

Research Article

Determinants of Livability and Social Equity in Vulnerable Neighbourhoods of Southwestern Nigeria

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Abstract

Urban livability in vulnerable communities is closely related to the distribution of urban resources and the socioeconomic circumstances of residents. This study examined the relationship between livability and social equity in vulnerable urban communities in Lagos and Ibadan, Southwestern Nigeria. Data were obtained from 1,190 respondents across selected communities using a structured questionnaire, supported by field observations and spatial assessment. Descriptive statistics, independent-samples *t*-tests and weighted mean analysis were used to examine socioeconomic differences and respondents' perceptions of livability and social equity. Spatial differences were assessed between the two cities. The results show significant inter-city differences in educational attainment and monthly income, while gender, age, number of children, household size and marital status did not differ significantly between the two cities. Respondents generally regarded social inclusion, access to urban services, spatial opportunity, safety, education, healthcare and equitable resource allocation as important components of livability. The overall mean score for the physical and social dimensions of livability was 4.02, while the corresponding mean for resource allocation and livability was 4.12 on a five-point likert scale. However, respondents expressed weaker confidence in the existence of deliberate institutional commitment to social equity within their communities. The findings indicate that vulnerability in the study areas is not explained by socioeconomic conditions alone; it is also reflected in unequal access to services, opportunities and neighbourhood resources. The study concludes that improving livability in vulnerable communities requires greater attention to the spatial distribution of infrastructure, equitable access to urban opportunities and meaningful participation in local decision-making.

Keywords

Urban Livability, Vulnerable Communities, Infrastructure, Accessibility, Southwestern Nigeria

1. Introduction

Nigeria is urbanising at a pace, matched only by few countries in the world. This exponential increase is best understood, when considering the leap from under seven million Nigerian

urban dwellers in 1960 to over 128 million in 2024 with a projection of 264 million urban dwellers in the year 2050 [1]. This demographic alteration however, has not been accompanied

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by an attendant investment in housing, infrastructure, or public utilities, leaving urban areas without the capacity required to manage urban growth. The result is a built environment increasingly defined by spatial inequality, where prosperity and poverty exist side by side, often within the same metropolitan area. The consequences of this uneven urbanisation are perhaps most visible in the proliferation of informal settlements. Across Nigeria's major cities such as, Lagos, Kano, Port Harcourt, Abuja, and Ibadan, millions of households live in overcrowded slum-like conditions, where basic utilities such as access to potable water, proper sanitation, healthcare, and adequate roads are lacking. This has led to the worsening of the national housing deficit, in which low-income household, settle for informal settlements, often characterized by makeshift wooden shacks and overcrowded rooms without basic amenities. Notably, these communities are usually systematically excluded from the benefits of urban development. The issue of inequity is a fundamental issue, deserving of both research and policy intervention. Research has consistently shown that infrastructure and services in Nigerian cities are distributed in ways that favour wealthier neighbourhoods while leaving poorer communities underserved. A World Bank analysis of eleven major Nigerian cities identified five core challenges that constrain urban livability: rapid population growth and uncontrolled spatial expansion, deficits in affordable housing and high levels of informality, limited basic services and poor urban mobility, increased disaster and climate risks, and a lagging business environment [2]. These challenges are not even across urban space. They are concentrated in particular places where low-income households are compelled to live.

The concept of livability offers a useful lens through which one social inequality may be examined. Livability refers to the quality of life experienced by residents of a given place, with respect to their access to essential services, safe housing, economic opportunity, and a healthy environment. While the term has been used in various ways across different disciplines, at its core, livability is about whether a place supports the well-being of those who live there. In the Nigerian context, where rapid urbanisation has outpaced planning and service delivery, livability is not given. Empirical evidence has shown that it is unevenly distributed, and shaped by historical patterns of investment, land-use decisions, and the differential enforcement of planning regulations [3]. Social equity, on the other hand refers to the fair distribution of urban resources and opportunities across different groups and neighbourhoods. It is concerned with whether the benefits of urban development are shared broadly or concentrated among the already advantaged. In cities like Lagos and Ibadan, where spatial inequality is deeply entrenched, social equity is not merely an abstract, it is a pressing practical concern. When some neighbourhoods have access to functioning schools, health clinics, and reliable water supply while others do not, the resulting disparities accumulate over time, affecting health outcomes, educational attainment, and economic mobility. The importance of understanding how livability and social equity are connected, and

what can be done to address the spatial injustices that characterise Nigerian cities, can therefore not be understated.

Despite the growing recognition of these issues, there remains a significant gap in empirical research that systematically examine the determinants of livability and social equity in Nigeria's vulnerable neighbourhoods. Much of the existing literature overlooks the intricate interaction between specific neighbourhood characteristics such as housing location, land-use compatibility, safety, and access to services and residents' perceptions of their quality of life [4, 5]. It is this gap that the present study seeks to address. The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature on livability, social equity, and urban marginalisation, with particular attention to the Nigerian context. Section 3 describes the study area, sampling strategy, and analytical methods. Section 4 presents the empirical findings, including the results of the correlation analysis, Principal Component Analysis, and regression modelling. Section 5 discusses the implications of the findings for planning theory and practice. Section 6 concludes with a summary of the key findings and recommendations for policy and future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Concept of Livability

Livability as a concept is an essential aspect of urban studies and a reflection of residents' experiences in their locations. While its use is widely connected to urban planning, geography, environmental studies and public health, it has broader implications influenced by the social, economic, environmental and spatial conditions of a place, as well as by the expectations and experiences of its residents [6]. Livability is equally associated with residents' perceived well-being and social cohesion, resulting from the interaction between the built environment, urban design, accessibility to goods and services, public infrastructure, health services, and environmental conditions [7]. Bedi *et al.*, (2023) [8] argued that livability is context-dependent and cannot be adequately represented by a single indicator because different population groups experience and value urban environments differently. Their review identified physical infrastructure, economic conditions, social relationships, environmental quality, and institutional arrangements as interconnected determinants of urban livability. Importantly, they argued that equity must be explicitly incorporated into livability assessment, particularly where vulnerable populations and informal settlements are concerned.

The multidimensional nature of livability spans residents' experience on housing quality, accessibility, transportation, health, education, employment, environmental quality, safety, social interaction, public services, recreation and neighbourhood amenities [9]. In similar vein, social equity provides an allied concept which explores the improvements in average urban conditions, often concealing substantial inequities be-

tween neighbourhoods and population groups. This issue becomes more important in developing countries, where there is a contrasting phenomenon of urban growth without the expected corresponding infrastructural improvement, with respect to housing, environmental upgrade, and equal access to public services. Thus, poor housing, inadequate sanitation, unreliable water supply, limited access to healthcare and education, poor transportation, and environmental hazards in the neighbourhood, which indicates residents' continuous inability to enjoy better livability continue to impede livability [10]. Individuals' perception with regards to safety, proximity to the city centre, place attachment, social cohesion, and quietness of the environment forms the determinants of livability satisfaction.

2.2. Concepts of Neighbourhood Vulnerability

Neighborhood vulnerability refers to the extent to which a geographically defined urban community is vulnerable to social, economic, environmental, and physical stresses, as well as its limited ability to predict, cope with, withstand, and recover from such shocks. It is thus a spatial approach that acknowledges that vulnerability is determined not only by the features of individual households but also by the conditions of the area in which individuals reside. Socioeconomic vulnerability is to be viewed as multifaceted, dynamic, and regionally diverse, reflecting the interaction of demographic, economic, geographic, social, and environmental circumstances [11]. The contemporary understanding of vulnerability has evolved beyond the earlier belief that vulnerability is simply an exposure to a threat, vulnerability is increasingly regarded as a combination of exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity. The degree to which a neighbourhood and its population are exposed to hazards or adverse conditions is referred to as exposure; the extent to which residents are likely to be adversely affected is referred to as sensitivity; and the ability of households and communities to anticipate, cope with, respond to, and recover from adverse conditions is known as adaptive capacity [12].

At the neighbourhood level, vulnerability is influenced by a variety of socioeconomic, demographic, housing, infrastructure, environmental, and institutional factors. Socioeconomic disadvantages, unemployment, low educational attainment, and low household income might impair citizens' ability to adapt effectively to shocks [13]. Similarly, overcrowded or deteriorating housing, insufficient transportation, restricted access to healthcare and education, poor water and sanitation facilities, and insufficient waste management can all raise the susceptibility of neighbourhood residents. The spatial dimension of neighbourhood vulnerability is an important consideration. Vulnerability is rarely evenly spread within a city. Rather, disadvantaged populations and poor urban environments tend to congregate spatially. Socioeconomic vulnerability varies across regional and temporal scales, and no single collection of indicators can appropriately describe vulnerability in

every geographic location. Recent research emphasises the need to understand neighbourhood vulnerability as a multifaceted entity. Uong *et al.* (2023) [10], for example, created a multidomain neighbourhood environmental vulnerability score that included demographic, economic, residential, and health-related factors. Their findings revealed significant regional variability in vulnerability and identified various neighbourhood risk profiles. Importantly, their findings showed that neighbourhoods might experience many combinations of vulnerabilities rather than being labelled as "vulnerable" or "not vulnerable". This notion is especially significant in vulnerable areas in developing nations like Nigeria, where rapid urbanisation can coexist with inadequate infrastructure, informal housing, environmental degradation, and social disparity. Poverty, poor housing, deficient infrastructure, environmental exposure, and limited institutional capacity can all contribute to neighbourhood vulnerability. As a result, a community may become vulnerable not because of a single hazard, but because multiple disadvantages reinforce one another. Low-income communities in a flood-prone areas, for instance, may be more vulnerable if the houses are poorly built, the drainage system is inadequate, the roads are inaccessible, and residents have limited financial resources to migrate or recover after floods. Similarly, inadequate water and sanitation can increase health risks, while poor mobility can limit access to jobs, education, and healthcare. Vulnerability is thus the result of a relationship between population characteristics and environmental variables [14].

3. Methodology

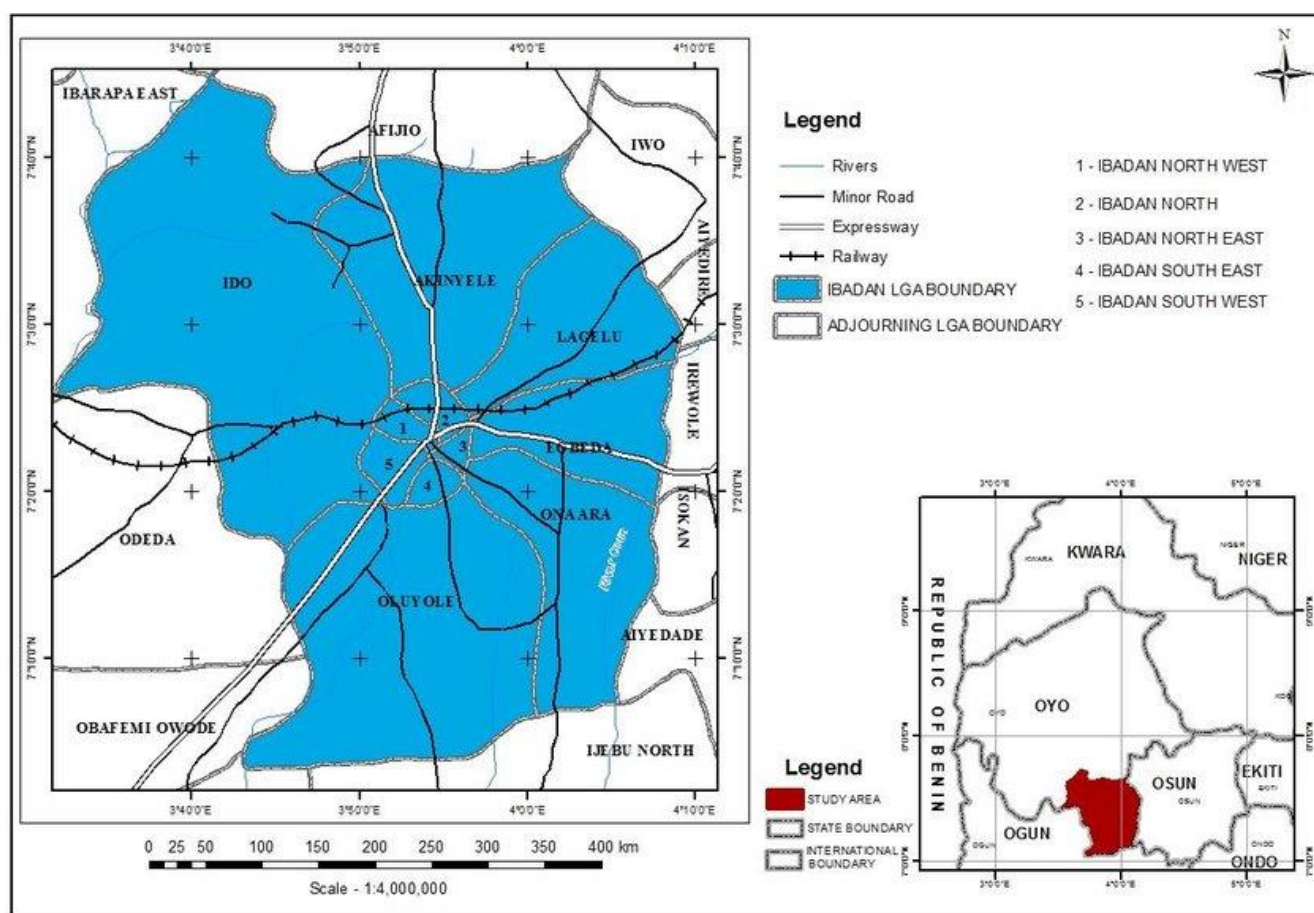
3.1. Study Area

The study considered two urbanized cities in Southwestern Nigeria, namely Ibadan, the state capital of Oyo State and Lagos, Lagos State.

Ibadan, as shown in Figure 1, is spatially located between latitude 7 023 °and 7 054 °North and longitude 3053 °and 3054 ° East, sits approximately 234 meters above sea level. The climatic amenity of Ibadan consisting of two major seasons (rain: March and October and dry: November and February) coupled with the natural vegetation of the Guinea Savanna zone makes agriculture the mainstay activity cum occupation among the Ibadan populace. However, while agricultural activities are mostly secondary, Ibadan still features primary farming functions. Where there are large expanses of land areas, farming activities are usually practiced in form of farm settlements, livestock rearing or plantation agriculture [15]. The population of Ibadan rose from 621,000 in 1963 to 2,185,000 in 1999 at a growth rate of 2.29% and increased to 2,567,000 in 2006 at a growth rate of 2.32% [16]. The Ibadan metropolis houses multiple slum-centric, vulnerable communities, situated chiefly in 5 local government areas namely, Ibadan North, Ibadan North-East, Ibadan North-West, Ibadan South-West, and Ibadan Southeast [17]. Three local government areas,

namely Ibadan North-East, Ibadan South-East and Ibadan South-west were selected for the study, being the location of some of the largest slums within the municipality. [Figure 1](#)

presents the Map of the Ibadan metropolis with its Local Government Areas.

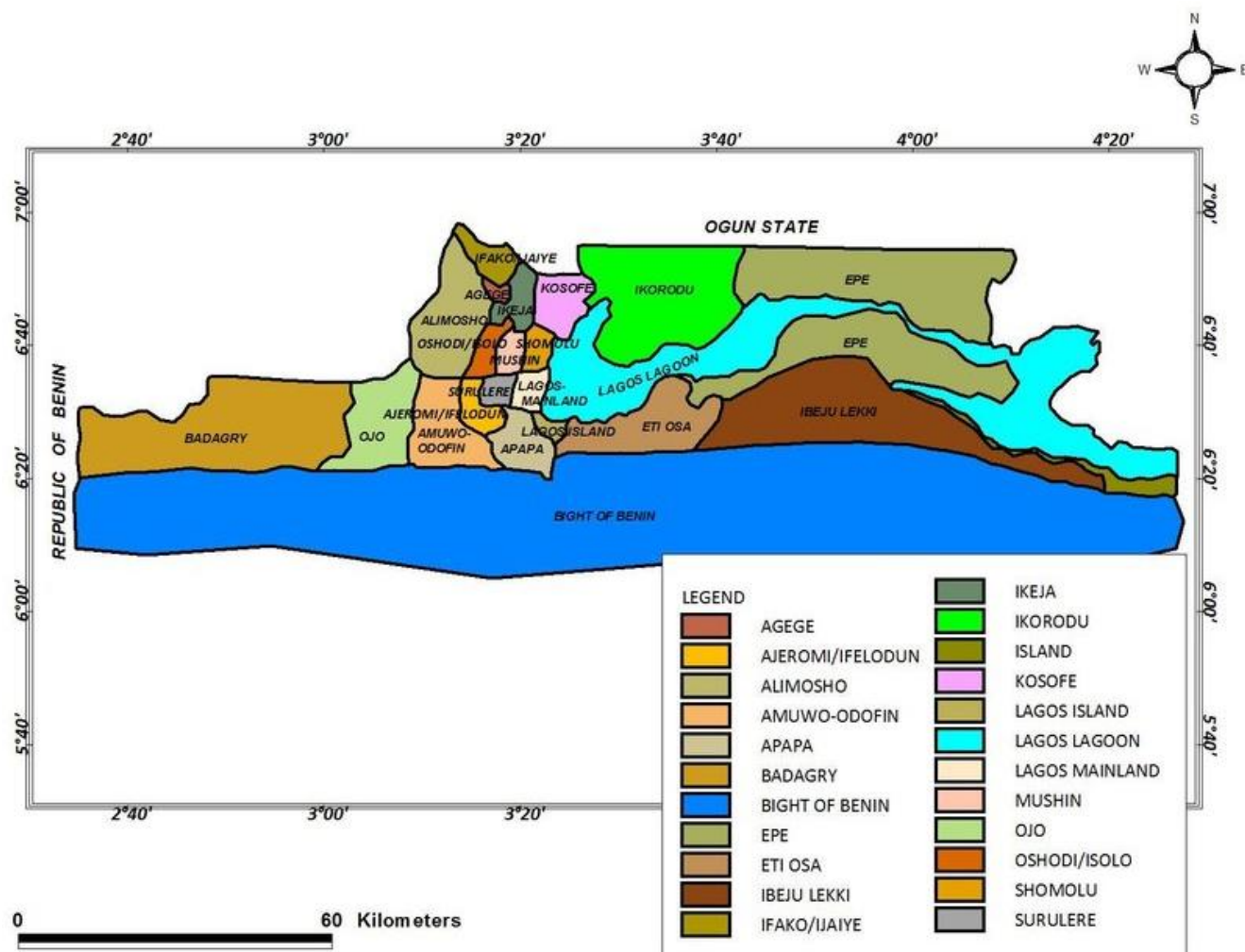


Source: Office of Surveyor General of the Federation

Figure 1. Ibadan Metropolis and its adjoining Local Government Areas (Inset: Oyo State Showing the Study Area).

Lagos, spatially located between latitude 6.5244° N, and longitude 3.3792° E, is a large metropolitan and Nigeria's economic powerhouse. Lagos State comprises twenty Local Government Areas (LGA) and thirty-seven Local Council Development Areas (LCDA), which is a testament to its vast size and administrative complexity. Being an economic hub, Lagos has a notably diverse composition of ethnic dwellers. Being an indigenous Yoruba city, Lagos is inhabited mostly by the Yoruba ethnic group, yet it is vastly inhabited by other tribes such as Edo, Fulani, Hausa, Igbo, and Ijaw, as well as the Ewe and Ogu people in the far western part of the state. Economically, Lagos State is one of the fastest-growing urban areas in the world and is generally accepted to be the financial nerve centre of Nigeria. Lagos State is equally a key culture,

education, and transportation hub for Nigeria and Sub-Saharan Africa. Additionally, the state also has the highest literacy rate in Nigeria. Figure 2 shows the Map of Lagos state with its Local Government areas. In Lagos State, Lagos Mainland LGA, Ojodu LCDA, carved out of the old Ikeja Local Government Area, by a bill of the Lagos state House of Assembly in 2003, and Ilaje Local Council Development Area (LCDA), carved out of the old Somolu Local Government Area, by a bill of the Lagos state House of Assembly in 2013, shall be selected for the study. These three Local Governments have some of the most vulnerable slum communities in Lagos State, namely, Makoko, Kara Berger and Ilaje respectively [18].



Source: Ministry of Physical Planning, Lagos State.

Figure 2. Lagos state and its Local Government Areas.

3.2. Sampling Method and Sample Size

The prevailing population of the selected study area was determined by projecting the 1991 population census data to 2024, based on an annual growth rate of 3.2% using the population growth formula as follows:

$$N_t = P_e^{r \cdot t} \quad (1)$$

Thereafter, the number of Household in the study area was estimated based on an assumption of 5 persons per household. Thus, the number of housing units of the targeted population in the selected vulnerable communities in Oyo and Lagos states was estimated to 158,543 Housing units. The study surveyed 0.75% of the total estimated number of households, which was computed to be one thousand one hundred and ninety (1,190) respondents via questionnaire administration. The questionnaires were proportionally shared among each Local Government Area and LCDAs (High residential density), based on their housing units, covering over Ninety

neighbourhood (90). In the administration of questionnaires, the targeted population (respondents) was identified to form smaller groups (clusters). The cluster sampling was based on criteria such as income, health state (physical challenge), age, location, social class, ethnicity, and income as selection variables. Then, respondents were selected using both purposive and random sampling. This was iterated until the required number of units for the sample size was completed for each of the local governments' areas across residential densities. The multi-stage sampling techniques entails six stages as follows:

Stage 1: The existing Senatorial Districts in the state were used as sampling units. Oyo State and Lagos States have three Senatorial Districts each comprising of thirty-three (33) and twenty (20) local government Areas respectively.

Stage 2: Four (4) Senatorial districts, (One in Oyo state and three in Lagos state) were purposively selected. These are: Oyo South in Oyo state, Lagos Central, Lagos West, and Lagos East in Lagos state. The selected Senatorial Districts were chosen, considering their peculiarity and the notable existence of informal settlements, consisting of vulnerable and marginalized individuals.

Stage 3: Six (6) Local Government Areas were purposively selected based on their reputation of containing large slum-centric informal settlements, with marginalized residents. Other factors considered include their distinguishable distinct residential densities and their sensitive landscape making them vulnerable to climate change. In Oyo South, three out of the five LGAs in Ibadan metropolis were selected which are Ibadan North-East, Ibadan South-East, and Ibadan South-West Local Government Areas while in Lagos State, Lagos Central, Lagos Mainland, Lagos West, Ojodu, Lagos East and Ilaje (LCDA) were selected.

Stage 4: Sixty-two (62) wards with the unique attributes of housing major slums were selected.

Stage 5: This stage zeroed in on ninety (90) localities, with major slums from the sixty-two (62) political wards. These neighbourhoods consist vulnerable residents dwelling in high residential density areas.

Stage 6: Purposive and simple random sampling method was used in the selection of respondents, while cluster sampling was used in the selection of marginalized individuals in the study areas. This was based on the varying estimated housing units in each selected vulnerable neighbourhood/ communities in each selected LGA /LCDAs of the study area.

3.3. Data Analysis

The analysis combined descriptive, comparative and spatial approaches to examine the relationship between socioeconomic conditions, livability and social equity in the selected vulnerable communities. Questionnaire responses were coded and analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were first used to summarise the socioeconomic characteristics of respondents, including sex, age, marital status, educational attainment, monthly income, household size, ethnicity and religion. Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations were used to describe the distribution of the variables within the selected communities. To determine whether socioeconomic characteristics differed significantly between the Ibadan and Lagos samples, independent-samples *t*-tests were conducted. The analysis considered sex, educational qualification, number of children, age, monthly income, household size and marital status. Levene's test was used to assess equality of variances, and the appropriate *t*-test result was interpreted at the 5% significance level. A probability value below 0.05 was taken as evidence of a statistically significant difference between the two city groups. Respondents' perceptions of livability and social equity were assessed using five-point Likert-scale items ranging from 1

(strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Weighted mean scores were calculated for individual indicators and for the respective dimensions of livability and social equity. The items covered social inclusion, accessibility to infrastructure and services, spatial opportunity, urban planning, housing, safety, environmental conditions, resource allocation, employment, education, healthcare, political participation and institutional support. Higher mean scores indicate stronger agreement with the corresponding statement. The physical and social dimensions of livability were assessed separately from indicators relating to resource allocation and social equity. This distinction was maintained to avoid treating access to urban resources and residents' broader assessment of livability as a single construct. The resulting mean scores were subsequently compared across the indicators to identify the dimensions receiving the strongest and weakest levels of agreement. Spatial analysis was used to examine the distribution of infrastructure and public services within the selected areas. Facilities including healthcare centres, schools, public utilities and other community services were georeferenced and mapped. Higher Order Nearest Neighbour analysis was used to assess the spatial distribution and proximity of facilities, while spatial autocorrelation and density analysis were applied where appropriate to identify areas characterised by concentrations or deficiencies in infrastructure and services. The spatial results were interpreted alongside the socioeconomic and perception data to establish whether differences in the physical distribution of urban resources corresponded with differences in residents' socioeconomic circumstances and reported livability. The analysis therefore combined evidence at two levels: the household level, represented by respondents' socioeconomic characteristics and perceptions, and the spatial level, represented by the distribution and accessibility of infrastructure and services. This integration provided the basis for assessing social equity as both a socioeconomic and spatial condition rather than solely as a measure of individual income or demographic status.

4. Results and Findings

4.1. Spatial Variation in Socio-economic Characteristics

The *t*-test analysis to test the study's null hypothesis which states that "there is no spatial variation in Socio-economic characteristics of respondents in vulnerable urban communities in Southwest, Nigeria" is presented in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. *T-test: Spatial Variation in Socio-economic characteristics of Respondents.*

Independent Variables	Town			Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means							
		M	SD	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
											Lower	Upper
Sex	Ibadan	1.5507	0.49792	3.153	.076	-.934	1188	.350	-.02718	.02910	-.08426	.02991
	Lagos	1.5779	0.49426									
Educational qualification	Ibadan	3.6143	1.16145	14.832	.000	4.799	1140.619	.000	.34357	.07159	.20310	.48642
	Lagos	3.2707	1.29568									
No of children	Ibadan	1.9423	1.09992	1.283	.258	1.390	1188	.165	.08645	.06219	-.03556	.20846
	Lagos	1.8559	1.02926									
Age	Ibadan	1.6879	0.62802	.001	.982	.062	1081.279	.951	.00228	.03684	-.07000	.07457
	Lagos	1.6856	0.62747									
Monthly Income	Ibadan	1.6083	0.83719	90.619	.000	-15.052	1186.001	.000	-.84434	.05609	-.95440	-.73429
	Lagos	2.4527	1.09745									
Household size	Ibadan	2.3658	0.78163	16.234	.000	-.618	1150.558	.537	-.03012	.04872	-.12571	.06547
	Lagos	2.3959	0.89239									
Marital status	Ibadan	2.3837	1.06272	10.835	.001	-1.768	1150.124	.077	-.11703	.06621	-.24693	.01287
	Lagos	2.5007	1.21203									

Source: Authors' Computation, 2026

The result shows that there were significant differences in respondents' educational qualification ($t = 4.799$; $p < 0.001$), as well as monthly income ($t = -15.052$; $p < 0.001$). There was notably a record of higher educational attainment among respondents in Ibadan, while the income level was significantly higher in Lagos. Conversely, no significant difference was reported in gender ($t = -0.934$; $p < 0.350$), number of children ($t = 1.390$; $p < 0.165$), age ($t = 0.062$; $p < 0.951$), household size ($t = -0.618$; $p < 0.537$) and marital status ($t = -1.768$; $p < 0.077$). Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no spatial variation in socio-economic characteristics and the spatial location of vulnerable communities is partially rejected for educational qualification but accepted for the other socio-economic indices including gender, number of children, age, household size, and marital status.

4.2. Spatial Variation in Livability Determinants and Social Equity Measures

Livability encompasses all indices of well beings, quality of life, comfort, safety, and convenience experienced by residents of community and urban environment [19]. These livability indices geared at attaining a secure and sustainable environment include quality housing, transportation, and public services, with a focus on having [20]. In order to examine the physical and social dimensions of livability, allocation of resources, and environmental factors a multi-criteria model was used to analyze each of the respondents' perception dimensions on livability and social equity.

4.2.1. Perception of Physical and Social Dimension of Livability

Table 2 captures respondents' lived realities and their view on how livability may be shaped by socio-physical indicators

such as accessibility, spatial opportunity and social inclusion.

Table 2. Physical and social dimensions of respondents' livability.

Statement	SA (5)		A (4)		U (3)		D (2)		SD (1)		Weighted average	Rmk
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Social inclusion creates a platform for growth and development for everyone.	793	66.6	245	20.6	29	2.4	54	4.5	69	5.8	5209/1190=4.38	SA
Inclusivity reduces poverty in communities.	360	30.3	508	42.7	119	10.0	161	13.5	42	3.5	4553/1190=3.82	A
Physically challenged individuals' educational opportunities are often limited compared to able-bodied individuals.	559	47.0	361	30.3	207	17.4	49	4.1	14	1.2	4972/1190=4.18	A
Inaccessibility of vulnerable communities to basic amenities and infrastructure restricts professional growth for some while providing advantages to others.	404	34.0	537	45.1	47	3.9	141	11.8	61	5.1	4652/1190=3.91	A
There is a conscious commitment to achieving social equity in your community.	183	15.4	419	35.2	34	2.9	38	3.2	516	43.4	3285/1190=2.76	U
Social inclusion and participation improve the overall quality of life and well-being for everyone.	424	35.6	557	46.8	120	10.1	47	3.9	42	3.5	4844/1190=4.07	A
Livability is largely dependent on social class.	525	44.1	408	34.3	117	9.8	136	11.4	4	0.3	4882/1190=4.10	A
Livable communities offer more opportunities and resources compared to vulnerable areas.	419	35.2	487	40.9	211	17.7	41	3.4	32	2.7	4790/1190=4.03	A
Individuals' locations can boost creativity and provide opportunities for entrepreneurship.	611	51.3	378	31.8	63	5.3	107	9.0	31	2.6	5001/1190=4.20	A
Cultural vitality and diversity enhance livability in communities.	289	24.3	152	12.8	152	12.8	418	35.1	179	15.0	3524/1190=2.96	U
Efficiency and adaptability in urban planning contribute to improved livability.	516	43.4	485	40.8	104	8.7	37	3.1	48	4.0	4954/1190=4.16	A
Mixed land use improves livability by ensuring access to diverse facilities and services.	359	30.2	525	44.1	76	6.4	187	15.7	43	3.6	4540/1190=3.82	A

Statement	SA (5)		A (4)		U (3)		D (2)		SD (1)		Weighted average	Rmk
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Physical access to spaces, such as parks, markets, and institutions, enhances livability.	539	45.3	376	31.6	162	13.6	42	3.5	71	6.0	4840/1190=4.07	A
Access to services like healthcare, education, and transportation is crucial for livability.	577	48.5	434	36.5	14	1.2	104	8.7	61	5.1	4932/1190=4.14	A

Source: Author's Computation, 2026.

*SA- Strongly Agree, A- Agree, U-Undecided, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly disagree.

Table 3 presents an overall mean score respondent's perception about livability and equity.

Table 3. Mean value of respondents' physical and social dimensions of livability.

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Rank	Std. Dev.
Social inclusion creates a platform for growth and development for everyone.	1190	1.00	5.00	4.38	1	1.11929
Inclusivity reduces poverty in communities.	1190	1.00	5.00	3.82	10	1.11001
Physically challenged individuals' educational opportunities are often limited compared to able-bodied individuals.	1190	1.00	5.00	4.18	3	0.93984
Inaccessibility of vulnerable communities to basic amenities and infrastructure restricts professional growth for some while providing advantages to others.	1190	1.00	5.00	3.91	9	1.18609
There is a conscious commitment to achieving social equity in your community.	1190	1.00	5.00	2.76	13	1.01041
Social inclusion and participation improve the overall quality of life and well-being for everyone.	1190	1.00	5.00	4.07	7	0.96362
Livability is largely dependent on social class.	1190	1.00	5.00	4.10	6	1.00841
Livable communities offer more opportunities and resources compared to vulnerable areas.	1190	1.00	5.00	4.03	8	0.95361
Individuals' locations can boost creativity and provide opportunities for entrepreneurship.	1190	1.00	5.00	4.20	2	1.05850
Cultural vitality and diversity enhance livability in communities.	1190	1.00	5.00	2.96	12	1.17364
Efficiency and adaptability in urban planning contribute to improved livability.	1190	1.00	5.00	4.16	4	0.99129
Mixed land use improves livability by ensuring access to diverse facilities and services.	1190	1.00	5.00	3.82	10	1.13412
Physical access to spaces, such as parks, markets, and institutions, enhances livability.	1190	1.00	5.00	4.07	7	1.12417
Access to services like healthcare, education, and transportation is crucial for livability.	1190	1.00	5.00	4.14	5	1.13479
Overall mean (M) = 4.02						

Source: Authors' computation, 2026

Given the overall mean score of 4.02, there appeared to be a general positive consensus that socio-physical factors significantly influence urban livability. Specifically, respondents' overwhelmingly agreement that "*social inclusion creates a platform for growth and development for everyone*" ($M = 4.38$; $SD = 1.12$) depicts an experiential understanding of how fundamental an inclusive social system is to sustainable urban development. This view that inclusivity is a prerequisite for sustained urban livability equally agrees with the established, empirically proven position of the United Nation Human Settlement Program [21]. In the same vein, respondents strongly agreed that spatial location influences the opportunity for economic growth and entrepreneurial development ($M = 4.20$; $SD = 1.06$). This position offers insight into the mindset of migrants who gravitates more towards urban spaces where access to markets, infrastructure, employment and economic opportunities abound, inadvertently leading to overcrowded resources where proper urban planning is absent. Respondents expressed agreement that physical challenge inhibits people from educational opportunities ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.94$). This reinforces the need for inclusive urban development, especially in light of respondents' overwhelming view that urban planning significantly influences livability. This is logically inferred from respondents' agreement that efficient and adaptable urban planning significantly improve livability ($M = 4.16$,

$SD = 0.99$). they equally viewed mixed land-use development as important for enhanced accessibility to infrastructure and public services ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.13$). This underscores the need to adopt compact, mixed-use inclusive urban planning and development. Respondents' mean perception that accessibility to urban services such as education, healthcare and transportation improve livability was ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 1.13$), while physical access to public spaces, institutions and markets was perceived as critical to improved livability ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 1.12$). Access to public infrastructure and services is therefore an inalienable component of enhance livability. Further analysis shows that livability is influenced by the social strata to which respondents belong to or can access ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 1.01$). By implication, access urban resources, as well as economic and mobility opportunities is heavily mediated by socio-economic classification. Thus, cases of limited access to opportunities, and economic stagnation experienced by vulnerable individual may be traced to underlying structural inequality. In the contrary, respondents' exhibited skepticism while answering the question on whether they perceived concerted commitment by stakeholders and governmental entities to attain social equity within communities, recording the lowest mean score ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.01$). Also, the response to whether cultural vitality and diversity can contribute to livability recorded a mean score of ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 1.17$).

4.2.2. Perception of Respondents on Allocation of Resources and Livability

Table 4 captures respondents' view on how equitable resource allocation may improve social equity and livability.

Table 4. Respondents' Perception of Allocation of Resources and Livability.

Statement	SA (5)		A (4)		U (3)		D (2)		SD (1)		WA	Rmk
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
High-quality education is essential for social equity and long-term community development.	709	59.6	296	24.9	70	5.9	68	5.7	47	3.9	5122/1190=4.30	SA
Skill acquisition and empowerment programs improve individual opportunities.	539	45.3	540	45.4	82	6.9	29	2.4	0	0.0	5159/1190=4.33	SA
Limited availability of high-paying job opportunities affects social equity.	472	39.7	488	41.0	143	12.0	65	5.5	22	1.8	4893/1190=4.11	A
Access to low-income housing schemes is crucial for vulnerable groups.	477	40.1	514	43.2	66	5.5	115	9.7	18	1.5	4881/1190=4.10	A
Political appointment slots are unequally distributed across social classes.	471	39.6	332	27.9	88	7.4	156	13.1	143	12.0	4402/1190=3.70	A
Access to grants and institu-	673	56.6	331	27.8	60	5.0	99	8.3	27	2.3	6718/1190=5.65	SA

Statement	SA (5)		A (4)		U (3)		D (2)		SD (1)		WA	Rmk
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
tional connections significantly impacts individual progress.												
Public engagement in decision-making processes fosters inclusive community development.	643	54.0	335	28.2	94	7.9	95	8.0	23	1.9	5050/1190=4.24	SA
Climate-conscious communities create a more sustainable and livable environment.	429	36.1	311	26.1	228	19.2	170	14.3	52	4.4	4465/1190=3.75	A
A focus on safety and security development improves the local economy.	610	51.3	392	32.9	43	3.6	85	7.1	60	5.0	4977/1190=4.18	A
Political inclusivity and fair representation promote social equity.	548	46.2	334	28.2	121	10.2	95	8.0	88	7.4	4717/1190=3.96	A
Providing location advantages for underserved areas enhances livability.	583	49.0	418	35.1	65	5.5	50	4.2	74	6.2	4956/1190=4.16	A
Access to quality healthcare and food security ensures better well-being.	618	51.9	419	35.2	23	1.9	98	8.2	32	2.7	5063/1190=4.25	SA
Livability is significantly influenced by public health initiatives and safety measures.	559	47.0	403	33.9	143	12.0	50	4.2	35	2.9	4971/1190=4.18	A
Improved quality of life and well-being are dependent on equitable access to basic amenities.	537	45.1	431	36.2	67	5.6	129	10.8	26	2.2	4894/1190=4.11	A

Source: Author's Computation, 2026.

*SA- Strongly Agree, A- Agree, U-Undecided, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly disagree, WA- Weighted average.

Table 5 presents the mean score of the respondents' perception on dimension of livability.

Table 5. Mean value of respondents' allocation of resources and livability.

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Rank	Std. Dev
High-quality education is essential for social equity and long-term community development.	1190	1.00	5.00	4.3042	1	1.07102
Skill acquisition and empowerment programs improve individual opportunities.	1190	1.00	5.00	4.3353	2	0.71227
Limited availability of high-paying job opportunities affects social equity.	1190	1.00	5.00	4.1118	10	0.94336
Access to low-income housing schemes is crucial for vulnerable groups.	1190	1.00	5.00	4.1067	11	0.98408
Political appointment slots are unequally distributed across social classes.	1190	1.00	5.00	3.6992	14	1.40954

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Rank	Std. Dev
Access to grants and institutional connections significantly impacts individual progress.	1190	1.00	5.00	4.2807	3	1.03685
Public engagement in decision-making processes fosters inclusive community development.	1190	1.00	5.00	4.2437	5	1.02669
Climate-conscious communities create a more sustainable and livable environment.	1190	1.00	5.00	3.7521	13	1.20689
A focus on safety and security development improves the local economy.	1190	1.00	5.00	4.1824	6	1.12073
Political inclusivity and fair representation promote social equity.	1190	1.00	5.00	3.9772	12	1.24622
Providing location advantages for underserved areas enhances livability.	1190	1.00	5.00	4.1647	8	1.11633
Access to quality healthcare and food security ensures better well-being.	1190	1.00	5.00	4.2546	4	1.02281
Livability is significantly influenced by public health initiatives and safety measures.	1190	1.00	5.00	4.1773	7	0.99603
Improved quality of life and well-being are dependent on equitable access to basic amenities.	1190	1.00	5.00	4.1126	9	1.06117
Overall Mean (M) = 4.12						

Source: Author's computation, 2026.

Given the overall mean score of 4.12, there appeared to be a general positive consensus on the influence of equitable resource allocation on livability. Specifically, respondents' overwhelmingly agreement that "*skill acquisition and empowerment programmes improve individual opportunities*" ($M = 4.34$; $SD = 0.71$) and that "*high-quality education is essential for social equity and long-term community development*" ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 1.07$) underscore the centrality of human capital development in improving socio-economic opportunities and reducing inequality among vulnerable communities in southwest Nigeria. Respondents equally agreed overwhelmingly that access to grants and institutional linkages is an important factor in enhancing individual progress ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 1.04$), they also believed public engagement tends to engender better decision making ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 1.03$). This points to a positive disposition of respondents towards participatory governance and institutional inclusiveness.

Additionally, respondents viewed healthcare and food security as important components of livability ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 1.02$). This indicates the acknowledgement that a wholistic approach to livability goes beyond just physical infrastructure but must integrate elements of social well-being and social services. In the same vein, respondents agreed that investments in public safety and security is cardinal to prosperity and economic development ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.12$), while also agreeing that public health initiatives and safety measure can engender improved livability ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.99$). The survey also examined respondents view in environmental sustainability as a panacea for improved livability. Respondents expressed positive perception toward the opinion that climate-conscious communities contribute to sustainable and livable

environments ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.21$). While this mean score may be relatively lower, yet it reflects a public awareness and increasing understanding of the role of environmental component in achieving sustainable urban livability. Vulnerable communities bear the brunt of environmental and climate related challenges such as flooding, heat stress, among others due to poor urban planning. Politically, respondents perceived political inclusivity and fair representation as central to promoting social equity ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 1.25$). Similarly, there appear to be a lukewarm, but general agreement on the survey "political appointments slots are unequally distributed across social classes" with a mean score ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.41$). Thus, there is more concerted need for a broad-based approach to political inclusion and access to political opportunities across social strata. Other factors of livability considered in this category include equitable access to basic amenities ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 1.06$), affordable housing opportunities ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 0.98$), and employment opportunities ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 0.94$). This analysis reinforces social equity, not as a mere rhetoric, but as a practicable and important factor of livability.

5. Conclusion

This study examined livability and social equity in vulnerable urban communities in Lagos and Ibadan. The findings show that vulnerability is expressed through both socioeconomic differences and unequal access to urban resources. Although the two cities share broadly similar demographic characteristics, significant differences were found in education and income. Respondents also placed strong importance on social inclusion, access to infrastructure and services, education,

healthcare, safety, employment and equitable resource allocation. However, the relatively low perception of institutional commitment to social equity indicates a gap between recognising equity as important and achieving it in practice. Spatial analysis further revealed uneven concentrations of infrastructure and services within both cities. Improving livability in vulnerable communities therefore requires more than increasing aggregate infrastructure provision; it requires attention to where resources are located, who can access them and whether disadvantaged communities are adequately represented in decisions affecting their living environment.

Abbreviations

LGA	Local Government Areas
LCDA	Local Council Development Areas
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

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Oluwaseun Opeyemi Asani: Conceptualization, Resources, Writing – original draft, Literature Review

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David Oyinlade Adejumobi: Validation

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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