



SOCIO-CULTURAL DETERMINANTS OF RESIDENTIAL SATISFACTION IN PRIVATE HOUSING IN ENUGU URBAN, NIGERIA

Irouke Vitalis Maduabuchi¹; Unamba Uchenna Kelechi²; Odoanyanwu Ndubuisi Michael¹; Aniakor Ugochi Chizorom¹

¹*Department of Architecture, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.*

²*Department of Architecture, Imo State University, Owerri.*

Corresponding Author: vm.irouke@unizik.edu.ng

Abstract

This study examines the influence of socio-cultural characteristics on residential satisfaction in private housing in Enugu Urban, Nigeria, using a sample of 422 household respondents selected through stratified and systematic sampling techniques. Despite increasing attention to housing satisfaction in urban Nigeria, limited empirical evidence exists on how socio-cultural factors shape residential satisfaction in privately developed housing environments. (Mridha, 2023; Mohit & Azim, 2022) A mixed-methods design was adopted. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis, while qualitative data were examined thematically to support and contextualize statistical findings. Results reveal a statistically significant relationship between socio-cultural characteristics and residential satisfaction ($p < 0.001$). However, the explanatory power of the model was modest, with socio-cultural variables accounting for between 4.4% and 9.8% of the variance in residential satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.044-0.098$). Key predictors include family lifestyle, social interaction patterns, community participation, and domestic spatial use. Qualitative findings further indicate widespread post-occupancy modifications, including spatial extensions and functional reconfiguration of dwellings, reflecting residents' adaptive responses to socio-cultural needs. The study concludes that residential satisfaction in private housing is significantly shaped by the degree of alignment between housing design and socio-cultural expectations. It recommends user-centred and participatory housing design approaches that integrate socio-cultural realities into residential planning in rapidly urbanising Nigerian cities.

Keywords: residential satisfaction; socio-cultural characteristics; private housing; post-occupancy adaptation;

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Housing is widely recognized as a fundamental human need and a key determinant of quality of life, social well-being, and urban sustainability. Beyond its function as physical shelter, housing provides a setting for social interaction, identity formation, cultural expression, and psychological well-being (Mridha, 2023). Contemporary housing discourse therefore extends beyond physical adequacy to include affordability, safety, accessibility, habitability, and cultural appropriateness as core dimensions of adequate housing (UN-Habitat, 2024; Adegun & Adedeji, 2023). Recent studies have also explored biophilic design and housing satisfaction in Nigerian cities (Irouke et al., 2026).

Globally, housing inadequacy remains a persistent urban challenge, particularly in rapidly growing cities of the Global South. Increasing urban populations have intensified pressure on housing systems, resulting in overcrowding, informal settlements, infrastructure deficits, and declining housing quality (UN-Habitat, 2024). In many contexts, households respond to these constraints through spatial adaptation, informal extensions, and modifications that reflect attempts to align available housing with evolving socio-economic and socio-cultural needs (Ibem & Aduwo, 202; Chukwuma-Uchegbu & Aliero, 2022)

Over time, housing research has shifted from a predominantly physical and technical orientation toward a more human-centred perspective. Early studies focused largely on structural quality, affordability, and building performance. However, contemporary scholarship increasingly recognizes that housing outcomes are shaped not only by physical attributes but also by users' subjective experiences, expectations, and socio-cultural contexts (Palm, 2007; Ibem et al., 2019; Mridha, 2023). Within this perspective, residential satisfaction has emerged as a key indicator of housing performance, reflecting the degree to which housing environments meet the needs, expectations, and lived experiences of occupants (Mohit & Azim, 2022).

Residential satisfaction is therefore a multidimensional construct influenced by dwelling characteristics, environmental quality, neighbourhood conditions, and socio-cultural compatibility. Among these, socio-cultural characteristics—including household structure, family size, religious practices, lifestyle patterns, privacy expectations, and social interaction norms—play a critical role in shaping how residents perceive and evaluate their housing environments (Makinde, 2015; Jiboye, 2019). This is because housing is not only a physical space but also a social and cultural system within which everyday life is organized and experienced.

Scholarly contributions have consistently highlighted the importance of socio-cultural dimensions in housing evaluation. Rapoport (1977) emphasized that housing forms are deeply rooted in cultural values and social organization, while Lawrence (1987) argued that residential environments derive meaning from behavioural and cultural practices. More recent studies confirm that socio-cultural factors influence spatial usage, privacy requirements, household interactions, and adaptation behaviour in residential environments, particularly in developing countries (Ibem et al., 2019; Aigbavboa & Thwala, 2021). Where housing design fails to reflect these socio-cultural realities, residents often express dissatisfaction or modify their dwellings to better suit their lifestyles (Makinde, 2015; Jiboye, 2019).

In Nigeria, housing provision is challenged by rapid urbanization, population growth, infrastructural deficits, and affordability constraints (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2023). Although significant research has examined public housing schemes, affordability issues, and physical housing conditions, relatively limited attention has been given to socio-cultural determinants of residential satisfaction, particularly within private housing developments. This is notable because private housing now constitutes a dominant form of housing delivery in Nigerian urban centres, yet it is often driven by economic and market considerations with limited integration of socio-cultural and user-centred design principles (Ibem & Aduwo, 2021; Aigbavboa & Thwala, 2021; Okereke & Anierobi, 2025).

In Enugu Urban, observable patterns of post-occupancy modifications—including spatial extensions, conversion of residential spaces, and informal structural adjustments—suggest potential mismatches between housing design and residents' socio-cultural needs. These modifications often reflect attempts by occupants to resolve inadequacies related to household composition, privacy expectations, social interaction requirements, and evolving domestic lifestyles (Odum, 2015). Despite these observable trends, empirical evidence on how socio-cultural characteristics influence residential satisfaction in private housing within Enugu Urban remains limited.

Research Gap

Three key gaps are evident in existing literature. First, most housing satisfaction studies in Nigeria have focused on public housing estates and government-driven housing schemes, with limited attention to privately developed housing, despite its dominance in urban residential provision. Second, existing studies have largely emphasized physical, environmental, and economic determinants of housing satisfaction, while underexploring socio-cultural variables such as family structure, lifestyle practices, and social interaction patterns that significantly

influence residential experiences. Third, there is a contextual gap in Enugu Urban, where empirical studies examining the relationship between socio-cultural characteristics and residential satisfaction in private housing are scarce.

Problem Statement

The persistence of post-occupancy modifications, spatial adjustments, and informal adaptations in private housing developments in Enugu Urban raises concerns about the extent to which current housing designs align with residents' socio-cultural realities. While housing projects continue to expand in the city, there is limited empirical understanding of whether these developments adequately reflect the cultural, social, and behavioural needs of occupants. This lack of evidence limits architects', planners', and policymakers' ability to design housing responsive to users' socio-cultural contexts, potentially contributing to reduced residential satisfaction and inefficient housing outcomes.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

Against this background, this study examines the influence of socio-cultural characteristics on residential satisfaction in private housing in Enugu Urban, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the socio-cultural characteristics of residents in private housing in Enugu Urban.
2. Assess residents' level of residential satisfaction.
3. Determine the influence of socio-cultural characteristics on residential satisfaction in private housing in Enugu Urban

2. Literature Review

2.1 Housing Satisfaction Concept

Housing satisfaction is a widely adopted indicator for evaluating residential quality because it reflects the extent to which housing environments meet occupants' needs, expectations, and lived experiences (Mohit & Azim, 2022). It is not merely a measure of physical adequacy but a multidimensional construct that integrates physical, environmental, social, and psychological dimensions of housing. (Mridha, 2023; Akindele et al., 2025) Housing satisfaction is increasingly linked to environmental psychology and design responsiveness (Irouke et al., 2026; Chukwu et al., 2026).

Early conceptualisations of housing satisfaction focused primarily on objective dwelling attributes such as room size, structural quality, ventilation, sanitation, and access to basic services (Galster, 1985). This approach assumed that housing satisfaction could be determined largely through measurable physical standards. However, subsequent research challenged this view by demonstrating that identical housing conditions can produce different satisfaction outcomes depending on residents' expectations, socio-cultural background, and household characteristics (Ibem et al., 2019).

Contemporary scholarship, therefore, conceptualises housing satisfaction as a cognitive comparison between expected and actual housing conditions, shaped by both objective housing performance and subjective interpretation. It is now widely accepted that housing satisfaction is closely linked to quality of life because residential environments influence privacy, emotional well-being, social interaction, and family functioning (Jiboye, 2019; Mohit & Azim, 2022; Ezeanah, 2022). In rapidly urbanising contexts, satisfaction is increasingly determined by how well housing accommodates changing household needs and adaptive living patterns.

2.2 Socio-Cultural Determinants of Housing Satisfaction

Housing is inherently a socio-cultural construct because it functions not only as shelter but also as a space for identity formation, family interaction, and cultural expression (Mridha, 2023). Socio-cultural determinants of housing satisfaction, therefore, refer to the social and cultural attributes that shape how residents use, interpret, and evaluate their residential environments.

These determinants include family structure, household size, lifestyle patterns, religious practices, privacy expectations, ethnicity, and social interaction norms (Makinde, 2015). Together, they define how space is organised and experienced within the home and its surrounding environment.

Theoretical perspectives emphasise that housing forms and meanings are deeply rooted in cultural values and behavioural practices rather than purely physical or technical considerations. From this standpoint, residential satisfaction depends on the compatibility between housing design and socio-cultural expectations of occupants. Where such compatibility is weak, dissatisfaction tends to emerge.

In developing countries such as Nigeria, socio-cultural expectations strongly influence post-occupancy behaviour. Housing units are frequently modified through spatial extensions, reconfiguration of internal layouts, and conversion of spaces to better align with household practices (Chukwuma-Uchegbu & Aliero, 2022). These adaptations are typically responses to mismatches between standardised housing designs and culturally embedded living arrangements, such as extended-family systems, hospitality practices, and communal lifestyles.

Consequently, socio-cultural alignment is increasingly recognised as a central determinant of residential satisfaction, shaping both perception and actual use of housing environments.

2.3 Empirical Synthesis and Research Gap

Empirical studies on housing satisfaction reveal divergent findings regarding its determinants. One strand of research emphasises physical and environmental factors, identifying dwelling quality, infrastructure provision, neighbourhood safety, and environmental conditions as primary predictors of residential satisfaction (Mohit & Azim, 2022; Ibem et al., 2019). These studies suggest that improvements in physical housing conditions significantly enhance satisfaction levels.

However, an alternative body of literature demonstrates that socio-cultural and behavioural factors may be equally or more important in explaining residential satisfaction. Studies have shown that lifestyle compatibility, household interaction patterns, and social cohesion within neighbourhoods significantly influence how residents evaluate their housing environments (Makinde, 2015; Jiboye, 2019). These findings indicate that housing quality alone is insufficient to fully explain satisfaction outcomes, as cultural expectations and social relations mediate residents' experiences.

Despite these contributions, existing empirical studies remain heavily focused on public housing schemes, low-income estates, and neighbourhood environmental assessments. Private housing developments—now a dominant form of residential provision in Nigerian cities—have received comparatively limited scholarly attention (Ugochukwu et al., 2025). This is particularly significant because private housing is often shaped by market-driven design decisions that may not adequately incorporate socio-cultural requirements of end users.

Furthermore, in the Nigerian context, while studies acknowledge post-occupancy modifications as indicators of housing mismatch, few have systematically examined how socio-cultural characteristics directly influence residential satisfaction in private housing environments. In Enugu Urban specifically, empirical evidence remains limited despite observable patterns of spatial adaptation and residential modification among occupants.

This gap highlights the need for a more integrated understanding of residential satisfaction that accounts for both physical housing conditions and socio-cultural dynamics. This study therefore addresses this gap by examining the influence of socio-cultural characteristics on residential satisfaction in private housing in Enugu Urban, Nigeria.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Conceptual Theoretical Orientation

This study adopts an integrated theoretical framework combining the Housing Adjustment Theory (Morris & Winter, 1978) and the Residential Satisfaction Construct Theory (Galster, 1985). The integration provides a comprehensive explanation of how socio-cultural characteristics influence residential satisfaction through the interaction between normative housing expectations, cognitive evaluation processes, and adaptive behavioural responses.

Within this framework, housing satisfaction is conceptualised as an outcome of the alignment between socio-cultural norms embedded in household structures and the perceived performance of the residential environment.

3.2 Housing Adjustment Theory

The Housing Adjustment Theory posits that housing satisfaction is determined by the degree of fit between housing conditions and socially or culturally defined household norms. These norms include expectations related to household size, spatial organisation, privacy needs, and functional adequacy.

When a mismatch occurs between housing conditions and these norms, a housing deficit arises, leading to dissatisfaction. Households may respond through behavioural adjustment, physical modification of dwellings, or residential relocation.

In this study, socio-cultural characteristics such as family structure, lifestyle patterns, and domestic practices represent the normative standards against which housing is evaluated.

3.3 Residential Satisfaction Construct Theory

The Residential Satisfaction Construct Theory conceptualises residential satisfaction as a cognitive evaluation formed through comparison between actual housing conditions and an internal reference standard developed from experience, expectations, and socio-cultural background.

Satisfaction occurs when perceived housing conditions meet or exceed this reference standard, while dissatisfaction arises when there is a perceived gap between expectation and reality. Importantly, this evaluation is subjective, meaning that individuals with different socio-cultural backgrounds may assess identical housing conditions differently.

Within this study, the theory explains how residents in Enugu Urban form satisfaction judgments based on their socio-cultural expectations regarding domestic living arrangements, privacy, and social interaction.

3.4 Theoretical Integration and Analytical Framework

The integration of both theories provides a structured explanation of the housing satisfaction process.

The Housing Adjustment Theory explains the origin of mismatch between housing design and household expectations, while the Residential Satisfaction Construct Theory explains the cognitive process through which this mismatch is evaluated.

In this integrated model, socio-cultural characteristics function as the independent variable, shaping household norms and expectations regarding housing adequacy. These expectations are then compared with perceived housing conditions through a cognitive-environmental evaluation process, which serves as a mediating mechanism. The outcome of this evaluation is residential satisfaction, expressed through levels of contentment or dissatisfaction with housing conditions.

Where discrepancies exist between socio-cultural expectations and housing provision, residents may either experience reduced satisfaction or engage in adaptive responses such as spatial modification or behavioural adjustment. This demonstrates that residential satisfaction

is both perceptual and behavioural in nature.

3.5 Conceptual Model of the Study

The conceptual model is structured as a sequential relationship linking socio-cultural characteristics to residential satisfaction through cognitive evaluation processes.

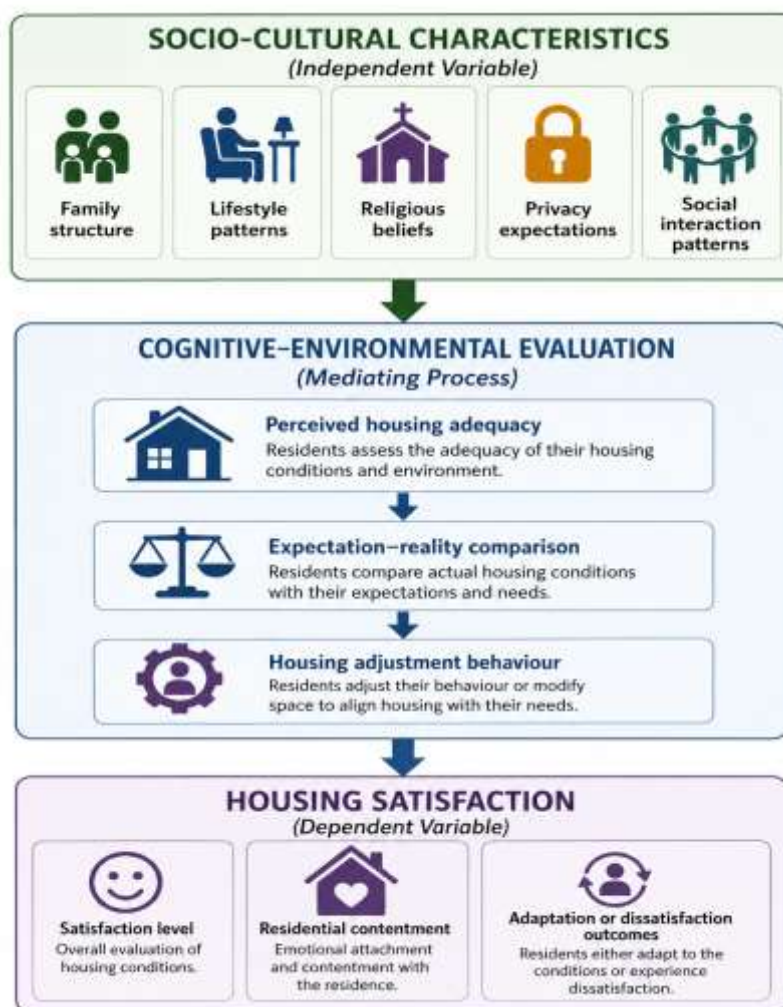
At the first level, socio-cultural characteristics—such as family structure, lifestyle patterns, religious practices, privacy expectations, and social interaction norms—constitute the independent variable. These factors define how individuals interpret and use residential space. At the second level, these characteristics influence cognitive-environmental evaluation, where residents compare expected housing conditions with actual residential experiences. This stage captures perception, interpretation, and assessment of housing adequacy.

At the final level, the outcome of this process is residential satisfaction, which reflects the degree of alignment between housing conditions and socio-cultural expectations. This is expressed through satisfaction levels and adaptive behavioural responses such as modification or dissatisfaction.

3.6 Hypothesis of the Study

Based on the theoretical framework, the study is guided by the following hypothesis:

H1: Socio-cultural characteristics significantly influence residential satisfaction in private housing in Enugu Urban, Nigeria.



3.7 Implication of the Theoretical Framework

The integrated framework suggests that residential satisfaction is not determined solely by physical housing attributes but by the interaction between socio-cultural expectations and cognitive evaluation processes. This implies that housing design in Enugu Urban must incorporate socio-cultural diversity and household behavioural patterns to achieve higher levels of residential satisfaction and reduce post-occupancy dissatisfaction.

4.0 Methods

4.1 Research Design

This study adopted a convergent parallel mixed-methods research design integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the influence of socio-cultural characteristics on residential satisfaction in private housing in Enugu Urban, Nigeria. This design enables simultaneous collection and separate analysis of both datasets, allowing for triangulation and a more comprehensive interpretation of housing satisfaction dynamics. (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2023)

The quantitative component examined statistical relationships among socio-cultural characteristics, cognitive-environmental evaluation, and residential satisfaction, while the qualitative component provided contextual explanations of residents' lived housing experiences.

4.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in Enugu Urban, Enugu State, Nigeria, which comprises three major Local Government Areas (LGAs): Enugu North, Enugu South, and Enugu East. The area is characterised by heterogeneous residential neighbourhoods with varying housing densities, including low-, medium-, and high-density zones.

These neighbourhoods exhibit diverse housing typologies, socio-economic conditions, and cultural compositions, making the study area suitable for analysing variations in residential satisfaction within private housing developments.

4.3 Population of the Study

The population comprised adult residents (18 years and above), specifically household heads and adult household members occupying private residential housing units across selected neighbourhoods in Enugu Urban. These respondents were considered appropriate because they directly experience and evaluate housing conditions.

4.4 Sample Size and Response Rate

The sample size for the quantitative survey was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling formula for finite populations, yielding a minimum sample size of 384 respondents.

To account for non-response, 422 questionnaires were distributed. Out of these, 402 were retrieved, and 388 were found valid for analysis, representing a response rate of 95.3%.

For the qualitative component, sample size was determined using data saturation, achieved when no new themes emerged from additional interviews.

4.5 Sampling Procedure

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to ensure representativeness across different residential contexts.

First, Enugu Urban was stratified into low-, medium-, and high-density residential areas to capture variation in housing form and socio-economic characteristics. Second, specific neighbourhoods were purposively selected within each stratum based on diversity of housing

types and socio-cultural composition.

Third, systematic random sampling was used to select residential buildings at fixed intervals within selected neighbourhoods. Finally, one adult respondent was selected per household using simple random sampling (balloting method).

For the qualitative strand, purposive sampling was used to select participants with relevant lived experience of housing conditions and residential adaptation behaviours.

4.6 Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide.

The questionnaire consisted of four sections:

1. Socio-cultural characteristics (family structure, lifestyle, religion, privacy expectations, social interaction patterns)
2. Cognitive-environmental evaluation (expectation–reality comparison and perceived housing adequacy)
3. Residential satisfaction (contentment, satisfaction level, and adaptation response)
4. Demographic characteristics

All items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

The interview guide explored lived experiences of housing and how socio-cultural factors influence residential evaluation and adaptation.

4.7 Validity and Reliability

Content validity was established through expert review by three specialists in housing and environmental psychology, ensuring clarity, relevance, and alignment with study constructs.

Face validity was confirmed through pilot testing to ensure clarity and comprehensibility of questionnaire items.

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding:

1. Socio-cultural characteristics: $\alpha = 0.82$
2. Cognitive-environmental evaluation: $\alpha = 0.80$
3. Residential satisfaction: $\alpha = 0.86$
4. Overall reliability: $\alpha = 0.84$

These values exceed the 0.70 threshold, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

4.8 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through field-administered questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. Participants were informed of the study purpose and provided informed consent prior to participation.

Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was strictly maintained. Completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately where possible, while interviews were audio-recorded (with consent) and transcribed verbatim.

4.9 Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 27.

Three stages of analysis were conducted:

1. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviation) to describe respondents and key variables.
2. Inferential statistics, including Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis, to determine relationships and predictive effects among variables.
3. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was conducted to validate the construct structure and ensure measurement adequacy before

regression analysis. PCA was therefore used as a pre-regression construct validation technique to confirm dimensionality and reduce measurement redundancy. (Hair et al., 2022)

Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis involving transcription, coding, categorisation, and theme development.

Finally, quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated through triangulation to enhance interpretation and validity of results.

4.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional ethics committee prior to data collection. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and participation was voluntary.

Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by removing identifying information, and all data were used strictly for academic purposes in accordance with research ethics standards.

5.0 Results and Discussion

5.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of respondents. The majority were male (74.2%), while females constituted 25.8%. Most respondents were within the active working-age group, with 83.6% below 50 years. In terms of marital status, 67.4% were married, 27.6% single, and 5.0% separated/divorced/widowed.

Regarding housing tenure, 75.8% were tenants, while 14.3% were owner-occupiers. Most respondents (59.4%) had lived in their residences for 1–5 years, indicating moderate residential mobility within the study area.

Overall, the demographic distribution suggests that responses largely reflect economically active urban residents who are primary users of private housing in Enugu Urban.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	285	74.2
	Female	99	25.8
Age	20–30	85	22.1
	31–40	97	25.3
	41–50	139	36.2
	51–60	53	13.8
	≥60	10	2.6
Marital Status	Married	259	67.4
	Single	106	27.6
	Others	19	5.0
Residency Status	Rent paying	291	75.8
	Owner-occupied	55	14.3
	Others	38	9.9
Length of Stay	1–5 years	228	59.4
	Others	156	40.6

Source: Author's fieldwork (2022)

5.2 Socioeconomic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2 shows that 80.5% of respondents had tertiary education, indicating a highly literate sample. Civil servants constituted the largest occupational group (47.4%), followed by traders/business owners (30.5%).

Income distribution shows that 76.4% earned above ₦240,000 annually, indicating a predominantly low-to-middle income urban population.

Household structure shows that 35.2% lived in households of 3–5 persons, while 28.6% had 6–7 persons, reflecting moderate household sizes typical of urban Nigeria. Most respondents (64.6%) lived with immediate family members.

These findings indicate that housing consumption in the study area is shaped largely by nuclear-family-dominant but moderately extended household arrangements.

Table 2: Socioeconomic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Education	Tertiary	309	80.5
	Secondary	69	18.0
	Others	6	1.6
Occupation	Civil servant	182	47.4
	Business/trader	117	30.5
	Artisan	39	10.2
	Others	46	11.9
Income	Above ₦240,000	293	76.4
	Below ₦240,000	91	23.6
Household size	3–5 persons	135	35.2
	6–7 persons	110	28.6
	Others	139	36.2
Relationship	Immediate family	248	64.6
	Others	136	35.4

Source: Author's fieldwork (2022)

5.3 Socio-Cultural Characteristics of Respondents

Results in Table 3 indicate generally low frequency of active socio-cultural engagement within residential spaces. A large proportion of respondents reported “rarely” or “sometimes” engaging in activities such as hosting social gatherings, outdoor family recreation, receiving overnight guests, and participating in neighbourhood activities.

This pattern suggests a shift toward privatized domestic lifestyles, possibly influenced by spatial constraints, security concerns, and changing urban behavioural norms.

Rather than indicating low cultural value, these patterns likely reflect environmental limitations on social and communal housing functions.

Table 3: Socio-Cultural Characteristics of Respondents

Activity	Very often/Often (%)	Sometimes (%)	Rarely/Never (%)
Hosting social gatherings	10.2	43.2	46.7
Outdoor family activities	11.0	44.5	44.6
Community participation	7.5	39.3	53.1
Overnight guests	8.1	44.0	47.9
Recreational neighbourhood activities	9.9	54.9	35.1

Source: Author's fieldwork (2022)

5.4 Effect of Socio-Cultural Characteristics on Housing Satisfaction

Regression results (Table 4) indicate a statistically significant relationship between socio-cultural characteristics and housing satisfaction ($p < 0.001$ across all variables). This confirms that socio-cultural factors are meaningful predictors of residential satisfaction in

private housing contexts.

The explanatory power of the model is, however, modest, with R^2 values ranging from 0.044 to 0.098. This indicates that socio-cultural variables explain approximately 4.4%–9.8% of variation in housing satisfaction, suggesting that other factors (physical housing quality, infrastructure, and economic conditions) also play significant roles.

Table 4: Regression Results of Socio-Cultural Characteristics and Housing Satisfaction

Variable	R	R ²	B	Sig.
Social gatherings at home	0.313	0.098	-0.231	<0.001
Outdoor family activities	0.304	0.092	-0.228	<0.001
Community participation	0.287	0.082	-0.221	<0.001
Overnight guests	0.211	0.044	-0.188	<0.001
Neighbourhood recreation	0.214	0.046	-0.199	<0.001

Source: Author's fieldwork (2022)

Important interpretation clarification

All regression coefficients are negative. This should not be interpreted as socio-cultural activities reducing satisfaction. Rather, it reflects a mismatch effect, where reduced ability to engage in socio-cultural practices is associated with lower housing adequacy perception. In practical terms, this suggests that housing units may not adequately support social gatherings, outdoor family interaction, and communal/neighbourhood engagement. Thus, the negative coefficients indicate functional inadequacy of housing spaces for socio-cultural expression, not behavioural causation.

5.5 Strength of Key Predictors

Among all variables, hosting social gatherings ($R = 0.313$) and outdoor family activities ($R = 0.304$) showed the strongest associations with housing satisfaction.

This indicates that domestic social space functionality, flexibility of internal layout, and availability of semi-private/communal space are more critical to residential satisfaction than externally oriented activities. These findings align with the view that housing satisfaction is strongly influenced by the usability of domestic space rather than physical shelter alone.

5.6 Construct Validity Consideration

Prior to regression analysis, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was conducted to validate the underlying structure of socio-cultural and housing satisfaction constructs. This ensured that measurement items loaded appropriately under their respective dimensions and confirmed construct validity before hypothesis testing. This step strengthens the reliability of the regression model and ensures that observed relationships are based on statistically validated constructs.

5.7 Field Observations

Field observations revealed widespread post-occupancy modifications in older housing layouts such as Artisan Quarters, Coal Camp, and Uwani. These include room extensions, use of temporary building materials, and conversion of open spaces into functional rooms. In newer estates such as New Haven, balconies and semi-open spaces are frequently converted into storage or utility areas, suggesting inadequacy of spatial provisions for evolving household needs. These modifications indicate a persistent gap between original housing design assumptions and actual socio-cultural living patterns.

5.8 Discussion of Findings

The findings confirm that housing satisfaction in Enugu Urban is significantly influenced by

socio-cultural characteristics, although their explanatory strength is moderate. The study demonstrates that housing dissatisfaction is not solely a function of poor physical design but also results from the limited accommodation of socio-cultural practices within residential layouts. The observed mismatch between housing design and lived social practices is consistent with housing adjustment theory, which predicts adaptation when residential environments fail to meet household norms. Similarly, residential satisfaction construct theory explains the subjective interpretation of housing adequacy, where satisfaction is shaped by comparison between expectations and actual housing experience.

The prevalence of post-occupancy modifications further reinforces the argument that residents actively adjust their environment to restore socio-cultural functionality.

5.9 Summary of Key Empirical Insight

Overall, the study shows that socio-cultural variables are statistically significant predictors; the effect size is modest but meaningful; housing satisfaction is multi-dimensional; spatial design limitations influence social behaviour; and post-occupancy adaptation is a key coping mechanism.

5.10 Discussion of Findings

The relationship between socio-cultural characteristics and housing satisfaction in this study reflects a consistent pattern in housing literature that emphasizes the interaction between cultural practices and residential space usability. The observed significant but modest explanatory power of socio-cultural variables suggests that housing satisfaction in Enugu Urban is shaped by multiple interacting determinants rather than a single dominant factor. (Mridha, 2023; Akindele et al., 2025; Irouke & Ivoke, 2025).

The relatively weak R^2 values align with studies such as Mohit and Azim (2022) and Ibem et al. (2019), which argue that housing satisfaction is inherently multidimensional, combining physical, environmental, economic, and socio-cultural components. In this regard, socio-cultural characteristics function more as moderating lived experience variables rather than standalone predictors of satisfaction.

The negative coefficients observed in the regression model are better understood through Housing Adjustment Theory, which posits that dissatisfaction emerges when there is a mismatch between residential design and household norms (Chukwuma-Uchegbu & Aliero, 2022). In this context, reduced engagement in social and domestic activities reflects constrained spatial capacity rather than diminished cultural value.

Similarly, Galster's Residential Satisfaction Construct Theory provides a useful explanation for the subjective nature of the findings. Residents evaluate housing based on internalized expectations shaped by cultural background and household structure. Where housing environments fail to support these expectations, satisfaction declines regardless of acceptable physical housing conditions.

Comparatively, the findings reinforce Makinde (2015) and Jiboye (2019), who reported that socio-cultural compatibility strongly influences residential satisfaction in Nigerian urban housing contexts. However, unlike studies that identify socio-cultural factors as dominant predictors, this study shows a more balanced outcome where socio-cultural variables are significant but not exclusive determinants of satisfaction. This difference may be attributed to the increasing influence of economic constraints and housing market dynamics in private housing developments.

The prevalence of post-occupancy modifications further supports the argument that residents actively negotiate spatial limitations through behavioural and physical adaptation. (Ugochukwu et al., 2025; Okereke & Anierobi, 2025). This aligns with Odum (2015), who

observed similar adaptive strategies in Enugu housing environments, reinforcing the idea that housing satisfaction is continuously constructed through interaction between users and space. Overall, the findings suggest that housing satisfaction emerges from a dynamic equilibrium between cultural expectations, spatial adequacy, and environmental constraints, rather than from any single explanatory domain.

6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study concludes that socio-cultural characteristics significantly influence housing satisfaction in private residential housing in Enugu Urban, though their explanatory power is moderate within a broader multidimensional framework of housing evaluation.

Housing satisfaction is therefore not determined solely by physical housing attributes but by the extent to which residential environments align with household socio-cultural expectations and lived domestic practices. Where misalignment occurs, residents experience reduced satisfaction and tend to engage in adaptive modifications of their living environments. The study establishes that socio-cultural factors remain essential, but not exclusive, determinants of residential satisfaction in private housing contexts.

The study recommends that housing design should adopt a more participatory and user-centred approach that takes into account the socio-cultural realities of occupants. Architects and planners are encouraged to incorporate flexible spatial configurations that can respond to changing family structures and evolving lifestyle patterns over time. Future residential developments should also prioritize adaptability, ensuring that housing units are capable of supporting informal social and cultural practices that typically emerge after occupation. Furthermore, post-occupancy evaluation should be formally institutionalized within housing policy frameworks as a mechanism for continuous feedback and improvement in residential design. Finally, designers are advised to anticipate ongoing technological advancement and shifts in domestic lifestyles by ensuring that residential spaces are sufficiently adaptable to accommodate modern equipment, services, and changing household needs.

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