

# A Literature Review on Satisfaction with Housing and Neighborhood Attributes

Teketel Mekebo<sup>1</sup> and Huang Dong<sup>2</sup>

1/PhD student/, College of Public Administration (CPA), Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), Wuhan, China

[I209122164@hust.edu.cn](mailto:I209122164@hust.edu.cn)

2/Professor/, College of Public Administration (CPA), Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), Wuhan, China

**Abstract:** *The physical, social, and economic aspects affect the quality of life in urban neighborhoods. Housing satisfaction is often used to evaluate residents' perceptions and feeling for their housing units and the environment (Ogu, 2002). It is recognized as an essential component of the individual quality of life. The main part of people's lives is spent in their residential neighborhoods. Therefore, neighborhood attributes have a significant impact on peoples' quality of life. It is essential to improve neighborhood satisfaction and residents' quality of life in the residential environment. Thus, this study is aimed to present a literature review on housing satisfaction and neighborhood attributes (physical, social, and economic). In order to find the relevant data, a number of literature sources have been conducted to identify previous publications and studies. This is to provide insight into the relationship between housing satisfaction and neighborhood environments, in which physical, social, and economic attributes should be taken into account in residential environment. It highlights the interdisciplinary dimensions of housing and neighborhood satisfaction and provides useful suggestions for future studies.*

**Keywords:** *Housing satisfaction, Neighborhood Attributes, Physical Attributes, Social Attributes, Economic Attributes*

## Introduction

Residential and neighborhood satisfaction is a significant indicator of housing quality and conditions that influences individuals' quality of life (Kellekc & Beroz, 2006; Adianse, 2007; Dimuna, 2017). Housing satisfaction refers to the degree of contentment experienced by an individual or family with regard to the current housing situation (McCray & Day, 1977; Djebarni & AlAbed, 2000). In order to enhance the quality of life, promote greater community participation and social integration of the population, it is necessary to provide adequate, quality housing and well organized urban service. Gbakeji (2014) has stated that in order to satisfy residents, a residential environment must represent desirable aspects of the wider social system, since how much residential needs while reflecting and maintaining ones' status.

The concept of housing satisfaction has been studied by many researchers (Awotona, 1990; Bruine & Cook, 1997; Morris & Winter, 1978). Varady and Preiser (1998), defined that housing satisfaction as the existing residential the perceived gap between the respondents' needs and aspirations of the current residential context. It has been used as a key predictor of an individual's perception of general "quality of life" (Djebarni & Al-Abed, 2000). It is often employed to evaluate residents' perceptions and feeling for their housing units and the environment (Ogu, 2002). Studies on residential satisfaction have examined many attributes such as the dwelling unit, neighborhoods, environment, and end-users' characteristics that affect residential satisfaction (Lu,1999).

In their study, Sedaghatnia et al., (2013) have seen that a significant part of peoples' lives is spent in their residential neighborhoods, and thus neighborhood attributes have a significant impact on peoples' quality of life in a residential setting. Further, Cramm et al. (2012) added that individual and neighborhood physical, social, and economic attributes had influenced people's quality of life. This review provides insight into the relationship between housing satisfaction and neighborhood environments and justifies neighborhood environments' relevant attributes. Therefore, this study aims to review residential satisfaction and neighborhood environments. The first is to discuss definitions and theories of residential satisfaction. The second is to determine the attributes of the neighborhood that influence housing satisfaction.

## Methodology

This study aims to present literature reviews and published studies on residential satisfaction and neighborhood environments in residential settings. In order to find the relevant secondary data, a number of literature sources have been conducted to identify previous publications and studies. Most of the literature chosen for this review is from interdisciplinary perspectives such as Architectural, Sociology, Psychology, and Economic. This is to provide insight into the relationship between housing satisfaction and neighborhood environments and thus justify the neighborhood's relevant attributes such as physical, social, and economic attributes that should be taken into account in which residential housing development.

## The Literature Review

### The Definitions and Theories of Residential Satisfaction

The residents' satisfaction is defined as how end users' current residential situations meet and accomplish their desired prospect and aspiration (Salleh, 2008). Satisfaction with housing situations indicates a lack of complaints and the extent of a match between the actual and desired situation. In contrast, a mismatch between current housing and desired condition could lead to dissatisfaction (Mohit, et al., 2010). Further, it is viewed as a subjective assessment of product and service performance in meeting customers' needs, expectations, and aspirations (Parker & Mathews, 2001).

Housing satisfaction is defined as the relative contentment that experienced households concerning their housing situation, how it meets their needs, and whether it requires a whole to further their aspirations (Huang & Du, 2015; Tech-Hong, 2012). It is a whole series of factors related to occupant dwelling, dwelling area facilities related to the dwelling unit's neighborhood, and location (Mohit & Azim, 2012). Housing satisfaction is influenced by a wide variety of objective and subjectively perceived conditions (Theodori, 2001). It is influenced not only by the engineering elements but also by physical, social, cultural, behavioral, and other parts of the entire societal environmental system. The residential house is only one link in a chain of factors that determine peoples' relative satisfaction with their neighborhood environments. Thus, residents' satisfaction with housing and neighborhood environment is an essential indicator that reflects the quality of life.

### **Residential Satisfaction Theories**

There are various theoretical and conceptual approaches that different authors and researchers have put forward in an attempt to understand and explain residential satisfaction. Galster and Garry Hesser (1981) defined residential satisfaction theories as measuring the difference between households' actual and desired housing and neighborhood situation. Based on this assumption, many residential satisfaction studies have used three main theories of residential satisfaction.

#### **Housing Needs Theory**

This Theory was postulated by Rossi (1955), who introduces the notion of "Housing Needs Theory" to conceptualize housing satisfaction/dissatisfaction. It states that housing needs and desires change as households move through different life cycle stages. It creates a discrepancy between household needs, housing, and neighbourhood situations, as explained by Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Besides, this Theory stresses or dissatisfaction for the household with their current housing. As a result, these may lead to migration as a way of adjustment to housing needs. Life cycle changes may affect the aspect of need. This, therefore, means that households do not meet their residential needs and aspirations. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization need. It is very important to satisfy a person's basic need for developing a person's potential and capability in a society.

#### **The Housing Deficit Theory**

The Housing deficit theory introduced by Morris and Winter (1975), which used to the Theory and conceptual framework in residential research. It posits that individuals and households judge their housing conditions according to family norms and societal norms associated with cultural standards. If there is any discrepancy between the housing prescribed by the norms and the actual situation identified, resulting in dissatisfaction. Residents respond to this low satisfaction by making adjustments, including partitions and adding an extension to get the desired accommodation. On the other hand, an incongruity between the actual housing situation and housing norms results in a housing deficit, which gives rise to residential dissatisfaction, leading to some form of housing adjustments that may be either situ, such as revising their housing needs and aspiration in order to reconcile the incongruity or to improve their housing condition through remodeling or else the residents may move to another places to change their housing into conformity with their aspirations and needs (Morris & Winter, 1978).

#### **The Psychological Construct Theory**

This Theory found residential satisfaction is an assessment of the extent to which the residents' current dwelling and the quality of the environment is close to aspiration of their favorites one. Based on this theory, everyone's cognitive construct acts as a reference to face living conditions and leads to congruence or incongruence. In this process, everyone's plans have a vital role to play as a criterion for comparison (Galster, 1985). Further, he argued that people have seen to have goals and specific objectives directed towards achieving such goals, and the extent to which one's residential environment is perceived to be facilitating the achievement of his/her goals has seen as an indication of residential satisfaction. People acquire housing with the expectation that it will contribute towards the attainment of specific goals in life. They view their homes as an asset capable of facilitating the overall achievement of their purpose in life. Thus, the extent to which they perceive their housing is performing the 'facilitator role' has been seen as a measure of residential satisfaction.

#### **Neighborhood Environments**

Neighborhood environments play a role in social interactions, interpersonal relationships, work, financial status, and marital relations (Sirgy & Cornwell, 2002). The increasing interest in the neighborhood can be linked to its influence on how people live,

interact, work, and play. Higgit and Memken (2001) found two main approaches to understanding the neighborhood's concept: the ecological and planning approaches. The ecological approach views neighborhood as a functional entity related to a community's physical features and how social groups are distributed into various neighborhood settings. In contrast, the planning approach sees the neighborhood as a construct that deals with how the physical environment supports their daily livelihoods. Further, Berk (2010) defined the neighborhood around the dwelling unit as the immediate social and physical environment. For this study, the neighborhood environment refers to the surrounding social, physical, and economic setting in which residential units are located.

According to Lu (1999), neighborhood satisfaction theories share a common view that one's neighborhood satisfaction level is based on one's congruity. Thus, neighborhood satisfaction serves different purposes, includes description or indication of the quality of life and other social phenomena like residential satisfaction and mobility, sense of belonging, and present housing conditions (Amerigo & Aragonés, 1990; Fang 2006). It gives insight into the extent to which people are happy or contented with their neighborhood environments. According to Hur and Morrow-Jones (2008) explained that it has far-reaching implications for residents' health and well-being, their mobility decision. Moreover, Batson and Monnant (2015) have seen that neighborhood satisfaction affects overall life satisfaction, mental and physical health, political participation, and investment in building healthy and stable communities.

### **Neighborhoods Environments**

The neighborhood environment is not homogeneous, while it is a prominent element of daily life. This neighborhood environment influences the residential satisfaction of individuals. It is a highly influential but mostly under-emphasized residential satisfaction attribute that people perceive and feel for their neighborhoods. The impact process is shaped by policies that involve processes of transformation and structuring beginning from the neighborhood's design dimension. Three main attributes influence the quality of the neighborhoods: physical attributes, social attributes, and economic attributes. In the next section, a detailed discussion of each attribute used in previous studies has been discussed.

### **The Physical Attributes**

The physical characteristics of the neighborhood can be understood from its scope, including several variables that make the housing and neighborhood more environmentally livable and attractive. Physical attributes have a significant impact on neighborhoods satisfaction compared to social or economic characteristics (Sirgy & Cornwell, 2002). The location of the neighborhood must be sufficient for access to different areas in terms of social capital formation.

The physical environment components such as green areas, sports, and playgrounds influence neighborhood satisfaction (Saleebey, 2004; Baum & Palmer, 2002). Satisfaction with the neighborhood physical features such as landscape, street lighting, crowding and noise level, nearness of neighborhood to facilities needed and quality of the environment in the communities contributing significantly to ones' overall satisfaction about the neighborhoods and housing (Sirgy & Cornwell, 2002).

Mohit et al. (2010), apply physical factors on the environmental aspects such as noise level, accidents situation, crime situation, security control, community relation, and the public facilities and the distance of neighborhood facilities provided. Hur, Nasar and Chun (2010), develop other physical measures used in influencing the neighborhood quality such as the attributes of the surrounding environment, perceived attributes of the environment and evaluation of the surrounding attributes environment. Karim (2008) quantifies communities' physical factors with education, grocery, eating, recreation, praying, and medical service.

In terms of being significant points of neighborhood interaction and reflecting points of social communication, such areas are valuable. Various studies have shown that these areas have historical importance in establishing interaction and quality of life. Open and public spaces in the neighborhoods are not only for the quality of life but also as part of social activity. These areas, which are effective in terms of trust and engagement between the community, are also potential areas in terms of the implementation of community activities. The proximity to shopping areas, major roads, and commonly used routine services are classified as location.

As a reflection of the physical characteristics of the neighborhood, the residents' feelings about crime security are changed. Thus, the level of satisfaction from the neighborhoods changes, and their level of feeling like a part of their society increases. It was found that there is a direct relationship between neighborhood satisfaction and perception of crime and fear of crime (Hur & Morrow-Jones, 2008; Lesile & Cerin 2008).

Among the physical attributes affecting residents' satisfaction in the residential neighborhoods are the environmental arrangements, especially the landscape structure, which is implemented in the neighborhood. Green areas and recreation areas positively affect neighborhood satisfaction. Increased neighborhood aesthetics and overall appearance levels have been shown to increase neighborhood satisfaction levels and increase housing density (Kearney, 2006; Leslie & Cerin, 2008). The physical

characteristic of neighborhoods environments, which are the layout of the neighborhoods, sizes of open spaces and the availability of basic social amenities and infrastructural facilities that promotes decent and healthy living (Adewale et al., 2018).

### **The Social Attributes**

Social attributes can be defined as residents' perception, active ties with the community, and social ties. Social relationships and human connection are important and profound in people's lives and residence. It is often considering the practices carried out to socialized people and society. With such practice, change in the physical environment's context leads to how residents begin to link themselves in their relationships with each other and society (Saleebey, 2004). Djebarni et al. (2000), in their study conducted in Yemen stated that satisfaction with the social environment is an important factor that affects the level of satisfaction. Similarly, Sigry et al., (2002) stressed that social satisfaction with the neighborhood environment is affected by social interaction between neighbors, people of the neighborhood, crime rate in the community, and sense of privacy.

The provision and location of social infrastructure and the sense of safety in the neighborhoods are important social determinants of neighborhood satisfaction. Permentier et al. (2011), pointed out that satisfaction with neighborhood population, contract with neighbours, social safety, availability of shopping facilities, social networks, and a number of government institutions are important attributes identified which can be grouped under the category of social characteristics. In addition, social features affect the formation of structural features of the neighborhoods, (Sampson et al., 2009). Studies have been attempted to identify the neighborhoods' attributes and have aimed to provide analysis to confirm the issues that constitute the residents' social ties (Raudush & Sampson,1999).

### **The Economic Attributes**

The economic attributes are important to forward economic factors in determining the satisfaction of the neighborhoods. Satisfaction with the neighborhood economic features such as home values in neighborhood, cost of living in the community, neighborhood and neighborhood's socioeconomic status seems to affect life satisfaction through overall feeling about the house and home (Sirgy & Cornwell, 2002; Galster,1987; Lu,1999). The major factor determining the economic attribute of satisfaction with housing the ownership of home (Varady & Carroza, 2000). Rohe and Stegman (1994), added that homeowners adapt the house to their needs in order to enhance the functionality of the house and consequently their housing satisfaction.

Boyle and Kiel (2001) demonstrate that the fall in house prices contributes to housing frustration. They clarified the effects on the valuation of the house of the physical maintenance of neighboring homes in which housing satisfaction relies on satisfaction with the neighborhood. The individual with different income levels may display additional housing satisfaction on similar housing environment. In their study, Sirgy and Cornwell (2002) pointed out that communities' economic characteristics influence the residents' satisfaction. Further, Knies et al. (2008) suggested that if they live in communities where their income is sufficient to meet their needs, people are satisfied.

When people have a higher social status and are economically prosperous, they are more likely to be satisfied (Lu, 1999; Mohit & Mahfoud 2015; Wang & Wang, 2016; Li et al. 2019). The rise in income increases social expectations or aspirations that lead to more expensive consumption. Marans and Rodgers (1975) use socio-demographic variables for appraising housing satisfaction. They accept that these variables need a smaller portion of housing satisfaction than the neighborhood characteristics.

### **Conclusion**

Studies have shown that how people evaluate satisfaction with housing and neighborhood environments indicates that their emotional states and abilities influence the way people perceive and evaluate their environment in order to determine their performance concerning particular needs, aspirations, and expectations. The residents' satisfaction with their neighborhood environment cannot be separated from the impact such environment has on them, which is generally governed by significant attributes: the physical, social, and economic attributes that individuals attach to their neighborhood environments.

It is possible to understand the neighborhood's physical attributes that make the housing and neighborhood more environmentally livable and attractive. Social attributes can be described as the perception of residents, active community relations, and social ties. The economic attributes are important to forward economic factors in determining satisfaction of the neighborhoods. Thus, to improve neighborhood satisfaction and residents' quality of life in a residential environment, urban planners, urban designers, and architects ensure residents' satisfaction by giving more attention to the neighborhood attributes, which are social, physical, and economic attributes in the residential setting. Further studies consider all the identified attributes which will contribute to the residential environment by providing adequate physical and social infrastructure facilities in residential housing development in urban areas.

### **Reference**

1. Adewale, B., Ibem, E., Amole, B., & Adeboye, A., (2018). Assessment of residential satisfaction in the core area of Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria. *Journal of Human Behavior in Social Environment*, 00(00), 1–28.
  2. Amerigo, M., & Aragones, J. (1990). Residential satisfaction in council housing. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 10, 313–325.
  3. Awotona, A. (1990). Nigerian Government Participation in Housing: 1970- 1980. *Habitat International* 14(10): 17-40
  4. Batson, C. D., & Monnat, S. M. (2015). Distress in the desert: neighborhood disorder, resident satisfaction, and quality of life during the Las Vegas foreclosure crisis. *Urban Affairs Review*, 51(2), 205-238.
  5. Baum, F., & Palmer, C. (2002). Opportunity structures: Urban landscape, social capital and health promotion in Australia. *Health Promotion International*, 17, pp. 351-361.
  6. Berk, M. G. (2005). The concept of neighbourhood in the contemporary residential environments: An investigation of occupants' perception.
  7. Bruin, M. and C. Cook (1997). Understanding constraints and residential satisfaction among low-income single-parent families. *Environment and Behavior* 29(4): 532-553.
  8. Buys L., Miller E. (2012), "Residential satisfaction in inner urban higher-density Brisbane, Australia: role of dwelling design, neighbourhood and neighbours", *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 55(3), 319–338
  9. Cramm, J., Moller, V. and Nieboer, A., (2012). Individual and Neighbourhood Level Indicators Of Subjective Well-Being In A Small And Poor Eastern Cape Township: The Effect of Health, Social Capital, Marital Status, and Income. *Social Indicators Research* 105(3): 581–593.
  10. Fang, Y. 2006. "Residential Satisfaction, Moving Intention, and Moving Behaviours: A Study of Redeveloped Neighbourhoods in Inner-City Beijing." *Housing Studies* 21 (5): 671–694. doi:10.1080/02673030600807217.
  11. Galster, G.C., (1985). Evaluating indicators for housing policy: Residential satisfaction vs. marginal improvement priorities. *Social Indicators Research*, 16(4), 415-448.
  12. Garip S. B., Sener H., (2012). "Analysing environmental satisfaction in gated housing settlements: A case study in Istanbul" *ITU A/Z*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp.120-133.
  13. Gbakeji, J.O. (2014). Analysis of residential Satisfaction in some residential neighborhood in Benin City, Nigeria. *Journal of Civil and Environmental Engineering*, 2(1) 1-10.
  14. Higgitt, N. C., & Memken, J. A. (2001). Understanding neighborhoods. *Housing and Society*, 28(1-2), 29-46.
  15. Huang, Z., & Du, X. (2015). Assessment and determinants of residential satisfaction with public housing in Hangzhou, China. *Habitat International*, 47(0), 218-230. doi:10.1016/j.habitatint.2015.01.025
  16. Hur, M. and H. Morrow-Jones (2008). Factors that influence resident's satisfaction with neighbourhoods. *Environment and Behavior* 40(5): 619-635.
  17. Hur, M., Nasar, J. L., & Chun, B. (2010). Neighborhood satisfaction, Physical and perceived naturalness and Openness. *Journal of Environmental Psychology* (30),52-59.
  18. Karim, H, A. (2012), Low Cost Housing Environment: Compromising Quality of life? *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Science* 35, 44-53.
  19. Kearney, M. (2006), Habitat, environment and niche: what are we modelling? *Oikos*, 115, pp. 186-191.
  20. Knies, G., Burgess, S., & Propper, C. (2008). Keeping up with the schmidt's: An empirical test of relative deprivation theory in the neighbourhood context. *Schmollers Jahrbuch: Journal of Applied Social Science Studies*, 128(1), 75-108.
  21. Leslie, E., & Cerin, E. (2008). Are perceptions of the local environment related to Neighbourhood Satisfaction and mental health in adults? *Preventive Medicine*, 47, 273- 278.
  22. Li, D. L., X. Ning, J. Sun, and H. Du., (2019). "Residential Satisfaction among Resettled Tenants in Public Rental Housing in Wuhan, China." *Journal of Housing and Built Environment* 34: 1125–1148. doi:10.1007/s10901-019-09667-x
  23. Lu, M. (1999). Determinants of Residential Satisfaction: Ordgered Logit vs. Regression 124 Models. *Growth and Change* 30(Spring): 264-287.
  24. Marans, R., Rodgers, W. (1975) Toward an understanding of community satisfaction, in A.H. Hawley and V.P. Rock (eds.), *Metropolitan America in Contemporary Perspective*, Halstead, New York.
  25. Mohit, M. A., & Azim, M. (2012). Assessment of the residential satisfaction with public housing in Hulhumale', Maldives. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 50, 756e770.
  26. Mohit, M. A., and A.-K. Mahfoud (2015). "Appraisal of Residential Satisfaction in Double-Storey Terrace Housing in the Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia." *Habitat International* 49 (October). Pergamon: 286–293. doi:10.1016/J.HABITATINT.2015.06.001.
  27. Mohit, M. A., Ibrahim, M., & Rashid, Y. R. (2010). Assessment of residential satisfaction in newly designed public housing low-cost housing in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. *Habitat International*,34(1), 18-27.
  28. Morris, E. W. and M. Winter (1978). *Housing, Family and Society*, John Wiley and Sons (New York).
  29. Morris, E. W., & Winter, M. (1975). A theory of family housing adjustment. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 79-88.
  30. Rohe, W.M., Stegman, M.A. (1994) The impact of home ownership on the social and political involvement of low-income people. *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 30(September) 152-72.
-

31. Rossi, P. H. (1955). *Why the families move: A study in the social psychology of urban residential mobility*: Free Press.
32. Saleebey, D. (2004)., "The Power of Place": Another Look at the Environment. *Families in Society*, 85(1), 7-16.
33. Sam M., Zain M.F.B., Saadatian O., (2012), "Residential satisfaction and construction", *Scientific Research and Essays Vol. 7*, No. 15, pp. 1556-1563.
34. Sedaghatnia, S., Iamit, H., Gharamanpouri, A. and Mohammad, S., (2013). An evaluation of the Residents Quality of Life through neighborhood satisfaction in Malaysia. *Environmental management and Sustainable development* 2(1), 114-125.
35. Sirgy, M., and T. Cornwell, (2002). "How Neighborhood Features Affect Quality of Life." *Social Indicators Research* 59 (1): 79–114. doi:10.1023/A:1016021108513
36. Sirgy, M. J., & Cornwell, T., (2002). How neighborhood features affect quality of life. *Social indicators research*, 59(1), 79-114.
37. Teck-Hong, T. (2012). Housing satisfaction in medium- and high-cost housing: The case of Greater Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. *Habitat International*, 36(1), 108-116. doi:DOI 10.1016/j.habitatint.2011.06.003
38. Wang, D., and F. Wang. (2016). "Contributions of the Usage and Affective Experience of the Residential Environment to Residential Satisfaction." *Housing Studies* 31 (1): 42–60. doi:10.1080/02673037.2015.1025372
39. Warady, D.P., Carrozz M. A. (2000). Toward a better the way to measure customer satisfaction levels in public housing: a report from Cincinnati, *Housing studies* (15) 797-825.