



**SOCIOECONOMIC AND LIVING CONDITION CHALLENGES FOR URBAN
SLUMS IN LAGOS, NIGERIA**

By

OBILAONU JANE IFEOMA

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

November 2022

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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November 2022

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Lagos is reportedly one of the Nigerian states with the highest number of slums who are experiencing housing challenges. Urban slums dwellers in Lagos are vulnerable parts of the society that are facing various types of problems like health and hygiene related problems, low level of income, due to poor housing conditions and other serious housing challenge. The rate at which urban slums are increasing in the state has become worrisome as it has continued unabated despite several attempts, by the Lagos state government to checkmate the phenomenon. There is need to develop the plans and policies for the upgradation of the slum dwellers in terms of infrastructural development and basic amenities. Unfortunately, the slums are presently faced with so many consequences due to many factors among which is their socioeconomic conditions. Understanding their socioeconomic conditions will help the government in designing a better framework for the development and upgradation of the slums. Therefore, in this study, the socioeconomic conditions of Lagos urban slum dwellers are investigated and analysed. To achieve this, a quantitative research approach was used, and the survey method was used in obtaining data from the study respondents. Convenience sampling technique was used to obtain data from a sample of 384 using a structured questionnaire. The sample of the study was drawn from six slums areas in Lagos State. Findings of the study revealed that the socioeconomic status of the urban slum dwellers that participated in this study is low, with an average yearly income which is below the poverty line, low yearly rent, and types of houses they live in. The findings also showed that, despite the low socioeconomic status of the dwellers, they demonstrated resilience in every aspect. Lastly, it was also found that perceived factors that influence urban slum expansion include, economic (availability of cheaper areas for micro businesses), socioeconomic (search of employment opportunities), and social reasons (social affinity and family).

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**CABARAN PERUMAHAN DALAM KALANGAN SETINGGAN BANDAR:
SUATU PANDANGAN TERHADAP GAYA HIDUP SOSIOEKONOMI
PENGHUNI SETINGGAN LAGOS, NIGERIA**

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Lagos telah dilaporkan sebagai salah satu negeri di Nigeria dengan bilangan setinggan tertinggi. Kadar peningkatan setinggan bandar di negeri tersebut merisaukan sebab ia masih tidak berkurangan walaupun beberapa strategi oleh kerajaan negeri Lagos bagi membendung fenomena tersebut. Terdapat keperluan untuk membangunkan pelan dan polisi bagi penataran penghuni setinggan dari segi pembangunan infrastruktur dan kemudahan asas. Malangnya, setinggan tersebut kini berhadapan dengan begitu banyak masalah dan isu yang disebabkan oleh pelbagai faktor, antaranya ialah kondisi sosio ekonomi mereka. Memahami kondisi sosio ekonomi mereka akan membantu kerajaan dalam mereka bentuk kerangka yang lebih baik bagi pembangunan dan menaik taraf kawasan setinggan ini. Oleh yang demikian, kajian ini akan meneliti dan menganalisa kondisi sosio ekonomi penghuni setinggan bandar Lagos. Bagi mencapai matlamat kajian, pendekatan penyelidikan kuantitatif telah digunakan, dan kaedah tinjauan telah dilaksanakan untuk memperolehi data daripada responden. Teknik persampelan mudah telah digunakan untuk memperolehi data daripada 384 sampel menggunakan soal selidik berstruktur. Sampel kajian ini telah diperolehi daripada enam kawasan setinggan di Lagos. Dapatan kajian mendapati bahawa status sosio ekonomi penghuni setinggan bandar yang terlibat dalam kajian ini adalah rendah, dengan purata pendapatan tahunan adalah di bawah garis kemiskinan, sewa tahunan yang rendah, dan jenis rumah yang diduduki. Dapatan juga menunjukkan bahawa, walaupun status sosio ekonomi penghuni adalah rendah, mereka memperlihatkan tahap adaptasi yang baik dalam setiap aspek. Akhirnya, dapatan kajian juga mendapati bahawa antara faktor yang mempengaruhi kemajuan dan pembangunan berterusan setinggan bandar termasuklah faktor ekonomi (kebolehsediaan kawasan yang lebih murah bagi mikro perniagaan), sosio ekonomi (carian peluang pekerjaan), dan isu sosial (pekara sosial dan keluarga).

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Inequality is one of the defining characteristics of the neoliberal accumulation regime. This makes it hard to maintain political regimes in Africa and other places, which are increasingly being expressed in cities. The majority of humanity lives in cities, which are also the global centers of capital accumulation. As a result, they are the primary crucibles or arenas in which the contradictions between exchange value and use value are displayed. Globally, cities are becoming increasingly interconnected, facilitating greater value flows and the spatial displacement of contradictions through the urban grid or network, particularly as the informal sector expands at a rapid rate (Carmody & Owusu, 2016). Thus, the evolution of these spaces is largely determined by inter- and intra-urban relations as well as those between cities and their hinterlands.

The "urban crisis" has primarily manifested itself in the Global South's cities up until this point. The neoliberalization of urban areas in Africa does not appear to be capable of meeting the challenges of poverty, security, or climate change, but it is contributing to them. Neoliberalism was posited as the solution to problems with global development. However, the development of "world city" developments in Africa or heterotopias (attempts to enact utopias) has recently emerged as a new strategy for mitigating the urban contradictions brought on by neoliberalization. This paper looks at how African neoliberal urban developments are trying to incorporate global urban forms and how this is contributing to the continent's (under) development. Restructuring the accumulation processes in a manner that can unleash the growth potential of African cities to benefit the mass of residents, rather than just their elites, is what we propose as a means of addressing urban challenges in a way that is more creative than those offered by the ideationally, if not practically, defunct ideology of neoliberalism (Carmody & Owusu, 2016).

The way cities are developing around the world has been significantly influenced by globalization and the spread of neoliberalism. Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) were the first step toward neoliberalism in Africa at the beginning of the 1980s, which effectively transformed the state's role into one of market and neoliberal project guardians; attempting to maintain control over those marginalized by neoliberalism and ensure a stable investment climate (Afena, 2010). In addition, globalization refers to global processes of interaction and integration between individuals, businesses, and governments of various nations that have intensified since the late 1980s. These processes are fueled in part by international trade and investment and aided by information technology, both of which make the world more integrated and, as a result, more dependent on one another (Murphy and Carmody, 2015). As globalization is a much more extensive and more multi-faceted cycle than the transnational financial exchanges that undergrid neoliberalism, the associations among globalization and

neoliberalism are not straight-forward (Litonjua, 2008;Heron, 2008).

Cities play a significant role in the globalization process because the world economy is largely organized around and through cities.Indeed, cities are no longer merely places where goods and services are produced and traded;According to Robinson (2006), they are now places where people and goods are connected to the wider world.Consequently, the global urban system of today is dominated by a small number of centers that serve as global capitalism's command and control centers.These global cities stand out not because of their size or their status as the capitals of large nations, but rather because of the range and extent of their economic power.They are areas for the vital individual establishments and associations, which make due, control, direct and decide the development and dissemination of free enterprise across the world, and accordingly possess predominant situations in the worldwide metropolitan ordered progression. Even though most of the world's cities are in developed nations (Robinson, 2006), more and more cities are contributing significantly to globalization.According to Grant and Nijman (2002), some geographers have taken this argument one step further by demonstrating that even the most impoverished cities perform productive functions.For instance, so-called "Bottom of the Pyramid" strategies, which aim to consumerize the poor by selling small packets of washing powder because the poor cannot afford to buy larger boxes of it, are increasingly placing cities in the Global South at the center of capital accumulation worldwide. In the platinum industry, for example, Johannesburg is a prime example of this—see Surborg 2011, for more information. As a result, some African cities serve ownership functions, are hubs for receiving surplus capital from Northern and Eastern nations, and they serve as new markets for transnational businesses like mobile phone or beverage companies. The African headquarters of Coca-Cola have recently moved from England to Johannesburg, South Africa; evidence of this creative and empirical shift (Grant, 2015).

In Lagos, Nigeria, slum dwellers now live in canoes for fear of the government agencies. The global expansion of urban slums poses questions for economic research, as well as problems for policy makers. Slums are a transitory phenomenon characteristic of fast-growing economies, and they progressively give way to formal housing as economic growth trickles down and societies approach the later stages of economic development. Even if slum areas appear stable in the short- or medium-term, this argument holds. Living in a slum area only represents a transitory phase in the life cycle of rural migrants: the slum dwellers or their children eventually move into formal housing within the city, for the fortunate ones, while others migrate back to their rural domains

Slums represent the worst of urban poverty and inequality. Yet the world has the resources, know-how, and power to reach the target established in the Millennium Declaration. Slums have existed as long as cities have and are a growing context in the developing world. The challenge is in their efficient, effective and inclusive management (Abubakar et al., 2019). The challenges of living in a slum area are immense and efforts to improve the living conditions of slum dwellers (especially within developing countries) have been feeble and incoherent over the last decade or so, having peaked during the 1980s. However, renewed concern about poverty has recently led various world governments to adopt a specific target on slums in the

United Nations Millennium Declaration, which aims to significantly improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by the year 2020.

Researchers have also found that urban slum sprawl is caused by weak regulation of policies by government (Sirkaya et al., 2008), thereby giving room for haphazard expansion of urban areas, which is evident in the manner buildings are constructed, and the existence of numerous illegal structures (Yiran, et al. 2020). These authors noted that one of the major reasons for the existence of such illegal and haphazard structures in urban slums in Nigeria, is the fact that city authorities are under-resourced and there is a shortage of experts in urban planning. They further noted that even where there were good plans, the authorities lacked the resources for monitoring and enforcing the development of built areas in urban centres.

In addition, slum areas have high concentration of social and economic deprivation, which may include broken families, unemployment and economic, physical and social exclusion. Slum dwellers have limited access to credit and formal job markets due to stigmatization, discrimination and geographic isolation. Slums are often recipients of the city's nuisances, including industrial effluent and noxious waste, and the only land accessible to slum dwellers is often fragile, dangerous or polluted land that no one else wants.

People in slum areas suffer inordinately from water-borne diseases such as typhoid and cholera, as well as more opportunistic ones that accompany HIV/AIDS. Slum women and the children they support are the greatest victims of all. Slum areas are also commonly believed to be places with a high incidence of crime, although this is not universally true since slums with strong social control systems will often have low crime rates. Albeit, on the positive side, slums are the first stopping point for immigrants - they provide the low cost and only affordable housing that will enable the immigrants to save for their eventual absorption into urban society. As the place of residence for low-income employees, slums keep the wheels of the city turning in many different ways.

Most slum dwellers are people struggling to make a honest living, within the context of extensive urban poverty and formal unemployment. They are in low- paying occupations such as informal jobs in the garment industry, recycling of solid waste, a variety of home based enterprises and many are domestic servants, security guards, piece rate workers and selfSlums are also places in which the vibrant mixing of different cultures frequently results in new forms of artistic expression. Out of unhealthy, crowded and often dangerous environments can emerge cultural movements and levels of solidarity unknown in the suburbs of the rich. Against all odds, slum dwellers have developed economically rational and innovative shelter solutions for themselves. However, these few positive attributes do not in any way justify the continued existence of slums and should not be an excuse for the slow progress towards the goal of adequate shelter for all.

Many past responses to the problem of urban slums have been based on the erroneous belief that provision of improved housing and related services (through slum upgrading) and physical eradication of slums will, on their own, solve the slum problem. Solutions based on this premise have failed to address the main underlying causes of slums, of which poverty is the most significant. There is need for future policies to support the livelihoods of the urban poor by enabling urban informal-sector activities to flourish and develop, by linking low-income housing development to income generation, and by ensuring easy geographical access to jobs.

The majority of slum dwellers in developing country cities earn their living from informal sector activities located either within or outside slum areas, and many informal sector entrepreneurs whose operations are located within slums have clienteles extending to the rest of the city (Yadav 2015; Mahabir, 2016). The informal sector is the dominant livelihood source in slums. However, information on the occupations and income generating activities of slum dwellers from all over the world emphasizes the diversity of slum populations, who range from university lecturers, students and formal sector employees, to those engaged in marginal activities bordering on illegality, including petty crime. The main problems confronting the informal sector at present are lack of formal recognition, as well as low levels of productivity and incomes

According to Olofinji (2017), facing the challenge of slums, urban development policies should more vigorously address the issue of livelihoods of slum dwellers and urban poverty in general, thus going beyond traditional approaches that have tended to concentrate on improvement of housing, infrastructure and physical environmental conditions. The research gap observed in the current research arose from lack of focus on Lagos slum.

1.2 Problem Statement

According to a 2018 World Bank report on the percentage of urban residents living in slums, Nigeria had a rate of 54%, while South Africa had 26%, Cameroon had 34%, The Gambia had 27%, Ghana had 30%, Senegal had 30%, and Zimbabwe had 34% (AJAJA, 2022). (Friesen, 2019). According to Singh (2016), slums dwellers are vulnerable parts of the society that are facing various types of problems like health and hygiene related problems, low level of income, poor housing conditions and lack of social amenities. Unhealthy living conditions of slum dwellers are the result of a lack of basic services, with visible, open sewers, lack of pathways, uncontrolled dumping of waste, polluted environments, and unorganized building constructions etc.

The UN (2022) noted the uprising of slums is caused by two things, which are, increase in population and urbanization. The UN noted that the increase in population has outpaced the building of new affordable homes. Slum areas have the highest concentrations of poor people and the worst shelter and physical environmental conditions. In the UN 2022 report, some challenges of urban slums were highlighted including, informal modes of transportation, lack of waste collection services, lack of

access to controlled facilities for waste disposal poor air quality inadequate and poorly designed public space, With these there have been responses aimed at improving the living conditions of the slum dwellers.

However, many of these past responses to the problem of urban slums have been based on the erroneous belief that provision of improved housing and related services (through slum upgrading) and physical eradication of slums will, on their own, solve the slum problem. Solutions based on this premise have failed to address the main underlying causes of slums, of which poverty is the most significant (Olofinji, 2017). Therefore, it becomes important to understand the major factors that influence the uprising of urban slums, so that government policies aimed at improving this condition will be properly designed in such a way that the underlying significant issues are tackled. Olofinji (2017) noted that facing the challenge of slums requires going beyond traditional approaches that have tended to concentrate on improvement of housing, infrastructure and physical environmental conditions. In order to develop new strategies that can adequately contain the issues of urban slum in Lagos it is important to understand the underlying factors responsible for the uprising of urban slums in Lagos. Based on this, the question “what are the factors that influence the uprising of urban slums?” is raised in this study. This aims at understanding the main factors that influence the uprising of urban slums.

In most African countries, the development of urban slums are common occurrences at the outskirts of major cities, being developed mostly by immigrants to cities from neighboring villages, who lack financial capacities to rent decent accommodation (Ahmed et al., 2012). In 2012, the estimated population of 47 sub- Sahara African countries was 910.4million (World Bank, 2013) and of this, 167million were Nigerians (FRN-National Population Commission, 2013). Out of the 167million people in Nigeria, 61.1% (over 102.2 million) were said to reside in slums (Pepple, 2012). In Nigeria, the failure of government to respond to the housing needs of the poor has encouraged them to find their own way of putting up houses, and this has given rise to urban slums (Fekade, 2000). Sietchiping (2000) observed that many urban slums in developing countries result mainly from socioeconomic factors such as, high rent charges and highcost of land in the cities, high immigration rate, problems of landlessness, poverty and unemployment.

Furthermore, Lagos which was once the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, has experienced transformation in several areas. Lagos which was also one of the dusty and crime-ridden state, has been transformed to one of the top 100 best places in the world to live and do business in, and it has been transformed into a state with less air pollution, less unemployment rate than some developed countries, and most importantly, higher GDP which is higher than that of so many other African countries (Koutonin, 2016). In addition, a decade of a responsive and accountable government has raised the revenue per inhabitant to the same level as in China, Brazil or Poland. In terms of people's happiness, the international happiness index now places Lagos at the same level as Finland. Lagos is already a megacity of 21 million people with a strong internal brand. Within the federated states of Nigeria, Lagos contributes 25% to the national GDP (or 32% to non-oil national GDP).

Despite the advanced level of Lagos, the question arises whether the fruits of human development have been fairly shared among all segments of the population. Among the urban population, slum dwellers are the poorest. According to Gandy (2006, p.372) there are as many as 200 different slums in Lagos, "ranging in size from clusters of shacks underneath highways to entire districts such as Ajegunle and Mushin. It has been noted that Lagos is one of the Nigerian states with the highest number of slums (Gandy, 2006). The rate at which urban slums are growing in the region has become worrisome as it has continued unabated despite several attempts, by the Lagos state government to checkmate the phenomenon. New make-shift apartments are being built on daily basis at the urban fringes of Lagos without title to land, and without planning approval. There appears to be a strong resilience by the residents of the urban slums to government attempts at, stopping the proliferation of urban slum formation. Over the years, such resiliencies have been exhibited through civil demonstrations, community uproar, and direct confrontations with, government agencies responsible for development control. The development of slums has impacted negatively on the physical and socioeconomic environment of some areas of Lagos State. Some of these areas are presently being perceived to be "safe-heaven" for anti-social elements like kidnappers, armed robbers, drug peddlers, and area boys generally referred to in the area as "Agbero". There is the general perception that crime rates in some of these areas of Lagos State have remained increasingly high because the perpetrators of such crimes come from these slums. As Okimiji et.a. (2021), Morka (2007, p.7) points out, over two- thirds of the population of Lagos lives in the "informal settlements or slums scattered around the city". Most of these slums are densely populated with some estimates indicating that "more than 75 per cent of urban slum dwellers live in one room households with a density of 4.6 persons per room" (Adelekan, 2009, p.6).

Given the above situation, combined with other challenges such as city transportation, electricity and potable water provision, Morka (2007, p.4) argues that "to say that Lagos is a city in crisis is to understate the severity and enormity of the challenges that confront its residents and managers". This makes it important to examine the living conditions of these urban slum dwellers. The purpose of examining their living condition is to help town planners and government policy makers make informed decisions when embarking on interventions aimed at improving the situation of urban slum dwellers. Thus, the question, what are the living conditions of urban dwellers?

Additionally, majority of studies carried out in the area of urban slum have focused on studying the living environment and health of urban slum dwellers (Bird et al., 2017; Karn, Shikura & Hideki, 2003; Khan 2015), healthcare in urban slums (Madhiwalla, 2007), malnourishment among slum children (Neeraj & Sanjay 2003). One of such studies carried out in Nigeria focused on the structural profile of the socio economic and housing problems of the slum areas in Enugu City, Nigeria (Mniti, 2013). Besides this, the available literature on urban slum dwellers in Lagos mostly features measures for addressing the problems of urban slum dwellers, without examining their socioeconomic conditions so as to be able focus on improving their socioeconomic status. Therefore, in this study the socioeconomic conditions of urban slums in Lagos will be studied, so that steps aimed at improving the living conditions of urban dwellers will be taken in the right direction.

Finally, it has been argued that in the slum dwellers face many hardships in their daily lives including, low incomes, overcrowded living conditions in high risk areas such as flood zones or steep hillsides, and limited access to clean water, sanitation, transport or solid waste services. These challenges are only made worse by the impacts of climate change and natural hazards. Heavy rains can quickly turn into a disastrous flood as a result of insufficient or ineffective drainage. Such flooding can destroy the limited assets of poor households, halt economic activity, contaminate water supply, lead to disease and displace residents. With the increase in weather extremes, it is anticipated that such events will happen with recurring frequency.

The research gap observed in the current research arose from lack of focus on Lagos slum. For example Koutonin (2016) was concern about the higher GDP which is higher than that of so many other African countries, while Fekade (2000) was after the failure of government to respond to the housing needs of the poor and the rising urban slums. Others such as Sietchiping (2000), Ahmed et al. (2012) was concern about the 167million people in generally Nigeria, 61.1% (over 102.2 million) and the lack financial capacities to rent decent accommodation (Ahmed et al., 2012). Also, Olofinji (2017) noted that facing the challenge of slums requires going beyond traditional approaches. However, studies on the socioeconomic status of urban slum dwellers is Lagos, the living conditions of urban slum dwellers in Lagos, the perceptions of respondents regarding the factors that influence urban slum expansion in Lagos and the level of resilience of the urban slum has not been done here the need for the current research.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the socioeconomic status of urban slum dwellers in Lagos?
2. What are the living conditions of the urban slum dwellers of Lagos?
3. What are the perceptions of respondents regarding the factors that influence urban slum expansion in Lagos?
4. What is the level of resilience of the urban slum in Lagos?

1.4 Research Objectives

Based on the problems highlighted in the previous section, the main aim of this study is to analyse the socioeconomic conditions of urban slum dwellers in Lagos, while the specific objectives are as follows:

1. To ascertain the socioeconomic status of urban slum dwellers is Lagos.
2. To examine the living conditions of urban slum dwellers in Lagos.
3. To determine the perceptions of respondents regarding the factors that influence urban slum expansion in Lagos.
4. To examine the level of resilience of the urban slum in Lagos

1.5 Significance of the study

The current is significant because it provided avenue to fill the gap in the aspect of socioeconomic status of urban slum dwellers in Lagos, the living conditions of urban slum dwellers in Lagos, the perceptions of respondents regarding the factors that influence urban slum expansion in Lagos and the level of resilience of the urban slum in has not been done here the need for the current research. The investigation focuses on determining the living conditions of urban slum dwellers in Lagos, as well as their socioeconomic conditions of the respondents. An understanding of this will help policy makers in the area of restructuring slum areas as well as improving the living conditions of people in urban slum areas so that their quality of life can be improved.

More so, findings of this study will serve as a contribution to the body of knowledge by revealing the perception of urban slum dwellers of the resilience of their communities. This knowledge can be used for theory building or further development of existing theories on resilience building in informal settlements. More so, understanding the relationship between the socioeconomic status and living conditions of the urban slum dwellers, will help in highlighting how their living condition is influenced by their socioeconomic conditions. One key significant of this study ascertain of resident area on “evidence-based design” to highlight the uniqueness of the research. Lastly, this work serves as a reference point for other researchers. Researchers seeking to study the main issues related to urban slum dwelling will be able to do so using this work as a relevant material for their investigation.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The current research focused on the socioeconomic status of urban slum dwellers in Lagos, the living conditions of urban slum dwellers in Lagos, the perceptions of respondents regarding the factors that influence urban slum expansion in Lagos and the level of resilience of the urban slum

1.7 Operational Definition of Variables

Urban Slum: are settlements, neighborhoods, or city regions that cannot provide the basic living conditions necessary for its inhabitants, or slum dwellers, to live in a safe and healthy environment.

Urban Slum Dwellers: this can be defined as the population living in settlements, neighbourhoods, or city regions that cannot provide the basic living conditions necessary for its inhabitants to live in a safe and healthy environment.

Socioeconomic status: is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation.

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

The remaining parts of the thesis are organized as follows:

Chapter Two contains the review of related literature, highlighting the main issues related to urban slums as related to this study. The issues discussed in this chapter are related to the living conditions, socioeconomic conditions of slum dwellers, and the factors that influence urban slum expansion. Also, the related theory and conceptual framework are presented in this chapter. Chapter Three presents the methodology used in the study. The methodology provides details on the procedure involved in the study, covering collection of data, sample determination, population of the study, sampling technique, reliability and validity. In Chapter Four, the results of the analysis, as well as findings are presented and discussed. Lastly, Chapter Five provides conclusion of the study, summary of findings, and recommendations for future works.

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