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EVALUATING THE HOUSING QUALITY AND STANDARD PARAMETERS IN GWAGWALADA AREA COUNCIL F.C.T., ABUJA

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Abstract

This study addressed the housing quality in Gwagwalada town with specific reference to Gwagwalada Central, Quarters and Kutunku wards. This is because most initial developments in Gwagwalada were based here and common to them all is that the houses have dilapidated over time. The aim of this work was to assess the quality of houses in the study area in relation to housing availability. This aim was achieved by identifying the major dwelling types in the area, examining the facilities in the houses, characterising the houses in the study area and also identifying the housing problems faced by respondents in the study area. This research made use of primary data sources mainly ranging from field observation, personal interview with household heads/landlords to administration of questionnaire. Secondary data sources were also made use of such as textbooks, journals, articles and published texts. The sample survey was 5% of the entire population under study. This study found that most of the respondents were living in the dwelling types that they could afford not because it was suitable for them in terms of the family size and comfortability. The facilities in these dwelling types also varies by wards with quarters ward having highest values of all the modern housing facilities identified in the course of this study. The housing problems faced by respondents were high cost of rent, overcrowding, congestion, indiscriminate waste disposal, development of slum and squatter settlements and lack of good water supply.

Keywords: Housing, Facilities, Amenities, Development, Standards

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Introduction

Among the three necessities of life (food, clothing), is Housing. Housing is the most important for the physical survival of man after the provision of food. Adequate housing contributes to the attainment of physical and moral health of a nation and stimulates the social stability, the work efficiency and the development of the individuals (Oyeyinka 2019). It is also one of the best indicators of a person's standard of living and of his place in the society (Oluwande 2020). Housing, both in units or multiple forms, is a significant component of the physical form and structure of a community, while the human and family contents of the house is part of the very spirit of life and prosperity of the society. As long as people exist, there is the pressing need to have a roof over their heads which strikes a relationship between the population and housing availability and quality. The need for shelter is as old as man himself. Right from the Stone Age up till today, the need for shelter by man is increasing by the day as population increases (Salau, 2021). Man needs shelter to protect him from the vagaries of physical and weather elements such as sun, rain, wind and even from wild animals and also for other protective reasons. In a civilized society, it is an inherent right of every family to live in a decent home at a reasonable cost in a desirable community where the necessary infrastructure is provided (United Nations Commission for Human Settlements, 2012).

However, the bulk of the population in developing countries live according to the situation they find themselves and in fact majority of the people live below poverty line. Similarly we can say that every sane man would like to live in a decent environment that represents housing (Omole, 2011). Housing represents one of the most basic human needs and has a profound impact on health, welfare, social attitudes and economic productivity of the individual. It is also one of the best indicators of a person's standard of living and of his or her place in the society. Despite this essential role played by housing as a basic need, adequate supply of this commodity has been lacking in virtually all societies throughout history (National Population Commission, 2006). This situation is particularly serious in developing countries where population growth and urbanization are increasing very rapidly and where the gap between housing need and supply is greatest. This condition remains because housing has typically been regarded as "unwanted step child", a frustrating nuisance in the family of projects that constitutes development or economic programmes (Olotuah and Adesiji, 2019).

The United Nations Conference on development held in Rio de Janerio in 1992 says that population and housing are key performers in rating the level of sustainable development and to record progress, adequate planning has to be made in ensuring that housing supply balances with the available population (UNCHS, 2012).

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Paradoxically, past theories of economic development regarded housing as a non-productive, durable, consumption good or service with an extremely high capital output ratio (Mabogunje, 2001). Nigeria belongs to the category of countries where the above conditions prevail. The subject of housing has generated much discussion and interest in the last two decades. This has given rise to calls on the various levels of government to give greater priority to the inherent housing problems and to allocate reasonable percentage of their budget to housing. Unfortunately, housing supply has been generally viewed by policy makers in Nigeria as something to be tolerated rather than desired (UNCHS,2012). This attitude has resulted in giving housing a low priority rating in development planning. For example, specific output targets have always been set for agriculture, manufacturing, industries, road, water etc but housing has been treated as a "social overhead". Relatively little continues to be done in improving housing supply in comparison with overall needs even though we are well informed about the multiplying rate of the population. Thus, housing remains one of Nigeria's most intractable problems; one which is continually getting worse as population grows rapidly and consequent urbanization goes on unabated in spite of the seemingly huge assets allocated to this sector. In fact it may well be seen as the great Nigerian failure of the last two or three decades. In order to achieve the national objectives of the shelter strategy, it should be linked to the overall settlement policies, since shelter is an integral part of settlements development.

Housing is more than shelter. It encompasses all the ancillary services and community facilities which are necessary to human well-being(Adenyuma, 2013). These include land utilities and services (infrastructure), access to employment and social amenities as well as the structure of shelter itself. The relationship between the provision of housing and adoption of urban or city planning measures as a pre-requisite to that provision is very fuzzy and sometimes utterly unclear in Nigeria, even among practising professionals in related field. Urban planning as an integral component of the housing delivery system has consisted of a framework of rules, presented as being neutral, and legitimized on the grounds of being in the public interest. However, within the urbanized areas of Nigeria characterized by extreme social and economic inequalities, it is not difficult to show that the neutrality between the populace and housing is a "myth" (Adenyuma 2013). That is, its impact on different sections of the population is far from equal. The concept of housing is generally referred to as a shelter or lodging for human habitation. It is a structure designed as an abode for one or more persons Encyclopedia Americana (Vol. 1: 460) or a building that provides a home for one or more families (Merits Students Encyclopedia 2010: 95). According to Oluwande, (2020); a house is a physical structure which human beings use for shelter. Such a shelter is referred to as a dwelling or a house that features

enclosing walls and a roof to protect man against precipitation wind, heat, cold and external attack. It provides a permanent residence for a family or a social unit and it consist of different rooms.

The term housing is viewed and conceptualized in various ways by different authors. More than just a shelter, a house may transcend the basic functionality of providing a roof over one's head. Its conception has therefore transcended the conservative view of four walls and a roof structure meant to protect man from the elements of weather (Jinadu, 2015). The quality of housing relates to the physical and economic characteristics of dwelling units, its size and arrangement, equipment, state of repair, neighbourhood environment, type of enclosing structure, prices of rent and tenure. The quality of housing is of great concern and necessity to individuals, community and the government. However, despite this concern, the level of investments and improvements of the existing housing in the country has been very little. Historically, the national development plans have tended to separate housing from other development sector, a low priority has been given to housing development. Infact, up to the mid 2000's the thrust of government efforts in the housing sector was to improve staff quarters for its employees, which was complemented with a staff housing loan scheme. Any other intervention by the government in this sector was largely determined by the exigencies of its financial position from time to time (Ogu, 2012).

Additions to the housing stock continue to rely mostly on the private/informal sector whose activities are constrained by a number of factors such as access to land and finance. Housing in a nutshell is not just about shelter. In this context, it encompasses the totality of man's immediate physical environment which includes all the social and cultural facets together with infrastructure and utilities built on the foundation of economies of funding and affordability(Omole,2001).The explosive nature of urban growth and the relative poverty which typically exists in Nigeria poses a special problem for housing development. The degree and process of urbanization differs between countries, even though it is evident that urbanization in Nigeria is taking place at a low level of economic development (UNCHS, 2012).

Perhaps the most visible and pressing challenge of Nigeria's urbanization is in the aspect of housing deficiency, deterioration of existing stock, overcrowding, congestion, development of slum and squatter settlements, the use of substandard building materials as well as high pressure on existing facilities. There is also the challenge of exorbitant cost of rent. It is in recognition of this that this research work seeks to address the quality of housing in Gwagwalada.

Statement of the problem

The need to provide good and qualitative housing is an important element of the environment as it affects not only the physical welfare of citizens but also their psychological and social well being.

The deterioration in liveability of our urban centre over the years has been the result of population pressure on existing urban services and facilities especially housing supply. The urban centres in Nigeria are facing the problems of shortage of affordable accommodation and rapid deterioration of existing housing stock and living conditions. (Sulyman, 2017)

> *The provision of housing does not really match the growth of the population in most urban centres; which accounts for the monumental deficiency in urban housing quantitatively and qualitatively.* (Jagun 2016, Olotuah, 2017:12).

Gwagwalada is not an exception to this assertion. Today, the provision of affordable and comfortable housing in urban centres like Gwagwalada presents a serious problem. This problem is not only that of quantity but also of quality of available housing units which emanate from growing population and overcrowding.

Although, the quality of housing has been identified as the major problems of housing in Gwagwalada, the exact nature is not yet certain and this therefore constitute the subject of this study.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to assess the quality of houses in the study area.

This aim was achieved through the following objectives.

(a) To identify the major dwelling types in the study area.
(b) To examine the facilities in the houses
(c) To characterize the houses in the study area.

The Study Area

Gwagwalada town is located about 55kilometers away from the Federal Capital City within the F.C.T. It is the administrative headquarters of Gwagwalada Area Council and is located in the Federal Capital Territory along the Abuja-Lokoja road. It is the largest satellite town and the third largest urban centre in the F.C.T (NPC, 1991). The population of Gwagwalada area council has risen from 99,000 as obtained in 1991 census to the current 157,770 as at 2006 giving a difference of 58,770 in fifteen years. (NPC,2006). It is majorly inhabited by the Gwari and Bassa people and also includes migrants from other

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parts of the country. It is located between latitudes 08°N55'N and 09°00'N and longitudes 07°00'E and 07°05'E. Gwagwalada area council is bounded by Kuje Area council to the East, Abaji Area Council to the West, Kwali Area council to the south and Abuja municipal area council to the North-East and Suleja local government of Niger state to the North. (Fig 1, Balogun, 2001). However, the township region has a total landmass of about 6,500 hectares or 65km^2 (Balogun,2001).

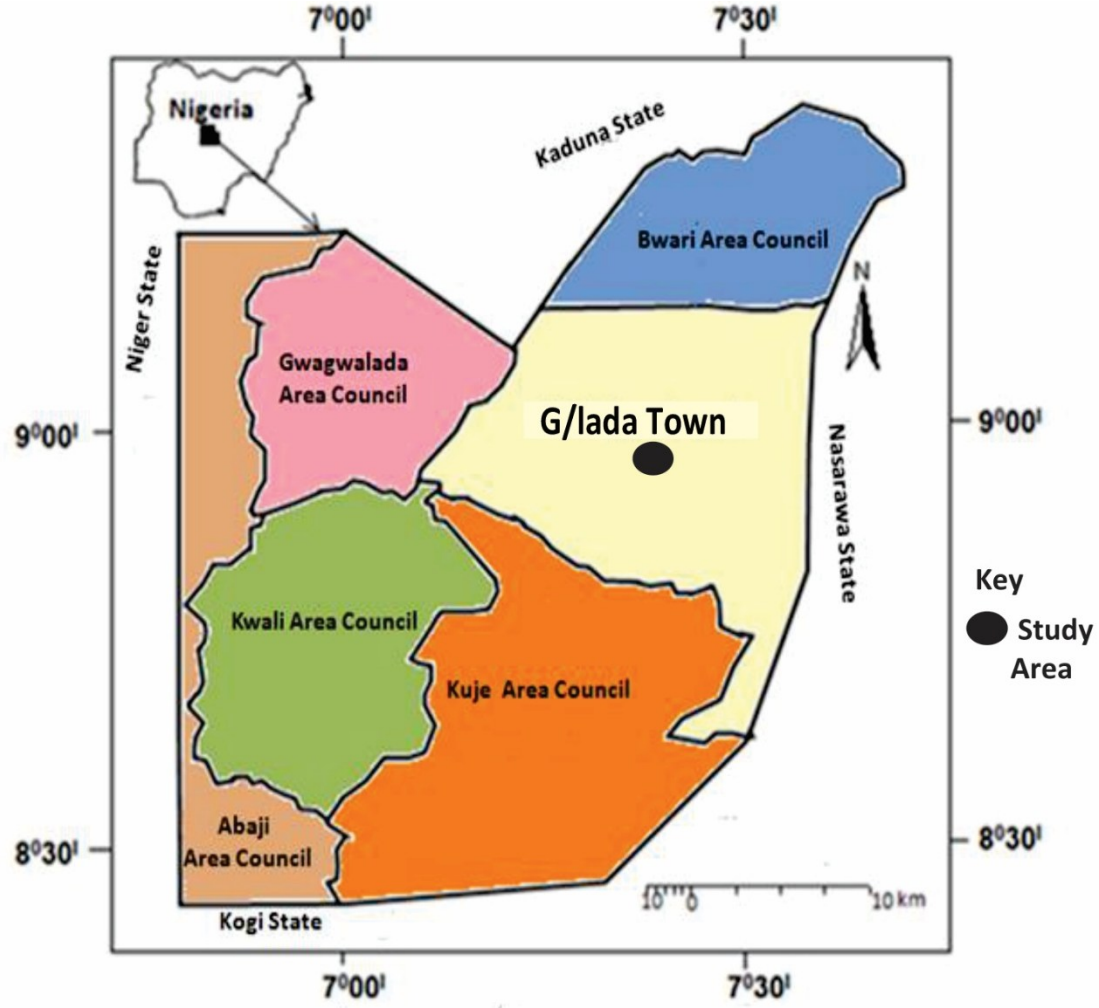

Figure 1: Location of the Study Area.
Source: Gwagwalada Area Council Information Department

Indices Used in Measuring Housing Quality

Several studies have been carried out on housing in terms of its spatial distribution, demand, availability and supply, housing conditions, quality and accessibility. (Mabogunje, 2001; United Nations,2012; Fagbohun,2007; Olotuah et al, 2010). These

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studies have generated some indices/criteria used in measuring housing quality. Atubi (2015), in his study of housing needs and supply in Asaba observed that the English housing condition in the 1960's has its housing Act and part IV section 58 defines overcrowding by reference to both the number of persons living in a room and the floor area of the rooms. The number of persons permitted in relation to a dwelling room is as follows: - where a house consists of:

(a) One room - 2persons
(b) Two rooms - 3persons
(c) Three rooms – 5persons
(d) Four rooms – 7persons
(e) Five rooms – 10persons

By implication, for the concept of housing for all to be achieved, the number of persons should be reduced to two persons per room. Furthermore, Umar (2019) in his analytical study of housing conditions in selected areas of Kano metropolis observed the following:-

House Grade A – This comprises of houses which were constructed using sandcrete blocks plastered with cement with metal or glassed door, well ventilated, clean and airy environment, windows covered with zinc/aluminium and all decently constructed and located.

House Grade B – This includes completed or uncompleted houses, well and strategically located, constructed decently using sandcrete blocks or mud bricks.

House Grade C – This include unplastered, complete and uncompleted houses that are not well ventilated, jam-packed in an unclean environment built with zinc sheets planks or wood and mud. Have bad or no access road.

Similarly, with specific reference to Olawepo's work (2012) who studied the spatial pattern of housing quality in Ilorin, Kwara State, he came up with a theory that divided the town into;

(i) **The Core City –** This is the well planned and decent environment comprising of well-structured and placed houses with privacy, quiet and adequate place for play and recreation, well ventilated, constructed with sandcrete blocks/mud bricks.

(ii) **Peripheral City –** This comprises of a mixture of old and new houses. Some completed and uncompleted located at one end of the town, comprises of opening up of new areas where some roads are inaccessible, dominated by low and middle income earners.

(iii) **Ancient City –** This is mainly a traditional settlement of initial occupants in the town. Majority of the houses are jointly owned or family houses, streets are

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always busy and not well planned and almost inaccessible. There is poor spacing and poor ventilation amongst the houses. The houses are of low quality and constructed using mud; wood/planks thatch roof and zinc sheets.

This study adopted Olawepo's (2012)'s classification of housing quality.

METHODOLOGY

The rule of thumb principle suggests that in any social science research, a sample size should be about 5% of the entire population (Meekyaa,1992 in Alabi, 2018). This research considered three main township wards were purposely selected because most initial developments in Gwagwalada were based here and common to them all is that the houses have dilapidated over time. They are:-

- **Gwagwalada Central ward** which includes Sabongari, Dagiri, Agwan-dodo, Angwan-azara, and Angwan-bassa.
- **Quarters ward** which includes FCDA staff quarters: Phases 1, 2 and 3 quarters.
- **Kutunku ward** which includes Angwan-jeshi 1 and 2, Angwan-fulani, Angwan-gede, Abattoir community, Agwan-shanu, Stadium layout community, New and Old Kutunku.

Since the study is a household study the sample size was 5% of the entire population of the study area.

Gwagwalada Township Wards with Approximate Number of Houses and Population.

Ward	Population	Approximate No. of Houses	Sample Houses (5%)
Gwagwalada central	16,434	5000	250
Quarters	11,504	3500	175
Kutunku	11,504	3500	175
Total	39,442	12,000	600

Sources: *2006 Population and Housing Census (NPC 2006).
Field Survey March 2022.

In order to ensure proper and appropriate representativeness of the information needed on housing quality, 600 houses would be sampled in the area under study. The systematic technique was be used in administering the questionnaire. In selecting a sample of 600 houses from an approximate population of 12000 houses, (k=12000/600=20). The first house was selected at random, followed by every 20th house.

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RESULTS

Figure 2 below shows the distribution of housing pattern of respondents.

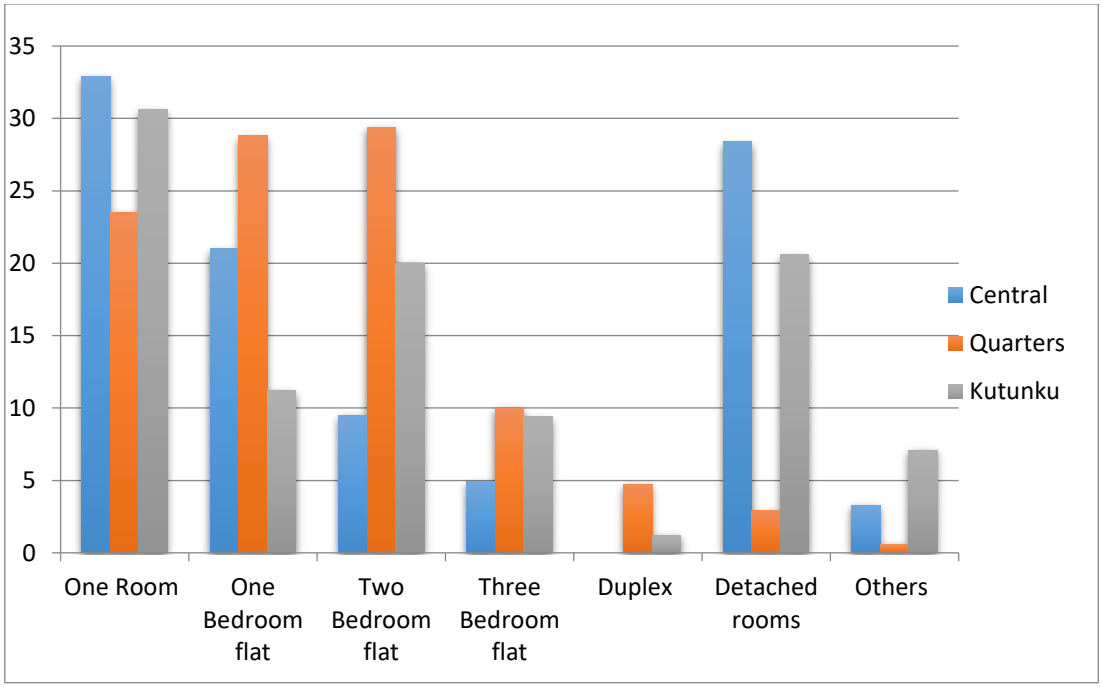

Figure 2: Dwelling type of Respondents by Ward
Source: Field Survey, March 2022

Of all the respondents, only 15.4% live in big and spacious houses such as duplex and three bedrooms flat. The most common were one room apartments with 29.2% and one bedroom flat with 39.5% because of the high cost of bigger and more spacious accommodation, the inhabitants are compelled to occupy small houses even when they have large families especially in Central ward where 51.8% of the respondents live in one room apartments and detached rooms and its equivalent. There was no record of duplexes in Central ward. Whereas in Quarters ward, 46.5% of the respondents live in two bedroom flat an d 25.9% live in duplex, three bedroom flat or its equivalent. In Kutunku ward, 42.9% live in one bedroom flat and 17.6% live in one room apartments and detached rooms. However, The Spearman's rank correlation (rho) result used in testing if there exists any significant relationship between the occupation and type of housing pattern of respondents is 0.93301 and the coefficient of determination is 87.1%.

This implies that there exists a strong positive relationship between the occupation of the respondents and the pattern of house they live in. The occupation determines their income and this directly influences their ability to afford bigger and spacious accommodation.

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Available Facilities in the Houses

A list of housing facilities was identified during reconnaissance survey in the course of this research. In running a check list of these facilities in and around the houses, the following data were obtained in testing positive to each facility by wards. Figures 4.2 clearly that houses in Quarters ward have the highest figures in all the wards. There exists adequate and quiet space for play and recreation, privacy; the surroundings are clean as against what is obtained in Central ward and Kutunku ward. However, there is generally a problem of low supply of electricity across the wards and this is shown evidently in the meeting point of the lines as shown above which has enabled the classification of the wards into house grades on the basis of the materials used in construction and the environment where the houses are being situated.

House Grade A – This comprises of houses which were constructed using sandcrete blocks plastered with cement with metal or glassed door, well ventilated, clean and airy environment, windows covered with zinc/aluminium and in all decently constructed and located. This is common in Quarters ward where (64.4%) of the houses fall within this category.

House Grade B – This includes completed or uncompleted houses, well and strategically located, constructed decently using sandcrete blocks or mud bricks common in New Kutunku and Quarters wards.

House Grade C – This include unplastered, complete and complete and uncompleted houses that are not well ventilated, jam-packed in an unclean environment built with zinc sheets planks or wood and mud. Have bad or no access road and is common in Gwagwalada Central Ward.

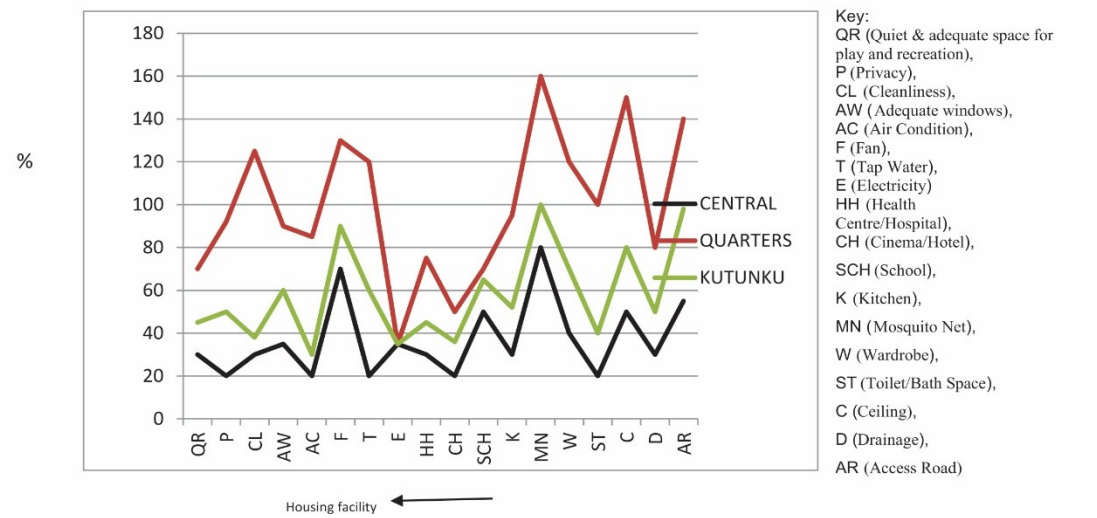

Figure 3: Housing facility Curve **Source:** Field Survey, March 2022

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Materials used in Construction of the House

Table 2 shows results of materials used in construction of houses in the sampled area.

Table 2: Materials used in Construction of the House

Materials Used	CENTRAL		QUARTERS		KUTUNKU		Total	
	Freq.	%	**Freq.**	%	Freq	%	**Freq**	%
Sand Crete blocks	26	10.6	92	54.1	50	29.4	168	28.8
Stones	102	41.9	23	13.5	41	24.1	166	28.5
Mud/mud bricks	52	21.4	19	11.2	32	18.8	103	17.7
Wood plank/zinc sheets& Others	63	25.9	36	21.2	47	27.6	146	25.0
Total	**243**	**100**	170	**100**	170	**100**	583	**100**

Source: Field Survey, March 2022

Table 2 shows that (28.8%) of all respondents have their houses constructed using sandcrete blocks. The presence of ancient houses was observed been constructed with mud or mud bricks at 17.7%. In Central ward, (21.4%) of the houses were being constructed with mud/mud bricks and 41.9% were constructed using stones. In Quarters ward, majority (54.1%) of the houses are constructed with sandcrete blocks. In Kutunku ward recently, there exists opening up of new areas which results in 29.4% being constructed with sandcrete blocks and only a few (18.8%) with mud/mud bricks. This implies that ancient houses are predominant in Central and Kutunku ward as opposed to what is obtained in Quarters ward.

Approximate Age of Dwelling

Figure 4 below shows clearly the approximate age of the dwellings in the sampled wards. The age of houses in the study area varies by wards. In Central ward, majority (49.0%) of the houses are aged 21 years and above because this area has been in existence over a long time. In Quarters ward, (55.3%) of the sampled houses were heterogeneous and were aged between 11-15 years. This is due to the fact that Alhaji Mamman Kotangora during his tenure as minister of FCT constructed some of these houses as at that time. In Kutunku ward, (49.4%) of the houses are aged between 1-5 years because of the opening up of new areas and expansion that is evident here in the last five years. This implies that Central ward is the ancient section of the town filled with aged and dilapidated houses.

Fig.4 shows the Approximate Age of Dwellings by wards.

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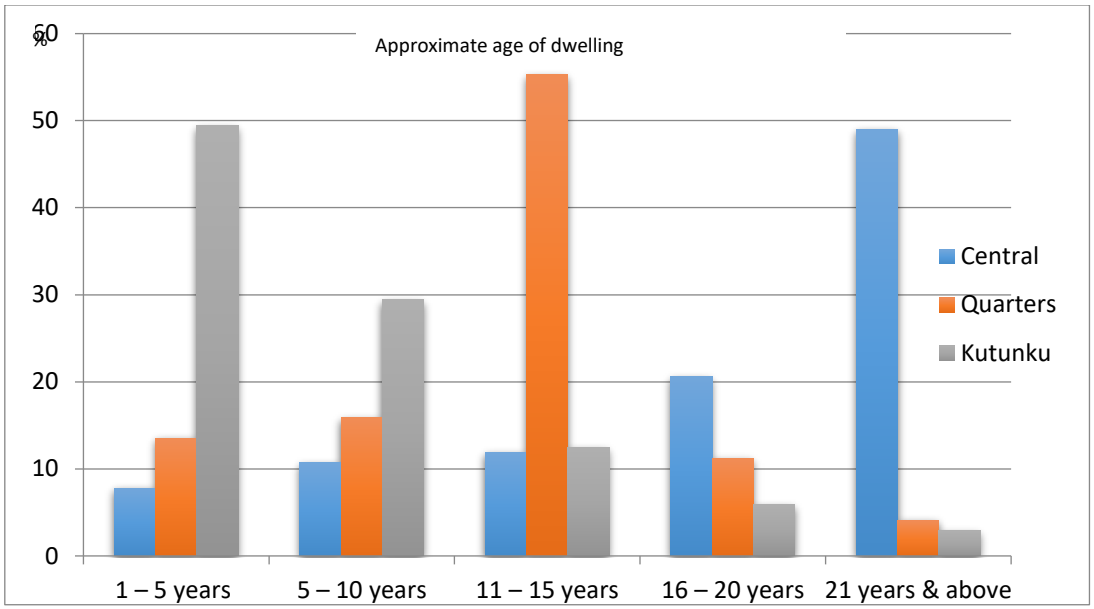

Figure 4: Approximate Age of Dwelling

Source: Field Survey, March 2022

Status of Ownership of the House

Figure 5 below shows that majority of the respondents (63.6%) live on rentage as a result of in-migration to Gwagwalada. It was observed that in Quarters ward, 25.3% are self-owners of the house as a result of the federal government of Nigeria's owner occupier scheme, 58.8% also live as tenants. In Central ward, 15.2% are owners of their houses because their fore fathers lived there but a large proportion of the respondents 60.5% are tenants. In Kutunku ward, 72.9% of the respondents are tenants and only 8.8% are house owners. This implies that a lot of the inhabitants in Gwagwalada do not own houses because of cost of land acquisition and high cost of building materials and also low income. Fig. 5 shows the Status of Ownership of the houses of respondents by wards.

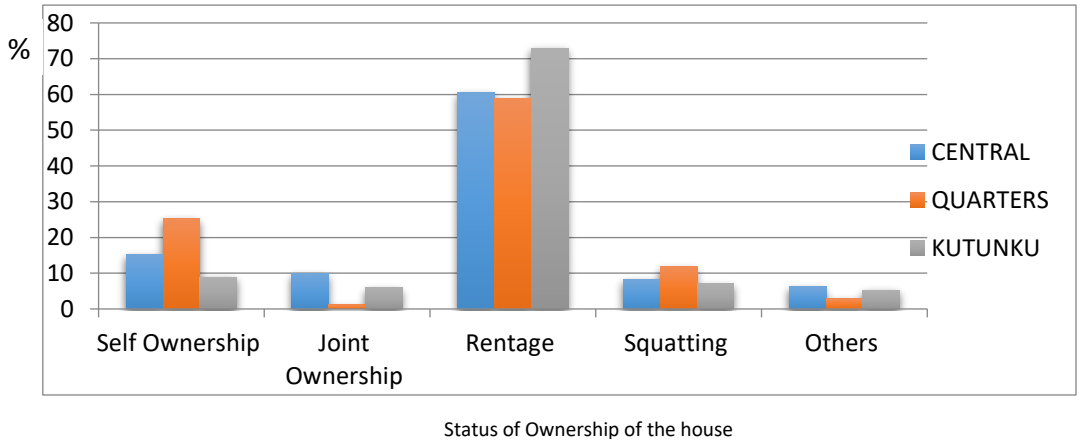

Figure 5: Status of Ownership of the house **Source:** Field Survey, March 2022

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Sources of Water Supply by Wards

Table 3 portrays the types of water supply in the houses in the study area.

Table 3: Sources of Water Supply in the House by Wards.

Source of water supply	CENTRAL		QUARTERS		KUTUNKU		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Municipal pipe	8	3.3	80	47.1	10	5.9	98	16.8
Well	62	25.5	15	8.8	53	31.2	130	22.3
Borehole	13	5.3	50	29.4	33	19.4	96	16.5
Ponds/streams	80	32.9	5	2.9	16	9.4	101	17.3
Others	80	32.9	20	11.8	58	34.1	158	27.1
Total	**243**	**100**	170	**100**	170	**100**	583	**100**

Source: Field Survey, March 2022

In general, only a few (16.8%) have access to municipal pipe borne water. (22.3%) of the respondents get water from wells, (27.1%) from other sources such as water vendors 'mairuwa'. This supply varies by wards. In Central ward, only (3.3%) of the respondents get water from municipal pipe, while in Quarters ward, majority (47.1%) of the houses have municipal pipe borne water. In Kutunku ward, only a few (5.9%) have municipal pipe borne water. The source of water in Kutunku and central ward is mainly from wells and streams. Figure 4.6 above shows that in Central ward, the major sources of water supply are (32.9%) from ponds/streams *(see plate 4.2)* and (32.9%) from other sources such as water vendors "Mairuwa". *(See plate 4.1).*



Plate 4.1 Shows water source by water vendors (mairuwa) in Gwagwalada Central Ward

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Plate 4.2 shows water source (from a stream) in Dagiri, Gwagwalada Central Ward.
This implies that Quarters ward is of high quality compared to Central and Kutunku ward. Only a few (5.9%) of the respondents in Kutunku ward have municipal pipe borne water, 31.2% have well 19.4% get water from borehole, 9.4% get water from ponds/streams.



Plate 4.3 Shows water source from a well at Angwanshanu in Kutunku ward.

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Plate 4.4 Shows water source from drainage in Kutunku ward.

This implies that Quarters ward is of better quality than Central and Kutunku ward because of availability of municipal pipe borne water.

SUMMARY

This study addressed the housing quality in Gwagwalada town with specific reference to Gwagwalada Central, Quarters and Kutunku wards. This is because most initial developments in Gwagwalada were based here and common to them all is that the houses have dilapidated over time. The aim of this work was to assess the quality of houses in the study area in relation to housing availability. This aim was achieved by identifying the major dwelling types in the area, examining the facilities in the houses, characterising the houses in the study area and also identifying the housing problems faced by respondents in the study area.

In the course of this study, it was found that most of the respondents were living in the dwelling types that they could afford not even though it was not suitable for them in terms of the family size and comfortability. The facilities in these dwelling types also varies by wards with quarters ward having highest values of all the modern housing facilities identified in the course of this study. The housing problems faced by respondents were

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high cost of rent, overcrowding, congestion, indiscriminate waste disposal, development of slum and squatter settlements and lack of good water supply.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that of all the three wards of (Gwagwalada Central, Quarters and Kutunku). Gwagwalada central ward be classified as the Ancient city, Quarters ward as the Core city and Kutunku ward as the Peripheral city based on the characteristics which they possess.

RECOMMENDATIONS

i. The activities of constituted authorities such as the Abuja Environmental Protection Board should be supervised to the suburbs to curb the problem of waste being littered around so as to give a face-lift to the environment.
ii. The government should facilitate the provision of basic social amenities in terms of waste supply, electricity, access roads, proper drainage system and also promote rehabilitation and timely maintenance of these basic services, facilities and amenities.
iii. The Government, developers and financiers should work together and come up with strategies that can make housing affordable especially to the low income segment of the populace. Strategies may include granting tax holidays to developers and allocating free land to them to reduce the cost of building houses.
iv. Community participation in domestic waste management and utilities/facilities creation and development should be encouraged at ward level to quarter, neighbourhoods, districts and town levels.

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