Impact Of Insecurity On Property Development In The Akpebe Area Of Uromi, Esan North-East Local Government Area, Edo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the impact of insecurity on residential property values in a section of Akpebe Area of Uromi, Esan North East L.G.A Edo State. It highlights that potential developers often consider the level of insecurity in an area before making a decision. In light of this, the study investigates how insecurity affects property development in the study region. The target population consists of residents living in the study area. A total of 78 questionnaires were randomly distributed, and 50 completed responses were used for analysis. Descriptive statistical methods were employed to analyze the data. The findings reveal that residents perceive insecurity—particularly kidnapping, burglary, robbery, and car theft to be a significant issue. This perception suggests that as crime rates increase, property development decrease. Therefore, the government should prioritize crime prevention and control. In conclusion the study establishes that there is an inverse relationship between insecurity and property development.

Keywords: Property, Residents, Insecurity, kidnapping, Burglary.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of study

The demand for residential buildings has steadily increased over the years, leading to a rise in their value. The value of a property is largely determined by its level of utility and scarcity in comparison to similar properties (Olusegun, 2008). However, several other factors also play a role in influencing property values, either positively or negatively. Among the most widely recognized factors are property characteristics, accessibility, neighborhood attributes, and environmental conditions.

Insecurity caused by the activities of various armed groups has raised serious concerns about the safety of lives, businesses, and properties. While these groups claim to be advocating for a just cause, the methods they employ have posed significant threats to residents in affected areas. A notable example is the security challenges in parts of Akpebe area of Uromi, which have put the lives of local inhabitants at risk.

In Nigeria today, insecurity has led to tragic losses—many individuals have lost loved ones and properties, some are still searching for kidnapped relatives, while others continue to grieve for those who have been killed. Additionally, valuable properties have been destroyed due to bomb attacks linked to these violent activities. Residents in areas prone to militant attacks often feel a complete lack of security, while those in previously affected regions live in constant fear of a resurgence. Bannister and Fyfe (2001) observed that the fear of crime is closely associated with densely populated and built-up environments. Although the causes of insecurity may differ across locations and time periods, its negative impact on lives and properties remains a critical concern. This study, therefore, explores the causes of insecurity and their effects on property values.

No nation can develop when there is high level of insecurity in the society. The far reaching effects of insecurity are evident in most communities in Nigeria. Most of the communities in Nigeria are less developed and backward. This is because insecurity in recent times has been one of the major issues bedeviling majority of the Nigeria communities as evidenced in communities in Uromi. The 2014 Global Report on security indicated that Nigeria is one of the crime ravaging countries in the world. The report rated Nigeria high on the following critical variables: unlawful possession of arms, forgery, receiving stolen properties, false pretenses, burglary, theft, Boko Haram, armed robbery, kidnapping, banditry and herdmen attempted murder cases, manslaughter etc. (Amirize, 2009).

According to Garga (2015), Nigeria's socio-political and economic landscape has been severely affected by the persistent issues of crime and violence. The repeated failure of successive governments to tackle poverty, unemployment, and the unequal distribution of wealth among various ethnic groups has led to frustration, agitation, and violent crimes against the state by certain individuals and groups. These crimes include militancy, kidnapping, bombings, armed robbery, destruction of government property, banditry, and attacks by herdsmen, among others.

Insecurity arises when conflicts or crises emerge within a community. Imhabekhai (2009) defines conflict as a state of disagreement, imbalance, or distortion in beliefs, values, or circumstances among individuals, groups, communities, states, tribes, or nations.

Conflicts occur due to shifts in perception and the subsequent responses to these changes, depending on the stance of the individuals or groups involved.The value of residential properties can decline due to the perception of environmental or neighborhood hazards, regardless of whether such concerns are rational or not. In Uromi, the rising insecurity in various communities has significantly stalled residential property development in recent years.

The persistent incidents of killings, kidnappings, and armed robberies, particularly in parts of Uromi (Akpebe area) have rendered these areas nearly deserted, as many residents have fled for fear of their lives. Consequently, numerous residential projects have been abandoned. The socio-economic dynamics of this area have suffered considerable setbacks. For any society to thrive, it must prioritize and safeguard the socio-economic stability and well-being of its people.

Insecurity significantly hinders the development of Nations and societies. The link between insecurity and underdevelopment is stronger than that between peace and development, as conflict often leads to stagnation or decline. When the safety of lives and property is not assured, meaningful progress becomes difficult. A climate of fear discourages both domestic and foreign investors and development agencies, while also restricting economic growth. This study explores the impact of insecurity on the value of residential properties in the study area.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Many urban cities worldwide have undergone rapid urban growth driven by industrialization and technological advancements. In Nigeria, industrialization and unplanned urbanization have significantly shaped economic and social development. However, this has led to severe environmental degradation, pushing urban areas beyond crisis levels. The spatial implications of these trends, coupled with uncontrolled urban expansion, have resulted in various urban challenges, including urban decay, where issues such as drug abuse, antisocial behavior, and vandalism of public and private properties are prevalent (Gibbons, 2004).

This situation fosters fear and insecurity among residents. Bannister and Fyfe (2001) observed that crime-related fears are closely linked to densely populated and heavily built environments. Crime and the fear of crime significantly impact daily life in cities, heightening insecurity and anxiety. In Nigeria, particularly in urban areas, people live in constant fear due to prevalent crimes such as burglary, armed robbery, internet fraud ("yahoo yahoo"), and kidnapping. Gibbons (2004) emphasized that crime, regardless of its nature, influences household location choices, ultimately affecting property values. As a result, the demand for low-crime neighborhoods is reflected in real estate trends (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001). For instance, studies in Los Angeles' inner-city corridors found that crime was a primary concern for residents. Potential renters or homebuyers prioritize crime rates when choosing neighborhoods. Consequently, areas with high crime rates often experience declining property values.

The Social Exclusion Unit (2001) further noted that neighborhoods with high crime and unemployment levels tend to develop poor reputations, leading to deteriorating property conditions and reduced market values. Much work has been done to determine the effect of crime on property values in the developed country (Patras and Greebaumt, 2006; Patras, 2007). In Nigeria, little or no effort has been made in this direction.

The few known studies that exist focused on the performance of the police in relation to crime and the impact of urban crime on residents' satisfaction and mobility in Nasarawa, Nigeria (Aluyor, 2005; Yacim, 2010). It is against this background that this study was undertaken.

2.2 Concept of Security and Insecurity

Traditionally, security has been primarily understood in relation to the protection of the state and the absence of war (Pease, 2012). As a fundamental concept, security is often linked to the mitigation of threats against valued principles, particularly those affecting the survival of individuals, groups, or entities in the near future. In essence, security entails the capacity to pursue valued political and social aspirations (Williams, 2008). Palme (1992) suggests a strong relationship between "security and survival," where survival serves as a basic condition, while security encompasses safety, confidence, and freedom from danger, fear, and uncertainty. Booth (2007) reinforces this view by defining security as "survival plus," where the "plus" represents an enhanced ability to live free from existential threats and exercise some level of choice in life. Brons (2001) expands on this perspective, describing security as encompassing multiple dimensions, including personal safety from harm by others, legal and economic protection, political and military stability, and confidence in the prevailing value system. Similarly, McNamara (1968) argues that security is synonymous with development, asserting that without development, true security cannot exist. Development, in this context, signifies economic, social, and political progress, including a reasonable standard of living (Alemika, 2012).

At a practical level, Alemika (2012) defines security as the absence of harm, fear, and deprivation. Security can be categorized into three main areas: protection from criminal activities, violent conflicts, and wars; protection from oppression by both state and non-state actors, including corporate entities and government institutions; and protection from deprivation, ensuring access to basic necessities such as food, shelter, healthcare, education, employment, and a healthy environment. However, security cannot be meaningfully discussed without considering what is being secured. Security is best understood in relation to a referent object (Nwagboso, 2012). Historically, security has primarily focused on the protection of people (Rothschild, 1995). However, some scholars, particularly in international relations, argue that states should be the primary referent of security. Others, such as McSweeney (1992), challenge this perspective, asserting that security discussions should prioritize individuals, as security loses its meaning without reference to human beings.

The concept of security is not new; it has been central to human societies since primitive times. The necessity of security led to the formation of social contracts, where individuals surrendered certain rights to a governing authority responsible for ensuring collective survival. For decades, security issues have been at the forefront of development discussions. Igbuzor (2011) defines security as a state of being free from harm or danger, emphasizing protection, defense, and the absence of threats to valued principles. Objectively, security is the absence of threats to these values, while subjectively, it is the absence of fear that these values may be attacked (Wolfers, 1962).

Despite its complexities, security remains vital for national cohesion, peace, and sustainable development. Oche (2001) describes security as the freedom from threats that could undermine a nation's ability to protect itself, develop, and maintain social, political, and economic stability. It encompasses safeguarding national values, ensuring internal cohesion, and maintaining vital institutions that promote socio-political and economic objectives. Security ultimately implies freedom from threats to life and prosperity.

Security, therefore, involves efforts to prevent, mitigate, and resolve conflicts—whether originating from other states, non-state actors, or socio-economic conditions (Stan, 2004). In contrast, insecurity represents the absence of security. Nigeria, in recent times, has faced an unprecedented rise in insecurity, with increasing incidents of inter- and intra-communal conflicts, ethno-religious violence, armed robbery, assassinations, gender-based violence, bombings, and other criminal activities. These events have resulted in significant loss of life and property, creating a pervasive sense of fear and social instability (Ibrahim and Igbuzor, 2002).

Insecurity, as a concept, is commonly associated with threats to valued principles, particularly the survival of individuals, groups, or societies. It entails the inability to pursue political and socio-economic conditions conducive to democracy. Insecurity reflects a state of vulnerability, lack of confidence, and the prevalence of fear, danger, and uncertainty. It can also refer to inadequate protection, instability, and the erosion of safety.

Alemika (2012) classifies insecurity into four main dimensions:
1. **Physical insecurity** – involving violent crimes against individuals and property.
2. **Public insecurity** – including violent conflicts, insurgencies, and terrorism.
3. **Economic insecurity** – characterized by poverty and unemployment.
4. **Social insecurity** – manifested in issues such as illiteracy, disease, and human rights violations.

For this study, insecurity is understood as any breach of peace and security—whether historical, religious, ethnic, social, economic, or political—that has contributed to recurring conflicts and significantly weakened Nigeria's stability and development.

2.3 Perception of Insecurity

The perceived presence of environmental or neighborhood hazards can negatively impact property values, regardless of whether such perceptions are rational (Patchin, 2009). The assumption is that purchasing decisions are preceded by a cognitive process involving the formation of beliefs, emotional responses in shaping attitudes, and motivation-driven choices (Gibler and Nelson, 2018). In his study of visual perception, Gibson (2000) argued that perception is direct and not mediated by inference or sensory construction but is instead shaped by relationships within the environment. Human thoughts and emotions strongly influence behavior and interactions with the environment, as they form conscious states that guide decision-making. However, perception does not always align with objective reality, particularly concerning crime (Skogan, 1986). When perceptions deviate from reality, households and businesses may base location decisions on their subjective views, which in turn become embedded in property values (Petras, 2007).

Sampson and Raudenbush (2004) investigated factors influencing perceptions of neighborhood disorder and found that race and poverty were stronger predictors of perceived disorder than objective indicators such as graffiti, litter, drug paraphernalia, or security fencing on commercial properties.

Furthermore, there is often a disconnect between actual crime rates and perceived neighborhood safety, with opinions on crime levels shaped by environmental cues. High social disorder is often interpreted as an indicator of high crime levels. Gibbons (2004) found that crimes like vandalism, graffiti, and arson had a more significant negative effect on house prices in London than burglaries. The perception of neighborhood safety plays a crucial role, as visible signs of disorder—such as vandalism and graffiti—strongly influence public perception (Skogan, 1990; Wilson and Kelling, 1982). Ultimately, crime perception affects household decisions about where to live and determines how much individuals are willing to pay for properties in specific locations.

2.3 The Socio- Economic Indicators and Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

To comprehend and analyze the underlying socio-economic causes and effects of insecurity on the activities of the people of Plateau State, it is essential to thoroughly understand the indicators of insecurity. The concept of socio-economic indicators of insecurity revolves around the causes and forms of insecurity that impact society both socially and economically. Key indicators for assessing the impact of insecurity include unemployment, poverty, ethno-religious conflicts, farmer-herder crises, indigene-settler disputes, illiteracy, and corruption.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section describe the research methodology use to analyze the research under the following sub headings which includes research design, population of the study, sampling procedure, method of data collection and method of data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The research design employ in this research is the descriptive survey design that will be use to examine the effect of insecurity on residential property development in Akpebe region of Uromi, Edo State.

3.2.1 Population of Study

The populations of study of this research consist of Engineers, landlords, tenants, and others living inAkpebe community of Uromi. A sampling size of 78 was selected for the study.

3.2.2 Sampling Technique

The sampling technique adopted in this research work would be random sampling probability sampling.

3.2.3 Instrument or Data Collection Method

The primary and secondary data used for this study are gotten from text books, journals, internet, respondent and library. The researcher employed the use of questionnaire whose objectives of the study were analyzed through questions as his primary source of data collection.

3.2 Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed with simple percentage.

    i.   Simple percentage formula <u>Total number of respondent</u> x <u>100</u>

                                     Total number of Questionnaire   1

  ii.   Also the Likert scale involving rating on interval scale of 5 and 1 developed for application in social sciences and management researches for quantification of qualitative variables was used.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction.

In summary, the data collected through questionnaires and interviews were collectively presented in a tabular form and analysed.

4.1.1 Questionnaire Response

In order to achieve the objectives of this research, 78 questionnaires were administered to respondents within Akpebe area of Uromi.

Table 4.1: Distribution of Questionnaire

Type of Response	Frequency(No.)	Percentage (%)
Number distributed	78	100
Number properly completed and returned	50	64
Number not properly completed/not returned	28	36

Source: Field Survey, February, 2025

Table 4.1 shows the questionnaire distributed were 78 out of which 50 representing 64% were duly filled and returned.

Section A: Demographic Information of Respondent.

Table 4.2: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	20	40
Male	30	60
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, February, 2025

Table 4.2 shows the gender of the respondent where 60% respondent is male and 40% are females. Therefore the percentage of respondent within 60% is the highest. This showed that both male and female are well represented in this study. This is crucial to the study because the effect of insecurity is strongly felt by both males and females in the areas of study.

Table 4.3: Age of Respondents

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
Between 18-22 years	10	20
Between 23- 28 years	10	20
Between 29-33 years	13	26
Between 34-39 years	5	10
40 and above years	12	24
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, February, 2025.

From table 4.3: the numbers of respondents from 18-22 years is (20%), 23-28 years is (20%), and 29-33 years is (26%). And the number of respondents from 40 and above years is (24%), which was the highest category of respondents in this survey. In all this implies that the researcher obtain data from all categories of adult population of the area under study. This frequency is helpful to the study because those who adults are widely affected by the effect of insecurity like unemployment, illiteracy, youth thuggery and kidnapping etc.

Table 4.4: Educational Background of Respondent

Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage
Primary/SSCE	10	20
NCE/ND	10	20
HND/BSC	20	40
MSC/PHD	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, February, 2025

From table 4.4: The qualification according to the table 4.4 showed that 10.% possess primary school certificate/SSCE 20% that possess NCE/Diploma, 40% possess HND/B.Sc. and 20% posses MSC/PHD . Therefore, most of the respondents possess at least HND or above. This shows that majority of the respondent's attained post-secondary educational qualification.

Similarly, this implies that efforts were made by the researcher to seek the opinions of people that possess the knowledge and educational qualification because such people were considered enlightened enough to understand the phenomenon under investigation and hence provide reliable findings as regards to efforts to be made to reduce the socio-economic effects of insecurity in the area..

Table 4.5: Status/ Position occupied by the respondent

Position	Frequency	Percentage
Project Manager	3	6
Foreman	12	24
Skill and Artisan	9	18
Landlord	12	24
Tenant	14	28
Total	50	100

Source: Author Field Survey, February, 2025

Table 4.6: Causes of Insecurity in the Study Area

S/N	Causes	5	4	3	2	1	$\sum f$	X	RII	Rank
1	Unemployment	5	3	3	18	21	50	40.2	0.804	2
2	Illiteracy	2	8	7	15	18	50	38.6	0.772	4
3	Poverty	3	2	3	19	23	50	4.00	0.800	3
4	All of the above	5	7	5	14	19	50	41.0	0.820	1

Source: Author Field Survey, February, 2025

Table 4.7 shows the respondents' opinion on the causes of insecurity in the study location. Respondents were of the opinion that all the causes stipulated on the table above contribute significantly to insecurity in the area with a relative important index of 0.820 was the highest.

Table 4.7: Crime Incidence in the Study Location

S/N	Crime Incidence	5	4	3	2	1	$\sum f$	X	RII	Rank
1	Armed robbery	10	2	7	15	16	50	36.1	0.772	3
2	Kidnapping	3	5	6	15	21	50	40.5	0.810	1
3	Assassination	5	8	3	20	14	50	37.2	0.744	4
4	Banditry	7	4	10	14	15	50	35.3	0.706	7
5	Terrorism	6	3	6	20	15	50	36.3	0.726	5
6	Burglary	3	4	4	20	19	50	39.1	0.782	2
7	Car theft	6	4	7	21	12	50	36.3	0.726	6

Source: Author Field Survey, February, 2025

Table 4.8 shows the respondents' opinion on the Crime incidence in the study locationKidnapping with relative important index of 0.810 was the highest, follow by Burglary with relative important index of 0.782, Banditry has the lowest with relative important index of 0.706.

Table 4.8 Efforts and strategies measure to forestall criminal activities

S/N	Efforts and strategies	5	4	3	2	1	Σf	X	RII	Rank
1	CCTV	3	5	6	16	20	50	39.5	0.790	4
2	Security guards (corprate)	3	5	6	15	21	50	40.5	0.810	3
3	Vigilante group	2	1	7	20	20	50	41.4	0.828	2
4	Nigerian police	2	7	6	14	21	50	38.6	0.772	6
5	Security guards (privateMaiguard)	6	3	6	20	15	50	36.3	0.726	7
6	Nigerian army	3	4	4	20	19	50	39.1	0.782	5
7	All of the above	1	6	4	16	23	50	41.9	0.838	1

 Source: Author Field Survey, February, 2025

On the level of the effectiveness of the mechanism employed to forestall criminal activities in the study area, all the preventives measures were judge by majority of the respondents as effective means of preventing crimes. It has the highest relative important index of 0.810.

4.2 Discussion

Quite number of statistical analysis was done and the results were summarized in table 4.1 - 4.9. The analysed data shows that majority are Male and they are all educated and are found to be knowledgeable due to their experience in their various fields.Larger proportion of the respondents is aware of the incidents of insecurity (causes, crime incidences and prevention strategies) and majority of them agreed that insecurity is Frequent in the study area. From the analysis carried out it was observed that occupants of residential property in the study area perceived crime (especially kidnapping, burglary, robbery and car theft) to be very high. This indicated that as crime increases rental values of property decreases. With this however, crime prevention and control should be paramount to the government.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusions

The findings of this study reveal a significant correlation between insecurity and the depreciation of property development values in the Akpebe area of Uromi. The persistent issues of armed robbery, kidnapping, cultism, and communal clashes have not only threatened the safety of residents but have also deterred potential investors and developers.

The real estate market in the area has experienced a downturn, marked by lower property prices, reduced rental demand, and stalled development projects. Many property owners have either abandoned their properties or sold them at prices far below market value. Furthermore, the lack of investor confidence has led to a decline in infrastructural development, further exacerbating the economic and social decline of the area.

In addition, the research indicates that residents and developers perceive the government's response to insecurity as insufficient. This lack of proactive intervention contributes to a vicious cycle of underdevelopment and continued insecurity.

5.3 Recommendations

i. The government, in collaboration with local security outfits and community leaders, should strengthen security patrols and surveillance in Akpebe. This includes establishing more police outposts, improving emergency response systems, and promoting community policing.

ii. A multi-stakeholder approach involving landlords, traditional leaders, youth groups, and civil society organizations should be adopted to address the root causes of insecurity and create localized solutions.

iii. High levels of youth unemployment have been identified as a driver of crime. Government and NGOs should initiate skill acquisition programs, entrepreneurship training, and small business funding to provide alternatives to criminal activity.

iv. Iv.Residents should be educated on the importance of reporting suspicious activities and participating in neighborhood watch programs. The creation of anonymous reporting systems can also aid in intelligence gathering.

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