

# **Appraisal of Security level within Nigeria Residential Real Estates Neighbourhood**

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**Keywords:** Security, Residential, Real Estate, Challenges, Akure, Neighbourhood, Nigeria

## **ABSTRACT**

Cities criminality rate relating to insecurity keep mounting daily, mostly across some developing countries. With a continuous growth in housing cost and demand, it is expected that secured properties be stimulated to ensure a comfortable and liveable environment for the masses. This however remains one of the principal challenges bedevilling the Nigerian real estate sector, which then reduces individual's desirability of home ownership in some areas. Hence, this paper endeavours to study the security level of three Residential Real Estate within Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria and its effect, through a systematic sampling technique. The outcome of the study indicates that individual residents' effort in securing their property and lives were more visible, with more of local resources been used than the advanced security systems. There is need for security system advancement within these areas for better safety. Hence this study recommends that the Local, State and Federal Government as well as housing related professionals' formulate an implementable policy to tackle the root causes of insecurity in housing neighbourhoods across the state and country at large. Such as weak security system, political corruption, unemployment and so on. This is expected to accolade private efforts in preventing the high level of crime rate within the areas concern and the entire country.

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## **1.0**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In recent times, there has been a high level of unprecedented insecurity across developing economies. This is one of the most problems existing in communities, even in low-crime rate zones. Insecurity has been established to negatively influence individual's mental, physical and social activities and also the vitality of their communities (De Biasi, 2017). A review documentation made by United Nations in 1990 in (Olajide and Mohd Lizam, 2017) revealed that while developed countries spend 2% to 3% of their annual budget on crime prevention/security of lives, 9% to 14% of the developing countries' annual budgets goes to such activity. This justifies the current situations within such developing economies with African continent inclusive. Having threatened both the local and the national security, this has impelled a huge allocation been channelled by the Nigerian government to the nation's security from the country's national budget (Achumba and Akpor 2013). According to the 1999 Federal Republic of Nigerian constitution, 'security and welfare of people stands as one of the main purpose of the government existence' however, this constitutional responsibility have long failed in placing a safe and secured environment for properties, lives, individual daily operations and economic events except for those in government's high ranking positions who are usually guided by all sort of security (Okonkwo, et al, 2015). More so, these disquieting insecurity levels have increased the terrorism and crime rate in different states of the country with Akure in Ondo state Nigeria not excluded. The crime rate across the country keep breeding destruction of properties and live as well as increasing fear of insecurity. This then leaves revolting consequences for people, business and economic growth as activities such as foreign direct invest and international organisations wishing to invest in the country's real estate are being discouraged. Furthermore, in other to curb crime rate, government recently embarked on criminalizing terrorism in the country through the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2011. Nevertheless, the insecurity level remains high with Nigeria being ranked low in the Global Peace Index (GPI, 2012) score.

On a general note real estate owners or users are often prone to diverse form of insecurity ranging from natural disaster like earthquake; hurricane sandy to that of man-made insecurity and so on, which constitute mainly properties and violent crime (Olajide and Mohg Lizam, 2017). Noteworthy is that the security of any country is inalienable when dealing with real estate transaction especially that of residential and commercial properties. Irrespective of whether it has an accessible gate with necessary control measures, electric fence mounted with

appropriate cameras or security guards in check, users or occupiers within any property often feel secured knowing that they are protected against any ill issues. However the level of their security could be questioned with regards to the current situation in Nigeria. Downing (2007) in his study titled “Centralized Integrated Security optimal for Residential Estate” counselled that people’s reliance on some security measures for their family, lives and properties may not be as worthy as it seems. This however does not portray that the product or method adopted are inferior nor the companies employed are handicapped in doing the job but, the researcher further explained that “as Estates employ different companies in handling different security task, their diverse expertise sometimes lack required integration between the numerous disciplines. In essence, the challenges of providing effective security systems could be stressful and time consuming for residential users or owners, although protecting a residential apartment, its inhabitants as well as its valuables secure and safe cannot be exaggerated (Olajide and Kolawole, 2013). While some house owners could strive to obtain a security measure on their own, others preferably may work with specialized professional security outlets in preventing any damaging events to their properties. However the security of a house goes beyond keeping unwanted people out of the house to that of protecting valuables therein (Seldon, 2007). This then includes but not limited to spouse, children, extended families, documentaries/personal information and other vital things. Consequently, this study examines the level of security problem and its implications among the resident of three residential estates in Akure Ondo State, Nigeria. (a state in the south-western part of Nigeria)

## 1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Urban criminality rate relating to insecurity in the developing country’s cities keep rising daily. With a continuous growth in housing cost and demand, it is expected that secured properties be stimulated to ensure a comfortable and liveable environment for masses. This is then assumed to enhance the emotional stability of residents/citizens and produce high work force efficiency towards the promotion of the country’s Gross domestic product. Considering the levels of residential home security systems which ranges from simple to sophisticated, different security system have emerged over the years across the globe such as trained dogs, thermal cameras, high/electric fencing, vigilantes, fire/back to base alarm systems, panic buttons, surveillance equipment and wire, fire system, home automation, temperature, spikes floor and water sensors, CCTV monitors, video recorders, 24hours security guards, and any type of anti-intruder perimeter control systems (Radetskiy, et al 2015). This however has not been fully employed in Nigeria owing to procurement cost, difficulty in installation or use as well as the unplanned nature of most housing environments. (Ajibola, et al 2011) noted the inefficient security problem within the length and breathe of the country which has resulted into numerous crime acts and loss of lives.

However, the insecurity level in Nigeria cannot be over mentioned without been traced back to the early military rule ages when bulky quantities and quality weapons were shipped into the countries for military uses during and after the civil war. Some of this weapons however were high jacked by the civilians and then became there tools for mischievous acts shortly after the war such as; robbery attacks, killings of innocent minds and ritualism which is high across the country (Olabanji and Ese 2014). Worthy of note is the 1999 constitution's provision for citizen's right which has been distorted due to government's incapability to curb insecurity thereby leading to religious vehemence, communal clashes and crime not just at the national level but more significantly at the state/local level, where innocent lives are daily destroyed. This has made some residential property owners vacating their comfort zone in search for a secured environment which are less comfortable. More so, it was observed that some fully furnished apartment across states including Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria are scarcely occupied owing to the rate of crime which then affects developer's profit and loan transaction. This has also kept residents off some public zones and their participation in some public activities.

Consequently, having the fear of crime with respect to personal safety especially when lonely and in the dark has caused the general trends of high walls construction around housing units. Such high walls together with other security measures like construction of huge walls, burglary proofs, installation of lighting amenities across housing environs with strong locks gives credence to this. In essence, this sometimes barricade such building's beauty, this suggest that the current Nigeria city's architecture is governed by the fear of crime and robbery attacks.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Theory of Defensible Space as a Substitute to Fear**

Defensible space according to the seminal study on public residential buildings delivered in New York by Newman Oscar (1972) is "a residential environment whose physical characteristics—building layout and site plan—function to permit inhabitants to become key agents of security within their environment. This involves making a visible change to people abode so as to make them less susceptible to crime while also supporting the growth of their environments. According to author, a model was proposed to prevent residential neighbourhood crimes through the physical expression of public material that protects itself. Hence, Newman studied the physical features of residential projects so as to define the causes of criminal activities, through the consideration of several factors around residential homes such as "Large open spaces within recreation and leisure properties due to their placement

away from traffic, high rise buildings with extensive passageway at its ends as well as numerous elevators and fire escape routes where criminal(s) could easily escape from. The latter was however painstaking with the assumption that places situated away from traffic flow are liable to vulnerability, as it is usually void at any time of the day and so frequently circumvented at nights as it offer means of crime without observation (Olajide and Kolawole, 2013). Further, in the modification of the irregularities of building designs, Newman's proposed the 'Defensible space model' to dishearten criminal attempts by offering the concept as an alternative term for varieties of symbolic barricades, well-defined zones as well as improved means of environmental surveillance combined together to bring resident's environs under their control (Taylor et al, 1984). Thus, the model depends mostly on self-help security for relatives, friends and neighbours rather than government intervention as it is liable to government withdrawal. In essence, residents are personally or collectively subjected to crime reduction, which offers opportunity for collaboration among people of different races, gender and income groups towards a beneficial unification. Further, the model offers low income or less privileged people within communities the benefits of conventional life; maintain cultural and economic integration as well as how their actions can enhanced their world thereby leading to an improved mobility (Newman, 1996). Although defensible space model have successfully worked with reduction in crime rate and more unified community, yet the consistency is yet to be recorded in some developing countries (Brunson, et, al 2001). This is because communities are yet to embrace the model in not just changing their building structures and surrounding spaces but also in their connexion towards the reduction of crime and criminals' removal. Hence, Vetter et al, (2013) noted that the application of such model will aid normal life and offer opportunities of how community actions can better the world around them thereby leading to an upward mobility.

## 2.2

### **Residential Estate Doctrine**

The word 'Estate' has been described by Thorncroft, (1978) to not essentially mean the physical structure of a land or building but the quality, degree, extent, nature and control of interest and right exercisable by a person over an existing property. Authors also, view it as duration of time which a user enjoys over a land and therefore identify such rights or interest into two categories: Freehold and Leasehold Estate. Freehold Estate gives an owner the highest and longest type of ownership on land or property. The common term ascribed to this complete ownership of right is either, 'Fee simple' or 'Fee simple absolute', where individuals holding this right are referred to as a fee property owner wholly without limitation as far as time and law is concern. On the other land, Leasehold right offers a time limit to the ownership of property or land. This been the most common of title or right asides fee simples confers a lesser ownership on individuals who then holds the property for a specific duration usually express

in the lease agreement between the Freehold and the leasehold, and it is commonly referred to as 'leasehold estate or estate for years'. More so, having created leasehold right through contract, the lessee or tenant becomes an automatic owner of the property interest based on the time stipulated in the lease agreement.

Having either a freehold or leasehold right on any Residential real estate, it is noteworthy to mention that such property is often subjected to individual use mostly to provide shelter or accommodation for families or individuals (Olajide and Bello 2003). This differs from commercial real estate which is often leased, used or sold to achieve a pre-set business objectives or rather used as an investment to realize an expected return on capital invested. Focusing more on personal use, residential properties also known as housing include property areas that impact daily operations of the people. Zhou and Kockelman, (2008) noted this property class as the largest consumer of land in urban areas. Although, the emergence of industrial, commercial (office and civic) land uses is spatially associated with residential housing development yet, its sizes as acknowledged by author gives credence to its relevance to any nation's economy, hence the need for effective security system around its vicinity. Residential property has both intrinsic and extrinsic values as such; its features and environment should therefore exert better impact on the lives of dwellers. The quality of component like security/physical condition and management services among other component cannot be overemphasized when discussing about the liveability of housing environment (Varady & Carrozza, 2000). Hence, there should always be an expected security measures for lives so as to meet acceptable standard of living (Johnson et al, 2000; Wendy et al, 2016).

However, Residential property are categorized into high, medium or low density, flat tenement, design Bungalow, mansion, Duplex semi-detached and so on, while it could also be within an urban or semi urban areas or a rural environment. These are thus the critical factors which influence this property class (Adegoke, 2014). More so, Johnson et al, (2000), observed residential zones as an area often affected by regulation owing to its observed needs to protect human lives against any abuse, there by categorising the common aspects which determines its worth as; position, physical characteristics, general economy and location. Andrews & Whitney, 1976; cited in Ogu, 2002, also suggested that these determinants defines the perception of residents within their environment as well as the quality of their lives. Hence, the security and liveability of any residential setting is dependent on both engineering elements, cultural, social, and behavioural factors as well as other elements such as; security measures within the communal environment. This relatively makes every residential property a connection to other chain of features which defines individual or families' optimal satisfaction within their accommodation.

In the world we live today, security is a prominent thing which everyone needs to guarantee their comfort and safety Azid and Kumar (2011). Similar to health, home security is an essential feature of human life, hence, different technological development have emerged across the globe to aid security of life; asset and privacy at all times Budijono et, al (2014). Where crime exists, individual desires proper measures to prevent intrusions or damages to their live and properties. This involves the prevention of unauthorized access or damage to residential environment and lives. In developed countries the use of wireless communication devices keeps increasing in preventing crime through quick action; image capturing and sound recording to display remote places; protection of child's safety through authorization and authentication systems efficiency in communication. This relates to wireless communication tool in storing and viewing of data on internet. However, security measures in developing countries such as Nigeria are commonly applied through the erection of high walls across the buildings or through other means such as provision of dogs, vigilante groups and so on without much application of advanced security systems.

In the work of Agboola 1997 cited in Olajide and Kolawole, (2013), the most noticeable form of providing security around residential property is through the erection of this high walls which mostly obstruct the beautification of such properties. Noteworthy is that bringing this together with burglar proof in shielding houses, erection of huge gates and sturdy locks, presence of lighting facilities across houses and other protective devices, there is strong indication that Nigerian's city Architecture is governed by the fright of robber's invasion. Agboola then suggested that such actions offer an invitation to robbers rather than protecting the occupiers. Further, this over the years have caused the dearth of several families within Nigeria at large owing to the fact that design nature of houses often deter rescuers whenever there is inferno or other negative event around the houses mostly at night. Among the recommendations offer by Agboola include; the aiding of neighbourhood association, high consciousness of resident; organisation of vigilante groups; as well as urban designers and planners being security conscious whiling dealing with residential neighbourhoods work to keep the general environment healthy and accessible.

Home Alarm monitoring has also become one of the key professionally recognized home security instrument, which engages in any number of devices and policies to ensure safety around property Olajide and Kolawole, (2013). Hence the understanding of its operation and the component that makes a good monitoring company will aid the satisfaction of safety choices that will deliver value to end users (occupiers) (Hannah, 2011). According to Hannah, modern security devices can aid the fending off possible crime acts and any actual damaging effort. Additionally, Khanna and Omprakash, (2011), also posited that where individuals wants to secure their lives and properties from crime, the need to introduce a single mobile device to

cover the entire proficiency and functionality of home security cannot be underestimated, as the incorporation of different parts and their solution can be established through current and up-to-date application and devices, to aid the safety of lives and property. Subsequently, Azuh (2012) in his work on Safeguarding of homes through affordable security systems posit that affordable home security devices can keep criminals away. Although some believe that only the rich obtains these security devices owing to its high cost, Azuh however oppose this affirming that there exists some affordable and effective security gadget which the low income class can purchase. He therefore pain stake door step alarm and camera home security system as one of the effective low cost security devices. Where camera home security system functions like a closed circuit television (CCTV), it according to the home security system.org helps in deterring criminals while significantly adding to entire security system when mounted at an easily noticeable spot around a house. Other low-priced security system recognised by author is: mini magnetic contact alarms; combination lock and electronic watch dog; stickers and home security yards sign.

On the Other hand, Olaniran (2006) suggested the prevention of flood and erosion, fire outbreaks, provision of flexible building design plans against obsolescence and child protection as part of security measures to be established in homes rather than mere safe guarding of lives and property as the absence of this offers misconception to the issue of home security. He then opined that where all these are considered as a portion of home security, serious attention will be channelled to residential housing safety by owners and occupiers.

## 2.4 Home security and Housing Value

Literatures have established that a sense of security within a residential neighbourhood directly affects property's value. An individual's perception of becoming a crime victim rather than actually becoming a victim is described as a sense of security or fear of crime Vetter et, al, (2013). In recent times the hunt for security of life and properties is a major feature enticing people to residential estates. Hence the insecurity within a house or neighbourhood could additionally add to a house not being occupied while individuals desire to pay high rent in another location with better security. In such case, their willingness to pay for corresponding decrease of violence is at least equal to that amount Soares (2009). Further Olajide, (2010) recognized the consistency in physical security of residential environment as one basic factor in determining the values of residential property in such location. Arguing that residential estate which is prone to crime often suffers capital and rental values reduction, authors quantified the rate of turnover of properties suffering inadequate security to be lower. This then renders such property unappealing and unprofitable (Radetskiy, et al 2015). However, other incidence constituting insecurity across houses can include ceaseless unrest of neighbourhoods; noise

pollution; high vehicular traffic; urban violence and so on which can indirectly affect values of residential properties (Onifade, 2007).

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study adopted structured questionnaire, questionnaire was administered on occupiers within three housing Estates in Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria. These are Oba-Ile Estate, Alagbaka Estate and Ijapo Estate respectively. A total number of 50 questionnaires were administered on each Estate after been considered adequate through systematic sampling technique. Data were presented through charts, tables and other descriptive statistics.

### 3.1 DISCUSSION OF FIND

Asides personal interview and observation conducted within the study area, questionnaire administration was also carried out. Result of the analysis is as follows:

Table: 1 Form of Security System

Details	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Fencing	47	32.6
Guards	42	29.2
Vigilante	21	14.6
Burglar proof	12	8.3
Security Dogs	11	7.6
Surveillance	3	2.1
Alarm System	0	0
CCTV System	0	0
Close Circuit	0	0
Others	7	4.9
No Response	1	0.7
Total	144	100

Source: Field survey, 2017.

From table 1 above, it is apparent that the highest security system across the Estates is Fence, giving a percentage of 32.6%. This is followed by Security guards which amount to 29.2%. There are other multiple choices, though security systems like Alarm system; CCTV operation and close circuit systems are found not available within the estates. This could be due to poor electricity supply therein.

Table 2 Degree of Security Efficiency

Details	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Regular	18	12.5
Regular	35	24.3
Slightly Regular	62	43.1
Scarcely	20	13.9
None	9	6.2
Total	144	100

Source: Field survey, 2017.

Table 2 above indicates that existing security systems are slightly regular in safe guarding lives and properties within the Estate, giving a percentage of 43.1. This is followed by 24.3 responses indicating the regular efficiency level of the security system. 13.9 indicated that security efficiency is scarce while 12.5% indicated that it is very regular. This could result from the lack of government input in securing the environment.

Table 3 Type of Fencing

Details	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Block/Concrete	54	37.5
Barbed Wire	14	9.8
Plank	2	1.4
None	32	22.2
No Response	42	29.1
Total	144	100

Source: Field survey, 2017

Table 3 shows that the mostly used construction materials for fence are block/concrete given 37.5% followed by barbed wire which is 9.8% and plank 1.4%. 22.2% houses do not have any fence around their residence. This implies that some residents do not see the necessity of providing security for their lives and properties or they feel it is costly for it to be in place.

Table 4 Security Service Provider

Details	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Government	17	11.8
House owner	83	57.6
House user	21	14.6
Tenant	9	6.3
Indifferent	14	9.7
No Response	0	0
Total	144	100

Source: Field survey, 2017

Table 4 shows that 57.6% or 14.6% of the respondents who are either property owners or users provide security by themselves while government input shows 11.8%. This indicates that

government input in protecting lives across the estates is not encouraging, which might have been the reason why others do not regard the need to secure their property.

Table 5 Frequency of Power Supply

Details	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Regular	7	4.8
Regular	35	24.3
Slightly Regular	89	61.8
Barely	16	11
None	3	2
Total	144	100

Source: Field survey, 2017

Table 5 illustrate that Electricity supplies in most of the Estate were slightly provided, with few indicating that electricity in their residence is regular. This means much still need to be done has regards electricity provision in the areas, so as to encourage the development of advanced security systems.

Table 6 Frequency of Arm Robbery Attacks

Details	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	70	48.6
Low	27	18.7
None	40	27.8
No Response	7	4.9
Total	144	100

Source: Field survey, 2017

It is evident from the above table (Table 6) that arm robbery attacks within the estates are high given 48.6%. This thereby creates fear and threat to the lives of residents as well as negatively affecting the value of properties across the Estate as indicated in the interview established. It is however applicable within other areas of the state which then calls for urgent attention from both the government and parties/agencies concern.

Table 7 Most Arm Robbery Occurrence

Details	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Morning	4	2.8
Afternoon	22	15.3
Night	25	17.1
Mid Night	51	35.4
No Response	42	29.2
Total	144	100

Source: Field survey, 2017

Table 7 shows that robbery attacks occur mostly in the mid-night when resident have retired to bed to sleep. Given 35.4% result, this could be as a result of lack of advanced and effective security measures as well as lack of electricity within the estate. Therefore there is need for government or agencies in charge of electricity to always provide electricity into the estates mostly in the night and midnight for visibility of the hidden areas where criminal act can be initiated.

## **3.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

After analysing the collected questionnaires, the following summary of findings were made.

Asides the continuous cases of kidnapping within the country, criminal activities have become unceasingly rampant with no evidence of any security measure working. Virtually all citizens now tries to reside inside a highly barricaded and wall fences which has become a sought of self-imposed prison. Other issues discovered are mentioned below.

- 3.2.1 There is a high significant level of arm robbery within the town neighbourhood which could have resulted from uncontrolled increase in youth unemployment and continuous increase in urbanization with less security measures in place.
- 3.2.2 Government's input in security provision is quite low as a result of less regards for citizens' welfare and safety across the country.
- 3.2.3 There is an evidence of dearth of modern security system in the residential houses owing to bad supply of electricity across the country, as well as high cost of security equipment procurement, ignorance and so on.
- 3.2.4 There was also lack of good collaboration among dwellers which directly have an effect on the sensitivity of resident to criminal acts within their neighbourhood.
- 3.2.5 Based on the interview conducted, there are evidences of low patronage in the estate areas where there is insecurity and criminal activities. This then affect the property values (capital and rental values).

The challenges of insecurity in any area often constitute a threat to property and lives thereby hampering daily operations. This is because where individuals especially at work get emotionally traumatized through insecurity at home; there will be a reduction in work efficiency, with a resultant effect on country or states' growths. It is therefore important for government to retrace their steps and formulate a proficient, implementable policies and program in tackling the root causes of insecurity across states of Nigeria. This can enhance compliment private sector's effort towards home security across the states of the federation. There should also be a supply of stable electricity supply, good road networks and community security systems, to scare away criminals. Unemployment and abject poverty among citizens should be addressed by agencies concerned to aid the reduction of violence and crime in Nigeria. Effective residents and landlord association should also be strengthened with youth being represented to aid security effectiveness and scare away unwanted strangers. Conclusively, Home security system across Akure, Ondo State Nigeria seems unacceptable to the existing standard in other countries. Hence there is still need for further actions to improve residential housing security when residents are home or away. Therefore, government at local, state and national level should embark on trainings relating to contemporary systems of intelligence gathering and sharing, logistics and organising of advanced machinery to manage security activities. Youth should mostly be involved in this program as part of solution to unemployment. Safety managements in higher institutions curriculum should also be encourage by government so as to help the youth to advance in the awareness of effective security systems and appreciate the relevance of security in a country like Nigeria. This will curb the incessant crime and mortality rate in the country while values will remain intact.

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