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The Effect of Mixed-Use Development on Communal Interaction in Victoria Island, Lagos

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Abstract

This study investigates the effect of mixed-use development on communal interaction in Victoria Island, Lagos, a rapidly urbanizing district recognized for its mix of residential, commercial, and recreational facilities. This study aims to investigate the effect of mixed-use development on communal interaction in Victoria Island, Lagos, with a focus on creating a socially sustainable & interactive urban development in Lagos. The study adopts a systematic empirical review technique, combining data from peer-reviewed literature, policy papers, and empirical studies from recent last five years to assess the relationship between mixed-use developments and urban involvement. The findings indicate that mixed-use developments on Victoria Island greatly improve communal interaction by enhancing walkability, functional diversity, and access to public areas, hence fostering economic participation and social cohesiveness. However, transportation congestion, ineffective zoning policies, and a lack of stakeholder involvement limit these ventures' full potential. Furthermore, engagement levels varied across demographic and socioeconomic groupings, with younger, economically active citizens having higher participation rates. In conclusion, while mixed-use development on Victoria Island improves community participation, its advantages can be enhanced through better urban planning, flexible zoning rules, and long- term infrastructure investment. This study proposes policies that promote inclusive urban design, participatory planning, and improved mobility options in order to build a more resilient and socially integrated urban environment.

Keywords: Mixed-Use Development, Communal Interaction, Urban Planning, Community Engagement, Spatial Planning, Lagos.

Introduction

Urbanization is an impending challenge for cities in developing countries like Nigeria. It is an unending rush to urban centers in search of better opportunities in terms of health, education, and jobs (Ashish Afun-Ogidan, 2019). Planning has been analyzed to be an effective tool for managing urban areas and sustaining ecological equilibrium (Agboola et al., 2017). Consequently, the attributes, types, geographical features, and advantages (including physical, ecological, economic, social, etc.) of open areas, marketplaces, streets, parks, and neighborhoods have been examined in the outskirts of emerging cities in developed nations (Qi et al., 2024). These mixed-use developments blend residential, commercial, and recreational activities within a unified setting, encouraging accessibility, sustainability, and community cohesion (Montgomery, 1998). In rapidly urbanizing regions like Victoria Island, Lagos, the impact of mixed-use developments on communal interaction has emerged as an important topic for examination. Victoria Island stands out as one of the liveliest commercial and residential zones in Lagos, where the convergence of business, entertainment, and living spaces creates a vibrant urban landscape (Adebayo & Aluko, 2020). Nonetheless, the degree to which mixed-use developments either facilitate or impede social interaction and community involvement is an area that necessitates further study. While mixed- use developments are typically recognized for their ability to promote connectivity and urban vitality, issues such as zoning disputes, insufficient public areas, and a lack of pedestrian-friendly designs can influence their overall effect on community dynamics (Gehl, 2010).

The justification for investigating the effect of mixed-use development on communal interaction in Victoria Island is underscored by the growing need for urban spaces that foster social interaction and inclusivity. Research indicates that well-designed mixed-use developments can enhance social cohesion, improve walkability, and create vibrant public spaces that encourage human interaction (Montgomery, 1998). Studies have shown that integrating diverse functions—such as residential, commercial, and recreational spaces—within a single development can lead to increased communal interaction and a stronger sense of place (Talen, 2015). Furthermore, biophilic design principles, when incorporated into mixed-use developments, have been proven to enhance social well-being by creating environments that connect people with nature. Green spaces, natural elements, and pedestrian-friendly urban layouts have been linked to improved mental health, reduced stress, and increased opportunities for socialization, particularly in high-density urban areas (Gehl, 2010). This is particularly relevant in a commercial hub like Victoria Island, where the rapid pace of urbanization has led to reduced access to quality public spaces and a growing sense of social disconnect (Adebayo

& Aluko, 2020).

This study aims to investigate the effect of mixed-use development on communal interaction in Victoria Island, Lagos, with a focus on creating a socially sustainable & interactive urban development in Lagos.

i. Examine the relationship between mixed-use development and communal interaction.
ii. Analyzing how spatial planning and functional zoning development affect social interaction.
iii. To propose design strategies and planning recommendations that ensure social engagement and inclusivity in mixed-use urban development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

OVERVIEW OF MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

Mixed-use development is a strategy in urban planning that combines residential, commercial, office, and recreational spaces within one structure or a related urban block, enhancing land efficiency, sustainability, and economic progress (Ekolama et al., 2024; Lubis et al., 2021). In the past, cities inherently supported mixed-use settings, but the effects of industrialization and zoning regulations led to separate land uses, resulting in urban sprawl and inefficient transportation networks (Bradecki, 2019). This approach aims to foster lively, walkable neighborhoods that promote a variety of activities and interactions, minimize long-distance travel, and improve the overall quality of life.

Currently, mixed-use developments tackle these problems by maximizing land utilization, improving walkability, and decreasing dependence on cars, which in turn reduces carbon emissions and energy use (Lucky-Badom & Imaah, 2022). These projects also stimulate economic activity, foster social interactions, and encourage urban renewal, particularly in fast-growing cities like Lagos and Port Harcourt (Lubis et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, obstacles such as regulatory limitations, high construction expenses, and the necessity for adaptive zoning policies continue to hinder broad implementation (Lucky-Badom & Imaah, 2022). Despite these obstacles, mixed-use developments are essential for sustainable urban development, facilitating smart city planning and promoting environmental sustainability (Bradecki, 2019).

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNAL INTERACTION

Communal interaction is a crucial aspect of urban planning that involves the active participation of residents and stakeholders in the decision-making processes that shape their living environments. It aims to ensure that the community's voices and needs are heard and considered in planning initiatives, leading to more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient urban development (Arnstein, 1969; Deep, 2023).

Community involvement is crucial for achieving sustainable and inclusive urban development, as it encourages local participation, builds trust, and ensures the long-term success of projects (Unegbu et al., 2024). Nonetheless, challenges such as limited funding and socio-political obstacles frequently hinder effective engagement (Lucky-Badom & Imaah, 2022).

Public engagement in urban planning is essential for influencing policies and decision-making. Conventional participation models are often inadequate, whereas collaborative approaches that prioritize stakeholder involvement and transparency yield more favorable results (Innes & Booher, 2004).

Public areas in mixed-use developments significantly contribute to social unity and the well-being of communities. Examples like U City in Adelaide illustrate that thoughtfully designed, accessible public spaces facilitate interaction, support mental health, and improve urban livability (Barrie et al., 2023). Moreover, incorporating walkability and promoting active living strategies within urban environments elevates the overall quality of life (APA, 2022). To enhance engagement and public spaces, cities should implement participatory planning, embrace inclusive design, and foster collaboration among multiple stakeholders (Reed et al., 2019). Strengthening policy frameworks and social programs can further support urban sustainability and resilience (Samuel, 2023).

IMPACT OF MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT ON COMMUNAL INTERACTION

Mixed-use development, characterized by the integration of residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, and industrial uses, has been increasingly promoted as a sustainable urban planning strategy. Its impact on communal interaction can be examined through several lenses, including social interaction, economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and urban resilience.

Grant, (2016) examines how mixed-use developments contribute to social interaction, economic growth, environmental sustainability, and urban resilience. It highlights that mixed-use spaces encourage community cohesion by fostering interactions in shared public areas and support local economies by integrating commercial and residential spaces (Schuetz, 2019). Additionally, these developments promote sustainability by reducing reliance on cars and incorporating green building practices (Cervero & Duncan, 2016). Their adaptability also enhances urban resilience, making cities more flexible in response to economic and environmental challenges (Vale & Campanella, 2018).

However, Talen (2019) reviewed the benefits from real-world case studies to support its claims and a deeper analysis of equity concerns, such as gentrification and affordability issues. While challenges like land-use conflicts and regulatory barriers are acknowledged, the discussion lacks an in-depth exploration of policy solutions (Coupland, 2016). Addressing these aspects would strengthen the review's argument and provide a more balanced perspective.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study investigates the effect of mixed-use buildings on communal interaction using the New Urbanism Theory and Communicative Planning Theory. The New Urbanism Theory advocates for the development of walkable, compact, and socially engaging neighborhoods by combining residential, commercial, and public spaces in urban settings. It underscores the significance of urban design, accessibility, and lively public areas in promoting social unity, economic vibrancy, and environmental sustainability (Garde, 2020). This theory supports the

notion that mixed-use developments enhance community participation by fostering dynamic streetscapes, stimulating social interactions, and creating inclusive neighborhoods.

Communicative Planning Theory centers on collaborative decision-making, inclusion of stakeholders, and participatory governance in urban planning. It posits that effective communal interaction is achieved when community members, planners, and policymakers participate in open discussions, enabling various perspectives to influence the characteristics of the built environment (Innes & Booher, 2004). This theory establishes a framework for evaluating how public involvement and inclusive planning methods affect the effectiveness of mixed-use developments in promoting community engagement and long-term urban resilience (Anthony Jnr, 2023).

The integration of the New Urbanism Theory and Communicative Planning Theory provides a holistic perspective on how mixed-use developments influence communal interaction. This combination emphasizes the importance of well-conceived urban spaces, participatory planning approaches, and societal inclusivity in developing viable and sustainable communities. In rapidly urbanizing cities such as Lagos, where land-use conflicts and infrastructure issues hinder community cohesion, these frameworks yield insights into how mixed-use developments can boost engagement, fortify social connections, and advance urban sustainability. This research intends to pinpoint planning and design tactics that encourage inclusive, community-oriented development and enhance social interactions within mixed-use spaces.

METHODOLOGY

This research conducts a systematic empirical review of existing literature to assess the impact of mixed-use development on communal interaction in Victoria Island, Lagos. Secondary data will be gathered from scholarly articles, conference presentations, policy papers, and other academic resources accessed through platforms like Google Scholar, Research Gate, Science Direct, and Academia. Keywords relevant to the research focus such as "mixed-use development," "community engagement," "urban planning," "social interaction," and "Victoria Island, Lagos" will be utilized to ensure that the studies reviewed are pertinent. The selection criteria will emphasize peer-reviewed publications from the last five years to ensure the research remains relevant and maintains high standards of quality. Thematic analysis will be implemented to detect and examine consistent patterns and themes throughout literature, including:

- The contribution of mixed-use developments to enhancing social interaction
- The influence of urban design on communal interaction
- Challenges and effective strategies in executing mixed-use developments for social sustainability

The search initially identified 52 records. After removing 12 duplicates, 40 studies were screened by title and abstract. Of these, 32 articles were excluded for not aligning with the research focus (e.g., studies outside the Lagos context, or those unrelated to community

engagement and biophilic principles). Finally, 8 studies met all inclusion criteria and were subjected to in-depth review and thematic synthesis. This process is visually summarized in the PRISMA flow diagram

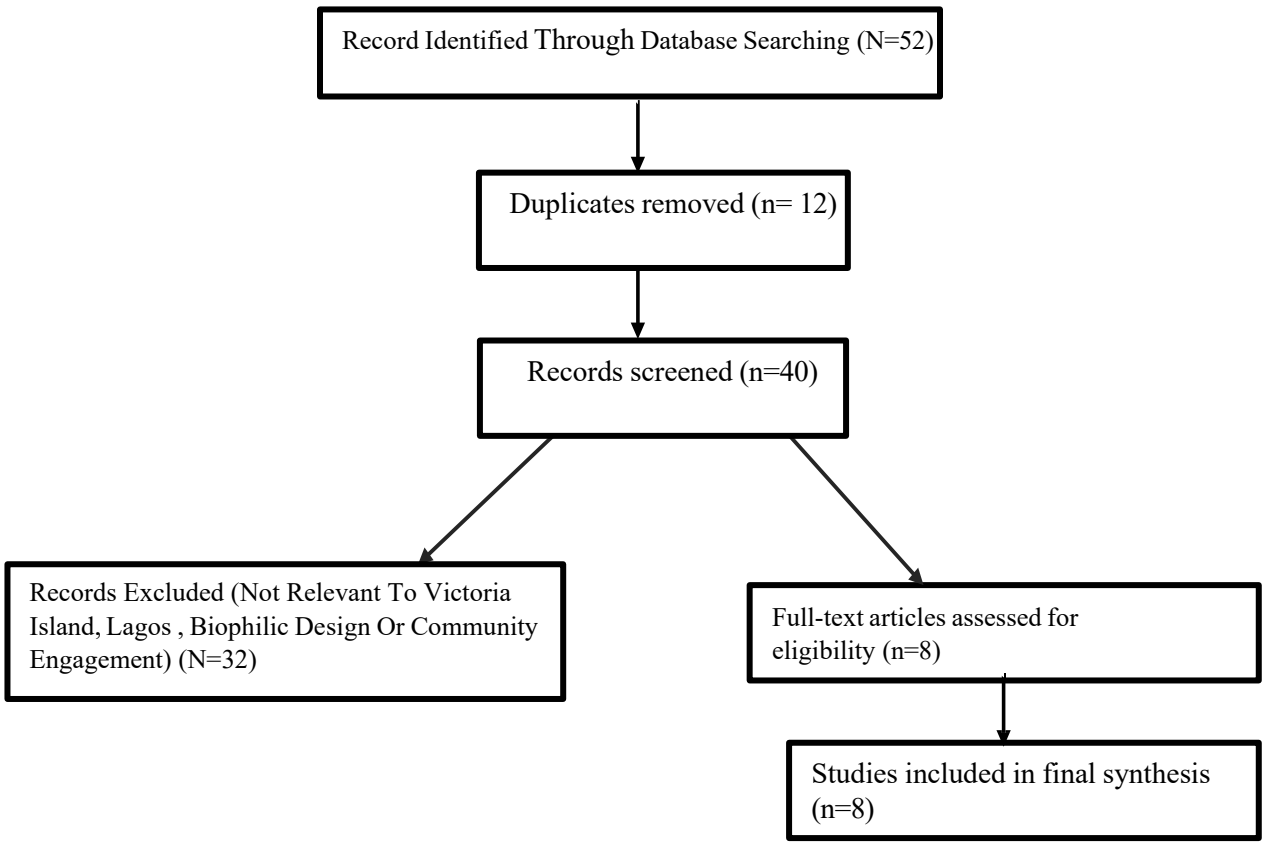


Figure 1: PRISMA flow chat Source: Author

Key findings will be organized and synthesized to meet the study objectives. To guarantee reliability, only literature that closely connects with the research focus will be included, while studies that lack empirical support or are not directly relevant to the context of Victoria Island will be omitted. The systematic review will not only yield a comprehensive understanding of the research domain but will also highlight existing gaps, serving as a basis for further investigation.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

This section highlights the main features of each of my research works concerning mixed-use development, communal interaction, urban planning, social interaction, and spatial planning. Table 1 presents a summary of the 8 reviewed papers.

Table 1: Summary of Reviewed Papers

S/N	Title of Article	Name of the Author & Year of Publication	Aim and Objectives	Methodology	Results
1	Evaluating the Impact of Community Engagement in Urban Planning on Sustainable Development	Gagan Deep, 2023	The research aims to assess the effectiveness of community engagement in urban planning and its role in achieving sustainable development goals.	Case studies and participatory initiatives analysis.	Community engagement improves social inclusion, governance transparency, and urban sustainability.
2	Mixed-Use Building Concept with Energy Conservation Approach	Mohammad Dolok Lubis et al., 2021	This research aims to explore how energy conservation principles can be integrated into mixed-use building designs for sustainability.	This research adopts a Mixed- methods approach with a comparative analysis of energy-efficient buildings.	Solar panels and passive design strategies enhance energy conservation in mixed-use buildings.
3	Models for Architecture of Contemporary Medium-Density Mixed-Use Buildings: Case Studies from Gliwice, Poland	Tomasz Bradecki, 2019	This study aims to analyze mixed-use building models and their role in achieving compact urban development.	This study adopts a case study analysis of two mixed-use buildings in Gliwice, Poland.	Mixed-use buildings contribute to urban density and economic efficiency, but present structural challenges.
4	Assessment of Residential Satisfaction of a Typical High-Rise Residential Building in Lagos, Nigeria	Oluwole Alagbe & Babajide Aina, 2020	To evaluate residential satisfaction levels in high- rise buildings in Lagos.	Survey-based study with statistical analysis of residential feedback.	High-rise residents report issues with maintenance, accessibility, and infrastructure.
5	Understanding the Relationship between Urban Public Space and Social Cohesion: A Systematic Review	Jie Qi, Suvodeep Mazumdar, & Ana C. Vasconcelos, 2024.	The study aim to examine how urban public spaces contribute to social cohesion.	Systematic review of 63 published studies from 2000 to 2023.	Public spaces enhance social interaction, but factors like safety perception and accessibility influence effectiveness.
6	Community Engagement as a Sustainable Tool in Transforming Mass Housing Urban Structures: Case Study of Petržalka Estate, Bratislava, Slovakia	Viktor Kasala & Katarina Smatanova, 2019	To evaluate the role of community engagement in sustainable housing transformation.	Case study analysis of mass housing estates.	Lack of identity in mass housing leads to disengagement, but participatory planning improves urban resilience.
7	Assessment of Functional Circulation in Selected Mixed- Use Buildings in Ikoyi, Lagos State	Ekolama, R. E., Ibitoye, O. A., Agbaje, I. A., & Thomas, A. J. (2024)	To analyze circulation efficiency in mixed-use buildings.	Field study and observational analysis.	Poor circulation impacts usability and safety, requiring better space planning.
8	Mixed-Use Development in Port Harcourt: Sustainability of Tall Development	Lucky-Badom L.T. & Napoleon Imaah, 2022	To examine how mixed- use high-rise developments can enhance urban sustainability.	GIS analysis and integration design approach.	Mixed-use tall buildings support urban revitalization and land efficiency, but require better planning strategies.

Source: Author

Synthesis of Findings by Objectives

This synthesis outlines the main findings from the analyzed articles in relation to the study's aims, which center on mixed-use development and its effects on community involvement, spatial planning, and inclusive urban design approaches.

Objective 1: Explore the Connection between Mixed-Use Development and Community Participation

Mixed-use developments are essential in promoting community participation by establishing walkable, multifunctional areas that facilitate social interactions and economic growth (Bradecki, 2019). Research shows that having public areas, commercial centers, and shared facilities enhances community engagement, lowers urban isolation, and fosters safety (Jacobs, 2016). Nonetheless, obstacles such as zoning laws and insufficient stakeholder involvement can hinder community participation in certain scenarios (Kasala & Smatanova, 2019).

Insights from Lubis et al. (2021) reveal that incorporating green infrastructure and energy-efficient features in mixed-use buildings boosts community well-being and raises environmental awareness among residents. Likewise, the examination of tall mixed-use developments in Port Harcourt (Lucky-Badom & Imaah, 2022) confirms that compact, high-rise mixed-use structures improve connectivity and engagement but necessitate policy reforms to optimize their social advantages.

Objective 2: Investigate How Spatial Planning and Functional Zoning Impact Social Interaction

Spatial planning and functional zoning greatly affect social interaction by influencing accessibility, land use diversity, and overall urban livability (Ekolama et al., 2024). Findings from a case study in Ikoyi, Lagos, indicate that inadequate functional circulation in mixed-use buildings detrimentally impacts user experience and curtails community participation. Well-designed mixed-use environments with effective pedestrian flow and thoughtful zoning can foster seamless interactions and mitigate spatial fragmentation (Bradecki, 2019).

Furthermore, research on the Petržalka Estate in Slovakia (Kasala & Smatanova, 2019) points out that mass housing developments lacking spatial character typically experience limited community involvement. This suggests that zoning policies should be flexible and responsive to local community requirements, ensuring that spaces promote interaction rather than seclusion.

Objective 3: Suggest Design Strategies and Planning Recommendations for Social Engagement and Inclusivity

Drawing from the findings, various design strategies and planning recommendations can be outlined to promote social inclusivity in mixed-use urban developments:

1. Incorporating Public Areas and Green Infrastructure – Research (Lubis et al., 2021; Barrie et al., 2023) underscores the significance of plazas, parks, and green corridors in fostering social cohesion and active participation.

2. Flexible Zoning Regulations – Studies in Port Harcourt and Ikoyi indicate that adaptable zoning policies are essential to meet varied community needs and improve functional efficiency (Ekolama et al. (2024); Lucky-Badom & Imaah, 2022).
3. Community-Driven Urban Planning – Insights from Kasala & Smatanova (2019) highlight the necessity of community involvement in the decision-making process regarding urban development, ensuring that mixed-use projects reflect local cultural and social values.
4. Improved Walkability and Mixed-Mode Transport – Effective spatial planning should emphasize pedestrian-friendly streets, cycling paths, and efficient public transport systems to enhance urban connectivity and promote increased social interactions (Bradecki, 2019).

Implications of the Findings

The results of this research underscore the crucial impact of mixed-use developments in promoting community involvement, enhancing spatial organization, and facilitating inclusive urban spaces. These consequences are relevant to urban planners, policymakers, architects, and developers aiming to create sustainable, socially dynamic, and functionally effective cities.

1. **Reinforcing Community Involvement Through Mixed-Use Developments**

The research demonstrates that well-designed mixed-use developments foster social interaction, safety, and community engagement (Bradecki, 2019). This implies that future urban planning initiatives should focus on mixed-use zoning laws that encourage interactive public areas, communal amenities, and the growth of local businesses. However, the absence of stakeholder involvement in certain developments (Kasala & Smatanova, 2019) highlights the necessity for inclusive decision-making processes where residents play an active role in shaping their surroundings.

2. **Improving Spatial Planning and Functional Zoning for Social Interaction**

Insights from Ekolama et al. (2024) indicate that inadequate functional circulation in mixed-use buildings adversely affects usability and engagement. This emphasizes the crucial role of effective spatial planning that prioritizes walkability, accessibility, and clearly defined zoning to enhance user experience and mobility. Urban designers must employ adaptive planning approaches that support flexible, people-centered environments to optimize urban efficiency.

3. **Policy and Design Approaches for Inclusive Urban Development**

The study findings reveal that participatory urban planning and inclusive design principles are vital for fostering socially cohesive, mixed-use neighborhoods (Lucky-Badom & Imaah, 2022). Policymakers should implement regulations that promote mixed-income housing, public amenities, and diverse land uses to mitigate gentrification and socio-economic displacement. Moreover, developers ought to embrace sustainable design practices, such as green infrastructure, energy-efficient building methods, and pedestrian-centric urban layouts, to enhance community well-being (Lubis et al., 2021).

4. **The Importance of Smart Growth and Sustainable Development Strategies**

Urban expansion, particularly in rapidly developing cities like Lagos and Port Harcourt, often results in land-use conflicts, congestion, and environmental deterioration (Lucky-Badom & Imaah, 2022). The findings suggest that cities should adopt smart growth policies by incorporating mixed- use high-rise developments, promoting multi-modal transport systems, and increasing green spaces. Additionally, GIS-based urban planning tools can be utilized to optimize land use allocation and environmental sustainability.

5. **Future Research Pathways and Implementation Approaches**

The study identifies gaps in community-driven urban design and policy application, indicating a need for more research focused on longitudinal studies examining the social impact of mixed-use developments (Kasala & Smatanova, 2019). Furthermore, urban authorities should initiate pilot initiatives to evaluate new planning frameworks and assess their effectiveness in promoting inclusive and sustainable urban growth.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has examined the influence of mixed-use development on Victoria Island, Lagos, with a focus on its effects on community participation, spatial organization, and urban inclusivity. The results indicate that effectively designed mixed-use developments promote social unity, economic vitality, and ecological sustainability by combining residential, commercial, and public areas within a walkable urban setting. Nevertheless, ineffective zoning laws, insufficient infrastructure, and limited involvement from the community have restricted the full potential of mixed-use developments in Victoria Island.

The research emphasizes that spatial organization and land-use regulations play a critical role in shaping social interactions, mobility patterns, and overall urban quality of life. Ineffective circulation and traffic congestion continue to pose significant issues, highlighting the necessity for adaptive planning strategies that prioritize accessibility and inclusivity. Moreover, sustainable design practices such as green infrastructure, energy-efficient construction, and the integration of public spaces can improve the long-term sustainability of mixed-use developments in Victoria Island.

However, the study is not without limitations. The reliance on secondary data restricts the ability to capture firsthand user experiences. In addition, only eight peer-reviewed studies were included in the final review, which narrows the breadth of perspectives considered. The focus on Victoria Island also makes the findings highly context-specific, limiting their applicability to other urban areas.

Future research should therefore incorporate primary data collection through surveys, interviews, and ethnographic observations to capture residents' and users' lived experiences. Comparative studies across Lagos districts and other African cities would provide broader insights into how local culture, urban infrastructure, and governance influence communal interaction in mixed-use developments. Furthermore, longitudinal research could track how such developments contribute to social cohesion and urban vibrancy over time.

To fully leverage the advantages of mixed-use developments on Victoria Island, urban planners, policymakers, and developers need to adopt strategic zoning regulations, participatory planning approaches, and sustainable infrastructure initiatives. These actions will help create a more vibrant, interconnected, and livable urban environment that can satisfy the increasing demands of a rapidly expanding city.

Recommendations

1. To improve the effectiveness of mixed-use development on Victoria Island, the following key recommendations are made
2. Improve Communal interaction - Use stakeholder-driven planning frameworks and participatory programs to engage people, companies, and policymakers in decision-making.
3. Improve Spatial Planning and Zoning: Revise land-use rules to encourage integrated development, improve pedestrian facilities, and reduce traffic congestion.
4. Promote Sustainable Development by implementing green building designs, energy-efficient technologies, and transit-oriented development (TOD) to reduce environmental impact.
5. Improve Public Spaces and Social Amenities: Integrate public plazas, parks, and recreational places to promote social interaction and urban livability.
6. Advance Research and Policy Development - Conduct long-term studies on the effects of mixed-use development and employ Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to govern cities using data.

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