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Socio-Demographic Influences on Housing Affordability and Aspirations among Informal Public Transport Workers in Lagos Metropolis, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of socio-demographic characteristics on housing affordability and aspirations among informal public transport workers in Lagos, Nigeria. It specifically assessed the extent to which these factors shape housing affordability within the informal sector. The study further identified key dimensions of housing affordability, explored relationships between socio-demographic variables and affordability indicators, and evaluated the pathways through which affordability constraints are experienced. Rapid urbanization has intensified housing demand in Lagos, disproportionately affecting low-income and informal workers who face limited access to adequate and affordable housing. Despite their critical role in the urban economy, many are excluded from formal housing finance systems and rely on informal arrangements that restrict their housing choices. A quantitative cross-sectional design, complemented by qualitative insights, was adopted. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) was employed to identify latent dimensions of housing affordability and aspirations, while Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression was used to assess the effects of socio-demographic variables. Findings indicate that housing affordability is multidimensional, encompassing both objective measures, such as rent burden, and subjective perceptions of financial strain. Income and household size emerged as the strongest predictors of rent burden, while education mitigates affordability challenges. Housing aspirations are shaped by socio-economic conditions, with income as the most consistent determinant. Age and marital status reflect life-cycle dynamics, while education indirectly influences aspirations through its effect on affordability. The study concludes that housing affordability conditions mediate housing aspirations, underscoring the need for inclusive and responsive housing policies.

Keywords: Housing affordability, Housing aspirations, Housing Finance Systems, Informal Public Transport workers, Socio-demographic characteristics

Introduction

Rapid urbanization in developing countries has significantly increased pressure on housing systems, particularly in major metropolitan areas such as Lagos, Nigeria. As one of Africa's fastest-growing mega-cities, Lagos continues to experience rapid population growth driven by rural–urban migration, natural increase, and expanding economic opportunities. This accelerated growth has created a persistent imbalance between housing demand and supply, resulting in widening housing deficits, overcrowding, and the proliferation of informal settlements (UN-Habitat, 2020; World Bank, 2021). Within this context, informal public transport workers represent a crucial segment of the urban labour force, providing essential mobility services that sustain economic activities. Despite their importance, these workers face significant challenges in accessing adequate housing. Their employment is largely characterized by low, irregular, and unstable incomes, limited access to formal financial systems, and a lack of job security. These constraints reduce their ability

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to participate in formal housing markets and limit access to mortgage financing (Ibem, 2011; World Bank, 2020).

As a result, many informal transport workers depend on informal housing arrangements, including low-quality rental units, shared accommodations, and residences in informal settlements. Such housing conditions are typically associated with overcrowding, poor infrastructure, insecure tenure, and inadequate access to basic services such as water and sanitation (UN-Habitat, 2020). Consequently, housing affordability remains a major concern, with many households allocating a substantial proportion of their income to rent, often at the expense of essential needs such as food, healthcare, and education.

Housing affordability in urban settings like Lagos is not determined solely by income but is shaped by a complex interaction of socio-demographic factors, including age, education, marital status, household size, and income stability. These characteristics influence individuals' capacity to secure housing, determine their access to housing finance options, and shape their exposure to financial strain. For instance, education can improve financial literacy and income opportunities, while marital status may enhance financial stability through shared household resources.

In addition to affordability, housing aspirations have become an important focus in urban housing research. Housing aspirations refer to individuals' desired future housing conditions, including preferences for home-ownership, improved dwelling quality, and better neighbourhood environments. However, in contexts of economic constraint, such aspirations are often unmet or adjusted downward to reflect financial realities (Jansen, 2014; Coulter, 2013).

Despite growing attention to urban housing challenges, housing affordability and housing aspirations are often studied separately. There is limited empirical evidence on how socio-demographic characteristics simultaneously influence both affordability experiences and future housing expectations, particularly among informal sector workers in rapidly urbanizing cities like Lagos. This separation restricts a comprehensive understanding of housing dynamics in informal urban economies.

Furthermore, much of the existing literature rely on descriptive approaches that do not adequately capture the multidimensional nature of housing experiences. This highlights the need for more robust analytical methods capable of integrating both objective and subjective dimensions of housing affordability and aspirations while examining the role of socio-demographic factors.

Against this backdrop, this study investigated the influence of socio-demographic characteristics on housing affordability and aspirations among informal public transport workers in Lagos, Nigeria. It seeked to provide deeper insights into how individual and household characteristics shape housing outcomes within an urban informal economy context.

Accordingly, the main aim of the study was to examine how socio-demographic characteristics influence housing affordability among informal sector workers in Lagos. The specific objectives were to identify key dimensions of housing affordability, analyse relationships between socio-demographic variables and affordability indicators, and evaluate the pathways through which affordability constraints are experienced.

By integrating these elements within a unified analytical framework, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of housing affordability dynamics among informal workers. It also provides valuable evidence to inform housing policy and urban planning interventions aimed at improving affordability and reducing financial vulnerability in Lagos and similar rapidly urbanizing cities.

Literature Review

Housing Affordability and Socio-Demographic Determinants

Housing affordability refers to the capacity of households to secure and sustain adequate housing without excessive financial strain relative to income (UN-Habitat, 2020; World Bank, 2020). In rapidly urbanising cities such as Lagos, affordability is increasingly constrained by rising housing costs, limited access to formal housing finance, and widening income inequality (World Bank, 2021). Informal public transport workers, as part of the urban informal economy, are particularly vulnerable due to irregular income patterns and restricted access to mortgage and institutional credit systems (Ibem, 2011). Socio-demographic characteristics constitute key determinants of housing affordability. These include income, education, age, marital status, sex, and household size, which collectively shape economic capacity, financial behaviour, and access to housing opportunities. Income remains the most significant determinant, directly influencing rent-paying ability and access to better-quality housing (World Bank, 2020). Education enhances financial literacy and improves navigation of housing and credit systems, thereby reducing reliance on informal savings and high-cost borrowing (Frost, Hoolachan, & McKee, 2019). Household size increases expenditure pressure,

while marital status reflects pooled resources and financial stability (Coulter, 2013). Age captures life-cycle dynamics that influence housing needs and planning.

Beyond individual attributes, affordability is shaped by structural conditions. Housing shortages, rent inflation, and weak housing finance systems in Nigeria intensify affordability challenges even among relatively higher-income households (UN-Habitat, 2020). These interactions suggest that housing affordability is both an objective condition, reflected in rent burden, and a subjective experience of financial strain.

Housing Aspirations and Socio-Demographic Influences

Housing aspirations refer to desired future housing conditions, including preferences for home-ownership, improved dwelling quality, and better neighbourhood environments (Jansen, 2014). These aspirations are forward-looking and reflect the gap between current housing conditions and desired standards.

Socio-demographic factors significantly shape these aspirations. Income influences the ability to aspire toward home-ownership and higher-quality housing (World Bank, 2020), while education raises awareness of acceptable housing standards and expectations (Frost, Hoolachan, & McKee, 2019). Age reflects life-cycle housing behaviour, with younger individuals displaying higher mobility and aspirations, and older individuals prioritising stability (Mulder, 2007). Marital status reinforces long-term housing goals linked to family responsibilities (Coulter, 2013).

However, in informal urban contexts, aspirations are often constrained by financial realities and limited access to housing finance. This results in a mismatch between desired housing outcomes and achievable options, particularly in high-cost cities such as Lagos (UN-Habitat, 2020).

Interrelationship between Affordability and Housing Aspirations

Housing affordability and aspirations are closely interconnected, with socio-demographic characteristics shaping both dimensions. Affordability functions as a critical mediating mechanism linking individual characteristics to housing aspirations. Higher income and education levels improve affordability, which in turn supports aspirations for home-ownership and improved housing quality (World Bank, 2020). Conversely, affordability constraints lead to downward adjustments in aspirations, particularly among informal workers reliant on rental housing.

This relationship operates through both evaluative and behavioural pathways (Figure 1). Affordability influences housing satisfaction, where manageable housing costs enhance satisfaction and support gradual aspiration improvements. In contrast, high cost burdens reduce satisfaction and trigger aspirations for alternative or more secure housing. Behaviourally, affordability affects housing mobility, as households experiencing financial strain may relocate in search of more affordable options. These adaptive responses align with housing adjustment theory (Morris & Winter, 1975) and behavioural decision theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), which emphasise decision-making under constraints.

Despite these linkages, the relationship is not strictly linear. Structural housing market constraints, including limited supply and high rental costs, often restrict upward mobility even when socio-economic conditions improve (UN-Habitat, 2020).

Diagram (Conceptual Representation):

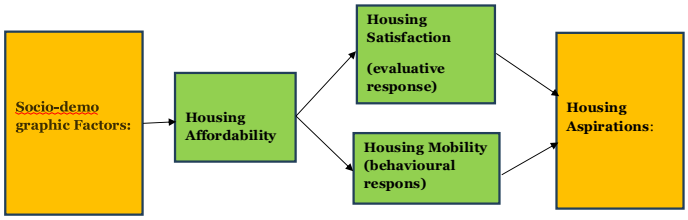


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Showing Pathways of Socio-demographic Charcacteristics influence on Housing Aspirations

Source: Author's Conceptualization, (2025)

Housing in Informal Urban Contexts

Housing systems in cities of the Global South, including Lagos, are characterised by informality, inadequate infrastructure, and weak regulatory frameworks (UN-Habitat, 2020; World Bank, 2021). Informal public transport workers typically reside in rental housing within low-income settlements, where overcrowding, poor housing quality, and insecure tenure are prevalent (Ibem, 2011). The dominance of informal employment limits access to formal housing finance, reinforcing reliance on informal coping mechanisms such as savings groups and cooperative arrangements. These structural conditions constrain both affordability and housing aspirations, highlighting the vulnerability of informal workers within urban housing systems.

Synthesis and Identified Gap

Existing literature demonstrates that socio-demographic characteristics significantly influence housing affordability and aspirations, with income and education emerging as the most consistent determinants. Age and marital status shape life-cycle housing behaviour, while household size intensifies affordability pressures. However, most studies examine affordability and aspirations independently, with limited integration of both within a unified analytical framework.

Furthermore, there is insufficient empirical evidence on how socio-demographic characteristics simultaneously shape affordability conditions and future housing aspirations, particularly among informal public transport workers in rapidly urbanizing African cities such as Lagos. Many studies also rely on descriptive approaches that do not capture latent dimensions of housing behaviour. This study addresses these gaps by adopting a multidimensional and integrated approach, examining how socio-demographic characteristics influence housing affordability and, through it, shape housing aspirations among informal sector workers in Lagos.

Methodology

Study Area

The study is conducted in Lagos Metropolis, located between latitudes 6°23′N and 6°41′N and longitudes 2°42′E and 3°42′E in southwestern Nigeria (Ojolowo et al., 2017). The metropolitan area comprises 16 Local Government Areas (LGAs) and covers approximately 1,100 km² (Nkwunonwo, Whitworth, & Baily, 2016), with an estimated population exceeding 16.5 million as of 2024 (United Nations, 2024). Lagos represents Nigeria's largest urban economy, characterised by rapid population growth, intense spatial pressures, and a highly active informal sector.

The informal sector dominates the labour market in Lagos, employing approximately 65% of the workforce (International Labour Organization, 2018; World Bank, 2022). Transportation plays a critical role in the city's economy, accounting for about 30% of economic activities, with road transport responsible for nearly 85% of passenger movement. Informal transport operators form the backbone of this system, facilitating the majority of daily commuting (BudgIT, 2017). This makes Lagos a suitable context for examining the intersection of livelihoods and housing conditions among informal workers.

The study focuses on four LGAs, namely Kosofe, Ikeja, Oshodi-Isolo, and Amuwo-Odofin, selected due to their high concentration of informal public transport activities and their representation of diverse residential and economic characteristics within the metropolis.

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional design to examine the influence of socio-demographic characteristics on housing affordability and housing aspirations among informal public transport workers in Lagos Metropolis, Nigeria. The design enables the analysis of relationships among variables at a single point in time and is particularly suitable for identifying patterns and associations within a heterogeneous urban population. To enhance spatial representativeness, a reconnaissance survey was conducted to identify major transport activity nodes with a high concentration of informal public transport workers.

The study population comprises informal public transport (IPT) workers operating within four selected Local Government Areas in Lagos Metropolis (), including operators of buses (danfo), tricycles (keke), and motorcycles (okada). The estimated distribution indicates approximately 75,000 bus operators, 50,000 tricycle operators, and 37,000 motorcycle operators, resulting in a total IPT population of 162,000 workers. This forms the target population for the study (The International Centre for Investigative Reporting, 2021).

The selection of these IPT modes is grounded in their dominant role in urban mobility and their significant representation within the informal labour force in Lagos Metropolis. Collectively, they constitute the backbone of daily transportation for a substantial proportion of the city's population, particularly among low- and middle-income groups who rely on flexible, affordable, and readily available transit options. Unlike formal transport systems such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), IPT modes operate within a highly adaptive and decentralized framework, enabling them to penetrate under-served areas and respond dynamically to fluctuating travel demands.

Moreover, these modes represent a critical segment of the informal economy, providing employment to a large number of operators while contributing significantly to local revenue generation. Their inclusion ensures that the study captures the diversity of operational structures, income levels, and housing experiences within the informal transport sector. By focusing on danfo, keke, and okada operators, the study reflects the heterogeneity of IPT systems in Lagos, thereby enhancing the analytical depth, as well as the relevance and applicability of the

findings to urban and housing policy contexts.

A multi-stage sampling strategy was employed, integrating purposive, stratified, and systematic random sampling techniques (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Initially, key transport nodes were purposively selected based on their intensity of IPT activities. These nodes were subsequently stratified by location and transport mode to ensure adequate subgroup representation. Within each stratum, respondents were selected using systematic random sampling to minimize selection bias.

From the estimated population of 162,000 IPT workers, a sample size of 522 respondents was scientifically determined and proportionately distributed across the selected Local Government Areas and transport categories. This proportionate stratified approach ensured that all relevant sub-groups were adequately represented, thereby enhancing the accuracy, reliability, and generalizability of the findings. In addition, 15 participants were purposively selected for semi-structured interviews to provide deeper contextual insights.

Table 1: Informal Public Transport Population and Sample Size of Selected Local Government Areas

The metro area population of Lagos (ee2024) - **16,536,000,**				Population			Sample Size per LGA
Lagos Metropolis Informal Public Transport (IPT)				Buses (*Danfo*)	Tricycle (*Keke*)	Motor Cycle (*Okada*)	
The International Centre for Investigative Reporting (2021)				75,000	50,000	37,000	
Informal Public Transport (IPT) Population (**162,000** Operators)							
Selected LGAs Population/Ratio to Lagos Population							
S/N	Selected LGAs	Population	Ratio (%) Prorated	Buses (*Danfo*)	Tricycle (*Keke*)	Motor Cycle *(Okada*)	
1	Kosofe	1,010,800	7.5%	5,625	3,750	2,775	
2	Ikeja	470,200	3.5%	2,625	1,750	1,295	
3	Oshodi-Isolo	931,300	6.9%	5,175	3,450	2,553	
4	Amuwo-Odofin	487,000	3.6%	2,700	1,800	1,332	
Prorated Sizes (LGAs / Vehicles)							
1	Kosofe			83	54	43	**182**
2	Ikeja			39	26	19	**84**
3	Oshodi-Isolo			80	52	38	**168**
4	Amuwo-Odofin			41	27	20	**88**
Informal Public-Transport (IPT) Total Research Sample Size							**522**

Note. N = 522. The 2024 population of Lagos Metropolis was 16,536,000. The estimated informal public transport (IPT) population was 162,000 operators, comprising 75,000 Danfo (bus) operators, 50,000 Keke (tricycle) operators, and 37,000 Okada (motorcycle) operators (International Centre for Investigative Reporting [ICIR], 2021). The IPT population for each selected LGA was estimated by applying the LGA's preposition of the Lagos Metropolis population to the total estimated IPT population. The research sample of 522 respondents was proportionately allocated among the selected LGAs based on their relative populations within the four selected LGAs and subsequently distributed across the three transport modes according to their respective proportions in the estimated IPT population. Danfo = informal public transport buses; Keke = tricycles; Okada = motorcycles.

Souece: Authors' Field Work (2025)

Data were collected using interviewer-administered structured questionnaires to address literacy constraints and minimize non-response bias. This was complemented by semi-structured interviews, allowing for the integration of quantitative and qualitative insights in line with established mixed-methods principles (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Poth & Munce, 2020). A pilot study conducted with 49 respondents confirmed the reliability of the research instrument, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.962, which indicates a high level of internal consistency. The study examined key variables including socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, education, income, marital status, and household size), housing affordability, and housing aspirations. Housing affordability was assessed using indicators such as rent burden, access to finance, and perceived financial strain. Housing aspirations captured respondents' preferences regarding tenure, housing quality, and residential mobility.

Data analysis was conducted using Stata version 17. Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) was used to derive latent dimensions and reduce data complexity, while Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression was employed to assess the influence of socio-demographic variables on housing affordability and aspiration outcomes. The results of these analyses are presented in 4.0, starting with the socio-demographic profile of respondents, followed by housing affordability and aspirations.

Results/Findings

Results and Discussion of Findings
Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The socio-demographic characteristics of informal public transport workers in Lagos indicate a workforce that is predominantly male (97%) and largely composed of younger individuals, with about 82% of respondents under the age of 45 (Table 2). This pattern aligns with recent findings that show a large share of Nigeria's informal labour force falls within the economically active population (Moniepoint, 2024).

With respect to marital status, the sample reflects a fairly even distribution, as 52% of respondents are married while 44% are single. The study population is almost entirely Nigerian (99%), with most participants originating from the South-West region. Ogun State accounts for the highest proportion of respondents (25%), highlighting regional mobility within the informal transport sector.

In terms of occupational structure, danfo drivers constitute the largest group (47%), followed by keke operators (30%) and okada riders (23%). The majority of respondents reported between one and five years of work experience, suggesting a relatively dynamic and fluid workforce. Educational attainment is generally low to moderate, with most participants having completed only primary or secondary education (40%). Additionally, a significant proportion (82%) lack formal trade certification. Nevertheless, financial inclusion levels remain relatively high, reflecting broader patterns observed within Nigeria's informal economy (Moniepoint, 2024).

Table 2: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

S/N	Attribute	Characteristics	Respondents N = 522	Percentage (%)
1	Gender:	Male	507	97
		Female	15	3
2	Age:	18-24	122	23
		25-34	185	35
		35-44	129	25
		45-54	66	13
		55-64	19	4
		65 and above	1	0.2
3	Marital Status:	Single	229	44
		Married	273	52
		Widowed/Divorced/Separated	20	4
4	Nationality	Nigerian	517	99
		Non-Nigerian	5	1
5	State of Origin: See Fig. 3 below			
6	Informal Sector Transportation Services	Okada (Bike)	120	23
		Keke Napep (Tricycle)	159	30
		Danfo (Mini-Bus)	243	47
		Others	-	
7	Role of Respondents	Driver/Rider	445	85
		Conductor	73	14
		Others	4	1
8	Driving Duration	Less than 1 year	56	11
		1-5years	342	66
		6-10years	92	18
		over 10 years	32	6
9	Education Level	No Formal Education	95	18
		Primary	88	17
		Secondary	209	40
		Diploma/OND	106	20
		First degree (HND/Bachelors)	21	4
		Post Graduate	3	1
10	Trade Certificate	Yes	430	82
		No	92	18
11	Household Size (persons)	1	196	38
		2–4	280	54
		5–8	42	8
		Above 8	4	1
12	Means of Identification: BVN/ NIN/Driver's license/Voter's Card	Yes	497	95
		No	25	5

13	Bank Account	Yes	467	89
		No	55	11
14	Tax Number/Tax Clearance Certificate	Yes	428	82
		No	94	18
15	Thrift society(Ajo/ Esusu) Membership	Yes	406	78
		No	116	22
16	Daily contribution to Ajo/Esusu	Less than 1,000	53	10
		1,000–3,000	165	32
		3,001–6,000	225	43
		6,001–10,000	37	7
		10,000 and above	3	1
		None	39	7
17	Cooperative Society Membership	Yes	354	68
		No	168	32
18	Weekly contribution to Cooperative	Less than 5,000	49	9
		5,001–10,000	304	58
		10,001–15,000	106	20
		15,001–20,000	20	4
		Above 20,000	4	1
		None	39	7
19	Average Monthly Household Income (NGN)	Less than 70,000	75	14
		70,000–150,000	270	52
		151,000–300,000	129	25
		301,000–500,000	45	9
		Above 500,000	3	1

Source: Author Fieldwork (2025)

Housing Affordability

Table 3 presents the findings on respondents' housing affordability, highlighting the challenges faced by informal workers in accessing decent shelter in Lagos. The study revealed that a significant majority (89%) of respondents are tenants, while only 4% own their homes. This pattern is consistent with recent evidence indicating that most residents in Lagos rely on rental housing, with about 77% living in rented apartments (Roland Igbinoba Real Foundation for Housing & Urban Development, 2025).

Regarding rent payment patterns, 66% of respondents pay their rent as a single annual lump sum, a practice that can impose considerable financial pressure. In terms of rental costs, most respondents pay between ₦11,000 and ₦25,000, with 85% allocating approximately 10–25% of their monthly income to housing expenses. However, 7% spend more

than 25% of their income on rent, placing them in a potentially vulnerable financial position. This finding supports Stone's (2006) argument on the relevance of the 25% affordability threshold as a benchmark for evaluating

housing cost burden.

The study results further revealed that housing expenses have a moderate negative effect on essential household needs, particularly food, education, and healthcare (Table 6). Despite these constraints, 55% of respondents perceive their current housing as affordable. This perception aligns with insights from all interviewed participants, who identified affordability as the primary reason for selecting their present accommodation (Interview: May 15, 2025). Conversely, 28% of respondents consider their housing unaffordable, while 17% remain uncertain about their affordability status.

Table 3 Housing Affordability

S/N	Characteristics	Description	Respondents N - 522	Percentage (%)
1	Tenure Status	Owner-occupier	21	4
		Rental	463	89
		Squatting/Free Stay	35	7
		Homeless	3	1
2	Frequency of Paying Rent	Monthly	103	20
		Annually	344	66
		randomly	9	2
		Others	66	13
3	Monthly Rent	Less than ₦ 10,000	90	17
		₦ 11,000–25,000	169	32
		₦ 26,000–60,000	82	16
		Above ₦ 60,000	65	12
4	% of Income Spent on Rent	Less than 10% (<10%)	41	8
		Between 10% and 25% (<25%)	443	85
		Between 25% and 50% (25-50%)	27	5
		Greater than 50% (>50%)	11	2
5	Housing Affordability: Is current housing affordable?	Yes	287	55
		No	147	28
		Can't Say	88	17

Source: Authors' Field Work (2025)

Influence of Socio-Demographic Characteristics on

Housing Affordability: Patterns and Implications

To deepen the analysis of housing affordability among informal transport workers in Lagos, this study employed Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) to uncover the key underlying dimensions shaping affordability outcomes. The analysis revealed two principal dimensions that jointly explained 58.9% of total variation (Table 4), with all selected variables contributing meaningfully. The first dimension, accounting for 31.0%, is termed "Structural Affordability" and reflects the objective burden of rent payments. The second dimension, explaining 27.9%, is labeled "Perceived Squeeze" and captures the subjective experience of financial strain caused by housing costs. Together, these dimensions offer a comprehensive perspective that integrates both measurable and experiential aspects of affordability.

The MCA incorporated eight categorical indicators, including tenure status, rent-to-income ratio, and five "rent-sacrifice" variables related to food, school fees, clothing, healthcare, and other household expenses. These variables illustrate how housing costs constrain household welfare. Factor scores derived from the two dimensions were used as dependent variables in Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression models to examine the influence of socio-demographic characteristics (Tables 5 and 6). Higher scores indicate greater rent burden (Affordability 1) and stronger perceived financial strain (Affordability 2).

Regression results show that age, household size, and income significantly influence affordability outcomes. Age has a negative and statistically significant relationship with objective rent burden ($\beta = -0.153$, $p = 0.001$), suggesting that older individuals are better able to manage housing costs. In contrast, household size exerts a strong positive effect ($\beta = +0.302$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that larger households face greater financial pressure. Income also shows a positive association ($\beta = +0.396$, $p < 0.001$), implying that higher-income individuals may experience increased rent burden due to preferences for more expensive housing. For perceived affordability constraints (Affordability 2), household composition and income remain key determinants, shaping how households experience financial pressure.

These findings align with descriptive results (Table 7), where nearly half of respondents reported that rent moderately reduces their ability to meet essential needs. Across expenditure categories, food, school fees, clothing, healthcare, and other necessities, most respondents indicated that rent "fairly" limits their spending capacity, with consistent responses and low variation.

Overall, the results demonstrate that housing costs impose a widespread and moderate constraint on household welfare, reflecting trade-offs between rent and essential consumption. This pattern is consistent with evidence from African cities, where low-income households often exceed affordability thresholds (Adeleke & Olaleye, 2020). Studies further show that informal workers adopt coping strategies such as reducing consumption or living in overcrowded conditions due to high rents (UN-Habitat, 2020). In Nigeria, housing expenditure remains a major burden, contributing to reduced quality of life and housing dissatisfaction (Ibem & Aduwo, 2013; Aduwo et al., 2016; Akinmoladun & Oluwoye, 2007). These findings highlight the structural nature of housing affordability challenges and the need for targeted policy interventions.

Table 4**. Variance explained by MCA dimensions (N = 522)**

Dimension	Principal inertia	% variance	Cumulative%
Dim 1	0.080	**31.0**	31.0
Dim 2	0.072	**27.9**	58.9
Dim 3	0.037	14.5	73.4
All others	0.069	26.6	100

Source: Author's Analysis of Field Survey (2025)

Table 5: **OLS regression predicting *Affordability 1(higher*** rent burden and sacrifices***)***

Predictor	**B**	**SE**	***t***	***p***	**95 % CI**
Age (years)	**−0.153**	0.046	−3.30	0.001	−0.244, −0.062
Sex (1 = female)	+0.384	0.246	1.56	0.120	−0.100, 0.868
Education (years)	**−0.082**	0.037	−2.20	0.028	−0.155, −0.009
Income (categorical)	**+0.396**	0.051	7.80	<0.001	0.296, 0.496
Marital status (1 = married)	−0.151	0.101	−1.49	0.136	−0.349, 0.048
Household size (persons)	**+0.302**	0.073	4.10	<0.001	0.157, 0.446
Model summary					
R^2 / Adj. R^2	0.150 /0.140				
F(6, 515)	15.17	p <0.001			

Source: Author's Analysis of Field Survey, (2025)

Table 6: **OLS regression predicting *Affordability 2* (higher = stronger perceived squeeze)**

Predictor	B	SE	*t*	*p*	95 % CI
Age (years)	**−0.131**	0.050	−2.63	0.009	−0.229, −0.033
Sex (1 = female)	−0.257	0.264	−0.97	0.331	−0.777, 0.262
Education (years)	−0.032	0.040	−0.80	0.427	−0.110, 0.047
Income (categorical)	−0.040	0.055	−0.73	0.466	−0.147, 0.067
Marital status (1 = married)	+0.152	0.108	1.40	0.162	−0.061, 0.365
Household size (persons)	+0.132	0.079	1.67	0.096	−0.023, 0.287
Model summary					
R^2 / Adj. R^2	0.021 / 0.009				
F(6, 515)	1.81	p = 0.095			

Source: Author's Analysis of Field Survey (2025)

Table 7: **Negative Effect of House Rents on the following Household Needs**

Variable	Negligibly	Marginally	Fairly	Substan-tially	Extremely	Total	Mode	Median	Std. Deviation	Decision
Negative Effect of House Rents on the following Household Needs:										
Food	41 (8%)	88 (17%)	243 (47%)	136 (26%)	14 (3%)	522	3	3	0.92	**Moderate negative impact**
School Fees	49 (9%)	82 (16%)	280 (54%)	66 (13%)	45 (9%)	522	3	3	1.00	**moderate negative impact**
Clothing	41 (8%)	94 (18%)	292 (56%)	89 (17%)	6 (1%)	522	3	3	0.83	**moderate negative impact**
Health Care	73 (14%)	94 (18%)	236 (45%)	112 (21%)	7 (1%)	522	3	3	0.98	**moderate negative impact**
Others	52 (10%)	50 (10%)	296 (57%)	90 (17%)	34 (7%)	522	3	3	0.96	**moderate negative impact**
Weighted Average = 3 (Mode)										

Source: Author's Analysis of Field Survey (2025)

Housing Aspirations

Results presented in Table 8 provide insight into the housing aspirations of informal public transport

workers in Lagos, revealing a marked disconnect between their current living conditions and preferred housing outcomes. The study revealed that majority of respondents (51%) currently live in single-room accommodations, while only a small fraction (9%) occupy units with four or more bedrooms. This distribution points to a high incidence of overcrowding, a common characteristic of low-income urban housing environments (Tipple, 2005).

In line with this pattern, approximately 67% of respondents reported that their present housing does not reflect their desired standards. This disparity can largely be explained by affordability challenges and the inadequate supply of larger and better-quality housing units within Lagos housing markets, a situation widely documented in the literature (Arimah, 2010).

In terms of preferences, respondents demonstrated a clear inclination toward more spacious housing. Nearly half (48%) expressed a preference for three-bedroom units, while 28% indicated a preference for two-bedroom dwellings. These preferences suggest a desire for improved living conditions that can better accommodate household needs. Furthermore, respondents showed interest in specific housing types, particularly semi-detached houses and detached bungalows, highlighting the diversity in their residential aspirations.

With respect to tenure, a significant proportion of respondents (57%) indicated a preference for home-ownership. Despite this strong aspiration, the transition from renting to owning remains challenging. Financial constraints, irregular and unstable income patterns, and limited savings capacity continue to restrict access to home-ownership, thereby limiting upward housing mobility (Tipple, 2005; Arimah, 2010).

Table 8: Factors affecting housing aspirations

Variables S/N	Variables	Options	Respondents (N = 522)	Percentage (%)
1	Number of Bedrooms the Household currently occupies	1	268	51
		2	105	20
		3	102	20
		4 or more	45	9
		None	2	1
2	Does the number of Bedroom meets the Respondents' Aspirations	Yes	171	33
		No	351	67
3	Number of Bedrooms that meets the Respondent's Aspirations	1	11	7
		2	47	28
		3	80	48
		4	19	11
		5	5	5
		6	4	
4	Accommodation options that meet the Respondent's Aspirations	1 bedroom face me and face you	163	31
		1 bedroom + parlour face me and face you	41	8
		1 room self-contained	32	6
		1 bedroom + parlour self-contained	29	6
		2-3 bedroom flat semi-detached	244	47
		Others	13	<3
5	Dwelling Type that meets the Respondent's Aspirations	A detached bungalow	324	62
		A semi-detached bungalow	68	13
		Multiple-unit row bungalow housing	43	8
		Single-family storey unit	30	6
		Two-family semi-detached storey unit	11	2
		Duplex	45	9
		Condominium	1	<1
		Others	-	-

6	Housing Tenure that meets the Respondent's Aspirations	Ownership	298	57
		Rental	181	35
		Rent-to-own	43	8
7	Barriers to meeting Housing Aspirations	Lack of savings	309	59
		Lack of stable employment	64	12
		Meeting rent or mortgage payments	11	2
		Lack of knowledge on how to achieve the housing I/we want	45	9
		Unable to secure a mortgage from a lending institution	14	3
		Lack of housing choice	9	<2
		Health issue	2	<1
		Don't perceive any barriers	66	13
		Having children.	2	<1
		Others	-	-

Source: Authors' Field Work (2025)

Influence of Socio-Demographic Characteristics on Housing Aspirations: Patterns and Implications

This study applied Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) to explore underlying patterns among categorical variables related to housing aspirations. Five indicators were examined: household size, bedroom adequacy, preferred accommodation type, dwelling form, and tenure intentions. The analysis produced two principal dimensions, jointly explaining 57.33% of total inertia (Table 9), indicating a satisfactory representation of variation within the dataset. The factor scores derived from these two dimensions were subsequently used as dependent variables in linear regression models to assess the influence of socio-demographic characteristics. The explanatory variables included age, sex, educational attainment, household income, marital status, and household size. This approach enabled a systematic evaluation of how individual and household attributes shape variations in housing aspirations. All analyses were conducted using Stata version 17, with statistical significance assessed at the 5% level.

Dimension 1 (Aspiration 1) represents a continuum between "basic rental or small-unit aspirations" and "larger, owner-occupied, or higher-quality housing aspirations." It distinguishes respondents who prefer modest rental housing from those aspiring to more spacious and owner-occupied dwellings. Dimension 2 (Aspiration 2) captures the contrast between "conventional housing arrangements" and "transitional or shared arrangements," such as rent-to-own schemes or multi-family housing. This dimension reflects the range of alternative pathways through which informal workers conceptualize access to improved housing. Together, these dimensions provide a structured framework for understanding housing aspirations in terms of dwelling size, type, and tenure.

Regression results based on factor scores for Aspiration 1 and Aspiration 2 are presented with unstandardised coefficients, robust standard errors, and 95% confidence intervals (Tables 10 and 11). For Aspiration 1, higher scores indicate a preference for smaller rental units, while lower scores reflect aspirations for larger or owner-occupied housing. The findings show that higher-income respondents tend to score lower on this dimension, indicating stronger preferences for home-ownership and improved housing quality. Conversely, married respondents tend to score higher, suggesting a greater likelihood of remaining in rental housing or pursuing only

incremental improvements.

For Aspiration 2, higher scores indicate a preference for transitional or shared housing arrangements, while lower scores reflect conventional housing pathways. Age and income emerge as significant predictors. Older respondents are less inclined toward transitional arrangements, whereas higher-income individuals are more likely to adopt such strategies, possibly as steps toward eventual home-ownership.

Overall, the results highlight the multidimensional nature of housing aspirations. The first dimension captures the rental–ownership divide, while the second reflects alternative housing pathways. Income emerges as the most consistent determinant, reducing reliance on basic rental housing (Aspiration 1, $\beta = -0.124$) and increasing engagement with transitional strategies (Aspiration 2, $\beta = +0.176$). Age shows dimension-specific effects, while education and sex do not exhibit independent influences once income is controlled, underscoring the central role of economic capacity.

Table 9**. Variance explained by MCA dimensions (N = 522)**

Dimension	Principal inertia	% of variance	Cumulative %
Dim 1	0.053	**43.8**	43.8
Dim 2	0.016	**13.5**	57.3
Dim 3	0.011	9.4	66.7
All others	0.041	33.3	100

Source: Author's Analysis of Field Survey (2025)

Table 10**. OLS regression predicting *Aspiration 1* (higher = basic rental / smaller unit)**

Predictor	B	SE	*t*	*p*	95 % CI
Age (years)	−0.078	0.050	−1.56	0.119	−0.176, 0.020
Sex (1 = female)	−0.144	0.264	−0.55	0.585	−0.664, 0.375
Education (years)	−0.003	0.040	−0.08	0.933	−0.082, 0.075
Monthly income (categorical*)	**−0.124**	0.054	−2.28	0.023	−0.231, −0.017
Marital status (1 = currently married)	**+0.245**	0.108	2.26	0.024	0.032, 0.458
Household size (persons)	−0.061	0.079	−0.77	0.441	−0.216, 0.094
Model					
R^2 / Adj. R^2	0.021 / 0.010				
F(6, 515)	1.88	$p = 0.083$			

Source: Author's Analysis of Field Survey (2025)

Table 11. **OLS regression predicting *Aspiration 2* (higher = transitional/shared/complex arrangements)**

Predictor	B	SE	*t*	*p*	95 % CI
Age (years)	**−0.154**	0.049	−3.17	0.002	−0.250, −0.059
Sex (1 = female)	+0.486	0.259	1.88	0.061	−0.022, 0.995
Education (years)	+0.038	0.039	0.96	0.336	−0.039, 0.114
Monthly income (categorical)	**+0.176**	0.053	3.29	0.001	0.071, 0.281
Marital status (1 = currently married)	+0.026	0.106	0.25	0.804	−0.182, 0.235
Household size (persons)	−0.121	0.077	−1.57	0.117	−0.273, 0.031
Model					
R^2 / Adj. R^2	0.062 / 0.051				
F(6, 515)	5.64	$p < 0.001$			

Source: Author's Analysis of Field Survey (2025)

Conclusion

This study examined how socio-demographic characteristics influence housing affordability and housing aspirations among informal public transport workers in Lagos, Nigeria. The findings indicate that housing outcomes are shaped by both individual attributes and broader structural constraints within the urban housing system. Housing affordability emerged as a multidimensional concept, incorporating both objective rent burdens and subjective perceptions of financial strain. Key socio-demographic factors, particularly income, age, and household size, significantly influenced affordability, although their effects were not strictly linear. Notably, higher-income respondents often experienced greater rent burdens, suggesting that increased earnings tend to facilitate access to more expensive housing rather than reduce financial pressure. Larger households consistently faced higher affordability challenges due to increased space and cost demands, while older respondents generally demonstrated greater capacity to manage housing expenses, likely reflecting more stable income patterns or life-cycle advantages.

Housing aspirations were similarly shaped by socio-demographic characteristics, with income emerging as the most consistent determinant. Higher-income workers expressed stronger aspirations for home-ownership and improved housing conditions, and were more likely to consider transitional housing arrangements as pathways toward ownership. Age and marital status also influenced aspiration patterns, reflecting life-cycle stages and household stability. In contrast, education and sex showed limited independent effects once income was controlled for, underscoring the central role of economic capacity in shaping housing expectations and future goals.

Overall, the findings highlight that housing affordability challenges and aspiration gaps among informal workers are not merely individual issues but are deeply embedded in structural housing conditions, income instability, and household composition dynamics. The interaction between affordability pressures and future housing goals reveals a persistent mismatch between housing needs and available opportunities in Lagos.

Based on these findings, several policy and practical recommendations are proposed. First, there is a need to strengthen inclusive housing finance systems tailored to informal sector workers. Flexible, low-interest loan schemes with simplified eligibility criteria can better accommodate irregular income patterns, while cooperative-based and micro-housing finance models can reduce reliance on costly informal arrangements.

Second, expanding access to affordable rental housing is essential, given the dominance of rental tenure among informal workers. Investment in low-cost rental schemes and incremental housing models, supported by public–private partnerships, can help reduce rent burdens and enhance housing security.

Third, housing design and development strategies should account for larger household sizes by promoting cost-effective, family-sized housing units. Fourth, improving income stability through measures

such as transport sector regulation, social protection, and employment support will indirectly enhance housing affordability. Fifth, targeted interventions, such as rental subsidies, housing savings schemes, and structured pathways to home-ownership, should prioritize younger and lower-income workers who are most vulnerable to affordability constraints. Finally, integrated urban planning that aligns housing provision with transport infrastructure and employment locations is critical. Such coordination can reduce commuting costs, address spatial mismatches, and improve overall urban livability. In conclusion, improving housing outcomes for informal workers in Lagos requires a comprehensive approach that combines inclusive housing finance, expanded affordable housing supply, and targeted social support within a coordinated urban development framework.

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