

Residents' Perception of Homelessness in Lagos Metropolis, Nigeria: Physical Planning Implications

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Abstract

This study assessed the physical planning implications of homelessness in Lagos Metropolis, Nigeria, with a view to providing evidence-based policy responses. Data were sourced from the residents within a 500-metre radius of identified homeless clusters. To select the residents, a multistage sampling technique was employed. The first stage is the stratification of the 16 Lagos Metropolis Local Government Areas (LGAs) into low, medium and high densities. The second stage is the purposive selection of two LGAs per density with high incidences of homelessness and where the homeless clusters are situated. The third stage is the systematic sampling of residents in 10% of buildings within a 500m radius of identified homeless clusters. A total of 144 residents were sampled for this study. Primary data were collected through questionnaire administration, while secondary data on LGA populations, number of buildings and maps were obtained from the Lagos State Government Digest of Statistics, GIS and Cooperative Information Network. Data collected were analysed using narrative analysis. The findings of the study revealed that residents' perceptions of the phenomenon of homelessness and homeless persons were predominantly negative, with 76.9% expressing adverse views. This showed that the physical planning implications of homelessness were negative on national identity, urban livability, imageability, land use planning, and urban infrastructure. Therefore, addressing homelessness effectively requires a comprehensive understanding of its spatial and planning implications.

Keywords: Homelessness, Implication, Physical Planning, Lagos Metropolis, Nigeria

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1. Introduction

One feature of contemporary cities across the world is the rate at which urbanisation is taking place (Akinluyi & Adedokun, 2014; Haase et al., 2018). In Africa, particularly Nigeria, the advent of urbanisation has brought with it, complex challenges that are evident in various forms such as traffic congestion, overcrowding, environmental degradation, and unemployment among others (McGranahan & Satterthwaite, 2014; Zhang, 2015). These challenges are brought to light due to the country's inability to fully profit from urbanisation's advantages and effectively manage its negative effects. Nigeria is one of the fastest-urbanising countries in Africa (Bloch et al., 2015), with consequential challenging implications including the availability of adequate and affordable housing (Aduwo et al., 2016; Oni-Jimoh & Liyanage, 2018; Ajayi, 2019). This is despite the fact that housing is a basic necessity of man, and ranked as the most important after food and clothing (Awe & Afolabi, 2017; Faniran & Olajide, 2021).

As obtainable in many developing countries, the appalling situations of housing in Nigeria have resulted in precarious and untoward life patterns, especially in urban areas. The spate of homelessness, as an attendant ill of the housing deficit, cannot therefore be overlooked. According to UN-Habitat (2014), homelessness is considered one of the insistent environmental, economic and social issues that cities around the globe grapple with. It is a global phenomenon, a common index for measuring the level of housing provision in both developed and developing nations of the world. It is variedly defined based on the prevailing social, cultural and economic statuses of a nation. For instance, Wright (2007) defines homelessness as a condition whereby a person does not regularly have access to adequate housing. Homelessness is also a situation where an individual or family are without shelter and thus belongs to a part of a disadvantaged group of the population (Ilesanmi & Mgbemena, 2015). Similarly, Fitzpatrick et al. (2012) described homelessness as a state where people are roofless (sleeping rough), houseless (living in institutions) and inadequately housed.

Over the years, homelessness has emerged as one of the most visible indications of poverty and broadening inequality in many cities across the globe. It is one of the biggest social problems which the whole world is facing in the twenty-first century (Toro, 2007), hence various classifications and taxonomy have emerged to deepen understanding of the phenomenon. On the one hand, homelessness can be classified into five types: short-term, long-term, permanently supported, environmentally dysfunctional, and self-induced (Somerville, 1992; Tipple & Speak, 2009; Akinluyi & Adedokun, 2014; Inner City Mission, 2021). The homeless, on the other hand simply refers to a person or group of persons who lack a fixed, regular and appropriate night-time abode (United States Federal Code 42, 2006). The homeless can be categorised into three

groups: chronically, cyclically and temporarily homeless (Lyne, 1999). According to Tipple and Speak (2009), Speak (n.d), and Rog and Buckner (2007), the homeless population are characterised by different traits. These include insecurity, unemployment, emotional distress, resilience, poverty, and substance abuse among others. Nevertheless, these characteristics may vary from one country to another due to socio-cultural setting, policy initiatives and frameworks, economic viability and political structure.

From the above definitions, it is evident that the phenomenon of homelessness is not limited to housing deficit. However, a broader definition of homelessness construed for this study is that it is a situation where an individual, group of individuals or family resort to living under the bridge, in abandoned or dilapidated buildings, public places, motor parks and other make-shift apartments not owned by them and not originally designed and fit for human habitation. The phenomenon of homelessness represents a multifaceted social issue that brings about several physical planning implications for the urban environment, notwithstanding, there remain grey areas in the literature on these. Among others, observed physical planning implications of homelessness are street littering, pollution, vandalism, traffic obstruction, and damage to public facilities. In many urban centres where homelessness is prevalent, homeless individuals often occupy public spaces such as sidewalks and open streets, with negative consequences on the environment. Homelessness also contributes to the spate of vandalism and damage to public facilities.

Available estimates of homeless individuals in Lagos, Nigeria suggest that they are in several thousands (Roberts, 2020). Although the phenomenon of homelessness is evident in other Nigerian cities, the situation in Lagos Metropolis is extremely high (Amnesty International, 2017). Insights into the lifestyles of the homeless in Lagos Metropolis showed that the homeless population are mainly clustered around roads leading to markets in highly commercial areas, uncompleted buildings, beaches, bus stations and under bridges among others (Daily Trust Newspaper, June 6, 2021). Further cursory observation revealed that the homeless engage in different sources of livelihood such as cart pushing, bus fare collector, motorcycle rider, begging, drug peddling, prostitution, and crime. Homelessness could have more far-reaching physical planning implications in Lagos Metropolis - the hub of Nigeria's external trade, a centre of commerce and trade, nation's imports and non-oil exports among others. This study is therefore set on the need to ascertain the physical planning consequences of homelessness in Lagos Metropolis, with a view to providing information for evidence-based policy responses to the phenomenon.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Physical Planning Implications of Homelessness

The phenomenon of homelessness represents a multifaceted social issue that brings about several physical planning implications for the urban environment. However, there is a dearth of literature examining the physical planning implications of homelessness. The observed physical planning implications of homelessness include street littering, pollution, vandalism, traffic obstruction, and damage to public facilities among others.

Street littering emerges as a critical concern in many urban centres where homelessness is prevalent. Individuals experiencing homelessness often occupy public spaces such as sidewalks and open streets. This leads to the environment being accumulated and polluted with different kinds of waste that are toxic to human health, degrading environmental quality and also defacing the urban centre. Similarly, homelessness also contributes to traffic obstruction as homeless individuals congest road corridors and pedestrian pathways, thereby resulting in unnecessary traffic delays and unintended disruptions to mobility. Furthermore, the spate and spread of homelessness have been linked to the deterioration and damage of public facilities. This often arises when the incidence of violence occurs among individuals experiencing homelessness, and street urchins as well as other marginalised groups.

In addition, Duffy (2021) pointed out that vandalism is another pertinent issue associated with homelessness. The socio-economic deprivation faced by individuals experiencing homelessness often brings out their aggressive tendencies, which in turn, may lead to the destruction of properties in the neighbourhood. More so, negative societal perceptions towards homeless individuals can exacerbate these tendencies, further escalating instances of vandalism.

Against this backdrop, it is imperative to ascertain beyond reasonable doubt the physical planning implications of homelessness in Lagos Metropolis. More so, this study aims to document and analyse these implications to inform policy recommendations.

3. Materials and Methods

The study area is Lagos metropolis, situated in the Southwestern Geopolitical zone of the Nigeria; approximately between latitude 6° 22' and 6° 52' North of the Equator and longitude 2° 42' and 3° 42' East of the Greenwich meridian. Lagos Metropolis comprise 16 of the 20 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Lagos State; bordered in the northern and eastern regions by Ogun State and in the west by the Republic of Benin. In the south, Lagos State is bordered by approximately 180km of the Atlantic coastline. An estimated 15 million people

(7.39% of the nation's population) reside in Lagos State (Onilude & Vaz, 2021). A significant proportion of this resides in the metropolis. The spate of homelessness is evident in different areas of Lagos due to a number of factors such as high rate of unemployment, poverty, high cost of living, high illiteracy level, large household size, peer group pressure, poor home conditions, parental pressure and lack of parental care, among others (Jiboye, 2011). In Lagos Metropolis, the homeless are majorly clustered along roads leading to markets in highly commercial areas, under bridges, beaches, motor parks, and uncompleted buildings among others. These and other prevailing ranges of social, cultural, economic, political, environmental and climatic settings, informed the choice of Lagos for the study.



Figure 1: Lagos State in the context of Nigeria
Source: Cooperative Information Network (COPINE), 2024

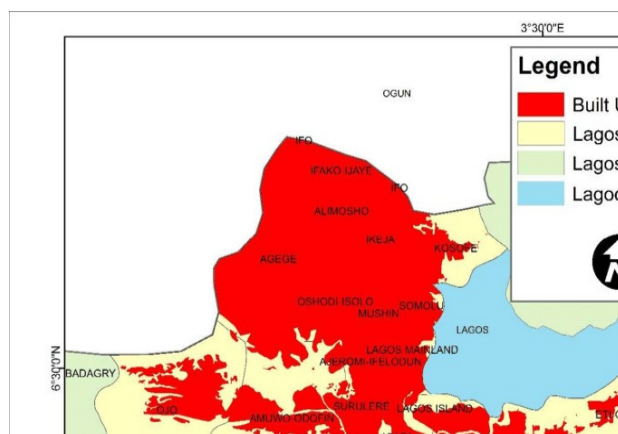


Figure 2: Built-up Areas of Lagos Metropolis
Source: Cooperative Information Network (COPINE) (2024)

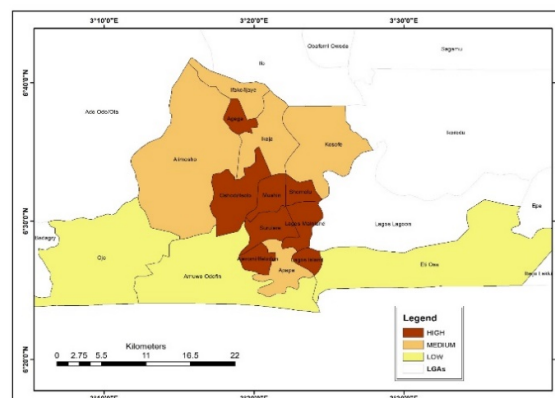


Figure 3: Residential Densities within Lagos Metropolis
Source: Cooperative Information Network (COPINE), (2024)

For the purpose of collecting data for this study, mixed-method approach comprising both quantitative and qualitative research methods was adopted. Information for the study were derived through a reconnaissance survey, participants' observation, in-depth interviews and questionnaire administration. The study population comprised residents in close proximity to homeless clusters in the study area. To select the respondents for the study, nine different homeless clusters were identified across the metropolis. Within a 500m radius of each of these identified clusters, estimates of buildings were obtained through counting using GIS and ground trudging (see Table 1). A resident was selected in every 10th building of identified homeless clusters using systematic sampling. In each of the selected buildings, a questionnaire was administered to a household head.

Table 1: Estimated number of buildings in selected clusters

Densities	Selected LGAs	Selected Clusters	Estimated Number of Buildings
Low	Ojo	Iyana-Iba Motor Park	140 (14)
Medium	Ikeja	Ikeja Flyover	160 (16)
	Alimosho	Iyana-Ipaja Market	190 (19)
		Iyana-Ipaja Motor Park	145 (15)
		Iyana-Ipaja BRT Terminal	220 (22)
High	Lagos Island	Idumota Market	180 (18)
		Obalende Motor Park	142 (15)
	Mushin	Mushin Market	180 (18)
	Oshodi-Isolo	Oshodi Pedestrian Bridge	70 (7)
Total	6	9	1,427 (144)

Source: Geographic Information System (GIS)

4. Results and Discussion

Presented in this section is the analysis of the physical planning implications of homelessness in Lagos Metropolis from residents' perspectives. In addressing this issue, residents were asked about the impacts of homelessness on the urban environment. As anticipated, a range of perspectives regarding the impacts of homelessness emerged from the residents, with the majority bolstering a negative impact. However, some respondents had a positive attitude about the phenomenon of homelessness.

As presented in Figure 4, is a proportion of 76.9% of the interviewed residents expressed their disapproval of homelessness because of its negative impacts on the urban environment. This finding is in tandem with the submission of Labeodan (1989) who averred that society's attitude toward the homeless is one of callousness, apathy, and complete neglect.

The respondents condemned homelessness unequivocally, despite their differing ways of putting it.

...the seemingly obstinate increase in the number of homeless people has negative implications on national identity. As it stands, Nigeria is ranked among the highest generators of homeless people in the world. This portrays a bad image of our cities. (A male respondent at Mushin).

A respondent at Obalende maintained the stand that the phenomenon of homelessness is a major problem but from different perspectives.

Homelessness is a major urban issue in our cities today, especially in Lagos. Homeless people are seen inhabiting such places as uncompleted buildings, under bridges, bus shelters, road kerbs, in front of shops, parked vehicles and other available and unmanaged open spaces. The implication of this is that they constitute informal occupants of urban space and therefore become a problem to urban livability and imageability.

The respondents went further by saying:

Homelessness also presents significant challenges for urban land use planning. Informal settlements spring up in unplanned areas, complicating efforts to allocate land effectively for sustainable development. This strain on urban infrastructure and services underscores the need for comprehensive policies that balance immediate needs with long-term urban planning goals, ensuring equitable access to housing and amenities for all residents.

In a similar vein, another resident at Iba reported that:

Homelessness has visibly impacted urban aesthetics in Lagos, often resulting in the proliferation of informal settlements and makeshift shelters in public spaces. These settlements, while serving as makeshift homes for many, can create visual clutter and detract from the city's aesthetic appeal. They often lack proper infrastructure, like water, electricity, and sanitation facilities, and contribute to a sense of disorder in urban environments. As a result, efforts to maintain and enhance the visual appeal of public spaces are challenged by the presence of these informal settlements. Balancing the need to address homelessness with the goal of maintaining a visually appealing urban landscape remains a significant urban planning challenge.

From the above narratives, it is obvious that homelessness manifests in the form of informal settlements that emerge in unplanned areas across the city. These settlements, characterised by makeshift shelters and lack of formal infrastructure, disrupt established land use patterns and planning frameworks. The spontaneous occupation of vacant lands, uncompleted buildings, parked vehicles, under bridges, and other public spaces challenges urban planners' ability to allocate land efficiently for sustainable development initiatives. Consequently, this dynamic can create tension between the immediate housing needs of homeless populations and the long-term goals of urban spatial planning.

Furthermore, the proliferation of informal settlements resulting from the phenomenon places significant strain on urban infrastructure and services in the city. Basic amenities such as water supply, sanitation facilities, electricity, and waste management systems are non-existent in these areas. As informal settlements grow in size and number, the demand for public services escalates, overwhelming existing infrastructure capacities. This strain not only compromises the quality of life for residents in these areas but also poses operational challenges for municipal authorities tasked with maintaining urban infrastructure resilience and efficiency.

A view as expressed by a respondent at Ikeja is thought-provoking:

The consternation of the inherent dangers of street life, economic deprivation and lack of support from the government make the homeless extremely vulnerable. Therefore, a nation that ignores its citizens and provides fertile ground for homelessness to thrive does so at its peril.

Besides the above negativities about homelessness expressed by residents, it was also reported that homelessness in Lagos Metropolis had greatly increased crime rates and safety concerns. In other words, the residents saw the homeless in light of criminality, a situation that should be nipped in the bud as quickly as possible. This was expressed differently by the residents across the different locations. For example, a female respondent residing at Oshodi had this to say:

Homelessness in Lagos has significantly contributed to the rise in crime rates and safety concerns. When individuals lack stable housing, they are often pushed into desperate situations, resorting to activities such as petty theft, drug trafficking, and vandalism to survive. These behaviours not only jeopardize public safety but also undermine efforts to maintain law and order in our communities.

Speaking in the same direction, another respondent at Iba said this about the homeless:

...sincerely, I don't trust those homeless folks, and I believe the government ought to act quickly to address their situation. A small number of them are out there because they are in situations that are out of their control, but most of them are criminals hiding in plain sight; some of them steal and engage in other illegal activities.

Another respondent staying around Iyana Ipaja Motor Park, who referred to the homeless as "Area Boys", reported the situation this way:

These days, the Area Boys are all over the city. Bus stations, busy roads, and markets are some of their favourite places to hang out. They extort money from market women wishing to put up stalls for the day, they tax bus drivers in broad daylight, they patrol possible parking spots, and they charge shoppers unlawful fees. They even demand "donations" from random bystanders, intimidating them.

Sharing the same thought, a male resident at Ikeja had this to say:

I have witnessed many of these social miscreants, also referred to as Area Boys, being hunted after and severely beaten by people for taking items that did not belong to them... the female homeless individuals with mental illness in this community endure great suffering because they are frequently raped by these Area Boys. They waylay innocent people at night and occasionally during the day and take valuables such as cell phones, cash, laptops and so on. Though there are hoodlums in other Nigerian cities as well, none are as blatant or pervasive as the Area Boys of Lagos.

In agreement with the above submissions, Eshiet (not dated) stated that the Area Boys' coercive and persuasive requests, petty crimes, and occasionally violent offences to acquire resources, generally cash in the urban main business and crowded areas, have disturbed the civil society and defied the civic authority. This further explains the reason why a high proportion of the jobless homeless were making between ₦23,000 and ₦28,000. Additionally, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2002) attributes the emergence of social miscreants to the intricate dynamics of socioeconomic hardship that young people in urban areas face.

Some respondents also viewed the impact of homelessness on health and sanitation challenges. These were expressed in various ways by the residents. For instance, a female youth respondent elaborated on the impact of homelessness on health and sanitation challenges at Ikeja this way:

Homelessness has had a profound impact on health and sanitation in Lagos. Many homeless individuals lack access to clean water, adequate sanitation facilities, and basic hygiene resources. This can lead to outbreaks of communicable diseases such as cholera and typhoid in makeshift settlements. The crowded and unsanitary conditions contribute to respiratory infections and skin diseases. Addressing these challenges requires not only providing temporary shelters but also improving access to healthcare services and promoting hygiene education among vulnerable populations.

In the same vein, a respondent at Mushin maintained that the phenomenon of homelessness is capable of contributing to environmental degradation in the urban area, such as through increased littering, waste accumulation, and strain on sanitation services. The respondent presented his argument this way:

In Lagos generally, the environmental impact of homelessness is palpable. With makeshift settlements growing along waterways and in public spaces, waste disposal becomes a critical issue. These areas often lack proper sanitation facilities, leading to increased littering and waste accumulation. This not only mars the urban landscape but also strains existing sanitation services. Addressing homelessness isn't just about providing shelter; it's about ensuring sustainable living conditions for all residents.

Another female respondent at Oshodi had this to say:

"I come across homeless people every day because my shop is not distant from the locations where they sleep in the night. Homeless people here often congregate in makeshift settlements that lack basic amenities and proper sanitation, posing health hazards and further exacerbating social tensions."

The respondents further noted that:

The informal settlements where many homeless people reside are often located in hazardous areas, such as floodplains or near industrial zones. These locations not only lack proper infrastructure but also expose residents to environmental dangers. This creates a need for urgent and strategic planning to address both the immediate needs and long-term risks.

The above narratives emphasise that the living conditions within informal settlements associated with homelessness in Lagos Metropolis posed substantial health and safety risks to both the homeless and the residents living in close proximity to their settlements. Overcrowding, lack of proper sanitation, and inadequate housing structures contribute to the spread of diseases and increase vulnerability to environmental hazards and disasters. The absence of healthcare facilities exacerbates health disparities among homeless populations, further underscoring the urgent need for integrated public health and urban planning interventions.

In another dimension, a male respondent around Iyana Ipaja Market thoughtfully expressed his opinion thus:

Our current urban planning efforts are often reactive rather than proactive when it comes to homelessness. We need more integrated strategies that combine infrastructure development with social services to create sustainable solutions. The absence of a cohesive plan often results in piecemeal responses that fail to address the root causes of homelessness.

This remark suggests that current planning efforts are insufficiently coordinated and often fail to address homelessness comprehensively. This aligns with the submission of Adewale (2022), who noted that the absence of a cohesive plan often results in piecemeal responses that fail to address the root causes of homelessness in Nigerian urban centres.

The overall narratives of residents on the negative impacts of homelessness on the urban milieu illustrate the complex interplay between homelessness and urban planning in Lagos. Therefore, addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that considers spatial, infrastructural, social, and economic dimensions to create a more equitable and resilient urban environment.

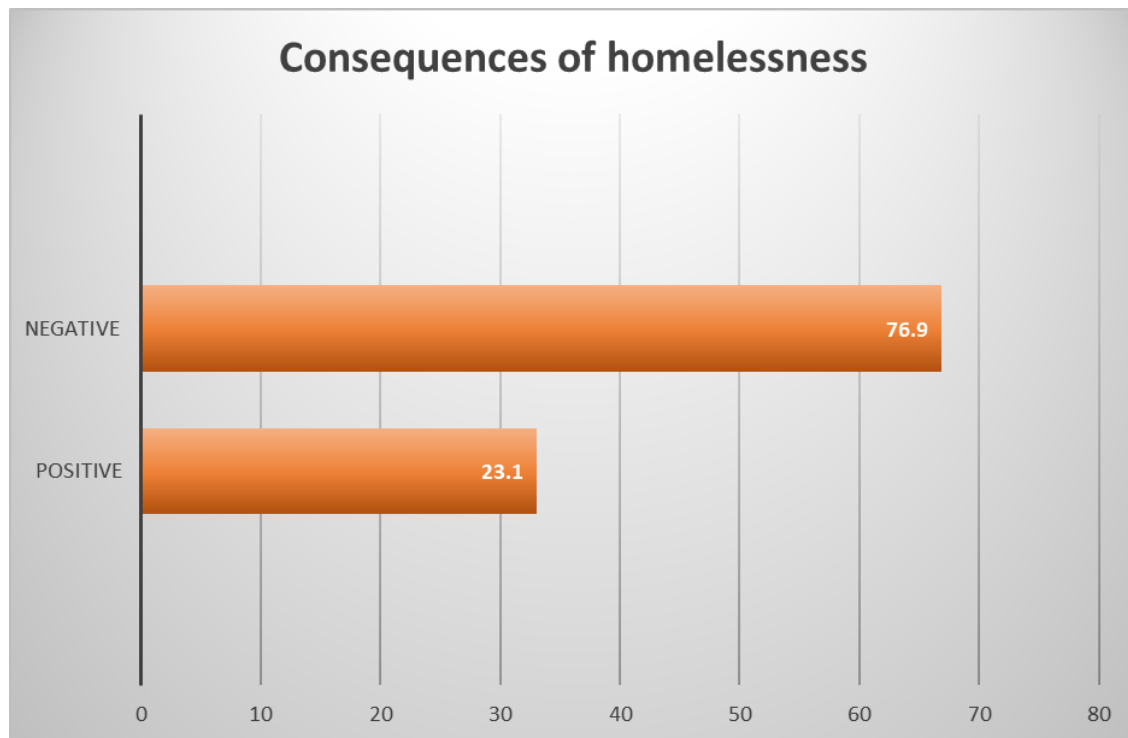


Figure 4: Residents' Perspection of Homelessness in Lagos Metropolis

On the contrary, about 23.1% of the interviewees tended to show acceptance of the menace. They saw nothing wrong with being homeless. The reason why some respondents had this positive mental image of the homeless could be that they had at one time or the other been homeless before. In agreement with this, Lee, Farrell and Link (2004) indicated that persons who have personally experienced homelessness are more likely to be sympathetic and positive about the issue. Thus, some residents in Lagos Metropolis saw homeless individuals as poor people who are helpless and by their circumstances do not have access to land and financial resources and have to engage in informal economic activities, such as street hawking or small-scale trading. By

participating in these activities, they contribute to the local economy and provide goods and services to residents, thereby, impacting the society. According to a respondent at Obalende, some of the street hawkers you see are homeless individuals. They are making an honest living, selling goods or offering services. They contribute to the local economy and bring life to our streets. It is impressive how resourceful they are.

Speaking in the same vein, another respondent residing around Iyana Ipaja Market had this to say:

Homelessness is a normal thing in Nigeria. It has become part of our culture... Some homeless people contribute to our local economy by hawking goods on the streets. Some of them hawk from morning till late in the night. They sleep on the streets so they can quickly get to business again the following day. Thus, they exhibit amazing resourcefulness and a spirit of entrepreneurship. Their ability to make a life in such challenging circumstances is astounding.

The above views are consistent with the submission of Tipple and Speak (2009) that homeless people's participation in vending is a fact of life in developing countries and an important coping strategy on the streets. It should be noted, however, that while it could be acknowledged that the respondents were firm in their support of the homeless working and sleeping on the streets, almost all the respondents were selective in their support. It was obvious from their comments that they made particular reference to the young street working category of the homeless, who were into hawking and trading while they were silent about other categories. For instance, a respondent at Idumota said it this way:

The fact that the homeless people, especially the young ones among them, who are selling things are economically active and support their families, in my opinion, deserves recognition. In addition, they are preparing for adult responsibilities.

Those who sympathized with the homeless also considered them as victims of their circumstances, living on the streets for causes that are beyond their control.

Although there are significant consequences from the increasing number of homeless persons, these people are not to blame for their situation. They are homeless as a result of escalating poverty, familial neglect, and government incompetence. (A female resident at Idumota).

Another resident rallies support for the homeless by saying this:

To be honest, I don't see any problems with the homeless. It is a common urban phenomenon that is present in all global metropolitan centres, including those with the highest levels of economic development. Some of them engage in some income-generating activities; they labour for pay; some are load carriers, some are street vendors, and some shine shoes. They are not as bad as people portray them; just that they are not financially buoyant to rent an apartment in the city. (A male youth living around Idumota Market).

It is important, however, to note that the general perception of the homeless depends on the activities they engage in on the streets. It is clear that those who provide valuable and essential services to the public are perceived differently from those whose activities are questionable such as thuggery, stealing, pickpocketing and so on.

In another dimension, some respondents noted that homelessness raises awareness about social issues like poverty and housing insecurity, encouraging advocacy and support for social programmes and policies. A female respondent around Mushin presented her narrative thus:

... homelessness has helped to increase awareness, and it is crucial because it shifts societal perceptions and inspires collective action. When more people understand the complex factors contributing to homelessness—such as economic disparities, lack of affordable housing, and systemic challenges—it fosters empathy and drives support for effective solutions. Awareness not only prompts individuals to advocate for better social policies and resources but also encourages communities to come together, offering tangible support

through shelters, outreach programs, and initiatives aimed at long-term solutions. Ultimately, by raising awareness, we empower ourselves to address homelessness with compassion and determination, creating real change in our urban environments.

Similarly, another female respondent at Oshodi pointed this out:

When people understand the challenges faced by individuals experiencing homelessness—whether it's through personal stories, data-driven insights, or community outreach—they are more likely to support initiatives aimed at providing shelter, resources, and long-term solutions. Awareness doesn't just shine a light on the issue; it inspires advocacy, drives policy change, and encourages collaboration between government, non-profits, and the private sector. By raising awareness, we empower communities to take meaningful steps toward ending homelessness, creating a more inclusive and compassionate society for everyone.

It is clear from the above narratives that homelessness serves as a poignant catalyst for raising awareness, shedding light on societal injustices and fostering empathy within communities. By illuminating the struggles faced by homeless individuals and families, it inspires advocacy, community engagement, and informed discussions on effective solutions. In the long run, heightened awareness not only drives efforts to address homelessness but also cultivates a collective commitment to creating a more inclusive and supportive society for all.

However, the general analyses revealed that the majority of the interviewed residents had negative perceptions of homelessness, while a negligible population had positive perspectives. In other words, homelessness in Lagos generally had more negative impacts on the urban environment than positive ones. These negative impacts included the proliferation of informal settlements in unplanned areas, and straining urban infrastructure and services such as water, sanitation, and transportation. This phenomenon disrupts land use patterns, poses health and safety risks due to poor living conditions, and affects urban aesthetics and image. This perceptual pattern is not a peculiar feature in Nigeria, it has a global trait. For example, in the United States of America, the judiciary system, the police, the media, the business community and society in general believe that homeless people are a group of criminals (Hsu et al., 2020; Meinbresse et al., 2014). It has also been reported that in Cape Town, South Africa, society regards the homeless as deviants (Johnsen et al., 2018; Ross, 2010).

From the foregoing, it can be concluded that the phenomenon of homelessness in Lagos Metropolis had physical planning implications or considerations and consequences related to the development and organisation of physical spaces within the city, which could arise from decisions made by urban planners, architects, policymakers and community stakeholders regarding the design, layout, infrastructure and land use of the urban area. Thus, these implications should not be taken too lightly when addressing the phenomenon of homelessness in Lagos Metropolis, and by extension, in Nigerian cities, if a lasting solution is desired.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, it is revealed that residents of Lagos had predominantly negative views regarding the physical planning implications of homelessness. The majority (76.9%) perceived homelessness as having adverse effects on the urban environment. Key concerns included the unchecked expansion of informal settlements, which exacerbates pressure on urban infrastructure and services such as water, sanitation, and transportation. Additionally, homelessness disrupts land use patterns, leading to inefficient and chaotic urban development. Homelessness has significantly contributed to the rise in crime rates and safety concerns. Poor living conditions associated with homelessness also pose health and safety risks and detract from the city's overall aesthetic and image.

Arising from the residents' standpoint and observations that homelessness has an adverse impact on urban planning and infrastructure, characterized by strained services, crime, disrupted land use, health risks, and negative effects on urban aesthetics, attempts at addressing the phenomenon should not be without recourse to urban planning and management. Therefore, attention must be given to developing and implementing policies to manage urban spaces and informal settlements. The urban spaces and settlements should be designed with greater sensitivity towards the needs of vulnerable groups, including the homeless. This does not necessitate a complete redesign of current planning and design practices but rather the political will and technical expertise to apply sustainable principles. These principles include mixed land uses that enhance social and economic opportunities, pedestrian-friendly and human-scale development, and crime prevention through environmental

design. The fields of urban planning and design should offer valuable principles to help improve the conditions for the homeless.

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