ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to find out housing consumer's choices and preferences in the City of Nairobi (CON) . The main features include all those characteristics that influence residential location choice. A total sample of 300 was used which covered 200 households from low income, 50 households from middle income and 50 households from the high income group in six Nairobi estates. Heads of individual households were interviewed using a questionnare. 200 was sampled from the low income group; the largest proportion because low, income earners are the majority, not only at the urban population level but also at the national level. Consequently, 50 households were drawn from middle income group and 50 '.. too from the high income areas. Heads of households were considered most appropriate to respond to the questionnaire. Housing institutions and agencies and one transport company were interviewed to find the major consideration for making a decision on the most preferred residential location choice. The purpose of the study was:- x determine those factors accounting for residential location preference by CON residents; find out whether households are satisfied with the arrangement of residential location's house types and neighbourhood being offered on the market; establish whether the planning process has directed the growth of residential areas and whether they conform to the classical models of Alonso (1964) and Muth (1969) on residential location preferences. The hypotheses of the study are that socioeconomic status plays an important role in people's choice of residential location; public transport significantly influences the growth of new estates and consequently the people's choice for that location; that only economic factors i.e land price, income and transport costs could be used to predict the determinants of a householfi's residential location. The study· used descriptive analysis to give the general characteristics of housing provision by housing agents and housing choices and preferences by housing consumers. Factor analysis was used to get the factors that determine residential location choice. Regression analysis was used to determine the relationship between house size and family size. xi It was revealed that the factors of household income ethnic status, household employments status, and neighbourhood status play a significant role in households' choice for a residence. Investigation on housing provision reveals that such provision depends mostly on the availability of land. Thus the ultimate arrangement of neighbourhoods and house types. Finally the study observe that there is little/no relationship between family size and house size, while the economic status of households is paramount in determining residential location. The study recommended that in order to achieve the objectives of housing policies and programmes other related fields need further study, for exampl~ house affordability by majority of the population who fall in the low income bracket is one important issue. Sources of finance for developing h~using for all the sectors of society. other related resources for housing provision i.e land, personnel and technology should be carefully studied to see their linkages. Lastly, housing developers should strive to aesthetically build houses/neighbourhoods in conformity to people's expected choices/preferences and not provide houses "en-mass" with little appeal, both in their physical plan, structure and neighbourhood.