secure, healthy and inexpensive adequate housing was enshrined in the Habitat Agenda (2001). This global call for human settlement and shelter encouraged the government of nations to intensifying efforts to provide houses for their citizen in particular for the low-income populace. Prior to this, Nigeria government at various times have introduced different housing policies to solve housing deficit problem. Thus, evidences from some studies, show that Nigerians are still under-housed (Nse, 2012). Nevertheless, both federal government and the state government have continuing building housing units for various levels of income groups (low, middle and high-income) in their respective territory. However, Niger state is one of the 36 states in Nigeria, and the Niger state government is one of the leading providers of public low-income housing to the low-income people among the states in Nigeria. From the foregoing, this study therefore, investigates the liveability of the public low-income housing estates of Niger State, Nigeria.

### *1.1. Aim*

The aim of this study is to examine the quality of life against the backdrop of the living environment in the public low-income housing estates in Niger State of Nigeria.

### *1.2. Objectives*

- To establish various dimensions and indicators of the liveability of public low-income housing through literature review;
- To find out the perception of the residents towards the liveability of the housing estates.
- To find out the factors that significantly influences the perception of the residents' level of satisfaction with their housing estate.
- To assess the fitness of the hypothesized model of liveability of the low-income housing

### *1.3. Research questions*

- What are considered as dimensions and indicators of liveability?
- How residents did perceive their living environment?
- What are the factors that influence the residents' level of satisfaction?
- How useful is the hypothesized model of liveability of the low-income housing?

## **2. Literature review**

The term “liveability” is closely related to the environment. Cambridge Advance Dictionary (2008) define “environment” as the conditions of living and the way the conditions influence how the inhabitants feel. Also, environment has been defined as the external conditions that can affect the life of an individual or group of citizens (Omuta, 1988).

The problem with the concept of liveability has been that scholars created definitions that were appropriate for their research. Consequently, various definitions, dimensions and indicators of liveability circulate in the literature and few examples of definitions of liveability are as follows: The Centre for Liveable Cities Singapore in 2011 define liveability as the city with excellent planning, create a lively, attractive and secure environment for people to live their life, work and play. It also encompasses good governance, a competitive economy, high quality of life and environmental sustainability. Shuhana et al., (2012) opined that high quality of living will affect citizen's lifestyle, health condition and shows stability of the built environment. Liveability according to Castellati (1997) means

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