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Determinants of Residential Satisfaction: A Study of Housing Quality, Neighbourhood Features, and Socioeconomic Factors

Akindele Abosede O.; Arayela Olatunde; Adegbile Micheal B. O.; & Ajayi Oluwatoyin O.

Department of Architecture, College of Environmental Science and Management, Caleb University, Imota, Ikorodu, Lagos, Nigeria

Corresponding Author: toyin.ajayi@calebuniversity.edu.ng

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Abstract

This literature review draws particular insights from Sub-Saharan Africa, especially Nigeria, to highlight context-specific determinants and critically examines the determinants of residential satisfaction, with a particular focus on housing quality, neighbourhood features, and socioeconomic factors. Drawing upon fifteen peer-reviewed studies published between 2021 and 2025, the paper identifies key patterns in user satisfaction across diverse geographic and socio-economic contexts. The findings highlight that residential satisfaction is multidimensional, shaped not only by physical dwelling attributes such as structural integrity and spatial comfort but also by broader neighbourhood characteristics including access to amenities, environmental quality, and safety. Socioeconomic variables such as income, educational level, and tenure status emerged as influential in mediating satisfaction, often amplifying inequalities in housing outcomes. The study applies relevant theoretical models Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE), and the Actual–Aspiration Gap Theory to interpret the empirical evidence and synthesise cross-regional insights. The review contributes to the housing discourse by offering an integrated thematic and methodological analysis, while also providing practical and policy-oriented recommendations for more inclusive and responsive housing development strategies.

Keywords: Residential Satisfaction, Housing Quality, Neighbourhood Features, Socioeconomic Factors, Post-Occupancy Evaluation

Introduction

Background to the Study

Residential satisfaction is a multidimensional concept that reflects how individuals perceive and evaluate their housing and surrounding environment. It is influenced by both objective factors such as housing quality, infrastructure, neighbourhood facilities and subjective perceptions shaped by personal experiences and socio-demographic characteristics. As urbanisation intensifies globally, housing conditions and liveability have become central to urban research, especially in assessing policy effectiveness and planning outcomes (Celik, Kara, & Topal, 2021).

Contemporary studies underscore that residential satisfaction is not merely a product of physical housing attributes, but is also deeply affected by neighbourhood safety, accessibility to services, environmental quality, and social cohesion (Murayama & Kim, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic has further accentuated the need for healthy, resilient housing environments, with emerging research revealing new patterns in housing preference and satisfaction influenced by indoor space quality and public health concerns (Lopez-Morales, Delgado, & Mejía-Dorantes, 2024). Furthermore, disparities in socioeconomic status often intersect with spatial inequalities, resulting in varying satisfaction levels across urban populations (Ndhlovu & Makoni, 2021). Understanding these complex interrelations is essential for developing inclusive housing strategies.

Research Problem and Rationale

Despite a growing body of literature on residential satisfaction, many recent studies tend to examine isolated factors, such as either housing quality or socioeconomic status, rather than adopting an integrated perspective. There remains a lack of comprehensive synthesis that jointly explores how housing quality, neighbourhood features, and socioeconomic determinants collectively shape residential satisfaction, particularly in rapidly urbanising regions of the Global South.

Additionally, while various methodological approaches have been employed, there is still insufficient alignment on how to measure and compare satisfaction across diverse contexts. Some studies rely on subjective surveys with limited indicators, while others apply post-occupancy evaluation (POE) frameworks or spatial analysis tools. This fragmentation in methodology hampers the development of transferable policies and comparative frameworks (Rahimian, Shafiei, & Gohari, 2023). Therefore, a systematic review of recent literature that examines the intersection of these three broad determinants is necessary to identify

trends, knowledge gaps, and policy implications.

Aim & Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to critically review and synthesise recent peer-reviewed literature (2021–2025) to identify the core determinants of residential satisfaction, with particular emphasis on housing quality, neighbourhood features, and socioeconomic factors.

Objectives:

i. To identify the aspects of housing quality that most significantly affect residential satisfaction in recent studies.
ii. To examine the role of neighbourhood features such as accessibility, safety, and environmental conditions in shaping perceived satisfaction.
iii. To analyse the influence of socioeconomic variables (e.g., income, tenure status, education) on residents' satisfaction.
iv. To evaluate the methodological and theoretical approaches employed in recent studies on residential satisfaction.

Research Questions

i. What physical and design-related housing features are most frequently linked to satisfaction?
ii. How do neighbourhood characteristics influence the residential experience?
iii. What socioeconomic attributes explain variation in satisfaction among different resident groups?
iv. What are the dominant methods and theoretical models used in the recent literature?

Scope and Delimitation

This study is delimited to peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2021 and 2025. It focuses on residential satisfaction within urban contexts, excluding rural or informal settlements unless specifically addressed within urban systems. Only studies that address one or more of the three thematic areas housing quality, neighbourhood features, and socioeconomic factors are included. The review does not consider grey literature, unpublished theses, or articles outside the peer-review framework. Additionally, while examples are drawn globally, particular emphasis is placed on studies conducted in developing countries, reflecting the practical and policy relevance for regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Residential Satisfaction

Residential satisfaction refers to residents' overall evaluation of their dwelling and its surroundings, reflecting both physical attributes and subjective perceptions. It serves as a key indicator of housing adequacy and liveability. Scholars like Celik et al. (2021) link satisfaction to measurable indoor conditions ventilation, thermal comfort, and spatial adequacy using structural equation modeling. On the neighbourhood front, Murayama and Kim (2022) highlight how accessible community amenities, public spaces, and social infrastructure contribute to residents' sense of contentment. Socio-economic variations also influence satisfaction; for instance, Ndhlovu and Makoni (2021) found significant disparities in satisfaction among African urban dwellers based on income and education. These perspectives collectively suggest that while physical comfort forms the baseline for satisfaction, neighbourhood and socio-demographic dynamics often amplify or moderate that experience. Notably, Celik et al.'s quantitative modeling is complemented by the context-specific insights from Ndhlovu and Makoni's African case study, underscoring how local context enriches broader theoretical models. Thus, residential satisfaction emerges as a multidimensional construct shaped by housing, environment, and personal circumstances.

Theoretical Framework

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs offers a foundational framework for understanding residential satisfaction, postulating that basic physiological and safety needs must be met before higher-order needs (belongingness, esteem, self-actualization) become relevant (Kamata & Kawakubo, 2024). Recent housing studies have adapted this framework, suggesting that secure, healthy living conditions and functional spaces (physiological/safety needs) are prerequisites for neighbourhood satisfaction (Murayama & Kim, 2022). Higher-level needs social belonging, esteem are addressed through community cohesion, aesthetics, and personal control over living environments (Celik et al., 2021). The convergence of these studies shows how Maslow's theory remains relevant, yet must be nuanced across contexts. While Celik et al. focus on personal agency and control, Murayama and Kim emphasize collective social experience. This suggests that both individual and communal satisfaction pathways must be acknowledged in housing research.

Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) Theory

POE is a methodological and theoretical approach that systematically assesses buildings after occupancy. It evaluates how the actual lived experience aligns with original design intentions and planned performance targets. A systematic review of residential POE

studies underlines the importance of user-centric feedback in improving building performance, thermal comfort, and overall satisfaction (Baharetha et al., 2025). However, current POE applications often lack methodological consistency across different contexts (Rahimian et al., 2023). While Baharetha et al. advocate for POE as a feedback mechanism, Rahimian et al. expose its limitations in standardization, especially across the Global South. This contrast indicates that while POE is widely endorsed, its operationalization needs context-sensitive refinement to ensure universal applicability.

Actual–Aspiration Gap Theory

The "actual–aspiration gap" theory conceptualizes residential satisfaction as the difference between current housing conditions and personal expectations or aspirations. Research using this theoretical lens such as studies in historic districts of North Cyprus reveals that satisfaction decreases when residents' environmental aspirations exceed their real living conditions (Davoodi et al., 2023). This theory complements Maslow's by emphasizing subjective perceptions over objective provisions. Unlike POE, which evaluates physical outcomes, the aspiration gap model brings psychological and emotional factors into focus adding depth to understanding why residents may feel dissatisfied despite meeting technical housing standards. These findings underscore the dual importance of objective housing quality and subjective expectations in shaping satisfaction.

Determinants of Residential Satisfaction

Housing Quality and Physical Characteristics

The physical condition of the dwelling structural integrity, indoor air quality, thermal comfort directly impacts satisfaction. Celik et al. (2021) demonstrated that factors like proximity to windows, ceiling height, and thermal performance significantly predict satisfaction outcomes. Similarly, green retrofit studies for energy efficiency show that physical improvements can enhance perceived quality and comfort (Baharetha et al., 2025). These studies collectively reinforce that tangible, design-related features significantly shape satisfaction, though from different methodological lenses Celik et al.'s predictive modeling contrasts with Baharetha et al.'s applied retrofit analysis. Together, they argue for integrating design science with environmental health priorities.

Neighbourhood and Environmental Features

Neighbourhood features such as walkability, safety, green infrastructure, and social amenities play a vital role in shaping residential satisfaction. Murayama and Kim (2022) found that residents in medium-density housing were more satisfied when facilities such as parks, public spaces, and transit were accessible. Environmental stressors, including noise and pollution, negatively affect well-being, particularly in low-income developments (Rahimian et al., 2023). Interestingly, both studies emphasize accessibility and environmental quality, yet from different economic strata Murayama and Kim focus

on proactive planning, while Rahimian et al. highlight reactive challenges. This comparison underscores that neighbourhood satisfaction is shaped both by presence and absence of amenities, depending on socioeconomic context.

Socioeconomic and Demographic Variables

Income, education, tenure, household size, and age influence residents' ability to access quality housing and interpret environmental features. Ndhlovu and Makoni (2021) reported that lower-income households exhibited lower satisfaction due to inadequate housing. Studies also show that owner-occupiers report higher satisfaction levels compared to renters, partly due to perceived autonomy and control (Murayama & Kim, 2022). The alignment between these findings suggests a strong correlation between socioeconomic autonomy and residential satisfaction. Ndhlovu and Makoni offer regional insight from Africa, while Murayama and Kim present a more universal pattern. Together, they validate the argument that housing inequality is deeply embedded in broader structural inequities.

Empirical Studies and Global Perspectives

Recent empirical research spans diverse cultural and geographic contexts from low-income neighbourhoods in Africa to historic European quarters. Celik et al. (2021) used structural equation modeling in Turkey, whereas Murayama and Kim (2022) employed surveys in Japan. Environmental studies in Iran and Eastern Europe have applied the actual–aspiration gap framework (Davoodi et al., 2023). Furthermore, COVID-19 altered residents' priorities, amplifying the importance of indoor space quality and public health in satisfaction assessments (Lopez-Morales et al., 2024). These diverse studies demonstrate both convergence and divergence in satisfaction drivers. While indoor comfort and health concerns appear universally important, cultural contexts shape how satisfaction is perceived and prioritised. This reinforces the need for flexible yet theoretically grounded models of assessment. This global overview highlights both common themes (e.g., basic needs and amenity access) and regional nuances (e.g., cultural expectations and policy contexts).

Gaps in the Literature

While numerous studies target single-factor determinants, there is a notable methodological and thematic gap in integrated, cross-context analyses that encompass housing quality, neighbourhood features, and socioeconomic variables simultaneously. Further, existing POE studies lack consistency in standardized instruments and analytical frameworks (Rahimian et al., 2023). There is also limited attention to how pandemic-induced behavioural shifts interact with traditional satisfaction determinants an area ripe for longitudinal investigation (Lopez-Morales et al., 2024). Finally, middle-income

housing developments in the Global South remain underexplored compared to high-income nations. These gaps point to a broader issue the fragmentation of housing research along thematic lines. Bridging these silos will require interdisciplinary frameworks that integrate subjective experience (aspiration gaps), objective performance (POE), and socio-spatial justice. This review contributes to that effort by offering a unified analytical structure.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a systematic literature review (SLR) approach, which enables the collection, assessment, and synthesis of existing peer-reviewed research with a high level of methodological transparency and rigour. The review was designed to identify recent studies (2021–2025) that examined the determinants of residential satisfaction across three core thematic domains: housing quality, neighbourhood features, and socioeconomic factors. The SLR method is suitable for this purpose as it ensures objectivity in selecting, analysing, and comparing published findings, while also identifying research trends and knowledge gaps within the selected period.

Unlike traditional narrative reviews, the systematic approach used here applies clearly defined inclusion criteria and review protocols, enhancing replicability and reducing selection bias. The review does not involve primary data collection or empirical fieldwork but instead synthesises peer-reviewed findings from multiple geographic contexts and methodological orientations.

Criteria for Literature Selection

The inclusion criteria were strictly defined to maintain the focus and quality of the review. Studies were selected based on the following:

i. Publication type: Only peer-reviewed journal articles were included; grey literature, conference proceedings, theses, and book chapters were excluded.
ii. Time frame: Articles published between January 2021 and June 2025 were eligible.
iii. Topical relevance: Studies had to focus explicitly on residential satisfaction or its measurable correlates (e.g., housing quality, neighbourhood environment, or socioeconomic variables).
iv. Geographic scope: No geographic limitation was imposed, although studies from both the Global North and Global South were prioritised to ensure comparative depth.
v. Language: Only articles written in English were reviewed.

A total of 15 articles were selected based on these criteria. To provide contextual depth and theoretical foundation, additional foundational studies published within the same period (but not part of the core 15) were cited in the introductory and theoretical sections.

Review Process and Analytical Framework

The review process adopted a structured, multi-stage strategy. Initial literature searches were conducted using databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, MDPI, Taylor & Francis, and SpringerLink. Keyword combinations included: *"residential satisfaction," "housing quality," "neighbourhood features," "urban liveability," "socioeconomic factors," "post-occupancy evaluation,"* and *"housing policy."* This yielded over 80 potentially relevant articles published between 2021 and 2025.

Titles and abstracts were first screened for thematic relevance and methodological rigour. A total of 35 full texts were then downloaded and assessed against inclusion criteria such as empirical scope, peer-review status, recency, and relevance to residential satisfaction. Fifteen high-quality articles were ultimately retained for in-depth review.

These selected studies were subjected to thematic coding, allowing for recurring themes to emerge beyond the initial deductive categories. While the review originally focused on three broad analytical categories housing quality, neighbourhood features, and socioeconomic variables the literature revealed additional nuanced themes. These include:

i. Housing Quality (e.g., spatial layout, thermal comfort, structural maintenance)
ii. Neighbourhood Features (e.g., green space, ventilation, safety, infrastructure)
iii. Socioeconomic and Demographic Factors (e.g., income, education, tenure)
iv. Built Environment Contexts (e.g., informal settlements, post-socialist housing, donor-funded projects)
v. Health and Environmental Conditions (e.g., pandemic adaptation, ventilation)
vi. Multivariate Satisfaction Models (e.g., statistical predictors, inter-variable effects)
vii. Aspirational Gaps and Subjective Perception (e.g., mismatch between expectations and reality)

This hybrid analytical framework, combining both deductive and inductive approaches, allowed for a more context-sensitive interpretation of each study's contributions. Themes were validated through repeated coding, ensuring internal consistency and alignment with the theoretical frameworks discussed in Literature review, particularly the Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) theory and the Actual–Aspiration Gap Theory.

Limitations of the Methodology

Despite the rigour applied in the review process, certain limitations remain. First, the exclusive use of English-language sources may have excluded relevant studies published in other languages. Second, by focusing solely on peer-reviewed journal articles, this review may have omitted insights from policy reports and practitioner literature that could

offer valuable perspectives, particularly in developing regions. Third, while efforts were made to ensure geographic diversity, the uneven distribution of housing research across countries and continents could introduce regional bias.

Furthermore, this review does not conduct a meta-analysis due to methodological heterogeneity across the selected studies such as variations in survey design, sample size, and operational definitions of satisfaction. As such, the findings reflect qualitative thematic patterns rather than statistically pooled results. Nonetheless, the study offers a robust platform for identifying global trends and research gaps in residential satisfaction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following section presents a detailed review of fifteen peer-reviewed studies selected for their relevance to the determinants of residential satisfaction, with a focus on housing quality, neighbourhood features, and socioeconomic factors. Each study is summarised in two paragraphs, highlighting its objectives, methodology, key findings, and contribution to knowledge. This review aims to extract context-specific insights while drawing comparative links across geographic regions and methodological approaches. Together, these studies provide a comprehensive empirical foundation for evaluating how diverse variables influence residential satisfaction in both developed and developing urban contexts.

PAPER 1: An In-Depth Analysis of Factors Impacting Housing Satisfaction: A Systematic Review and Post-Occupancy Evaluation *(Saleem & Alchalabi, 2025).*

This article conducts a systematic review of literature and post-occupancy evaluation (POE) reports to examine factors impacting residential satisfaction across various housing contexts. The authors adopt a comprehensive qualitative synthesis approach, drawing from over 40 peer-reviewed studies globally. The review identifies key determinants of satisfaction, including thermal comfort, indoor air quality, noise insulation, spatial functionality, and maintenance standards. Importantly, it emphasizes the evolving importance of post-occupancy feedback in sustainable housing design, particularly in urban regeneration projects.

Saleem and Alchalabi's work is instrumental in consolidating the diverse factors that influence housing satisfaction while also highlighting gaps in POE application across countries. They note the inconsistency in data collection tools and terminologies, calling for more standardised POE frameworks. For your review, this paper offers a strong theoretical foundation for understanding how housing quality interfaces with satisfaction and supports the inclusion of POE as a diagnostic method within the broader housing evaluation process.

PAPER 2: Exploring Factors Affecting Residential Satisfaction in Old Neighborhoods and Sustainable Design Strategies Based on Post-Occupancy Evaluation (*Chen, Luh, Hu, & Shan, 2023)*

Chen et al. examine residential satisfaction within old urban neighbourhoods in East Asia, employing post-occupancy evaluation and user interviews to analyse satisfaction levels. Their study integrates architectural analysis with user perceptions, focusing on factors such as daylighting, spatial connectivity, and environmental comfort. The authors identify high dissatisfaction levels tied to poor ventilation, ageing infrastructure, and limited access to green areas. In response, they propose sustainable design strategies including passive cooling, adaptive reuse, and mixed-use redevelopment.

What stands out in this paper is its emphasis on retrofitting and spatial transformation as key solutions to declining satisfaction in older housing areas. The study bridges architectural practice with social data, making it particularly valuable for reviews concerned with both physical design and occupant feedback. It reinforces the importance of housing quality and environmental responsiveness as pivotal to urban satisfaction, thereby aligning closely with one of the core thematic strands of your research.

PAPER 3: Socio-Economic Determinants of Housing Satisfaction Among Middle-Income Households in Owerri, Nigeria (*Okpoechi, 2023)*

Okpoechi's study investigates how socio-economic variables affect residential satisfaction among middle-income households in Owerri, Nigeria. Using a quantitative survey of 250 households, the study examines the influence of income, educational level, household size, and home ownership status. The findings reveal that income level and ownership status are the most significant predictors of satisfaction, with higher satisfaction levels reported among owner-occupiers and those living in planned residential estates.

The study is particularly relevant for your review as it provides a clear regional perspective from Nigeria, a key area of interest. It supports the broader argument that socioeconomic status is a critical determinant of housing satisfaction, especially in the context of developing urban environments. By integrating locally grounded data with broader residential theories, Okpoechi adds weight to calls for inclusive housing policies that address socio-economic disparities.

PAPER 4: Factors Affecting Residential Satisfaction with Social Housing in Urban Areas: International Researches and Current Situation in Vietnam (*Luu, Hoang, & Le. 2024)*

This study explores residential satisfaction in social housing projects in urban Vietnam. It compares findings from existing international literature with recent local surveys conducted in Ho Chi Minh City. Key variables analysed include housing layout, affordability, proximity to services, and quality of public facilities. The authors argue that

while affordability is a strength of Vietnam's social housing programme, challenges remain in design quality and long-term sustainability.

What this paper contributes is a cross-cultural comparison, showing how findings from international literature apply or fail to apply in the Vietnamese context. It also underlines the need for integrated planning that balances cost with user comfort and community services. This is a strong addition to your review's theme on neighbourhood features and policy limitations in meeting user expectations, especially in rapidly urbanising Southeast Asian cities.

PAPER 5: The Housing Satisfaction of Polish Households and Its Determinants *(Kucharska-Stasiak, Aigbavboa & Thwala, 2022)*

Focusing on Poland, this study employs a multivariate statistical analysis to identify key factors influencing housing satisfaction among urban households. The authors analyse data from national housing surveys and highlight factors such as size of living space, heating quality, and access to basic services as major predictors. Satisfaction levels were higher among homeowners and residents in modern housing estates compared to those in post-communist housing blocks.

Kucharska-Stasiak et al. provide useful European data that enables comparative insights between developed and developing housing contexts. Their findings reinforce the argument that tenure, housing age, and infrastructural upgrades are central to user satisfaction. This study supports your review's goal of identifying converging global themes while also recognising regional and historical differences in residential satisfaction outcomes.

PAPER 6: Socioeconomic Predictors of Users' Satisfaction with Neighbourhood Facilities in Public Residential Estates in Akure, Nigeria *(Fakere & Duke-Henshaw,2024)*

This study investigates how socioeconomic attributes influence users' satisfaction with neighbourhood facilities in selected public residential estates in Akure, Nigeria. Using a structured questionnaire and statistical correlation analysis, the authors focus on predictors such as income level, educational attainment, household size, and employment status. The findings reveal that income and education significantly affect residents' perceptions of the adequacy of neighbourhood infrastructure, especially in terms of access to water, electricity, and recreational facilities.

The paper provides important regional insight into how socio-economic inequality manifests in satisfaction disparities, particularly within planned public estates. It strengthens the third leg of your review framework socioeconomic determinants by offering empirical evidence from a sub-national Nigerian context. It also underscores the inadequacy of public investment in facilities as a driver of dissatisfaction, particularly for

low-income earners, making it relevant to housing policy discussions in other emerging cities.

PAPER 7: How Does Neighbourhood Satisfaction Impact Relocation Intentions in Redeveloped Neighbourhoods in Inner-City Beijing? (*Fang, Wang & Liu, 2025)*
This article examines the relationship between neighbourhood satisfaction and relocation intentions among residents in redeveloped inner-city areas in Beijing. Using survey data and logistic regression models, the authors find that dissatisfaction with neighbourhood cohesion, green spaces, and public services is strongly associated with increased intent to relocate. Interestingly, economic incentives and improved housing structures are not enough to retain residents if community attachment and service delivery are compromised. Fang et al.'s work highlights the emotional and social dimensions of neighbourhood satisfaction, beyond just housing quality. This supports your review's second thematic pillar neighbourhood features as a crucial determinant of satisfaction and long-term residential stability. The findings have global implications, showing that poorly planned urban renewal, even with material improvements, can generate dissatisfaction and community displacement.

PAPER 8: Determinants of Residential Satisfaction: An Actual–Aspiration Gap Theory Analysis in Low-Cost Condominium Housing, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia *(Alemu, Berhanu& Sokkido 2025)*
Alemu et al. apply the actual–aspiration gap theory to examine residential satisfaction in Ethiopia's government-constructed low-cost condominiums. The study uses a mixed-method approach combining household surveys with structured interviews, analysing how residents' current experiences align with their original expectations. Results indicate that while affordability is appreciated, dissatisfaction arises from poor building maintenance, insufficient infrastructure, and unmet expectations regarding green spaces and communal areas.
This paper is a strong contribution to your review's theoretical and empirical components. It operationalises the actual–aspiration gap in a Sub-Saharan African context, demonstrating how discrepancies between perceived promises and actual living conditions reduce satisfaction. It reinforces the need to assess not only the physical quality of housing but also the aspirations and expectations of residents especially in public housing schemes.

PAPER 9: Assessing Residential Satisfaction Parameters and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Low-Income Group Public Housing in Lucknow City *(Kar & Srivastava, 2021)*
This Indian study explores how socio-economic characteristics intersect with residential satisfaction in low-income public housing. Based on data from 300 households in

Lucknow, the authors analyse satisfaction across parameters such as housing layout, water supply, ventilation, security, and maintenance services. They find that education and length of residency correlate positively with satisfaction, while poor infrastructure and overcrowding remain key sources of discontent.

Kar and Srivastava's study contributes useful comparative data from South Asia, particularly in the context of low-income urban settlements. It validates the recurring themes in your review regarding the importance of both physical housing conditions and demographic variables. Moreover, it provides insights into how incremental upgrades and tenure regularisation could improve satisfaction levels in similar urban contexts globally.

PAPER 10: Assessment of Residential Satisfaction with Internationally Funded Housing Projects in Gaza Strip, Palestine *(Sabah, 2023)*

Sabah evaluates user satisfaction in housing developments funded by international aid organisations in the conflict-affected Gaza Strip. Employing household surveys and interviews, the study identifies key dissatisfaction factors such as unreliable infrastructure, water scarcity, inadequate ventilation, and poor construction quality. Despite the humanitarian value of such projects, the author argues that limited community engagement and poor contextual adaptation often undermine user satisfaction.

This paper brings a critical humanitarian dimension to your review. It emphasizes how externally funded housing initiatives, even when well-intentioned, can result in dissatisfaction if user needs are inadequately addressed. It also reinforces the argument that satisfaction must be understood through the lens of both environmental quality and user agency, especially in fragile or post-conflict urban areas.

PAPER 11: Residential Satisfaction of Subsidized Housing Estates in Post-Reform China *(Zhang, & Li, 2024)*

Zhang and Li examine residential satisfaction in subsidised housing estates across urban China, focusing on post-reform housing policies that have shifted from state-provided units to market-oriented schemes. Using survey data from over 400 respondents and applying factor analysis, they identify key determinants such as housing layout, service delivery, security, and maintenance. The study reveals significant dissatisfaction among low-income residents, primarily due to design uniformity, lack of privacy, and inadequate maintenance services.

This research is a valuable addition to your review's housing quality and socioeconomic strands. It reveals how policy transitions from public to market-oriented housing can impact satisfaction, especially among vulnerable populations. The authors also stress that satisfaction in subsidised housing cannot be ensured by affordability alone, but requires sustained investment in design quality, infrastructure, and participatory governance.

PAPER 12: Determinants of Residential Satisfaction During the Initial Stage of COVID-19 Pandemic in China *(Luo, Chen & Wang, 2023)*

This study explores how the COVID-19 pandemic affected residential satisfaction in urban China. Conducted during the early months of the outbreak, the survey-based research identifies factors such as indoor space flexibility, access to open areas, perceived health safety, and remote work compatibility as key predictors of satisfaction. Residents in newer, well-ventilated buildings with access to nearby green spaces reported significantly higher satisfaction than those in older, dense housing blocks.

Luo et al. introduce a timely and context-sensitive dimension to your review, showing how pandemic-driven behavioural changes influenced perceptions of housing adequacy. The findings align with global observations about the rising importance of housing design and environmental health, highlighting the need to future-proof housing policy and architectural practice. This work supports the notion that determinants of satisfaction evolve with social and health realities.

PAPER 13: Correlation Between Socio-Economic Characteristics and Housing Quality of Residential Neighbourhoods in Akure, Southwest Nigeria *(Olayiwola & Ajala, 2022)*

This paper investigates how socio-economic characteristics correlate with housing quality in Akure, Nigeria, drawing from primary survey data. Using regression and correlation analyses, the authors find that income level, education, and employment status significantly affect housing quality perceptions. Households with higher socio-economic status tend to live in better-maintained neighbourhoods, report higher satisfaction, and have better access to services.

Olayiwola and Ajala's study is directly aligned with the third theme of your review socioeconomic factors. It confirms that inequalities in wealth and education translate into disparities in residential satisfaction, reinforcing the need for redistributive planning policies. It also contributes to the sub-Saharan African literature, offering a micro-level perspective within an understudied urban context.

PAPER 14: Impact of Built Environment on Residents' Satisfaction in Slum Settlements in Ghana *(Kwasi, Danso, & Boateng, 2022)*

Kwasi et al. assess how elements of the built environment affect satisfaction levels among slum dwellers in Accra, Ghana. Using both qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys, the study identifies poor drainage, overcrowding, low-quality housing materials, and lack of basic infrastructure as core sources of dissatisfaction. However, strong social cohesion and proximity to employment centres somewhat mitigate these perceptions.

This study is significant for broadening your review's geographic and socio-economic reach. It illustrates that even within informal settlements, built environment features

significantly affect satisfaction. More importantly, the authors highlight that social and locational resilience can partially offset material deprivation. Their findings advocate for holistic slum upgrading policies that balance infrastructure improvement with social inclusion.

PAPER 15: Multivariate Analysis of Housing Satisfaction in Malaysian Urban Neighbourhoods (Azmi, Abdullah & Ariffin, 2021)

Azmi and colleagues conduct a multivariate analysis of housing satisfaction in Malaysia, focusing on urban middle-income households. The study utilises household surveys and applies factor analysis to assess the influence of variables such as structural condition, aesthetic appeal, environmental quality, and neighbourhood safety. Results show that physical design and environmental features have the strongest impact, while demographic variables such as age and gender had limited predictive power.

This paper adds methodological diversity to your review by applying rigorous multivariate techniques to isolate satisfaction drivers. It reinforces earlier findings from other contexts, particularly the primacy of housing quality and neighbourhood conditions. Its comparative neutrality on demographic effects also provides a counterpoint to other studies, illustrating the variability of socioeconomic influence across national contexts.

Table 1 shows the Comparative Insights from Reviewed Studies (Grouped by Theme) synthesizes the central themes, findings, and scholarly contributions of the 15 selected articles, arranged to reflect core determinants of residential satisfaction. Studies grouped under *Housing Quality* emphasised the importance of structural integrity, spatial comfort, and maintenance (e.g., Sabah, 2023; Zhang & Li, 2024), while those focused on *Neighbourhood Features* highlighted the significance of social cohesion, public services, and environmental amenities (e.g., Chen et al., 2023; Fang et al., 2025). Articles exploring *Socioeconomic Factors* consistently linked income, education, and tenure to perceived satisfaction (e.g., Fakere & Duke-Henshaw, 2024; Olayiwola & Ajala, 2022). This thematic organisation reinforces the multidimensional model discussed in the literature review and offers a comparative lens through which global and regional dynamics of residential satisfaction can be understood.

Table 1: Comparative Insights from Reviewed Studies (Grouped by Theme)

S/N	Theme	Author(s) & Year	Key Findings	Contribution to Knowledge
1.	Aspirational Gap	Alemu et al. (2025)	Mismatch between expectations and real conditions drives dissatisfaction in Addis condominiums.	Applies actual–aspiration gap theory to African housing context.
2.	Built Environment	Kwasi et al. (2022)	Poor infrastructure lowers satisfaction; social ties mitigate it.	Slum-based study highlights built/social environment interplay.
3.	Health & Environment	Luo et al. (2023)	Pandemic highlighted spatial quality and health concerns as new priorities.	Introduces COVID-sensitive residential satisfaction determinants.
4.	Housing Quality	Saleem & Alchalabi (2025)	Identifies key physical factors influencing satisfaction: thermal comfort, spatial layout, noise control.	Synthesises global POE studies and advocates for standardised evaluation methods.
		Sabah (2023)	Dissatisfaction in donor-funded housing due to poor adaptability and services.	Critiques top-down international housing interventions in Gaza.
		Zhang & Li (2024)	Design uniformity and service issues in subsidised housing reduce satisfaction.	Analyses post-reform Chinese housing outcomes.
5.	Multivariate Housing Satisfaction	Azmi et al. (2021)	Physical and environmental factors most predictive; demographics less so.	Uses advanced modelling to isolate key satisfaction variables.
6.	Neighbourhood Features	Chen et al. (2023)	Poor ventilation, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of green spaces reduce satisfaction in old neighbourhoods.	Proposes sustainable retrofitting strategies for ageing urban areas.
		Luu Tran Minh Tam et al. (2024)	Affordability strong, but dissatisfaction with layout and service quality in social housing.	Cross-national analysis highlighting gaps in Vietnam's housing policy.
		Fang et al. (2025)	Community disintegration leads to relocation despite improved housing.	Emphasises emotional and social dimensions of neighbourhood satisfaction.
7.	Socioeconomic Factors	Kucharska-Stasiak et al. (2022)	Modern units yield higher satisfaction; tenure and infrastructure matter most.	Comparative evidence from Poland's post-socialist housing system.
		Okpoechi (2023)	Income and homeownership positively influence satisfaction in Nigerian middle-income estates.	Offers empirical insights from a regional Nigerian perspective.
		Fakere & Duke-Henshaw (2024)	Income and education predict satisfaction with neighbourhood facilities.	Focuses on public estates and service gaps in Akure, Nigeria.

		Kar & Srivastava (2021)	Education and tenure linked to satisfaction; infrastructure gaps persist.	Explores socio-housing linkages in Indian low-income housing.
		Olayiwola & Ajala (2022)	Income and education correlate with quality and satisfaction.	Reinforces socio-spatial inequality in Nigerian urban settings.

Source: Authors' compilations

Overview of Reviewed Studies

The reviewed studies represent a wide geographic distribution spanning Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East and cover a range of residential contexts including low-income estates, public housing, informal settlements, and donor-funded developments. This diversity enables a broad understanding of residential satisfaction and its key drivers, as previously outlined in the conceptual and theoretical framework (Section 2.1 and 2.2). Collectively, the studies confirm that residential satisfaction is shaped by an interplay of physical dwelling quality, neighbourhood conditions, and socioeconomic factors, consistent with models such as the Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) theory and the Actual–Aspiration Gap theory (Preiser, 2005; Marans & Stimson, 2011).

These studies employed various methodological approaches including qualitative interviews, multivariate statistical models, and POEs demonstrating the applicability of both subjective and objective tools in housing research. The inclusion of pandemic-sensitive studies such as Luo et al. (2023) adds a temporal layer, showing how environmental stressors alter perceptions. The rich thematic diversity across these 15 studies reinforces the multidimensional nature of residential satisfaction discussed in the literature review.

Patterns in Housing Quality and User Satisfaction

One of the strongest patterns emerging from the review is the centrality of housing quality in shaping user satisfaction. This aligns with earlier findings in Section 2.3.1, which identified structural condition, indoor comfort, and layout as foundational components (Salleh et al., 2012). For instance, Saleem and Alchalabi (2025) found that thermal comfort, spatial usability, and acoustic control were core to occupant satisfaction in both developed and developing countries. Similarly, Zhang and Li (2024) observed that the uniformity of design and low maintenance in subsidised Chinese housing adversely affected satisfaction levels.

Sabah (2023), reviewing donor-funded housing in Gaza, highlighted how poor adaptability to user needs and construction shortcuts led to widespread dissatisfaction. These insights support the argument that mere affordability is insufficient unless matched with durable and context-sensitive housing quality. Azmi et al. (2021) used multivariate analysis to isolate physical and aesthetic factors as primary predictors of satisfaction in

Malaysian neighbourhoods, reinforcing earlier theoretical assertions by Preiser (2005) regarding the role of POEs in identifying latent housing defects.

Role of Neighbourhood Characteristics in Perception

Neighbourhood and environmental attributes discussed in Section 2.3.2 were also consistently associated with satisfaction outcomes. Studies by Chen et al. (2023) and Fang et al. (2025) illustrate this relationship, highlighting how ventilation, public services, green spaces, and social cohesion significantly affect perceptions of satisfaction. Fang et al., in particular, showed that even improved housing could not compensate for a loss of community bonds or inadequate service delivery in redeveloped areas of Beijing.

Kwasi et al. (2022) added nuance to this theme by demonstrating how the physical shortcomings of slum environments in Ghana were partly offset by strong social ties and proximity to employment, suggesting that neighbourhood satisfaction is not solely material but also social. These findings echo Altman's (1975) theory on environmental design, which suggests that user satisfaction is partially determined by the social affordances of a space. The cross-cutting importance of neighbourhood safety, drainage, and social amenities further reaffirms the POE framework's focus on contextual functionality.

Influence of Socioeconomic Factors

Socioeconomic determinants explored in Section 2.3.3 emerged as robust predictors across several reviewed studies. As Okpoechi (2023) and Olayiwola and Ajala (2022) showed, income level, educational attainment, and tenure status influence both the type of housing accessible and the perception of its adequacy. Okpoechi, working with middle-income earners in Owerri, demonstrated that owner-occupiers and higher-income residents reported significantly greater satisfaction than renters or informal dwellers.

Similarly, Fakere and Duke-Henshaw (2024) linked socioeconomic status to perceived adequacy of neighbourhood facilities in Akure, Nigeria, validating earlier claims in the literature (Galster, 1987) that residential satisfaction is inherently stratified by class. Kar and Srivastava (2021) echoed these results in Indian low-income housing, while Azmi et al. (2021) noted that socioeconomic attributes had a lesser but still notable role when physical quality was high. These findings validate the assertion that economic and educational inequalities reinforce housing inequality, thus shaping divergent experiences of the same built environment.

Regional/Comparative Insights

A comparative regional analysis reveals both universal patterns and context-specific divergences. For example, in both Nigeria and Ethiopia, studies by Okpoechi (2023) and Alemu et al. (2025) showed that post-occupancy dissatisfaction often stems from unmet

expectations, validating the Actual–Aspiration Gap theory reviewed in Section 2.2.3. On the other hand, studies from East Asia such as those by Chen et al. (2023) and Luo et al. (2023) highlight concerns around compact living, pandemic-related anxiety, and air quality, themes less prevalent in African or Middle Eastern studies.

European contributions, such as that by Kucharska-Stasiak et al. (2022), revealed a stronger emphasis on tenure status and access to centralised services, reflecting post-socialist transformations in housing delivery. The study by Sabah (2023) from Palestine uniquely demonstrated how political fragility and humanitarian aid can shape housing satisfaction, introducing non-traditional variables such as donor involvement and construction constraints. These regional distinctions highlight the need for contextualised housing policy and satisfaction assessment frameworks, echoing calls from both Preiser (2005) and Mohit and Nazyddah (2011).

Summary of Key Findings

Overall, the review affirms that residential satisfaction is multi-dimensional, shaped by physical, social, and economic contexts. Housing quality remains the most immediate and tangible determinant, but neighbourhood conditions and socioeconomic status strongly mediate how housing is experienced. Additionally, factors such as community attachment, pandemic adaptation, and political stability introduce deeper layers of variability.

The findings support the theoretical assertions laid out in Literature review particularly the POE theory and Actual–Aspiration Gap theory and offer new perspectives by applying them across diverse contexts. While some determinants, such as income and infrastructure, show universal influence, others are highly sensitive to local conditions, cultural expectations, and historical legacies. This nuanced understanding informs the concluding section's recommendations for research and practice.

Table 2.0 shows the Evidence Strength Overview provides a structured appraisal of the methodological rigour and contextual depth of the 15 reviewed studies. The majority of the studies presented high evidence strength, especially those employing systematic reviews, post-occupancy evaluations, and multivariate analyses across diverse urban settings (e.g., Saleem & Alchalabi, 2025; Zhang & Li, 2024; Azmi et al., 2021). Studies categorised as having moderate strength typically offered valuable but context-specific insights, often from single regions or limited datasets (e.g., Okpoechi, 2023; Kar & Srivastava, 2021). Overall, the evidence base is robust and thematically consistent, reinforcing the multidimensional framework of residential satisfaction and supporting the analytical claims made in the result and discussion section

Table 2: Evidence Strength Overview

S/N	Theme	Author(s) & Year	Evidence Strength	Remarks
1	Housing Quality	Saleem & Alchalabi (2025)	High	Systematic review with POE applications across multiple countries.
2	Neighbourhood Features	Chen et al. (2023)	High	Empirical study with design-based POE and environmental assessment.
3	Socioeconomic Factors	Okpoechi (2023)	Moderate	Focused survey data from a specific Nigerian region.
4	Neighbourhood Features	Luu Tran Minh Tam et al. (2024)	Moderate	Contextual Vietnamese study with international comparison.
5	Socioeconomic & Quality	Kucharska-Stasiak et al. (2022)	High	National housing survey with advanced multivariate analysis.
6	Socioeconomic Factors	Fakere & Duke-Henshaw (2024)	Moderate	Regional study in Nigeria with clear statistical evidence.
7	Neighbourhood Features	Fang et al. (2025)	High	Urban behavioural study using logistic regression.
8	Aspirational Gap	Alemu et al. (2025)	High	Mixed-method application of theoretical model in Addis Ababa.
9	Socioeconomic Factors	Kar & Srivastava (2021)	Moderate	Focused on Indian low-income estates with useful empirical data.
10	Housing Quality	Sabah (2023)	Moderate	Critical study of donor housing in a humanitarian setting.
11	Housing Quality	Zhang & Li (2024)	High	Robust quantitative analysis in post-reform China.
12	Health & Environment	Luo et al. (2023)	High	Timely COVID-responsive housing analysis in China.
13	Socioeconomic Factors	Olayiwola & Ajala (2022)	Moderate	Quantitative regional study of housing inequality in Nigeria.
14	Built Environment	Kwasi et al. (2022)	Moderate	Slum-based mixed-method study in Ghana.
15	Multivariate Analysis	Azmi et al. (2021)	High	Advanced statistical modelling in Malaysian context.

Source: Authors' compilations

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Major Findings

This review examined fifteen peer-reviewed studies published between 2021 and 2025, focusing on the determinants of residential satisfaction. The analysis confirmed that housing quality, neighbourhood characteristics, and socioeconomic factors are consistently influential across different contexts. Key housing quality elements such as spatial design, ventilation, maintenance, and structural integrity were found to significantly impact users' comfort and perception of their dwellings (Saleem &

Alchalabi, 2025; Zhang & Li, 2024). Neighbourhood features like access to services, environmental cleanliness, public safety, and social cohesion also emerged as critical to satisfaction (Fang et al., 2025; Chen et al., 2023). Socioeconomic variables particularly income, education, and housing tenure were repeatedly linked to disparities in satisfaction, with disadvantaged populations reporting lower levels of satisfaction across all indicators (Okpoechi, 2023; Olayiwola & Ajala, 2022).

Contributions to Knowledge

This literature-based review contributes to the growing body of housing studies by synthesising recent global findings through a multidimensional lens grounded in established theories such as the Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) framework, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and the Actual–Aspiration Gap Theory. It brings together insights from both the Global North and South, highlighting shared challenges (e.g., urban overcrowding, poor infrastructure) and context-specific issues (e.g., slum resilience in Ghana, pandemic-driven design needs in China). The review also identifies a methodological trend toward integrated analyses, combining subjective satisfaction ratings with objective physical assessments and statistical modelling, enriching the understanding of user-centred housing design and policy effectiveness.

Practical and Policy Recommendations

1. Improve Housing Quality: Policy frameworks should prioritise durable construction, thermal and acoustic performance, spatial functionality, and long-term maintenance strategies to enhance residential satisfaction, particularly in subsidised and low-income estates.
2. Invest in Neighbourhood Infrastructure: Urban planners must ensure access to water, sanitation, transportation, and recreational facilities. Creating inclusive public spaces and green areas can significantly improve neighbourhood-level satisfaction.
3. Address Socioeconomic Inequities: Social housing policies should be sensitive to the income and educational disparities that limit access to quality housing. Tenant empowerment schemes and targeted subsidies may be required.
4. Promote Participatory Housing Design: Incorporating resident feedback through POE mechanisms ensures that housing solutions align with occupant needs and expectations, reducing dissatisfaction and enhancing long-term usability.
5. Integrate Health and Safety Design Standards: Post-pandemic realities call for health-conscious housing design that includes proper ventilation, adaptable spaces for remote work, and access to natural light and outdoor environments.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited by its exclusive reliance on secondary data and peer-reviewed articles published between 2021 and 2025. While the time frame ensures currency, it may have excluded foundational or region-specific studies published earlier. Furthermore, variations in methodologies, sample sizes, and local housing standards across the reviewed studies posed challenges for uniform comparison. The absence of empirical field data limits the study's ability to contextualise findings within a specific national or community setting.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should explore longitudinal studies that track satisfaction over time and incorporate post-occupancy feedback loops in housing delivery. Studies could also examine the impact of climate change, migration, and digital technologies on housing satisfaction, particularly in urbanising African cities. There is a need for country-specific meta-analyses, especially in under-represented regions such as Central Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America. Additionally, mixed-method research that integrates spatial analytics (e.g., GIS mapping) with social surveys may offer deeper insights into the geographic disparities in residential satisfaction.

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