

English Language Instructions and Walkability Constraints among Adult Residents in Southwest, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the nexus between English language instructions and walkability constraints among adult residents in Southwest, Nigeria. In the light of this, two specific objectives and research questions were achieved and answered respectively. The study was premised on Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) as a relevant theoretical framework. With respect to methodology, descriptive survey research design was embraced and simple random sampling techniques were used to take a sample of three hundred and eighty-four (384) participants from the target population within the studied areas. In addition, a self-designed structured research instrument was administered on these respondents with the aid of twelve (12) trained research assistants and the obtained data was analyzed by employing descriptive statistical tool, that is, simple percentage. The empirical findings revealed that most adults barely comprehend English language instructions on road/community routes in southwest Nigeria, and as a result of this, they feel intellectually disturbed. It was recommended that well-trained English language instructors should be integrated into environmental planning team of each State Government within Southwest Nigeria to curb the rise of walkability constraints among adults.

Keywords: English language, Instructions, Walkability constraints, Adult, Residents, Southwest Nigeria.

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Contribution of this paper to the literature

This study has contributed to the existing body of knowledge by establishing the nexus between English language instructions and walkability constraints among adult residents in Southwest Nigeria.

1. Introduction

The concept 'walkability' simply connotes walking, which is a basic and regular elementary means through which an individual is able to move around his immediate environment and/or reach other desired destinations. The benefits associated with walking range from reducing air pollution, traffic congestion and resource consumption, to solving obesity and other health challenges (Dannenberg, Cramer, & Gibson, 2005). Thus, walking has been considered as an essential consideration in the creation of "live-able" environment that encourages friendly social interactions among neighbours and colleagues, as well as making both the urban environment a more enjoyable and safer place to live in for both children and adults (Eunyoung, 2012; Graham, 2003).

English Language is a west-germanic language that was first spoken in early medieval England, and the use of comprehensible English language instructions plays a vital role in the creation of a sustainable environment that permits walkability in both the urban and rural environment, especially when such instruction is pedestrian friendly, comprehensible and presented where it is necessary (August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005; Oguntunase, 1990). With respect to an adult which is referred to a grown up person residing in Southwest Nigeria, assessing level of walkability in any environment, town planning professionals may not be able to address the quality of the pedestrian environment and the factors that may facilitate the occurrence of walkability constraints in southwest Nigeria, towards being more integrated, appealing and suitable for living, without involving the service of English language instructors who will help put forth simple comprehensible instructions where necessary.

Corroborating the words of Handy, Cao, and Mokhtarian (2006) the level of walkability in Southwest Nigeria being a geo-political segmentation in Nigeria comprising six States, will certainly determine the extent to which a built environment can be qualified as being hostile or friendly to the people living, schooling, shopping, visiting and recreating, or spending time in such area. Thus, any built environment that will negate possibility of walkability constraints must be well planned to include land use patterns, drainage channels, transportation system, and design features that together generate needs and provide opportunities for travel and physical activity (Deborah et al., 2007).

Walkability constraints refers to hindrances to walking freely and the major factor considered to emit walkability constraints among adult residents in different environment (Southwest Nigeria inclusive) has been found to be deficient literacy, poorly outlined instructions on road maps, walkways, restriction in communities and private facilities which are often presented in English language (Russell, Scott, Timothy, Penny, & Sylvia, 2007). Similarly, the deliberate refusal or fear of removing traditional physical features by communities, the conversion of recreational parks into shopping plaza, fascinating privately owned houses or government structures with or without State Housing Authority's approval, and absence of community cohesion towards abetting walkability constraints experience by adults, constitute a big issue of concern (WCED, 1987).

Besides environmental factors, socio-economic characteristics such as the level of income, education and type of occupation have also been considered as part of the factors that affect walking behaviour among adults in various households (Southwest Nigeria inclusive) (Manaugh & El-Geneidy, 2011). The diverse utilization and importance of English language instructions towards promoting a society void of accidents and walkability constraints among adults cannot be under-emphasized or discarded, because walking has been increasingly accepted and appreciated as an effective and popular means of enhancing levels of physical activity for the majority of the population, especially for adults and the aged (Powell, Martin, & Chowdhury, 2003).

Walkability constraints is a notable experience among adults in Southwest Nigeria and to curtail this awful experience, intrapersonal factors, interpersonal processes, institutions, community, and environmental factors, as well as public policy require simplicity in terms of instructions which is often presented in English language on various routes, road maps and restricted communities and facilities (Eunyoung, 2012; Manaugh & El-Geneidy, 2011; Saunders & Goldenberg, 1999). Research shows that there is dearth of literature on the whole subject of English language instructions and walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria. Therefore, this study examined how walkability constraints can be mitigated through suitable and easily comprehensible English language instructions on various pathways utilized by most adults in Southwest Nigeria.

1.1. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The broad goal of this study was to examine English language Instructions and walkability Constraints among adult residents in Southwest, Nigeria. The specific objectives of this paper are;

1. To explore the perceived effects of English language instructions on walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria.
2. To examine effectiveness of English language instructions towards mitigating walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria.

Moreover, to accomplish the above aim and specific objectives, the following research questions were examined:

1. What are the perceived effects of English language instructions on walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria?
2. How will suitable English language instructions be effective towards mitigating walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria?

Thus to examine walkability constraints experienced by most adult residents in southwest Nigeria, with hope bring about mitigation this menace through the use of suitable comprehensible English language instructions, both objectives were thoroughly examined.

Objective 1: Perceived effects of English language instructions on walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria.

Walkability constraints among adults is simply the product of inadequate planning of an environment, as well as poorly delineated instructions or vocabularies which are often presented in English language (Mezynski, 1983). The consumption of alcohol or other drugs by adults (and young people also) either to relieve pain or to maintain their homeostasis might likely influence the possibility of walkability constraints among adults in the form of accidents during an attempt to walk on roads in their neighbourhood, leading to physical incapacitation, severe body pain, bruises, fracture permanent disability or instant death in rare cases (Jurnal, 2013).

Walkability constraints experienced by adult residents is becoming a popular buzzword in planning cities (i.e. southwest Nigeria) that suffers high level of pollution due to, amongst others, emission from automobiles are embracing walkability in order to reap its benefits. In addition to that, walkability constraints hinders the measure of how satisfactorily the transportation system meets the need of walking of the community (Jurnal, 2013). The influence of knotty English language instructions on road signs and/or bill with respect to directions, speed limits and environment restraints have gross potency to influence the occurrence of walkability constraints (Manaugh & El-Geneidy, 2011).

Nevertheless, the critical role of English language instructions in terms of preventing walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria, cannot and should not be underemphasized, so as to prevent the occurrence avoidable injuries, sudden slips that may cause death, disability, injury, or physical harm (WCED, 1987). Therefore, the utilization of English language instructions and suitable communication strategies on routes, roadmaps and restricted communities/facilities will certainly help in curbing recurrence of walkability constraints among adults in Southwest Nigeria.

According to Hoehner, Ramirez, Elliott, Handy, and Brownson (2005) walkability constraints experienced by most adults in most urban cities is the product of poor planning, as well as product of corrupt practices which pertains to construction of houses, lack of clear instructions on what to do at each locomotive junction and unsafe attitude exhibited by most adults in knotty situations. It is no longer news that walkability constraints occurs most among adults across southwest Nigeria, regardless of age, gender, skin colour, level of education, and/or socioeconomic status, but can be mitigated, if clearer comprehensible English language instructions are put where necessary/needed along various routes, road maps, restricted communities and facilities.

Walkability constraints experienced by adults on various land routes in southwest Nigeria has been erroneously believed to be a permanent issue without a viable solution in developing communities, but can be mitigated drastically through proper reorganization of English language instructions on various routes, road maps and restricted communities/facilities and orientation of adults on the need to patiently read and comprehend instructions on various routes, as well as deliberate follow-up on building approvals by State Housing Authority in southwest Nigeria (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004; Manaugh & El-Geneidy, 2011).

Objective 2: Effectiveness of English language instructions towards mitigating walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria.

English language instructions simply refers to whatever has been or is written in English language on any routes, road maps, restricted communities/ facilities and other relevant public spaces such as schools, markets, religious centres, legal and financial institutions etc., aimed at providing ease in terms of movement and safety of lives and property. The essence of adopting different communication strategies when disseminating English language instructions on different territory is simply to prevent chaos and all sorts of risks (ESL, 2019).

Driven largely by present day situation of constant congestions, most adults tend to find pleasure in walking shorter distances around and within their communities, but most often encounter or experience walkability constraints due to the presence of nucleated buildings and hostile social environments (Maria & Amalia, 2015). Most adults have been found to be at risk of walkability constraints in southwest Nigeria due to building of unapproved houses and structures on walkways and erosion path, deliberate refusal of some to comply with approvals granted by State Housing Authority and town planning units etc, but can be remedied through use of simple comprehensible English language instructions (Echevarria et al., 2004).

Following Maria and Amalia (2015) the traditional walkability patterns in southwest Nigeria have changed over the years; as more adults and children have become reliant on automobiles for their trips, thereby leading to a greater shift which has contributed to greater congestion in both urban and developing communities, eventually decreasing the quality of life while depriving adults and children of the noted health benefits of physical activity. Hence, adult pedestrians demand a clear English language instructions at every route, road maps and restricted communities/ facilities to mitigate walkability constraints in southwest Nigeria.

2. Theoretical Framework: Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

Socio-cognitive theory was first introduced in 1941 by Miller and Dollard, however the theory became famous in 1977 after being used to emphasize the major role cognition plays in encoding and performing behaviours (McAlister, Perry, & Parcel, 2008). The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) is absolutely pertinent to communication because it attempts to expound related issues that deals with cognitive, emotional and behavioural aspects of life for easy assimilation, comprehension and positive behavioural change (Glanz, Rimer, & Lewis, 2002).

Besides, Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) has been proven in behavioural research in health education, social sciences, peace and conflict interventions, and other applied behavioural sciences, thereby making it most suitable for other theoretical and societal areas/issues, based on the fact that it provides new insights and understanding on why certain occurrence and actions are perpetuated in certain environment (Bandura, 2004). Adopting the tenets of social cognitive theory will also provide clear explanation on why adults in Southwest Nigeria experience walkability constraints, as well as providing the basis for intervention strategies through examination of factors such as behaviour, cognition and environment that promote walkability constraints among adults in Southwest Nigeria (McAlister et al., 2008).

However, the three basic factors in the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) are environment, people and behaviour which are constantly influencing one another, as behaviour is not simply the result of the environment and the person, just as the environment is not simply the result of the person and behaviour (Glanz et al., 2002). Consequently, Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) framework can be used to persuade adults in Southwest Nigeria towards reading English language instructions on routes/road maps, restricted communities/ facilities and other

relevant public spaces, as well as stirred up each State Housing Authority and policy makers within Southwest Nigeria in planning appropriate intervention programmes towards creating a conducive environment.

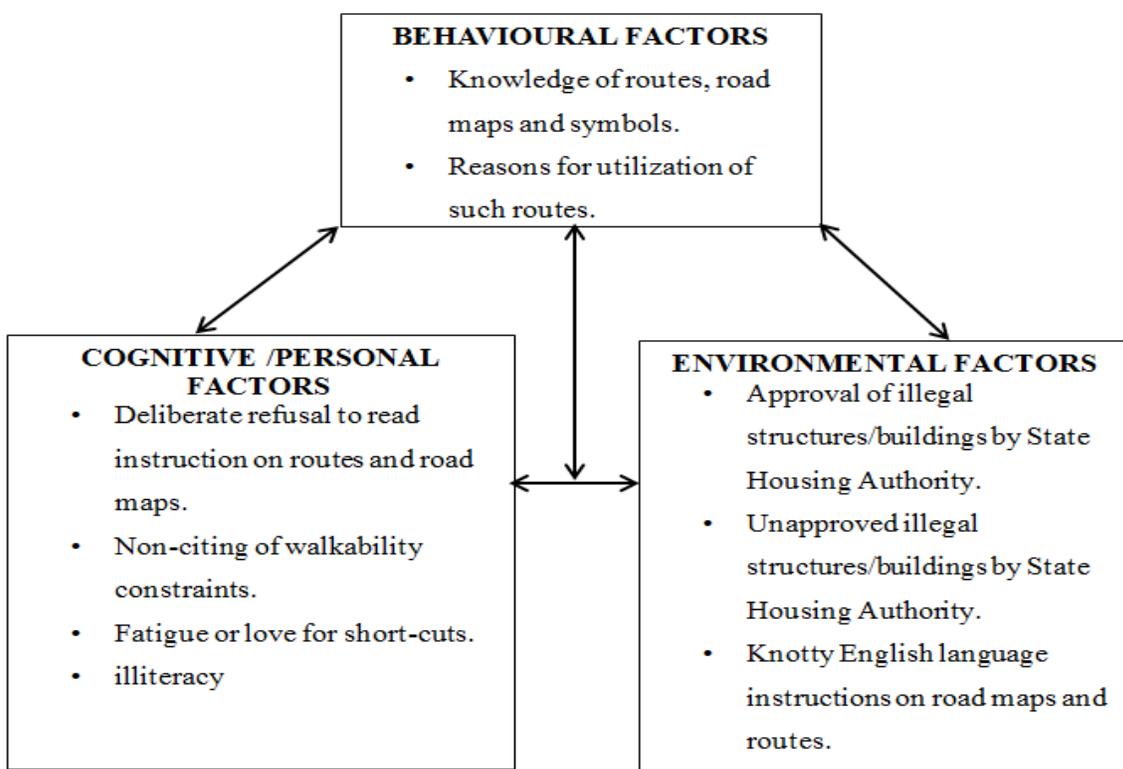


Figure-1. Application of the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) to the Study.

Source: Theory at a Glance by Glanz et al. (2002)

The three basic factors in the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) as seen on Figure 1 above, are environment, people and behaviour which are constantly influencing one another, as behaviour is not simply the result of the environment and the person, just as the environment is not simply the result of the person and behaviour (Glanz et al., 2002). Consequently, Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) framework can be used to persuade adults in Southwest Nigeria towards reading English language instructions on routes/road maps, restricted communities/ facilities and other relevant public spaces, as well as stirred up each State Housing Authority and policy makers within Southwest Nigeria in planning appropriate intervention programmes towards creating a conducive environment.

3. Methodology

Twelve (12) research assistants who were recruited and trained for 6 days on how to politely require valid informed consent from the 384 participants (comprising 192 men and 192 women) through simple random sampling across the senatorial districts of the six (6) states in southwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria from 1st of February 2021 to 15th of March, 2021.

Table-1. Southwest States sampled for the study and method.

S/N	6 Selected States	3 Senatorial District each.	No. of Questionnaire Administered	Male Adults	Female Adults	Total (%)
1.	Lagos State	Lagos Central, Lagos East and Lagos west	64	32	32	64 (16.7)
2.	Oyo State	Oyo South, Oyo Central and Oyo North	64	32	32	64 (16.7)
3.	Ogun State	Ogun East, Ogun Central and Ogun West	64	32	32	64 (16.7)
4.	Osun State	Osun West, Osun Central and Osun East	64	32	32	64 (16.7)
5.	Ekiti State	Ekiti North, Ekiti Central and Ekiti South	64	32	32	64 (16.7)
6.	Ondo State	Ondo North, Ondo Central and Ondo South	64	32	32	64 (16.7)
Total	6	18	384	192	192	384 (100%)

Table 1 above revealed that there was equality of sample adopted for the study through simple random sampling technique, as thirty-two male and thirty-two female respondents (a total of sixty-four (64 respondents) were selected from each of the State in southwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

Research Question 1: What are the perceived effects of English language instructions on walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria?

Table-2. Analysis of perceived effects of English language instructions on walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria.

S/N	Perception Statement	Agreed (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)
1	Walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria is due to knotty English language instructions on routes, road maps and restricted communities/facilities.*	213 (55.5%)	34 (8.8%)	137 (35.7%)
2	Adults in southwest Nigeria often ignore English language instructions on routes, road maps and restricted communities/facilities.*	194 (50.5%)	34 (8.9%)	156 (40.6%)
3	Unapproved buildings in southwest Nigeria usually contribute to walkability constraints among adults on routes, road maps and restricted communities /facilities.*	196 (51.0%)	35 (9.1%)	153(39.9%)
4	There is need to reorganize English language instructions on different routes, road maps and restricted communities /facilities in southwest Nigeria.*	194 (50.6%)	32 (8.3%)	158 (41.1%)
5	Hasty attitude of most adults in southwest Nigeria influences the rate of walkability constraints on routes, road maps and restricted communities /facilities.*	195 (50.8%)	33 (8.6%)	156 (40.6%)
6	Weak government policies on house building and patterns increases walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria.	192 (50.0%)	36 (9.4%)	156 (40.6%)
Total		197 (51.4)	34 (8.9)	153 (39.7)

Note: *** Expected Responses.

Table 2 contained the empirical analysis of the respondents as regards the perceived effects of English language instructions on walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria. However, from the perception score categories, 197 (51.4%) of respondents perceived that walkability constraints among adults are caused by non-comprehensible English language instructions on different routes and road maps in southwest Nigeria, as they are either too complex or knotty to comprehend, while 153 (39.7%) of respondents do not perceived that there is need to reorganized most English language instructions on various routes, road maps and restricted communities/facilities within each State in southwest Nigeria.

3.1. Categorization of Respondents' Perception of Effects of English Language Instructions on Walkability Constraints among Adults in Southwest Nigeria

The instrument used for data collection on research question one (1) was graduated into a Likert scale (e.g. Agree, Undecided and Disagree), data was categorized and analyzed using simple percentage and findings of the study were stated thereafter. On the categorization of effects of English language instructions on walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria, six perception items were used to arrive at the categorized perception scale. A three-point mark was assigned to 'Agreed', two-points was assigned to 'Undecided' and while one-point was assigned to 'Disagree', making a 18 point scale. Each of the respondents' responses were summed up, frequency and percentage determined. As such, respondents' who score between 0-9 were considered as having 'poor perception', those who scored >9-18 were regarded as having 'high perception'.

From the perception score categories, 197 (51.4%) of respondents perceived that walkability constraints among adults are caused by non-comprehensible English language instructions on different routes and road maps in southwest Nigeria, as they are either too complex or knotty to comprehend, while 153 (39.7%) of respondents do not perceived that there is need to reorganized most English language instructions on various routes, road maps and restricted communities/facilities within each State in southwest Nigeria. To this end, mitigating walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria will certain help to bring about protection of their life and improvement in their health status (Manaugh & El-Geneidy, 2011).

The perception of the respondents truly represents the effects felt and level of walkability constraints experienced by adults in southwest Nigeria, but with definite coordinated attempt involving team work among members of State Housing Authority and qualified English language instructors, this issue of concern can be addressed through the use simple comprehensible English language instructions, compensation of landlords whose houses might be pulled down to permit wider road construction and creation of pedestrian lane to mitigate walkability constraints in southwest Nigeria.

Research Question 2: How will suitable English language instructions be effective towards mitigating walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria?

Table 3 contained the empirical analysis of the respondents as regards the effectiveness of English language instructions on mitigation of walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria. From the effectiveness score categories, 289 (75.2%) of respondents agreed that walkability constraints among adults can be mitigated through the use of comprehensible English language instructions on different routes, road maps and restricted communities/facilities in southwest Nigeria, while 57 (15.0) of respondents disagreed that the use of English language instructions cannot be effectively used to mitigate walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria.

3.2. Categorization of Respondents' Perception of Effectiveness of English Language Instructions towards Mitigating Walkability Constraints among Adults in Southwest Nigeria

The instrument used for data collection on research question two (2) was graduated into a Likert scale (e.g. Agree, Undecided and Disagree), data was categorized and analyzed using simple percentage and findings of the study were stated thereafter. On the categorization of effectiveness of English language instructions towards mitigating walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria, six effectiveness items were used to arrive at the categorized effectiveness scale. A three-point mark was assigned to 'Agreed', two-points was assigned to 'Undecided' and while one-point was assigned to 'Disagree', making a 18 point scale. Each of the respondents'

responses were summed up, frequency and percentage determined. As such, respondents' who score between 0-9 were categorized as being 'not effective', those who scored >9-18 were regarded as been 'effective'.

Table-3. Analysis of effectiveness of English language instructions on mitigation of walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria.

S/N	Efficiency Statement	Agreed (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)
1	Easily comprehensible English language instructions on routes, road maps and restricted communities/facilities can mitigate walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria.*	314 (81.8%)	67 (17.5%)	3 (0.7%)
2	English language instructions on routes, road maps and restricted communities /facilities aids locomotion among adults in southwest Nigeria.*	298 (77.6%)	72 (18.8%)	14 (3.6%)
3	Through appropriate use of English language instructions on routes, road maps and restricted communities/facilities in southwest Nigeria, walkability constraints caused by unapproved buildings can be addressed.*	262 (68.3%)	22 (5.7%)	100 (26.0%)
4	Through proper English language instructions on different routes, road maps and restricted communities/facilities, walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria will be curbed.*	299 (77.9%)	11 (2.9%)	74 (19.2%)
5	Adequate English language instructions can be used to control the hasty attitude of most adults in southwest Nigeria towards mitigating walkability constraints.*	197 (51.3%)	31 (8.1%)	156 (40.6%)
6	Improved government policies on house building and patterns through clear English language instructions will decrease walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria.	361 (94.0%)	23 (6.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Total		289 (75.2%)	38 (9.8%)	57 (15.0)

Note: *** Expected Responses.

From the effectiveness score categories, 289 (75.2%) of respondents agreed that walkability constraints among adults can be mitigated through the use of comprehensible English language instructions on different routes, road maps and restricted communities/facilities in southwest Nigeria, while 57 (15.0) of respondents disagreed that the use of English language instructions cannot be effectively used to mitigate walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria.

4. Discussion of Results

It was found that walkability constraints among adults is a major occurrence in southwest Nigeria because of the poor dissemination of instructions which are often in English language. Also, the study revealed that most walkability constraints paths are deadly, due to the building of unapproved houses and structures on land spaces that were left for roads over many decades and generations. This finding is in line with [Manaugh and El-Geneidy \(2011\)](#) who affirmed that walkability constraints will always occur in areas where the houses are nucleated, of which southwest Nigeria is not exempted due to traditional proximity adopted by families when building their houses.

Besides, the findings of the study revealed that walkability constraints occur among adults in-and-out of their places of work, especially in unplanned environments that are more or less makeshifts, or approved by State Housing Authority (SHA) within Southwest Nigeria in past decades. This is in line with the study of [Powell et al. \(2003\)](#) who postulated that except a society is well planned through reorganization of communities with compensation from each State Government to individual property owners/landlords and/or companies whose building has been wrongly given approval in past decades or recently by State Housing Authority (SHA) within southwest Nigeria, and reordering of English language instructions on various routes, there might be no permanent way of resolving the recurrence of walkability constraints among adults.

Similarly, findings revealed that most adults deliberately ignore English language instructions on road/community routes because they feel intellectually disturbed, too familiar with the terrain to acknowledge warnings/signs, especially if they are in haste or trying to accomplish a difficult task. The above finding of the study is in line with the findings of [Maria and Amalia \(2015\)](#) who reported that walkability constraints is capable of degenerating into death-traps, especially among adult, if not well addressed by State Housing Authorities (SHA), town planning units in conjunction with English language instructors.

Also, walkability constraints among adults in southwest Nigeria has been a fierce experience each time it happens, and it has been linked to fallen road signs on various land transport routes and lack of adequate English language instructions ([Jurnal, 2013; Shaibu, 2013](#)). The above corroborates the findings of [Saunders and Goldenberg \(1999\)](#) who affirmed that when designing a city or community, there is need to involve a team of building experts (e.g. State Housing Authority and English Language Instructors) who will help put the right instruction on each route in both free and restricted communities/facilities. To this end, the findings of this study has strong implications for State Housing Authority and existing English language instructors in southwest Nigeria.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the followings were recommended:

1. Qualified and well-trained English language instructors should be integrated into town planning committees and environmental response team of each State Government within southwest Nigeria with clear

demarcation of duties to be discharged by members of the committee, so as to curb the rise of walkability constraints among adults within southwest Nigeria.

2. Health care centers should be equipped with necessary treatment utilities and healthcare specialists to respond to walkability constraints that demand therapeutics and social support for adults within southwest Nigeria for free or at a cheap cost.
3. Further qualitative study and spot on research that will disseminate adequate facts and prevention strategies against occurrence of walkability constraints among adults should be promoted through utilization of English language instructions that are easily comprehensible on various media by each State Government within southwest Nigeria.
4. There should be provision of free accident and emergency education in both primary and secondary schools across southwest Nigeria, and for adults in extra-mural classes and driving schools.

6. Conclusion

Experience of walkability constraints among adult residents in southwest Nigeria is on the rise, hence demanding necessary cautions be taking to put an end to its continuation, so as to adequately preserve the adult/aged population within this confined territory. Also, individual State Government must/should place more emphasis against building of unapproved houses/structures on space set aside for road or pedestrians by the planning authority on different media through the use of adequate, suitable and easily comprehensible English language instructions within southwest Nigeria.

6.1. Operational Definition of Concepts

Adult: refers to a grown up person residing in southwest Nigeria.

English Language: is a west-germanic language that was first spoken in early medieval England.

Southwest Nigeria: refers to a geo-political segmentation in Nigeria comprising six States.

Walkability constraints: refers to hindrances to walking freely by adults in southwest Nigeria.

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