
Estate Security and Property Value Awareness of Residents of Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic Host Community, Ikot Osurua, Ikot Ekpene in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study is conducted to examine Estate Security and Property Value Awareness of Residents of Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic Host Community, Ikot Osurua, Ikot Ekpene in Nigeria. A sample of 400 respondents was drawn from the population parameters. Data were collected through the use of structured questionnaire, personal interviews and observations. Three hundred and sixty (360) completed questionnaire representing 90% of the 400 copies distributed were retrieved from the respondents. Frequency count and simple percentage were used to analyze the data. The study revealed that security is a major concern in the minds of accommodation seekers, as they take into consideration the security of the estate before making plans to live in such accommodation. Also, the research shows that occupants and tenants living in these residential estates do not mind paying a high amount of monies for an accommodation that is secured. The respondents also reveal that the level of security or lack of security of an estate affects the property value. Therefore, it is recommended that security awareness should be carried out at public fora in order to boost security consciousness of the occupiers and tenants in these estates and estate investors should prioritize security in their estate so as to secure optimum returns.

Keywords: *Security, estate, property value, tenants, property owners.*

INTRODUCTION

It is an understatement that security remains one of the principal challenges bedeviling the nation's real estate. Also, as crime and insecurity in estates and its environs keep mounting daily, there is need to make estates and their dwellers safe. Housing safety awareness is one of the most significant aspects of housing safety management (Ban and Chen, 2020). Urban and rural criminality rate relating to insecurity keep mounting daily, mostly across some developing cities and towns. With a continuous growth in housing cost and demand, it is expected that secured property be stimulated to ensure a comfortable and liveable environment for the occupants. This, however, remains one of the principal challenges bedeviling the Nigerian real estate sector, which then reduces an individual desire in home

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ownership and, in most cases, diminishes the rate of return on property investment. Olajide and Kolawole (2013) argue that estate security could be access control of the gate, electric, fencing with cameras or guards patrolling; however, families or individuals who occupy these estates feel secured in the knowledge they are protected against almost any calamity. The security of many people to protect their homes and families may not be as good as they desire (Downing, 2007). The importance of keeping a home, its occupants, and its valuables safe and secure and the effective security strategies are time - consuming and stressful for some home owners (Olajide and Kolawole, 2013). According to Seldon (2007), some home owners may either choose to work on the difficulties of effective security and develop home security measure, or work with a professional company that specializes in preventing and responding to burglaries and other potentially damaging occurrences.

Essentially, how secure an estate is, is not just keeping people or criminals out of the house. It is about protecting the things that are valuable, including children, personal information and identities, among other valuables that matter most to you. Therefore, the aforementioned indices of estate security and its effects on property value have engendered estate owners and occupants considering home security system; this ranges from simple to sophisticated. This has to do with the level of development, economic ability of house owners or house user. Over the years, various systems have been used to provide security for homes. These include vigilante, trained dogs, high fencing, charm, thermal cameras, alarm systems, fire wire, surveillance tools and wire etc. The more the presence of all these and more of security measures, put in place the more desirable the property is to accommodation seekers. And in the event of the lack of these security measures the lesser the desirability of the estate and the lower the returns and value the estate commands.

The high rise of estate insecurity and criminality in our cities and rural areas still stands tall as one of the problems estate owners and residents/citizens face. As the cost of housing or producing an estate rises, so is the demand for a secured and safe housing. Considering the high cost of purchasing, installation and maintenance of residential home security systems which range from simple to advance, different security systems have emerged over time and as events unfold that threatened the capital returns expected from estate management. To this, different security systems have been seen as a panacea to this problems; ranging from high electric fencing, vigilantes, 24 hours security guards, home automation, fire/back to base alarm systems, panic buttons, charms, surveillance equipment and wire spikes floor and water sensors, CCTV monitors, and any



type of anti intruder perimeter control systems (Radetskiy, et al 2015). This, however, has not been fully employed in our cities and rural areas owing to procurement, installation and maintenance cost. Ajibola et al (2011) note the inefficient security problem within the length and breathe of our society and environment which has resulted into numerous crime acts, loss of lives and property.

However, the insecurity level in our estates and our communities cannot be over mentioned without being traced back to the early military rule ages when bulky quantities of quality weapons were shipped into the country for military purposes during the civil war. Worthy of note is the 1999 constitution's provision for citizens' right which has been distorted due to government's incapability to curb insecurity thereby leading to religious violence, communal clashes and baditry not just at the national level but more significantly at the State and local levels, where innocent lives are daily destroyed. This has made some residential property owners vacating their comfort zone in search for a more secured but less comfortable environment. More so, it was observed that some fully furnished apartments across the States and Local Government Areas most especially the low-cost residential estates are scarcely occupied owing to the rate of crime which then affects developers profit. This menace has also discouraged the occupation of these estates thereby rendering it obsolete; for fear of being robbed, harassed by cultists and miscreants.

Consequently, having the fear of crime with respect to personal safety especially when alone and in the dark has caused the general fence of high walls construction with gate and barbed wires around housing units. Such high walls together with other security measures like construction of burglary proofs, installation of lighting amenities across housing environs with strong locks gives credence to this. In essence, this sometimes barricades such building's beauty; suggesting that the Nigerian cities and rural estates architecture are governed by the fear of crime and robbery attacks.

According to Agbola (1997), looking around Nigerian cities, one would notice the general trend towards the construction of high walls around residential units, which have become so high that they obstruct the visual beauty of such buildings, sometimes concealing them altogether, erection of houses which are intricately shielded with burglary proofing, construction of massive gates and strong locks, installation of lighting facilities at every corner of the residential environment, and a host of other protective devices, all of which give credence to the assertion that city architecture in Nigeria today is governed by the fear of incursion by robbers.



Researches on the different aspects of estates security and property values have been almost exclusive preserve of sociologists, political scientists, and criminalists. Over time, as estate insecurity has become more endemic and its effects more pervasive, social and environmental scientists have become interested and involved in the nature, causes, consequences to proffer workable solution to the menace. Estate Planners, Architects, Real Estate Surveyors, among others have become active researchers in the field of real estate insecurity, especially as it relates to and affects human psychology and general society.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to evaluate estate security and property value awareness of residents of Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic host community, Ikot Osurua, Ikot Ekpene in Nigeria. To achieve this, the following are the specific objectives:

- i. To determine whether estate security affects property value in Ikot Osurua, Ikot Ekpene.
- ii. To examine the level of awareness of estate owners, occupants and tenants on the necessary security measures in place in their estate.
- iii. To determine whether estate tenants consider estate security as a major condition before choosing the apartment in Ikot Osurua, Ikot Ekpene.
- iv. To determine who provides security in estates between the estate owners and estate tenants.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study underpins the Theory of Defensible Space. Defensible space according to Newman (1972), is a “residential environment whose physical characteristics - building layout and site plan function to permit inhabitants to become help agents of security within their environment. This involves making a visible change to estate residents so as to make them less susceptible to crime while also supporting the growth of their environments. Accordingly, a model was proposed to prevent residential neighbourhood crimes through the physical expansion of public material that protects itself. Hence, Newman (1978) defines the causes of criminal activities, through the consideration of several factors around residential homes such as “large open spaces within recreation and leisure property due to their placement away from traffic, high rise buildings with extensive passage way at it 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 situate 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 offers means of crime without observation (Olajide and Kolawole, 2013). In the modification of the irregularities of building designs, Newman proposes 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 residents environs under their control (Taylor, Gottfredson and Brower, 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 (Ajibade and Adediran, 2019).

Defensible space model has successfully worked with reduction in crime rate and more unified community (Brunson et al, 2001). Some estates are yet to embrace the defensible space model in their building structures and surrounding spaces in their connections towards the reduction of estate insecurity. Vetter et al, (2013) note that the application of such model will aid normal life that enhanced estate security.

The effect of estates insecurity on property value is well documented. Thaler (1978) shows that estates insecurity reduces house value by approximately three percent. Gibbons (2004) finds a decrease in property value of 10% for a one standard deviation increase in estates insecurity. Lack of estate security may change as the composition and characteristics of neighbourhoods change. According to Linden and Rockoff (2008), reduction in estate insecurity may correspond with other changes that increase the value of property located in a particular neighbourhood.

There are a large number of factors that go into choosing where to buy, build and rent an Estate. People do not only consider the characteristics of the house, such as the overall quality, size and number of bedrooms, but also consider the security of the estate and its neighbourhood. Every accommodation seeker places certain amount of significance on many aspects of a particular property that give that property its inherent values. For instance, some houses are worth more because of their proximity to desirable area, the number of bedrooms or bathrooms, the square footage of the home or even just the existence of a basement (Corsini, 2009).

Estates insecurity and crime around estate neighbourhood is a social phenomenon (Baumann and Friehe, 2013). Indeed, estate security is consistently placed at or near top of the list of an estate seeker or investor (Helsley and Strange,



1999). According to Aliyu et al (2016), potential victims of estates insecurity go to considerable length in order to address the crime risk by taking private action. Such private precautions include not only minor expenses such as walking a detour to avoid a dark alley but also a sizable investments such as security systems to safeguard the private home, allowing for empirical judgement that private precaution expenditure are (Baumann and Friehe, 2013). Estates insecurity and the fear it generates are among the most important determinants of individual welfare and expected returns on many economic activities. According to Buonanno et al, 2012, robbery, theft, and the fear of these crimes inflict many direct and indirect costs on residents including the monetary value of property stolen or damaged, insecurity, anxiety; and lack of safety has direct negative impact on the property values (Aliyu et al, 2016).

Doctrine of Residential Real Estate

Thorncroft (1978) defines estate as not necessarily the physical structure but the quantum and quality of right and control the owner has and the ability to exercise. He also sees it to include the length of time the user has over the land. Olajide and Bello (2003) express residential real estate also known as housing as building that is basically or essentially used for the purpose of providing living accommodation. They, however, categorize buildings into low density, high or medium; design-bungalow, flat tenement, duplex, semi-detached and mansion. Others are settlements - rural and semi-urban. Johnson et al (2000) see residential estate to include area of property which touches on most people in their everyday lives. The range of property is vast, with tenements and cottages at one extreme and country estate at the other. They also see it as the area of property which is most affected by legislation because of the perceived need to protect the individual against exploitation. They identify the common factors that determine the value of residential estates to include location, position, physical characteristics and general economy to mention only but a few. Thorncroft (1978) also identifies two major classes of estates, namely freehold and leasehold. Freehold means the right to hold over land in perpetuity while leasehold estate represents ownership with time certain.

Estate and Home Security

Security is a prominent thing which everyone needs to guarantee their comfort and safety (Azid and Kumar, 2011). Where crime exists, individual desires proper



measures to prevent intrusions or damage to their lives and property. This involves the prevention of unauthorized access or damage to residential environment and lives. According to Ajibade and Adediran (2019), the use of wireless communication devices keeps increasing in preventing crime through quick action image capturing the sound recording to display remote places; protection of child's safety through authorization and authentication systems efficiency in communication.

However, security measures in developing countries such as Nigeria are commonly applied through the creation of high walls around the buildings or through other means such as provision of dogs, vigilante groups and so on without much application of advanced security systems. Agbola cited in Olajide and Kolawole (2013) observes that the most noticeable form of providing security around residential property is through the erection of high walls with burglary proof in shielding houses which mostly obstruct free air, erection of huge gates and security locks, presence of lighting facilities across houses and other protective devices. There is strong indication that Nigerian cities architecture is governed by the mercy of robber's invasion. Agbola then suggests that such actions offer an invitation to robbers rather than protecting the occupiers. Agbola further states that this has caused the death of several families in Nigeria due to the fact that the design nature of houses often deter rescuers whenever there is inferno or other negative event around the houses mostly at night.

Home alarm monitoring has also become one of the key professionally recognized home security instrument, which engages in any number of devices and polices to ensure safety around property (Olajide and Kolawole, 2013). Additionally, Khanna and Omprakash (2011) also posit that where individuals want to secure their lives and property 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) posits that affordable home security devices can keep criminals away. He therefore states door step alarm and camera home security system as one of the effective low cost security devices. Home camera security system 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 systems are mini magnetic contact alarms; combination lock and electronic; watch dog; streets and home security yard signs. Olaniran (2006) suggests 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 opines that where all these are considered as a portion of home security, serious attention will be channeled to residential housing safety by owners and occupiers.

Gated Communities

A gated community is a housing development on private roads closed to general traffic by a gate across the primary access. The developments may be surrounded by fences, walls, or other natural barriers that further limit public access and also enhance security (Grant and Mittelsteadt, 2004). There has been a considerable growth of interest in recent years surrounding the emergence of “gated communities”, fortified enclaves and other forms of privatized public space (Atkinson and Flind, 2004). This interest has been found in the work of sociologists and anthropologists who have focused on the residents of these developments as well as urban and regional theorists who have linked the emergence of Gated Residential Developments to wider processes of economic and urban restructuring that have been associated with globalization (Low, 2003).

Gated communities are residential areas with restricted access designed to privatize normally public spaces. These new residential areas occur in both new suburban developments and older inner city areas for the purposes of segregation and security. Gated communities came about as a result of larger cities not being able to use gates and fences due to the high population density. Gated communities, usually called guard-gated communities, are staffed by private security guards and are often high value property, or set up as retirement villages.

Some gated communities are secure enough to resemble fortresses. Since the real estate boom in the late 1980's, this rapidly growing phenomenon of gating off communities has become more prevalent in today's society (Adibola, Oloke and Ogungbemi 2011). In its modern form, a gated community is a form of residential community or housing estate containing strictly-controlled entrances for pedestrians, bicycles and automobiles, and often characterized by a close perimeter walls and fences. Gated communities usually consist of small residential streets and include various shared amenities. For smaller communities, this may be only a park or other common areas whereas for larger communities, it may be possible for residents to stay within the community for most day-to-day activities. Currently, there is no national policy on enclosed neighborhood or road closures for security purposes in Nigeria, no legislation either overtly or covertly to provide



for “gated communities”, “road closures” or “neighbourhood enclosures” or security estate”. Over the years, there have been several criminal acts within the length and breadth of the country as a result of inefficient security. This has culminated into the loss of lives and property.

Majority of the gated community classification and essence are based on several needs that arise. Studies about gated communities explain the main reason for their emergence, as the rate of crime and insecurity of lives and property increase. Some residents decides to run away from this “risky or unsecured” environment and live in a closed safely gated community, (Caldeira, 2000; Landman, 2000a), and “gaffed enclave” (McGoey, 2003). Equally, one can find road street closures in major cities in Nigeria. They came up in response to insecurity within the non-gated communities. Gated communities represent the hope of security; they appeal to consumers searching for a sense of community and identity, offer an important niche marketing strategy for developers in a competitive environment, keep out the unwelcome attention or robbers and kidnappers generally associated with attractive amenities and increased property values (Blakely and Snyder 1997; Grant, 2003).

Home Security and Housing Value

Olajide (2010) establishes one of the basic factors that determine property values especially residential to be the reliability of physical security of the neighbourhood as well as that of the property. He argues that residential estates that are prone to robbery attacks and disturbances usually suffer reduction in both capital and rental values. Onifade (2007) believes that it is not only robbery incident that constitutes home insecurity but incessant neighbourhood unrest, urban violence, noise pollution and high vehicular traffic among others. The rate of turnover of property suffering from inadequate security is usually low thereby rendering such property unattractive and unprofitable (Olajide, 2010).

Onifade (2007) affirms that all these will negatively affect residential real estate market. In recent times, the hunt for security of life and property 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).



METHOD

The study employed survey research design. The population comprises all the occupiers of the houses in Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic host community, Ikot Osurua, Ikot Ekpene. The population consisted of all estates occupants (both owners and tenants). A simple random sampling technique was employed to select the respondents. This sample is made up of 400 occupants in the estates in Ikot Osurua, Ikot Ekpene. Three hundred and sixty (360) completed questionnaire representing 90% of the 400 copies distributed were retrieved from the respondents. Data were collected through the use of structured questionnaire, personal interviews and observations. The data collected were presented and analyzed using frequency table and simple percentage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that 66% of the respondents lived in detached bungalows while 34% lived in semi-detached bungalows. Table 2 indicates that 240 respondents representing 66.6% agreed that the basic form of security they have in their residence is the semi perimeter fence wall round the estates. 98 respondents relied on burglary proof which represents 27.3% while 1.4%, 1.9% and 1.4% of the respondents respectively depend on guards, surveillance of the police team and security dogs as their sources of security. From table 3, 65 respondents agreed that security in their estate is provided by government while a whopping 295 respondents (tenants/occupiers) representing 82% overwhelmingly agreed that they provide their own security.

From table 4, 105 respondents say that armed robbery attacks are usually experienced in the night representing 29.2% while 250 respondents representing 69.4% affirmed that armed robbery attack are frequent in the midnight with 5 respondents (1.4%) saying they have not experienced any attack. From table 5, a whopping 275 (76.6%) respondents affirmed that estate insecurity has a negative effect on property values while only 85 (23.6%) respondents were in the negative. Table 6 shows the negative effect of insecurity on rental values. 218 (60.5%) respondents occupying 3 bed rooms detached bungalows said the pay lower rents between ₦130,000 and ₦140,000 because the property are not secured while 142 (39.5%) respondents agreed they pay as low as ₦100,000 – ₦120,000 for the same reason. These are properties that should have attracted rent between N250,000-N300,000 for 3 bedroom detached bungalows and N200,000-N250,000 for Semi-detached bungalows respectively.



Security in estates is a major factor that tenants now consider before choosing an apartment or lodge. No tenant will like to stay in an environment that cultists disturb, where there is unrest or where armed robbers threaten the lives and property of its residents. This gives credence to the fact why students pay high rent for a secure location and low rent for a property that is not secure. Aside the continuous cases of cult activities around the student lodges, criminal activities have become unceasingly rampant with no evidence of security measure. Virtually all tenants residing in the low-cost estates in Ikot Osurua, Ikot Ekpene preferred a highly barricaded and wall fences that have an interior fortified with burglary proof and iron doors; this invariably has become a sort of self-imposed confinement. There is a high significant level of armed robbery in the midnight because of lack of night guards. Government input in security provision is very low leaving the property owners, residents and the citizens living in this estate to pay dearly for their security. There is an evidence of dearth of modern security system in the residential houses owing to poor maintenance culture as well as high cost of security equipment procurement, ignorance and so on. 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) negatively.

Table 1: Types of Estates

Respondents Options	Frequency	Percentage
Detached Bungalow	240	66
Semi-Detached Bungalow	120	34

Source: Field survey, 2020.

Table 2: Forms of Security systems used

Respondents Options	Frequency	Percentage
Fencing	240	66.6
Guards	5	1.4
Vigilante	5	1.4
Burglary Proof	98	27.3
Security Dogs	5	1.4
Surveillance	7	1.9
Alarm System	0	0
CCTB System	0	0
Others	0	0
No Response	0	0
Total	360	100

Source: Field survey, 2020.



Table 3: Sources of Security

Respondents Options	Frequency	Percentage
Government	65	18
Tenant	295	82
Indifferent	0	0
Total	360	100

Source: Field survey, 2020

Table 4: Time of Armed Robbery occurrence

Respondents Options	Frequency	Percentage
Morning	0	0
Afternoon	0	0
Night	105	29.2
Midnight	250	69.4
No Response	5	1.4
Total	360	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 5: Effect of Estate insecurity on property values

Respondents Options	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	85	23.6
Negative	275	76.4
Indifferent	0	0
Total	360	100

Source: Field survey, 2020

Table 6: Rents on insecure property

Respondents Options	Frequency	Percentage
₦130,000 – ₦140,000 3-bedrooms Detached Bungalows	218	60.5
₦80,000 to ₦120,000 2-bedrooms Semi-detached Bungalows	142	39.5
Total	360	100

Source: Field survey, 2020



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the foregoing, it has been proven that issues relating to home security are non-negotiable. This is so because of the multiplier effect it can have on the well being of the residents, environment and the property business. Lack of security in an estate has been observed to cause emotional disturbance and loss of estate values and returns. This has also been attributed to the government lackadaisical attitude to home security. Government is expected to provide sustainable security measures and to encourage the use of modern security gadgets in these students' areas in order to deter criminal activities which thrive solely in the night. The landlords or residents associations in the study areas should be strengthened to scare away unwanted strangers and criminals.

Conclusively, the developmental progress about the effectiveness of home security in the low-cost housing estates is substandard and unacceptable. There is still much to be done in order to make residential estate and neighbourhood a place where occupants can sleep comfortably and go about their businesses without fear of harassment or robbery. In order to improve on the efforts on grounds in the area of estate security, the following measures are recommended:

Government Collaborative Efforts: Security issues cannot be discussed in isolation. There is need for the public and private partnership concept to come to play. The private sectors are to provide necessary facilities that will make their home safe to a greater extent while the government on the other hand is expected to provide sustainable security measures, stable power supply and provision of neighbourhood security.

Use of Modern Security Systems: This can be done through adequate enlightenment, as it has been argued that it is not all of the systems that are expensive, some have been proven to be affordable and effective.

Need of Sensitive Dwellers: Residents are advised to put on eagle eyes in order to detect strange faces and actions around the estates and immediately alert the law enforcement agency.

Discouragement of Late Night Outings: Students living in these estates should stop going out or coming in late at night as the dark environment encourages hoodlums to perpetuate evil on residents.



Security Consciousness: Students living in these areas that are very prone to robbery attacks should be encouraged to lock their doors, windows and burglary gate when they are indoors and when they are going out.

Encouragement of Vigilantes: The self-help security system which insecurity has forced local populace to adopt should be strengthened because this security measure in some cases and areas has been proven to be effective.

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