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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Nexus between the participation of residents in house design and residential satisfaction in Akure, Nigeria

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**Abstract**

This study examined the relationship between residents' level of participation in house design and level of residential satisfaction in Akure, Nigeria. The study was based on the idea that the goal of housing projects is to provide satisfactory environments for users. A cross-sectional survey was conducted on 304 household heads in transitional and peripheral zones of the city. Data were obtained through a structured questionnaire and focus group discussions and observations. The obtained data were subsequently subjected to single-factor descriptive analysis, mean satisfaction scoring, and categorical regression analysis. Results showed a positive significant relationship between the level of resident participation in house design and the level of residential satisfaction. The significant participatory predictors of satisfaction were number of bedrooms, general house design, development of the brief for the design, arrangement of interior spaces, and selection of finishing materials. Space size and building materials were not significant predictors in this context. The obtained p-value of 0.000 indicated that the regression model was significant. This study recommends a high level of resident participation in house design to achieve a high level of residential housing satisfaction in Nigeria.

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## 1. Introduction

The roles and performances of housing design professionals, especially architects, in identifying the housing problems of a nation are of paramount concern (Olotuah and Ajenifujah,

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2009). The assumption that the needs of residents are adequately addressed when the residential space dimensionally accommodates them would be untrue if the behavior of residents in this space is misunderstood. Therefore, ensuring that the needs of residents are met in the design of houses exerts positive effects on the level of satisfaction of residents. Housing is one of the most important basic needs of man, and house designers must ensure that users are satisfied with their houses as much as possible. Another reason that makes housing important is that man spends most of his life in his house.

Resident participation is a means of ensuring that housing environments suit the lifestyles of users to achieve residential satisfaction. Ensuring that users participate in house design is a major means of guaranteeing that the housing needs of users are met. Moreover, designing houses that suit the lifestyles of users leads to a high level of user satisfaction. However, [Jiboye \(2012\)](#) indicated that in developing countries, such as Nigeria, the majority of public and private residential projects are unsuccessful because the requirements of residents are not sufficiently considered or their residential needs are not met. The participation of residents in house design is not a norm in Nigeria but an exception; this condition usually results in low residential satisfaction.

Most studies on housing participation and satisfaction, particularly on public housing, were conducted in Western countries. These studies examined how participation influences satisfaction, but not much in-depth work has been conducted to investigate this relationship in the context of less-developed countries, such as Nigeria. Little or no empirical research has been conducted to examine the link between participation and satisfaction in developing countries, and no evidence indicates that the results of studies in developed countries are applicable to less-developed countries, such as Nigeria. Moreover, existing studies on this subject have not identified which aspects of design participation significantly predict the level of residential satisfaction. The housing in Nigeria is mostly private, and this condition shows that private housing should form an integral part of studies. Therefore, further research is required in these contexts to resolve these issues.

Satisfaction with living conditions indicates that only a few or no complaint is received about housing units because the needs and aspirations of residents are fulfilled ([Abdul-Ghani, 2008](#)). Household satisfaction is an indication of the quality of life because it means the aspirations and needs of residents are met ([Waziri et al., 2013](#)). It also refers to the level to which residents are satisfied with what their homes offer. A high level of residential satisfaction indicates that residents are highly satisfied with their houses. A high level of resident participation in house design generally leads to a high level of housing satisfaction. Conversely, a high level of housing dissatisfaction exerts an undesirable impact on the comfort of a family ([Husna and Nurizan, 1987](#)). Failed projects could result from unsatisfactory environments, and this scenario might lead to other problems, such as abandonment.

Several studies ([Aduwo et al., 2013](#); [Adegbehingbe, 2011](#); [Adegbehingbe et al., 2010](#)) have shown that when people are dissatisfied with their houses, they abandon or modify them. Modification, especially when not approved by

relevant authorities, results in slum conditions, which degenerate the environment. Involving people in the development of their living environments could reduce the occurrence of this phenomenon. Similar to all living organisms, people wish to choose their living environments; hence, they need to participate in the design of such environments. The attempt of users to modify an unsuitable living environment to suit them is a manifestation of low housing satisfaction. Low housing satisfaction can be reduced or prevented if houses are built around residents' activity systems and lifestyles through resident participation.

The aim of this study is to analyze the nexus between the participation of residents in house design and the level of residential satisfaction in Akure, Nigeria. It investigated the aspects of design participation that significantly predict the level of residential satisfaction in this context. Emphasis was placed on private housing. To achieve its aim, this study identified the level of resident participation in house design, examined the level of residential satisfaction, and analyzed the relationship between the level of resident participation in house design and residential satisfaction in the study area. Previous studies ([Onder and Der, 2007](#); [Erinsel-Onder et al., 2010](#)) showed how participation in general affects residential satisfaction. However, the present study showed how the participation of residents in several individual aspects of house design affects residential satisfaction in the Nigerian context.

## 2. Review of related literature

### 2.1. Participation of residents in house design

Residents should participate in the design process to achieve a sustainable housing design that meets their needs and desires ([Adedayo, 2012](#)). User-centered designs require a direct interaction between the architect and user through communication and a design process in which meaning is created and shared ([Adedayo, 2012](#)). The design concept is a result of the participation between experts and non-experts or users ([Ammar et al., 2013](#)). [Bowen \(2010\)](#) argued that in participatory design, architects and users collaborate to explore design possibilities depending on their knowledge and experiences to achieve applicable solutions to user needs, and these solutions are usually innovative. [Salleh \(2006\)](#) noted that architects have a scientific background experience that guides and controls user needs and thoughts, which must be the paramount interest of architects. Users should make balanced decisions on certain factors in their housing under the guidance of the architect. These factors include the arrangement of spaces inside the house, orientation, floor area, natural lighting and ventilation, and location ([Ammar et al., 2013](#)). Users can participate in the brief development stage of the housing scheme, in which prospective owners are identified and their needs ascertained and provided for ([Adedayo, 2012](#)). In addition, users can participate in the sketch design and final drawing stages for continuity to ensure that users are aware and approve of any unforeseen changes in the design.

[Figure 1](#) shows the housing design process, in which the user meets with the architect to discuss the design of the

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