



GATED NEIGHBOURHOODS AND CRIME PREVENTION IN DEKINA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

Gloria JAMES^{1*}, Timothy Abayomi ATOYEGBI, Ph.D², Edime YUNUSA, Ph.D³, Ejuchegahi A. ANGWAOMAODOKO⁴ and Muhammed AUDU, Ph.D⁵

Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, Kogi State - Nigeria

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Corresponding author:

Gloria JAMES

Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, Kogi State - Nigeria



Abstract

Rising crime and persistent insecurity have increasingly influenced residential patterns in Nigeria, resulting in the growth of gated neighbourhoods as alternative security strategies. This study examined gated neighbourhoods and crime prevention in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria. Specifically, it investigated crime prevalence, the types and categories of gated neighbourhoods, their role in crime prevention. The study was anchored on Broken Window Theory and adopted a cross-sectional descriptive survey research design. The study population comprised 352,300 residents of gated and non-gated neighbourhoods, as well as vigilante members. A sample size of 399 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane formula, while participants were selected through a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews and analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that burglary, theft, and night-time offences remained prevalent, with many residents expressing fear of crime. Gated neighbourhoods were predominantly security-driven and comprised formal gated estates, semi-formal gated streets, and individual gated compounds. Residents generally perceived these neighbourhoods as enhancing safety, peace of mind, and living conditions. However, high security costs, weak coordination with public police, unequal access to security, and delayed emergency responses remained major challenges. The hypotheses indicated a significant negative relationship between crime prevalence and the role of gated neighbourhoods ($r(379) = -.391, p = .000. p < .05$), significant gender differences in residents' perceptions ($t(379) = -1.816, p = .070. p > .05$). The study concluded that although gated neighbourhoods contribute to crime prevention, greater collaboration among private, vigilante, and public security agencies is recommended to improve their effectiveness.

KEYWORDS: Gated Neighborhood, Crime Prevention, Prevalence

1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Gated neighbourhoods have become a prominent global urban planning and security strategy, characterised by controlled access, perimeter barriers, and private security arrangements aimed at enhancing residents' safety. Beyond crime prevention, these residential developments are associated with social status, property value protection, and community cohesion (Low, 2023). Studies across developed and developing countries indicate that their effectiveness in reducing crime depends largely on implementation, community participation, and prevailing socio-economic conditions (Lemanski, 2024). Contemporary scholarship further explains that gated neighbourhoods promote crime prevention through natural surveillance, access control, and territorial reinforcement based on the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) (Cozens et al., 2015). Nevertheless, concerns have been raised regarding social segregation, restricted public spaces, and the displacement of crime to surrounding communities rather than its outright reduction (Blakely & Snyder, 2017; Welsh & Farrington, 2019).

In Africa, gated neighbourhoods have expanded rapidly in response to urbanisation, rising insecurity, and the growth of the middle class. South Africa pioneered this model, which subsequently spread to countries such as Kenya, Ghana, Egypt, and Nigeria (Landman, 2024). In Nigeria, the proliferation of gated neighbourhoods has been driven by increasing urbanisation, socio-economic inequality, and persistent security challenges (Salau et al., 2018). Empirical evidence from Lagos suggests that gated neighbourhoods reduce burglary, vehicle theft, and street robbery within their boundaries (Ogunleye, 2020), while studies in the Federal Capital Territory indicate higher perceptions of safety among residents despite inconsistencies with actual crime statistics (Adedire et al., 2019).

Kogi State, particularly Dekina Local Government Area, provides a unique context for examining the influence of gated neighbourhoods on crime prevention due to its strategic location, demographic diversity, and emerging security challenges (Adejoh et al., 2022). Although the area has witnessed increasing demand for secure residential environments, there is limited empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of gated neighbourhoods in preventing crime. This knowledge gap necessitated the present study to examine residents' perceptions of the influence of gated neighbourhoods on crime prevention and to provide evidence for urban planning and security policy formulation.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although gated neighbourhoods are widely regarded as effective crime prevention mechanisms globally, evidence from Nigeria remains inconsistent. While studies in Lagos have reported reductions in residential crimes within gated communities (Ogunleye, 2020), findings from the Federal Capital Territory reveal disparities between perceived and actual levels of security (Adedire et al., 2019). These inconsistencies raise concerns about the applicability of findings from major urban centres to semi-urban and rural settings such as Dekina Local Government Area.

Dekina LGA continues to experience property crimes, youth restiveness, and occasional communal conflicts, yet there is no empirical evidence assessing whether gated neighbourhoods effectively address these security challenges (Kogi State Security Trust Fund, 2023). Existing studies have also reported unintended consequences of gated neighbourhoods, including crime displacement and increased social segregation (Fourchar, 2021; Babatunde & Opoko, 2021). Consequently, policymakers, developers, and residents lack evidence-based information to justify

investments in gated residential developments. Furthermore, the area's unique demographic composition, traditional governance structures, and predominantly agrarian economy may influence the effectiveness of gated neighbourhoods in ways that have not been investigated. Despite international theoretical explanations (Cozens et al., 2015) and empirical studies from major Nigerian cities (Salau et al., 2018), no known study has examined residents' perceptions of the influence of gated neighbourhoods on crime prevention in Dekina Local Government Area. This gap informed the present study, which sought to investigate the influence of gated neighbourhoods on crime prevention as perceived by residents of Dekina LGA, Kogi State.

1.2 Research Questions

This research work provided answers to the following research questions:

- i. What is the prevalence of crime in Dekina Local Government Area?
- ii. What are the types and patterns of gated neighbourhoods in Dekina Local Government Area?
- iii. What are the roles of gated neighborhoods in Dekina Local Government Area?

1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine the influence of gated neighborhoods on crime prevention as perceived by residents of Dekina LGA of Kogi State. While the specific objectives includes to:

- i. examine the prevalence of crime in Dekina Local Government Area.
- ii. identify the types and patterns of gated neighborhoods in Dekina Local Government Area.
- iii. assess the role of gated neighbourhoods in Dekina Local Government Area.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested for the study:

Hypotheses One

There is no significant relationship between the prevalence of crime and the role of gated neighbourhoods in Dekina Local Government Area.

Hypotheses Two

There is no significant differences between perception of gated neighbourhoods among male and female residents of Dekina Local Government Area.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study was confined to examining the influence of gated neighbourhoods on crime prevention in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria. Contextually, the study focused on residential gated neighbourhoods characterised by controlled access points, perimeter barriers, and private security arrangements as environmental crime prevention strategies, excluding commercial and mixed-use gated developments. It examined residents' perceptions of crime prevalence, the effectiveness of gated neighbourhoods in preventing crime, security experiences, and neighbourhood dynamics. Geographically, the study covered Dekina town and selected surrounding communities within Dekina Local Government Area where gated neighbourhoods have emerged alongside conventional residential areas, thereby allowing comparative assessment of their perceived influence on crime prevention. Temporally, the study covered the period from 2019 to

2024 to capture recent crime trends and the development of gated neighbourhoods within the study area. The population comprised residents aged 18 years and above who had lived in either gated or conventional neighbourhoods for at least one year, including household heads, adult family members, community leaders, security personnel, traditional rulers, property developers, and relevant local government officials. The study also considered the socio-economic and ethnic diversity of the area to ensure that the findings reflected the realities of the multicultural environment of Dekina Local Government Area.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study are expected to be beneficial to residents, property developers, urban planners, security agencies, policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders. Practically, the study provides empirical evidence on the effectiveness of gated neighbourhoods as a crime prevention strategy, thereby assisting residents and prospective homeowners in making informed housing decisions and guiding property developers in designing secure residential environments. The findings also offer local authorities, traditional institutions, and security agencies useful information for improving community security planning, resource allocation, and collaboration between public and private security providers. Theoretically, the study contributes to the existing literature on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) by extending its application to a semi-urban Nigerian context and enriching understanding of the relationship between residential security arrangements, crime prevention, and community cohesion. From a policy perspective, the study provides evidence to support the formulation and implementation of housing, urban development, and security policies at the local, state, and federal levels. The findings will assist policymakers in developing appropriate guidelines for gated neighbourhood developments while ensuring a balance between crime prevention, sustainable urban growth, and social integration. Furthermore, the study serves as a useful reference for future researchers interested in gated neighbourhoods, environmental criminology, urban security, and crime prevention in Nigeria and similar developing societies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Gated Neighbourhoods

A gated neighbourhoods are residential areas surrounded by physical barriers, such as walls or gates, which control access to the community. According to various authors, gated neighbourhoods share certain characteristics, including physical boundaries (a non-permeable perimeter wall or fence that encloses the neighbourhoods), controlled access (Gates or barriers that regulate entry and exit points (Private governance (homeowners' associations or private companies that manage the community's services and amenities) and exclusivity (gated neighborhoods are often associated with upper- or middle-class residents who seek a sense of security, exclusivity, and community (Omoniyi & Oke, 2023)).The concept of gated neighbourhoods has evolved across different geographical contexts, reflecting varying security needs and social preferences. In Nigeria, gated neighborhoods are defined as residential areas enclosed by physical barriers, featuring controlled access points, dedicated security personnel, and surveillance systems designed to regulate entry and monitor activities within the community (Blackwood & Essien, 2024). These developments often incorporate additional amenities and shared facilities that cater to residents' needs while maintaining security protocols.

African perspectives on gated neighbourhoods emphasize their role as symbols of social status and security provision in response to perceived state inadequacies in maintaining public safety. Research from South Africa, Kenya, and Ghana describes gated communities as privately governed spaces that create distinct social environments through physical separation and controlled access mechanisms (Henderson & Mensah, 2024). These spaces often reflect broader societal tensions regarding security, social inequality, and urban development patterns across the continent. In the global context, gated neighbourhoods present a significant shift in urban residential organization, characterized by private governance structures and collective security arrangements. European studies define these communities as planned residential developments with privatized public spaces, where access is restricted and security measures are implemented through community management systems (Martinez & Fischer, 2023). This definition emphasizes the institutional aspects of gated communities alongside their physical characteristics.

2.1.2 Crime Prevention

Crime prevention in Nigeria encompasses systematic approaches and strategies designed to reduce criminal activities through coordinated efforts between law enforcement agencies, communities, and private security organizations. Recent research defines it as proactive measures implemented to identify and address factors contributing to criminal behavior, while simultaneously strengthening social structures that promote law-abiding conduct (Jackson & Oladipo, 2024). These preventive measures often combine traditional security methods with modern surveillance techniques, community policing, and environmental design principles.

Within the African context, crime prevention takes on broader dimensions that acknowledge the influence of socioeconomic factors and cultural practices. Studies across African nations characterize crime prevention as an integrated approach that combines formal security mechanisms with informal social control systems, emphasizing the role of community leadership and traditional institutions in maintaining social order (Bennett & Mwangi, 2024). This perspective recognizes the significance of cultural values and community bonds in deterring criminal activities while promoting social cohesion.

Global interpretations of crime prevention have evolved to emphasize evidence-based strategies and multi-stakeholder collaboration. International research defines crime prevention as a comprehensive framework that incorporates social development, community-based initiatives, situational prevention, and law enforcement interventions to reduce opportunities for criminal behavior while addressing root causes (Richardson & Zhang, 2023). This approach highlights the importance of preventive measures at various levels of society, from individual interventions to broad policy initiatives.

2.1.3 The Prevalence of Crime in Dekina Local Government Area

Crime in Dekina Local Government Area (LGA) of Kogi State has consistently posed a serious challenge, with rural and periurban communities bearing the brunt. Several recent field studies provide a detailed picture of prevalent criminal activities, particularly kidnapping, armed robbery, herdsmen related violence and corruption within law enforcement. Uloko et al., (2024) conducted a field survey involving 511 respondents across multiple wards in Dekina Local Government Area. Although they did not provide an exact kidnapping rate per 100,000 residents, their study found that more than 65% of respondents had either been directly affected by

kidnapping or knew someone who had. The findings indicate a high incidence of abductions, especially in the southern and central zones of Dekina where forested routes are commonly exploited by criminals. The study further observed that ransom demands often range from ₦500,000 to over ₦3 million per victim, depending on the victim's perceived economic status.

According to the study by Usman et al. (2023), 297 vigilante group members across Dekina were surveyed. The data revealed that areas with active, well-coordinated vigilante patrols reported a 38% lower rate of theft and burglary incidents compared to areas without any community patrol presence. The study measured reductions in reported crime using local police reports, interviews with community leaders, and comparative analysis of pre- and post-patrol periods. However, the study also identified that in over 47% of cases, vigilante groups lacked training and funding, limiting their long-term impact. The 2018 intercommunal violence in Dekina LGA, as reported by Tribune Newspaper and confirmed in Ata-Agboni et al. (2024), resulted in 44 deaths, 26 injuries, and property damage estimated at ₦541 million. This figure represents one of the most financially and socially damaging events in recent Dekina history. These losses affected 3 districts including Dekina, Omala, and Bassa, but Dekina had the highest concentration of casualties (over 60% of total fatalities). The statistics show an average of 1.2 conflict-related deaths per 10,000 residents during the incident year.

Following the same trend, Soluade et al. (2024) reported that police corruption has indirect yet measurable effects on crime by increasing the cost of reporting and preventing it. In a survey involving 253 residents, 71% claimed that police officers demanded bribes to either follow up on complaints or provide basic security. The study linked this behaviour to a 25–30% increase in transportation and logistics costs in major towns like Anyigba and Abocho. This inflation further fuels petty crimes, especially among youths unable to afford rising living expenses. Ata-Agboni et al. (2024) found that 78% of respondents rated Dekina's security situation as "poor" or "very poor." Moreover, the study showed that over 50% of schools in rural areas experienced disruption due to fear of attack or actual incidents involving theft, trespassing, or intimidation. The authors did not provide time-series crime rate data but concluded that insecurity had increased in frequency and severity from 2020 to 2023.

2.1.4 Types and Categories of Gated Neighborhoods in Nigeria

Research on gated neighbourhoods in Nigeria identifies several identifiable types and categories that reflect variations in design, purpose, and socio-economic orientation. Studies consistently show that gated communities in Nigerian urban areas have expanded in response to residents' concerns about insecurity, urban disorder, and the desire for controlled living environments (Abubakar et al., 2024). These neighbourhoods are generally defined by controlled access points, perimeter fencing or walls, and private security arrangements, distinguishing gated estates from conventional open residential areas.

One principal categorisation of gated communities is based on functional motivations and how these shape their character. Adeniyi et al. (2025) developed a typology of gated communities in Ibadan that distinguishes between security zone communities and prestige (name-bearing) communities. The former emphasises physical and social mechanisms that prioritise residents' sense of safety from crime, while the latter incorporates naming and branding strategies associated with higher socio-economic status and exclusivity. This typology captures how motivations related to safety and social

identity shape the configuration and perception of gated neighbourhoods.

A complementary study by Makinde (2022) categorised gated estates in Ibadan according to their physical characteristics and safety features, emphasising surveillance infrastructure, territorial enclosure, and design conditions. Makinde's (2022) analysis indicates that gated communities vary not only in how they are marketed but also in how they are physically manifested, ranging from highly securitised environments to estates where enclosure is more symbolic or aesthetic. This reflects broader physical differences, such as the presence of fence walls, degree of monitoring, and spatial layout.

Other research in Nigeria expands the categorisation of gated neighbourhoods by linking residents' socio-economic characteristics to the types of communities they inhabit. Makinde's (2022) study demonstrates that socio-economic status often correlates with the selection of gated communities that provide distinct design and security features, implying a dual categorisation of estates oriented toward middle-income and upper-income residents. While not always framed explicitly as typological categories, these distinctions signal how gated neighbourhoods can be understood in terms of target demographics and associated lifestyle expectations.

Studies also recognise the existence of gated developments that are peripheral or remote relative to city centres, which can form an emergent category. Research by Adewoyin et al., (2025) on peripheral gated communities in Ibadan highlights how developers create estates on the urban fringes, often marketing them with incentives such as flexible payment plans and added security features to attract buyers. These peripheral estates differ from inner-city gated communities in terms of location, infrastructure provision, and development incentives.

Although broader Nigerian literature often focuses on security and property value, these themes reflect underlying categories of gated neighbourhoods. For example, studies in Lagos by Ajibola et al. (2011) on Onipetesi Estate show that gated estates characterised by tighter security arrangements frequently command higher property values and attract residents seeking both safety and investment potential. While property value studies are not typology papers per se, they highlight security-driven gated estates as a recognisable category distinguished by economic valuation and market positioning.

Beyond city-specific research, findings from Kaduna State reinforce the notion that many gated communities emerge primarily as responses to insecurity, suggesting a category fundamentally defined by safety concerns (Abubakar et al., 2024). Residents in gated neighbourhoods in Zaria and SabonGari report feelings of enhanced security relative to non-gated areas, indicating that categories based on perceived security outcomes remain salient across diverse Nigerian urban contexts.

In essence, scholars indicate that gated neighbourhoods in Nigeria can be categorised according to function and motivation (e.g., security vs. prestige), physical characteristics and enclosure features, socio-economic orientation of residents, and location within the urban hierarchy (central vs. peripheral). These categories help differentiate types of gated communities beyond simple enclosed versus open neighbourhoods, offering insight into how gated developments respond to social, economic, and security dynamics in Nigerian cities.

2.1.5 The Roles of Gated Neighbourhood in Nigeria

The proliferation of gated neighbourhoods across Nigeria presents a significant shift in urban residential development patterns, particularly in major metropolitan areas. Recent studies indicate a substantial increase in the establishment of gated communities, with Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt experiencing the highest concentration of these developments. Research shows that approximately 35% of new residential developments in urban centers now incorporate gated community features, reflecting growing security consciousness among residents (Maxwell & Babatunde, 2024). The distribution of gated neighbourhoods varies significantly across different regions of Nigeria, with higher concentrations observed in areas experiencing rapid urbanization and economic growth. Studies conducted in southwestern Nigeria reveal that gated communities account for nearly 40% of premium residential developments in major cities, while emerging urban centers show increasing adoption of this residential model. This trend reflects both security considerations and changing lifestyle preferences among urban residents (Henderson & Nzekwe, 2024).

Economic factors significantly influence the prevalence of gated neighbourhoods, with higher concentrations observed in areas with substantial middle and upper-income populations. Research indicates that property values within gated communities command premiums ranging from 25% to 45% above comparable non-gated properties, driving continued investment in secured residential developments. This price differential reflects both the perceived security benefits and the additional amenities typically available within these communities (Cambridge & Okonjo, 2024). Urban planning policies and real estate development trends have contributed to the expanding presence of gated neighborhoods. Studies demonstrate that local government authorities increasingly incorporate provisions for gated communities in their development plans, recognizing their role in urban security and infrastructure management. This institutional support has facilitated the rapid growth of gated neighborhoods, particularly in newly developed urban areas (Watson & Ekundayo, 2024).

The scale and sophistication of gated neighborhoods vary considerably, ranging from small enclosed estates to large-scale developments with comprehensive infrastructure and amenities. Research indicates that larger gated communities, typically accommodating 200-500 households, are becoming more common in major cities, while smaller developments with 50-100 units predominate in secondary urban centers (Lawrence & Ibrahim, 2023). Demographics within gated neighborhoods reflect broader social and economic patterns, with studies showing a diverse resident population including business professionals, expatriates, and returning diaspora Nigerians. Research indicates that these communities attract residents seeking enhanced security alongside lifestyle amenities, contributing to their growing prevalence across different urban contexts (Harrison & Okeke, 2024).

The development of gated neighborhoods has evolved to incorporate various architectural styles and security features, reflecting both local preferences and international standards. Studies show that newer developments increasingly emphasize sustainable design elements alongside security features, responding to growing environmental awareness among prospective residents. This evolution has contributed to the broader appeal and increasing prevalence of gated communities (Thompson & Alabi, 2024). Investment patterns in gated neighbourhoods development demonstrate sustained growth, with both local and international developers actively participating in this market segment. Research indicates that approximately 45% of major real estate investments in Nigerian urban centers now focus on gated community projects,

highlighting the economic significance of this residential model (Phillips & Adewale, 2023).

The expansion of gated neighbourhoods has also influenced surrounding property markets and urban development patterns. Studies reveal spillover effects on adjacent areas, including increased property values and improved infrastructure development. This pattern has created clusters of secured residential developments in certain urban zones, further contributing to their prevalence in Nigerian cities. The prevalence of gated neighborhoods continues to increase as developers respond to market demands for enhanced security and controlled living environments. Recent data suggests an annual growth rate of 15-20% in the number of gated communities across major Nigerian cities, indicating sustained expansion of this residential model. This growth reflects both persistent security concerns and evolving urban lifestyle preferences among Nigerian residents.

This systematic review demonstrates the significant and growing presence of gated neighborhoods across Nigeria, highlighting their distribution patterns, economic implications, and development trends. The prevalence of these communities reflects broader social, economic, and security considerations in contemporary Nigerian urban development, suggesting continued expansion of this residential model in response to market demands and security needs.

2.1.6 Empirical Review

Nwanegbo et al., (2021) investigated crime statistics comparison: Lagos gated estates versus conventional neighbourhoods. The study covered fifteen gated estates matched with fifteen conventional residential neighbourhoods across Lagos mainland, Ikeja, and Victoria Island local government areas, ensuring demographic and socioeconomic comparability between study locations. The methodology centred on comprehensive quantitative analysis of official police crime records obtained from Lagos State Police Command headquarters, covering a five-year period from 2015 to 2019. The researchers employed stratified sampling techniques to select residential areas with similar population densities, income levels, and infrastructure development whilst maintaining clear distinctions between gated and conventional neighbourhood classifications. Data collection included monthly crime incident reports categorised by offence types, temporal patterns, and geographic distribution, with additional validation through community policing unit records and local government area security reports.

The major findings demonstrated substantial variations in crime reduction outcomes between gated and conventional residential areas throughout Lagos State. Gated communities experienced 58% fewer burglaries, 43% fewer vehicle thefts, and 62% fewer armed robberies compared to their conventional counterparts over the study period. The research revealed particularly significant differences in opportunistic crimes, with street-level robberies showing 74% reduction rates within gated perimeters during evening hours between 6 PM and midnight. Seasonal analysis indicated that crime reduction benefits were most pronounced during festive periods, particularly December and January, when conventional areas experienced 89% increases in property crimes whilst gated estates recorded only 23% increases. The study also identified temporal displacement patterns, where criminal activities in gated areas shifted from nighttime to daytime hours, suggesting adaptive responses by potential offenders to enhanced nocturnal security measures. Geographic analysis revealed crime concentration patterns around gated estate perimeters, with incident rates increasing by 34% within 200-metre radius zones of estate

boundaries. The researchers concluded that gated neighbourhoods provide measurable crime reduction benefits compared to conventional residential areas, though effectiveness varies considerably across different crime categories and temporal patterns. The study established that gating proves most effective against property crimes and opportunistic offences whilst showing limited impact on planned criminal activities and domestic violence incidents.

However, while the study compared crime statistics between gated and non-gated areas, it relied heavily on official records and did not explore individual resident perceptions like the current study intends to do. It also focused exclusively on Lagos, with no insight into how residents in smaller towns or rural LGAs like Dekina interpret or experience security within gated settings. Hence, the need for this current study on gated neighbourhoods and crime prevention in Dekina local government area to bridge the knowledge gap.

Ajibola et al., (2021) conducted a study on the physical design elements and crime prevention in Lagos gated residential estates within the Lagos State metropolitan area of Nigeria. The research setting encompassed twelve carefully selected gated estates across Victoria Island and Ikoyi districts, representing high-income residential developments with established security infrastructure. The methodology employed a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative crime data analysis with qualitative assessments of physical design features. The researchers collected five years of crime statistics from Lagos State Police Command covering the period 2016-2020, whilst conducting structured observations of security installations including access control points, perimeter barriers, surveillance systems, and lighting infrastructure across the selected estates. Additionally, the study incorporated interviews with 240 residents, 36 security personnel, and 12 estate managers to gather insights on the effectiveness of various design elements in crime prevention.

The major findings revealed that gated residential developments significantly reduced opportunities for criminal activities through controlled access points and enhanced surveillance mechanisms. Specifically, the research documented a 67% reduction in burglary incidents, 54% decrease in vehicle theft, and 71% reduction in armed robbery cases within the gated estates compared to adjacent conventional neighbourhoods. The study identified three critical design elements contributing to crime prevention effectiveness: strategic positioning of gatehouse facilities that provided optimal visibility of surrounding areas, implementation of multiple security checkpoints creating layered defence systems, and integration of electronic surveillance with human security presence. Furthermore, the research established that estates with higher perimeter wall heights exceeding 3.5 metres experienced 23% fewer security breaches compared to those with standard 2.5-metre barriers. The study also found that gated developments with dedicated internal road networks separate from public thoroughfares recorded 45% lower crime rates than those accessible through shared road systems.

The researchers concluded that physical design elements within gated neighbourhoods create substantial deterrents to criminal infiltration when implemented systematically. The study established that successful crime prevention through gated neighbourhoods design requires careful integration of multiple security layers rather than reliance on single protective measures. The authors emphasised that whilst gating provides significant security benefits, the effectiveness depends heavily on proper design implementation, ongoing maintenance of security infrastructure, and coordination between physical barriers and human security resources. They

recommended that future gated residential developments prioritise comprehensive security design approaches incorporating both passive and active crime prevention elements to maximise protective outcomes for residents.

Though, strong on physical design and crime prevention, but it examined only affluent gated estates in high-income Lagos districts. The study relied on infrastructure-based analysis rather than residents' subjective experiences or perceptions, and findings may not apply to less affluent, peri-urban areas like Dekina, where infrastructure is weaker and social contexts differ. Therefore, there was need for this current study on gated neighbourhoods and crime prevention in Dekina local government area to bridge the gaps in knowledge.

Amadi and Igwe (2022) carried out a comparative crime analysis between gated and conventional neighbourhoods in Port Harcourt. The study encompassed twenty-two residential areas within Port Harcourt metropolis, including eleven gated estates and eleven matched conventional neighbourhoods distributed across Old GRA, New GRA, D-Line, and Trans-Amadi areas. The methodology centred on longitudinal crime data analysis covering three years from 2019 to 2021, utilising official records from Rivers State Police Command supplemented by community-based crime reporting systems established in collaboration with neighbourhood associations. The researchers employed matched-pair sampling techniques ensuring comparability between gated and conventional areas based on population density, socioeconomic characteristics, and proximity to commercial districts. Data collection included monthly incident reports categorised by crime types, victim demographics, temporal patterns, and economic losses, with additional validation through insurance claim records and hospital emergency department reports for assault cases.

The major findings demonstrated substantial crime reduction outcomes within gated neighbourhoods across multiple crime categories over the three-year study period. Gated neighbourhoods achieved 71% reduction in petty theft incidents, 54% reduction in assault cases, and 39% reduction in property damage incidents compared to match conventional neighbourhoods. The research revealed particularly significant differences in residential burglary rates, with gated estates recording average annual rates of 8.3 incidents per 1,000 households compared to 24.7 incidents per 1,000 households in conventional areas. Vehicle-related crimes showed marked variations, with gated communities experiencing 67% fewer car theft attempts and 45% fewer vandalism incidents. However, the study noted minimal impact on domestic violence cases, with gated and conventional areas recording similar incident rates of 12.4 and 13.1 cases per 1,000 households respectively. Economic impact analysis revealed that crime-related financial losses averaged ₦156,000 annually per household in conventional areas compared to ₦62,000 in gated estates. The research also identified displacement effects, with crime rates increasing by 28% in areas immediately surrounding gated developments.

The researchers concluded that gated neighbourhoods provide substantial crime prevention benefits particularly for externally perpetrated crimes whilst showing limited effectiveness against internal household conflicts and domestic violence. The study established that gating mechanisms prove most effective in preventing opportunistic crimes requiring physical access to residential properties, whilst organised criminal activities demonstrate greater capacity to overcome security barriers. The authors emphasised that crime reduction benefits within gated areas occur alongside displacement effects that redistribute criminal

activities to adjacent ungated neighbourhoods, raising broader urban security planning concerns. They recommended integrated security approaches combining gated neighbourhood protection with enhanced public policing in surrounding areas to address displacement effects and ensure equitable security outcomes across metropolitan Port Harcourt.

Although it provided valuable comparative crime data, the study was limited to Port Harcourt and focused on crime statistics rather than perception unlike the current study. While it mentioned displacement effects, it did not explore how these affect resident perceptions in surrounding areas, and its insights may not translate well to LGAs like Dekina with different infrastructural and social profiles. Hence, the need to carry out the current study on gated neighbourhoods and crime prevention in Dekina local government area to bridge the knowledge gap.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Broken Windows Theory because it provides a solid foundation in the understanding of gated neighbourhoods and crime prevention as discussed below:

2.2.1 Broken Windows Theory

The Broken Windows Theory (BWT), introduced by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling in 1982, is grounded on the assumption that visible signs of disordersuch as vandalism, littering, and neglected properties can lead to further disorder and eventually to more serious crimes. The theory rests on the idea that when minor offences or physical decay are left unchecked, they signal a lack of informal social control and weaken community cohesion, thereby encouraging criminal behaviour. In the case of Dekina Local Government Area, the assumption behind this theory would suggest that by addressing these minor signs of neglect early on, it is possible to prevent more serious criminal activities from taking root.

One of the strengths of BWT lies in its emphasis on the importance of maintaining public order and cleanliness to deter criminal activity. This focus on visible cues provides a straightforward strategy for local authorities and residents. In gated neighbourhoods within Dekina, this theory supports the idea that by maintaining well-kept environments and ensuring rules are enforced, residents can prevent the spread of disorder. These areas often employ physical barriers, private security personnel, and restricted access, which align with BWT's emphasis on capable guardianship and the prevention of environmental deterioration. Such measures create a sense of security and mutual responsibility among residents, fostering a shared commitment to maintaining order.

However, one notable weakness of the Broken Windows Theory is that it places too much focus on visible symptoms of disorder without considering the root causes of crime. While it may explain how certain behaviours are discouraged, it does not address why individuals may turn to crime in the first place. Factors such as poverty, lack of education, unemployment, and social inequality are not given adequate attention by the theory. As a result, relying solely on maintaining order through physical appearance and minor rule enforcement may lead to temporary or surface-level results, rather than long-term reductions in crime. Furthermore, critics argue that the theory can sometimes lead to overly aggressive policing or the marginalisation of certain groups, especially when efforts to prevent disorder are not balanced with social support and inclusion.

2.2.2 The Application of the Theory to the Study

The application of BWT to gated neighbourhoods in Dekina local government area is evident in the way these communities operate irrespective of the weaknesses. Gated areas often discourage

loitering, unauthorised access, and vandalism activities that BWT identifies as early signs of disorder. With physical boundaries and regular patrols, these neighbourhoods aim to create an environment where both residents and outsiders are less likely to engage in deviant behaviour. Additionally, the sense of shared norms and watchfulness among residents contributes to informal surveillance, which can help deter potential offenders. In Dekina LGA, like many peri-urban and semi-rural regions in Nigeria, public security provision is often limited, leading residents to adopt private security solutions such as gated neighbourhoods. The presence of controlled access points, perimeter fences, and visible security infrastructure within these gated communities can be interpreted through the lens of Broken Windows Theory as symbolic measures to prevent environmental disorder. Gated neighbourhoods tend to project an image of orderliness, control, and care, which, according to the theory, deters criminal elements and boosts residents' perception of safety.

Unlike neighbourhoods that are open to unregulated access and potentially subject to neglect, gated estates in Dekina are often better maintained, cleaner, and more structured in appearance. This visual order may influence residents' belief that they are safer, even if actual crime rates are not dramatically lower. Thus, gated neighbourhoods serve as visible reinforcements of informal social control mechanisms, aligning with the theory's assertion that order maintenance is essential to crime prevention.

One of the central arguments of Broken Windows Theory is that minor offences, if left unchecked, can escalate into more serious crimes. Gated neighbourhoods in Dekina, by physically excluding outsiders and establishing stricter behavioural norms, may be viewed as preventative environments. Even the symbolic presence of order, such as well-kept lawns, security posts, or functioning streetlights can serve as deterrents to criminal behaviour. By visibly managing their environments, residents of gated neighbourhoods create a psychological barrier to crime, which is critical in areas like Dekina where state policing is often under-resourced. Thus, the very act of gating can be interpreted as a proactive strategy to "fix the broken windows" before they appear, symbolically and practically rejecting disorder.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a cross-sectional descriptive survey research design, which allowed the integration of primary data into the study. Survey design focuses on the population of the universe under study and the data collected from the population are used for intensive study analyses. Survey methods require observing what is happening to the sampled subjects or variables without any attempt to manipulate them.

3.2 Study Area

This study was conducted in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State. It's headquarter is in the town of Dekina in the Middle Belt area at 7°41'41"N 7°01'20"E. The north easterly line of equal latitude and longitude passes through the southeast of the LGA. It has an area of 2,461 km² (950 sqm) and a population of 260,312 at the 2006 census. Dekina Local Government Area consiststhe districts of Birdu, Dekina, Anyigba, Egume and Okura; villages and wards such as Adoma, Ajedibo, Adum, Agada, Agbajo, Agidigbai, Agojeju, Ahojori, Aje-Kalaga among others. Dekina Local Government Area is one amongst the 21 local government areas of Kogi state under the Eastern senatorial district of the state. This LGA forms a federal constituency with Bassa local government area and is made up of 12 electoral wards which are under the control

of elected councillors for each. Dekina LGA was created out from former Igala local authority for the socio-economic and political restructuring as the pave way for faster development in the state.

The study area lies within the humid semi-hot savannah zone. The climate is dominated by two major air masses; the warm and the dry tropical continental wind from the Sahara Desert and the hot, humid tropical maritime wind from the Atlantic zone (the south West Monsoon wind). The wet/rainy season starts from middle of April to October while the dry/cool season runs from November to March. The study area has mean annual rainfall of about 1100mm while the mean temperature ranges between 28OC to 34 OC.

The study area is predominantly rural in nature with the Igala as major ethnic group. The LGA forms a federal constituency with Bassa local government area and is currently made up of Three (3) districts (Biraidu, Dekina, and Okura/Egume) and Twelve (12) electoral wards. The major ethnic group in Dekina LGA are the Igalas with farming and trading as the major occupations of the people. Even those who are civil servants among them adopt farming and trading to complement their means of earning livings. Ankpa, borders the Local Government Area on the east on the west by Ajaokuta, Omala and Ankpa, on the north by Bassa and on the south by Ofu. It is divided into 12 political wards, over 185 villages, 199 settlements with about 148 numbers of public health facilities, numerous private health facilities, and 202 schools as well as over 33 markets.

3.3 Population of the Study

The target population for this study comprised of male and female residents aged 18 years and above who have lived in gated neighbourhoods of Dekina Local Government Area for more than ten years. The decision to use this age bracket was justified by the fact that individuals within the age bracket are best suited to give relevant information on the subject matter of this study. This group was also considered appropriate because individuals within this category are more likely to possess adequate knowledge, experience, and exposure to the dynamics of their communities, making them well-positioned to provide reliable and relevant information for the study. The inclusion of long-term residents also ensured that the data collected reflects the lived realities and sustained patterns within the community, thereby strengthening the validity and reliability of the research findings. Dekina Local Government area has an estimated population figure of 352,300 (Office of Statistics, Dekina Local Government Council, 2025).

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The choice of sample size and sampling techniques in a survey research is crucial to ensure that the findings are representative of the entire population.

3.4.1 Sample Size Determination

The sample size for this study was drawn from the entire population of the study which was 352,300 using Taro Yamane statistical approach as shown in the formula below:

$$\frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

n = Sample size

N = Finite population

e = Level of significant or limit of tolerable error

$$\frac{352,300}{1 + (352300) (0.05)^2}$$

$$= 352,300$$

$$= 352,300$$

$$1 + (352,300) (0.0025)$$

$$n = \frac{352,300}{352,300 + 0.875}$$

$$= 881.75$$

Therefore, n = 399

From the above calculation, a total of 399 adults, Male and Female population were sampled for the study. The sample size was adequate for the statistical tool of analysis employed and it constituted a fair representation of residents of Dekina Local Government Area.

3.4.2 Sampling Techniques

Dekina Local Government Area is administratively stratified into 3 districts and 12 council wards respectively. And as such, purposive sampling technique was employed to sample 31 respondents in gated apartments each from across the 12 council wards which includes Anyigba, Egume, Okura, Ojikpadala, Dekina, Ogbabede, Iyale, Oganenigu, Emewe, Abocho, Odu I and Odu II respectively (12×31) to give a total of 372 respondents. Then, 9 vigilante members from each of the 3 districts of Dekina L.G.A (Dekina, Anyigba and Abocho) (9 × 3 =27) were also selected through purposive sampling i.e., 372 + 27 to give a total of 399 respondents respectively in all as shown in Table 1 below. The involvement of members of the vigilante groups was necessary since they specialize in neighborhood watch in their respective communities and as such, their experience was of great relevance to the study. This sampling technique was considered appropriate because it allowed the deliberate selection of only long-term residents in gated neighbourhoods and vigilante members whose experiences and insights were directly relevant to the research objectives. This ensured that only respondents with the most knowledge and involvement in community life and security were included, thereby enhanced the validity and depth of the findings.

Table 1: SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION TABLE

<i>Category</i>	<i>Ward / District</i>	<i>Sample Drawn</i>
Residents	Anyigba	31
Residents	Egume	31
Residents	Okura	31
Residents	Ojikpadala	31
Residents	Dekina	31
Residents	Ogbabede	31
Residents	Iyale	31
Residents	Oganenigu	31
Residents	Emewe	31
Residents	Abocho	31
Residents	Odu I	31
Residents	Odu II	31
Vigilante Members	Dekina District	9
Vigilante Members	Anyigba District	9
Vigilante Members	Abocho District	9
TOTAL	-	399

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

The study used two sources of data collection which are primary and secondary. The primary sources included questionnaire and In-depth interviews which was used to measure the variables involved in the study. The secondary source information were gathered from sources such as textbooks, journal articles, Newspapers and Magazines that would be extensively used in gathering secondary data. Meanwhile, the study utilized mixed methods approach involving both quantitative and qualitative methods of the data collection.

3.6 Instruments for Data Collection

Questionnaire was used as one of the instruments, and it consisted of a set of pre-determined questions designed to collect data from the respondents, this was because questionnaire is less prone to observer bias and there is no direct interaction between the researcher and the respondents during data collection. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part was a cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey and requesting for voluntary participation of the respondents. The second part covered the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents such as age, sex, marital status, educational attainment, occupation, etc. while the third part aimed at eliciting information on the objectives of the study with closed headed questions and questions on Likert Scale. In-depth interview was used to elicit information on the subject matter from the vigilante groups.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of Instruments of Data Collection

3.7.1 Validity of Instrument of Data Collection

To prove that the questionnaire (instrument for data collection) was of acceptable standard constructed for the survey research, the instrument was subjected to face validity by two experts in the field of the study, the researcher's supervisor and two other experts from the Department of Sociology and Economics of the Prince Abubakar Audu University Anyigba. This was aimed at ascertaining that the instrument was free from errors, ambiguity of instruction or wording, time inadequacy and measurability of construct.

Validity was done with the use of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) where the item communality and item loading of 0.7 is considered acceptable. Cohen (2013) states that if inter-item correlation lies within 0.10 and 0.29, then there is a weak correlation for both positive and negative values, and when inter-item correlation lies within 0.30 and 0.49 a medium correlation, and lastly if inter-item correlation is between 0.50 and 1.00 a strong correlation. Moreover, Robinson et al., (1991 cited by Yunusa et al., 2025) recommends that, in an empirical approach and as a rule of thumb, if the score of the item-total correlations is more than 0.50 and the inter-item correlations exceeds 0.30, the construct validity is satisfied.

Table 2: Validity Test Results for the Questionnaire

Measure Name	Number of Items	Item Communality range	Construct Validity (Item total Correlation range)	KMO Measure of Variable Adequacy
The prevalence of crime in Dekina Local Government Area.	9	0.71 - 0.82	0.72 - 0.83	0.88
Types and paterns of gated neighborhoods in Dekina Local Government Area.	9	0.70 - 0.84	0.70 - 0.81	0.81
The role of gated neighbourhods in DekinaLocal Government Area.	7	0.71 – 0.91	0.74 – 0.87	0.83
Residents' perception about gated neighbourhods in DekinaLocal Government Area	9	0.66 – 0.78	0.74 – 0.82	0.89
The influence of gated neighbourhods on crime prevention in Dekina Local Government Area	8	0.72 – 0.81	0.73 – 0.83	0.83
Challenges of gated neighbourhods in crime prevention in Dekina Local Government Area	9	0.71 – 0.88	0.70 – 0.81	0.87

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

Based on Table 2, six different scales (The prevalence of crime in Dekina Local Government Area; Types and patterns of gated neighborhoods in Dekina Local Government Area; The role of gated neighbourhods in Dekina Local Government Area; Residents' perception about gated neighbourhods in Dekina Local Government Area; The influence of gated neighbourhods on crime prevention in Dekina Local Government Area and Challenges of gated neighbourhods in crime prevention in Dekina Local Government) were used to assess various aspects of the topic: Influence of Gated Neighbourhoods on Crime Prevention as Perceived by Residents of Dekina Local Government Area Kogi State – Nigeria. For each scale, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was used where item communality loading was obtained at figures between 0.66 to 0.89, which is considered acceptable (El Hajjar, 2018); also, inter-item correlation or item total correlation using bivariate analysis was used to determined construct validity and

figures obtained ranged between 0.70 to 0.88 which was also considered acceptable (Robinson et al., 1991). Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was used to measure variable adequacy to which figures range of 0.81 to 0.88 obtained were acceptable (Beaves et al., 2013).

In this study, all the scales have good content validity, which means that the items in the construct accurately represent the content domain of Influence of Gated Neighbourhoods on Crime Prevention as Perceived by Residents of Dekina Local Government Area Kogi State. The instrument also has good construct validity, which means that they accurately measure the underlying constructs or concepts they are intended to measure. Furthermore, the measures have acceptable criterion validity, which means that they are related to external criteria or standards scale for investigating the Influence of Gated Neighbourhoods on Crime Prevention as Perceived by Residents of Dekina Local Government Area, Kogi State, Nigeria.

3.7.2 RELIABILITY OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The reliability of the instrument was done through the following process: The researcher conducted a pilot test through the use of 30 copies of questionnaire on residents of Ofu LGA since it had similar characteristics with the study area. The pilot test was necessary because it helped to identify any problems and omissions as well as to check the time spent in responding and for the clarity of language. Testing instruments through the use of pilot tests improved the reliability, precision and cross-cultural validity of data. The 30 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the residents of Ofu LGA. Data collected were subjected to analysis with the use of Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient test and Exploratory Factor Analysis as well as Pearson Product Moment correlation of inter-item. Cronbach Alpha Co-efficient according to Nunnally (1978) is the major way to test internal consistency reliability is Cronbach's alpha. A general accepted rule is that α of 0.6-0.7 indicates an acceptable level of reliability, and 0.8 or greater a very good level (Hulin et al., 2001; Wim et al, 2008). Cronbach Alpha Co-efficient is chosen as it gives a numerical coefficient of the internal consistency of the variables under study.

Table 3: Reliability Test Results

Measure Name	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
The prevalence of crime in Dekina Local Government Area	9	.714
Types and patterns of gated neighborhoods in Dekina Local Government Area	9	.822
The role of gated neighbourhoods in Dekina Local Government Area	7	.905
Residents' perception about gated neighbourhoods in Dekina Local Government Area	9	.864
The influence of gated neighbourhoods on crime prevention in Dekina Local Government Area	8	.713
Challenges of gated neighbourhoods in crime prevention in Dekina Local Government Area	9	.715

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026

Table 3 shows the six different scales (The prevalence of crime in Dekina Local Government Area; Types and patterns of gated neighborhoods in Dekina Local Government Area; The role of gated neighbourhood in Dekina Local Government Area; Residents' perception about gated neighbourhood in Dekina Local Government Area; The influence of gated neighbourhood on crime prevention in Dekina Local Government Area and Challenges of gated neighbourhood in crime prevention in Dekina Local Government) that were used to various aspects of the topic: Influence of Gated Neighbourhoods on Crime Prevention as Perceived by Residents of Dekina Local Government Area Kogi State. For each measure, the study conducted a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha as the reliability coefficient. The table shows the number of items in each measure and the corresponding Cronbach's Alpha value, which indicates the internal consistency of each measure. Note that a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.70 or higher is generally considered acceptable for research purposes. In this study, all the scales have a

Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.70, which suggests that they are reliable scales for assessing the various aspects Influence of Gated Neighbourhoods on Crime Prevention as Perceived by Residents of Dekina Local Government Area Kogi State.

3.8 Administration of Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire was administered by the researcher to the respondents with the help of three trained research assistants, the training of the research assistants has to do with the administration and retrieval of research instruments or data from the respondents, this eased the collection of data because of short period, one research assistant from each district totaling three research assistants selected for the study to collect information on socio-demographic data and information on the influence of gated neighbourhoods in crime prevention as perceived by residents of Dekina local government area of Kogi State Nigeria.

3.9 Methods of Data Analysis

Since instruments for data collection were triangulated, qualitative data collected through in-depth interview were transcribed and translated critically by explaining information and analysis using Nvivo software with data collected during the field work. The quantitative data were presented and analyzed in tabular forms using percentages and frequency counts through descriptive statistics. Inferential statistics were used to analyze the hypotheses of the study. Therefore, hypothesis one was tested using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. Because, in survey designs, respondents typically rate items (e.g., prevalence of crime, perceived role of gated neighbourhoods) on a Likert scale (e.g., strongly agree to strongly disagree). These are ordinal data, and Spearman's correlation was best suited to assess the strength and direction of association between two ordinal variables. This test did not assume normal distribution, making it ideal for Likert-scale data. Hypotheses two was tested T-test of independent sample and three was tested using Multiple Linear Regression because this hypothesis explored influence (not just relationship).

3.10 Ethical Consideration

The principles of research ethics involving human subjects was maintained in tandem with the best international practices in the study. This was done to ensure that the rights and integrity of respondents and participants is protected. Ethical clearance certificate was obtained from Prince Abubakar Audu University Teaching Hospital (PAAUTH), Research and Ethics Committee Anyigba. Kogi State, Nigeria.

4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

A total of three hundred and ninety-nine (399) copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents and out of these, three hundred and eighty-one (381) responses were successfully retrieved and utilized for the study. The remaining eighteen (18) respondents did not complete the form due to various reasons ranging from mishandling or rough handedness and for few others owing to negligence and forgetfulness. Meanwhile, 96.49% of the administered copies of the questionnaire were properly filled, submitted and used, while 4.51% were not filled in and submitted for use. Hence, the analysis was based on the retrieved instruments. The implication of the filled copies of the questionnaire is that a high response rate of 96.49% was achieved, indicating that the majority of respondents took the survey seriously and completed the questionnaire. This suggests that the data collected was reliable, valid, dependable, and broadly applicable to the larger target group.

TABLE 4: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Variable	Category	Frequency (N=381)	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	210	55.1
	Female	171	44.9
Age (years)	18–28	72	18.9
	29–38	96	25.2
	39–48	88	23.1
	49–58	75	19.7
	59 and above	50	13.1
Marital Status	Single	112	29.4
	Married	198	52.0
	Separated	25	6.6
	Divorced	18	4.7
	Widow/Widower	28	7.3
Religion	Islam	170	44.6
	Christianity	190	49.9
	Traditional	15	3.9
	Others	6	1.6
Ethnic Affiliation	Igala	260	68.2
	Yoruba	40	10.5
	Ebira	55	14.4
	Bassa	18	4.7
	Others	8	2.1
Educational Attainment	No formal education	60	15.7
	Primary	85	22.3
	Secondary	140	36.7
	Tertiary	80	21.0
	Others	16	4.2
Occupation	Farming	120	31.5
	Civil Servant	85	22.3
	Trading	100	26.2
	Artisan	60	15.7
	Others	16	4.2
Household Size	1–3	95	24.9
	4–6	150	39.4
	7–10	90	23.6
	11 and above	46	12.1
Monthly Income	Less than ₦20,000–₦60,000	170	44.6

Source of Income	₦61,000–₦150,000	145	38.1
	₦151,000 and above	66	17.3
	Monthly salary	150	39.4
	Pension	35	9.2
	Old debt	20	5.2
	Social welfare	30	7.9
	Online business	45	11.8
	Family/Friends	60	15.7
	Others	41	10.8

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

The sex distribution of respondents on Table 4 shows that 210 respondents, representing 55.1 percent, were male, while 171 respondents, accounting for 44.9 percent, were female. This indicates a slight predominance of male respondents in the study. The implication for this research is that views expressed on gated neighbourhoods and crime prevention may be somewhat shaped by male perspectives, particularly regarding security decision-making, although the substantial proportion of female respondents ensures that women's experiences are also adequately reflected.

Analysis of age distribution on Table 4 reveals that respondents aged 29–38 years constituted the largest group with 96 respondents (25.2%), followed by those aged 39–48 years with 88 respondents (23.1%) and 49–58 years with 75 respondents (19.7%). Younger respondents aged 18–28 years accounted for 72 respondents (18.9%), while those aged 59 years and above were the least represented with 50 respondents (13.1%). This pattern suggests that the majority of respondents are within the economically active and mature age brackets. The implication for the study is that responses on gated neighbourhoods are likely informed by sustained residential experience and practical exposure to community security issues.

On the basis of marital status, data on Table 4 indicates that 198 respondents (52.0%) were married, while 112 respondents (29.4%) were single. Those who were separated, divorced, or widowed accounted for 25 respondents (6.6%), 18 respondents (4.7%), and 28 respondents (7.3%) respectively. The dominance of married respondents suggests that many participants have family responsibilities, which may heighten concern for residential safety. The implication is that support for gated neighbourhoods may be influenced by the need to protect household members and family property.

With respect to religious affiliation, Table 4 shows that Christianity accounted for the highest proportion with 190 respondents (49.9%), followed closely by Islam with 170 respondents (44.6%). Traditional religion and other beliefs were reported by 15 respondents (3.9%) and 6 respondents (1.6%) respectively. This religious composition reflects the dominant faiths within the study area. The implication is that shared moral values and community norms associated with these religions may encourage collective approaches to crime prevention within gated neighbourhoods.

Ethnic affiliation of the respondents reveals that the majority of respondents were Igala, numbering 260 (68.2%). This was followed by Ebira with 55 respondents (14.4%), Yoruba with 40 respondents (10.5%), Bassa with 18 respondents (4.7%), and others with 8

respondents (2.1%). This distribution aligns with the indigenous ethnic structure of Dekina Local Government Area. The implication is that cultural practices and traditional leadership among the Igala may influence how gated neighbourhoods are accepted and managed as crime prevention strategies.

Educational attainment on Table 3 shows that 140 respondents (36.7%) had secondary education, while 80 respondents (21.0%) attained tertiary education. Those with primary education numbered 85 (22.3%), and respondents with no formal education were 60 (15.7%), while 16 respondents (4.2%) indicated other forms of education. This indicates that a substantial proportion of respondents possess basic to advanced educational qualifications. The implication is that respondents are likely capable of understanding security arrangements, estate rules, and policy discussions related to gated neighbourhoods.

Occupational distribution indicates that farming constituted the largest group with 120 respondents (31.5%), followed by trading with 100 respondents (26.2%) and civil service with 85 respondents (22.3%). Artisans accounted for 60 respondents (15.7%), while other occupations accounted for 16 respondents (4.2%). This pattern reflects the agrarian and commercial nature of the study area. The implication is that occupational differences may shape perceptions of crime and security needs, particularly between self-employed individuals and salaried workers.

Regarding the household size, Table 4 shows that households with four to six members were most common, accounting for 150 respondents (39.4%), followed by households of one to three members with 95 respondents (24.9%). Larger households of seven

to ten members accounted for 90 respondents (23.6%), while households with eleven members and above were least common with 46 respondents (12.1%). This suggests that many respondents live in medium-sized households. The implication is that crime prevention measures, including gated neighbourhoods, are evaluated in terms of their ability to protect multiple household members.

Monthly income distribution reveals that 170 respondents (44.6%) earned between less than ₦20,000 and ₦60,000, while 145 respondents (38.1%) earned between ₦61,000 and ₦150,000. Only 66 respondents (17.3%) earned ₦151,000 and above. This indicates that most respondents fall within the low- to middle-income categories. The implication is that the cost of developing and maintaining gated neighbourhoods may pose financial challenges for residents, affecting sustainability and participation.

With regards to source of income of the respondents, Table 4 shows that 150 respondents (39.4%) depended on monthly salary payments, followed by assistance from family and friends with 60 respondents (15.7%). Online business accounted for 45 respondents (11.8%), while pension allowances, social welfare, old debt recovery, and other sources accounted for 35 respondents (9.2%), 30 respondents (7.9%), 20 respondents (5.2%), and 41 respondents (10.8%) respectively. This diversity of income sources suggests varying levels of financial stability among respondents. The implication for the study is that income stability may influence residents' capacity to contribute to communal security arrangements in gated neighbourhoods.

Research Objective One: To examine the prevalence of crime in Dekina Local Government Area.

TABLE 5: PREVALENCE OF CRIME IN DEKINA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA (N = 381)

ITEM	SA	A	N	D	SD
Crime is a common occurrence in my neighbourhood	145 (38.1%)	120 (31.5%)	40 (10.5%)	50 (13.1%)	26 (6.8%)
Cases of theft, burglary or armed robbery have increased	160 (42.0%)	110 (28.9%)	35 (9.2%)	48 (12.6%)	28 (7.3%)
Residents feel unsafe due to frequent crime	150 (39.4%)	115 (30.2%)	45 (11.8%)	45 (11.8%)	26 (6.8%)
Authorities are unable to effectively reduce crime	140 (36.7%)	125 (32.8%)	38 (10.0%)	52 (13.6%)	26 (6.8%)
Most crimes in my community go unreported	155 (40.7%)	105 (27.6%)	42 (11.0%)	55 (14.4%)	24 (6.3%)

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

Analysis of respondents' perception of crime prevalence on Table 5 shows that crime is widely perceived as a common occurrence in Dekina Local Government Area. A total of 145 respondents (38.1%) strongly agreed, and 120 respondents (31.5%) agreed that crime is common in their neighbourhoods, giving a combined agreement of 265 respondents (69.6%). Only 76 respondents (19.9%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 40 respondents (10.5%) remained neutral. This indicates a strong perception of frequent criminal activities across communities in the study area. The implication is that crime constitutes a real and persistent concern for residents, thereby justifying the growing interest in alternative crime prevention measures such as gated neighbourhoods.

Regarding the increase in theft, kidnapping, burglary, and armed robbery, 160 respondents (42.0%) strongly agreed and 110 respondents (28.9%) agreed that such crimes have increased in recent years. This represents 270 respondents (70.9%) affirming a rise in property-related crimes. In contrast, 76 respondents (19.9%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 35 respondents (9.2%) were neutral. This pattern suggests that residents perceive a worsening

crime situation over time. The implication is that fear of escalating crime may be a driving force behind the demand for gated residential developments in Dekina Local Government Area.

Perception of safety among residents reveals that 150 respondents (39.4%) strongly agreed and 115 respondents (30.2%) agreed that people feel unsafe due to frequent criminal activities, accounting for 265 respondents (69.6%). Those who disagreed or strongly disagreed accounted for 71 respondents (18.6%), while 45 respondents (11.8%) expressed neutrality. This indicates that feelings of insecurity are widespread. The implication is that residents' daily experiences of fear and vulnerability may influence residential choice and acceptance of restricted-access neighbourhoods.

On the effectiveness of local authorities in reducing crime, 140 respondents (36.7%) strongly agreed and 125 respondents (32.8%) agreed that authorities are unable to effectively reduce crime, totaling 265 respondents (69.5%). Only 78 respondents (20.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 38 respondents (10.0%) were neutral. This reflects a lack of confidence in formal crime control

mechanisms. The implication is that residents may increasingly rely on private or community-based security arrangements, including gated neighbourhoods, as substitutes for perceived institutional failure.

Concerning crime reporting, 155 respondents (40.7%) strongly agreed and 105 respondents (27.6%) agreed that most crimes in their communities go unreported, representing 260 respondents (68.3%). Those who disagreed or strongly disagreed were 79 respondents (20.7%), while 42 respondents (11.0%) were neutral. This suggests significant underreporting of crime, possibly due to fear, distrust in authorities, or perceived inefficiency. The implication is that official crime statistics may underestimate the true crime situation, reinforcing residents' preference for self-protective measures such as gated neighbourhoods.

Responses from the In-depth Interviews section in support of the above findings had the following, as a participant said that:

“From what we see during patrols, burglary and theft are the most common crimes here. Motorcycles are stolen frequently, especially in student-dominated areas like Anyigba. Phone snatching is also increasing. In recent years, we have started noticing cult-related violence among youths. Compared to some years back, crime has become more organized and sometimes more daring.”
(IDI/1/ Male Vigilante member /39yrs Anyigba).

Another participant said:

TABLE 6: TYPES AND PATTERNS OF GATED NEIGHBOURHOODS IN DEKINA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA (N = 381)

ITEM	YES	NO	I CAN'T SAY
There are gated neighbourhoods with controlled access	295 (77.4%)	55 (14.4%)	31 (8.1%)
Some gated neighbourhoods exist mainly for security	310 (81.4%)	42 (11.0%)	29 (7.6%)
Some gated neighbourhoods are developed for prestige	270 (70.9%)	70 (18.4%)	41 (10.8%)
Security levels differ among gated neighbourhoods	300 (78.7%)	50 (13.1%)	31 (8.1%)
Gated neighbourhoods target different income groups	285 (74.8%)	60 (15.7%)	36 (9.4%)
Some gated neighbourhoods are located on the outskirts	260 (68.2%)	80 (21.0%)	41 (10.8%)
Some gated neighbourhoods provide more facilities	275 (72.2%)	65 (17.1%)	41 (10.8%)
Not all gated neighbourhoods are fully enclosed	255 (66.9%)	90 (23.6%)	36 (9.4%)
Gated neighbourhoods can be grouped by type and purpose	305 (80.1%)	45 (11.8%)	31 (8.1%)

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

Analysis of the existence of gated neighbourhoods on Table 6 shows that 295 respondents (77.4%) affirmed that there were residential areas with controlled access points such as gates or barriers in their communities, while 55 respondents (14.4%) disagreed and 31 respondents (8.1%) could not say. This indicates that gated neighbourhoods are a recognizable feature of residential development in Dekina Local Government Area. The implication is that gated housing is no longer a rare phenomenon but an emerging residential pattern in the area.

In terms of the primary purpose of gated neighbourhoods, 310 respondents (81.4%) agreed that some gated neighbourhoods exist mainly to improve residents' security, compared to 42 respondents (11.0%) who disagreed and 29 respondents (7.6%) who were uncertain. This strong affirmation suggests that security remains the dominant motivation behind gated neighbourhoods development. The implication for the study is that gated neighbourhoods are

“The economic situation is affecting young people seriously. Many are unemployed, and some turn to stealing to survive. Drug abuse is another serious issue. When young boys are under the influence of substances, they become aggressive and may attack people or break into houses.” (IDI/7/ Male Vigilante member /34yrs Anyigba).

A third participant said:

“Most burglaries happen very late at night, between 1am and 4am, when residents are asleep and movement is low. During festive seasons like Christmas, crime increases because people travel and leave houses empty. On market days, we record more cases of pickpocketing.” (IDI/9/ Male Vigilante member /38yrs Anyigba).

These responses suggest that crime in Dekina LGA is largely property-driven and influenced by socio-economic hardship. This corroborates the questionnaire findings where a high proportion of respondents agreed that crime is a common occurrence and that incidents of theft, kidnapping and burglary have increased in recent years. The qualitative accounts reinforce the quantitative pattern by providing concrete examples of the nature of crimes experienced at the community level.

Research Objective Two: To identify the types and patterns of gated neighbourhoods in Dekina Local Government Area.

largely perceived as crime prevention mechanisms rather than merely status symbols.

Perceptions of gated neighbourhoods as symbols of prestige reveal that 270 respondents (70.9%) agreed that some gated neighbourhoods are developed mainly for social status or prestige, while 70 respondents (18.4%) disagreed and 41 respondents (10.8%) could not say. This indicates that beyond security, social differentiation and status also play a role in the categorization of gated neighbourhoods. The implication is that gated neighbourhoods in Dekina serve both protective and social identity functions.

Regarding variation in security measures, 300 respondents (78.7%) agreed that gated neighbourhoods differ in the level of security provided, such as guards, fences, or surveillance systems. In contrast, 50 respondents (13.1%) disagreed and 31 respondents (8.1%) were uncertain. This finding suggests that gated neighbourhoods are not uniform in design or effectiveness. The implication is that not all

gated neighbourhoods provide the same level of crime prevention, which may influence residents' satisfaction and perceived safety.

Analysis of income-based targeting shows that 285 respondents (74.8%) agreed that some gated neighbourhoods are designed for middle-income residents while others target higher-income residents, whereas 60 respondents (15.7%) disagreed and 36 respondents (9.4%) could not say. This indicates socio-economic stratification in gated neighbourhood development. The implication is that access to gated living and its associated security benefits may be shaped by residents' income levels.

Location-based categorization reveals that 260 respondents (68.2%) agreed that some gated neighbourhoods are located on the outskirts of towns rather than in central areas, while 80 respondents (21.0%) disagreed and 41 respondents (10.8%) were uncertain. This suggests that gated neighbourhoods are expanding into peripheral areas where land is more available. The implication is that urban expansion and land use patterns contribute to the spread of gated neighbourhoods in Dekina.

Regarding facilities and services, 275 respondents (72.2%) agreed that some gated neighbourhoods provide more facilities and services than others, compared to 65 respondents (17.1%) who disagreed and 41 respondents (10.8%) who could not say. This indicates disparities in service provision among gated estates. The implication is that differences in amenities may affect residents' perception of safety and quality of life within gated neighbourhoods.

On enclosure, 255 respondents (66.9%) agreed that not all gated neighbourhoods are fully enclosed with walls or fences, while 90 respondents (23.6%) disagreed and 36 respondents (9.4%) were uncertain. This suggests varying degrees of physical restriction. The implication is that partial gating may limit the crime prevention effectiveness of some gated neighbourhoods.

Finally, 305 respondents (80.1%) agreed that gated neighbourhoods in the area can be grouped into different types based on purpose and design, while 45 respondents (11.8%) disagreed and 31 respondents (8.1%) could not say. This confirms residents' awareness of categorization among gated neighbourhoods. The implication is that

typological differences should be considered when assessing the effectiveness of gated neighbourhoods in crime prevention.

In support of the above findings, a participant of In-depth Interviews unveiled the following as he said thus:

“There are different kinds of gated neighbourhoods here. Some estates have full fencing, one main gate, private security men, and sometimes CCTV cameras. Others just have a community gate that they close at night but open during the day. Wealthy individuals also fence their compounds and employ guards personally.” (IDI/9/ Male Vigilante member /38yrs Anyigba).

On operational differences, another explained:

“In non-gated areas, we patrol regularly because there is free access. But in gated estates, private security guards are usually stationed there. They only call us when there is serious trouble. So our involvement is more reactive than proactive in those places” (IDI/8/ Male Vigilante member /29yrs Abocho).

Regarding effectiveness, a participant said;

“Where the estate has trained guards and proper monitoring, crime is lower. But in places where the gate is just symbolic and nobody monitors visitors properly, criminals can still enter.” (IDI/13/ Male Vigilante member /48yrs Abocho).

The responses revealed that gated neighbourhoods in Dekina are diverse and stratified by socio-economic capacity. Fully secured estates appear more structured, while semi-gated communities rely on informal arrangements. Effectiveness is influenced not just by physical barriers but by professionalism, monitoring systems, and cooperation between security actors. This aligns with the questionnaire findings where most respondents agreed that gated neighbourhoods in Dekina can be grouped into different types based on purpose and design.

Research Objective Three: To assess the role of gated neighbourhoods in Dekina Local Government Area.

TABLE 7: ROLES OF GATED NEIGHBOURHOOD IN DEKINA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA (N = 381)

ITEM	YES	NO	I CAN'T SAY
Experienced crime while living in a gated community	95 (24.9%)	240 (63.0%)	46 (12.1%)
Crime has reduced since neighbourhood became gated	290 (76.1%)	55 (14.4%)	36 (9.4%)
Gated areas are safer than ungated communities	305 (80.1%)	45 (11.8%)	31 (8.1%)
Gated neighbourhoods improved quality of life	285 (74.8%)	60 (15.7%)	36 (9.4%)
Gated living discourages loitering and suspicious activity	300 (78.7%)	48 (12.6%)	33 (8.7%)
Gated areas are better maintained	295 (77.4%)	50 (13.1%)	36 (9.4%)
Residents of gated communities are more security conscious	310 (81.4%)	40 (10.5%)	31 (8.1%)

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2026

The data on residents' experiences and assessments of gated neighbourhoods on Table 7 reveals a generally positive evaluation of the role such residential arrangements play in addressing crime and improving living conditions in Dekina Local Government Area. A substantial proportion of respondents, 249 individuals representing 65.4 percent, indicated that they had not experienced crime while living in a gated community, compared to 96 respondents (25.2 percent) who reported having experienced crime. This suggests that

while gated neighbourhoods do not completely eliminate crime, they are perceived to offer a relatively safer residential environment. The implication is that gated neighbourhoods may function as partial deterrents rather than absolute safeguards against criminal activity.

In assessing whether crime has reduced since neighbourhoods became gated, a clear majority of respondents, and 271 (71.1 percent), answered in the affirmative, while only 63 respondents (16.5 percent) disagreed. This strong positive perception

underscores the belief that access control mechanisms, such as gates and security checks, contribute to reducing criminal incidents. For the study, this implies that gating is widely perceived as an effective local crime management strategy in Dekina Local Government Area.

The perception of safety is further reinforced by the finding that 288 respondents (75.6 percent) agreed that gated areas are safer than ungated communities, compared to 57 respondents (15.0 percent) who disagreed. This reflects a dominant narrative among residents that physical barriers and controlled entry enhance personal and collective security. The implication here is that safety considerations are central to the continued acceptance and expansion of gated neighbourhoods in the area.

With regard to quality of life, 264 respondents (69.3 percent) believed that gated neighbourhoods have improved residents' living conditions, while 71 respondents (18.6 percent) held contrary views. This suggests that beyond crime reduction, gated neighbourhoods are associated with improved environmental orderliness and residential satisfaction. The implication is that gated developments may contribute to broader urban well-being rather than serving purely security-oriented purposes.

Similarly, 279 respondents (73.2 percent) agreed that living in a gated community discourages loitering and suspicious activities, compared to 58 respondents (15.2 percent) who disagreed. This indicates that gated neighbourhoods are perceived as spaces where informal surveillance and access regulation reduce opportunities for deviant behaviour. The implication for the study is that gating may reshape social behaviour and public space usage within communities.

On maintenance and security awareness, 292 respondents (76.6 percent) believed gated areas are better maintained than ungated ones, while 54 respondents (14.2 percent) disagreed. In addition, 301 respondents (79.0 percent) perceived residents of gated neighbourhoods as more security-conscious. These findings imply that gated neighbourhoods encourage a culture of collective responsibility and vigilance, reinforcing their perceived role in crime prevention.

The interview session on this study objective availed the following, as an interviewee said that:

“About ten years ago, it was rare to see estates with gates. But now, almost every new building project includes fencing and sometimes a security post. Developers now advertise security as part of their selling point.” (IDI/10/ Male Vigilante member / 51yrs Okura).

Another vigilante remarked:

“People are afraid because of rising crime. Families want privacy and protection for their children. Some also move there because they feel it gives them higher status.” (IDI/9/ Male Vigilante member /38yrs Anyigba).

On geographical spread, a vigilante noted that:

“Gated communities are more common in urbanized areas like Anyigba. In rural communities within Dekina, they are still few.” (IDI/13/ Male Vigilante member/48yrs Abocho).

These detailed remarks indicate that gated neighbourhoods are expanding due to perceived insecurity and the commercialization of safety. Fear of crime and the search for social prestige are strong motivating factors. The spread is uneven, with urban areas adopting gating more rapidly than rural communities. This aligns with the

questionnaire findings where a majority acknowledged the presence of gated neighbourhoods in their communities.

4.1 Analysis of the Tested Research Hypotheses

HYPOTHESIS ONE: PREVALENCE OF CRIME AND THE ROLE OF GATED NEIGHBOURHOODS

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the prevalence of crime and the role of gated neighbourhoods in Dekina Local Government Area.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between the prevalence of crime and the role of gated neighbourhoods in Dekina Local Government Area.

Statistical technique: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), computed on the composite scale scores for the two constructs ($\alpha = .05$, two-tailed).

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Prevalence of Crime	381	3.795	0.796
Role of Gated Neighbourhoods	381	3.700	0.885

Table 9: Pearson Correlation Between Prevalence of Crime and Role of Gated Neighbourhoods

	Pearson r	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Prevalence of Crime ↔ Role of Gated Neighbourhoods	-.391	.000	381

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). df = 379.

Decision Rule: Reject H₀ if p (Sig. 2-tailed) < .05; otherwise fail to reject H₀.

Result and Interpretation: The Pearson Product Moment Correlation produced $r(379) = -.391$, $p = .000$. Because $p < .05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. The negative sign indicates an inverse relationship: as the perceived prevalence of crime increases, the perceived role of gated neighbourhoods decreases (and vice versa). Using Cohen's (1988) benchmarks (.10 = weak, .30 = moderate, .50 = strong), $r = -.391$ represents a moderate, statistically significant negative relationship between the two variables.

Statistical Decision: Reject the null hypothesis (H₀). There is a significant relationship between the prevalence of crime and the role of gated neighbourhoods in Dekina Local Government Area.

Conclusion: The prevalence of crime and the role of gated neighbourhoods in Dekina LGA are significantly and inversely related i.e residents who perceive crime as more prevalent tend to rate the protective role of gated neighbourhoods lower, while residents in areas where gated neighbourhoods are seen as playing a strong role tend to report lower perceived crime prevalence.

Implication: This finding supports Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) reasoning where gated neighbourhoods are functioning effectively (access control, surveillance, guarding), residents perceive less crime. It implies that strengthening the operational role of gated neighbourhoods (functional gates, active patrols, resident vetting) could be an effective, targeted crime-reduction strategy for the LGA, and that areas with high crime prevalence should be prioritised for gating interventions or for auditing why existing gated schemes are underperforming.

HYPOTHESIS TWO: PERCEPTION OF GATED NEIGHBOURHOODS BY GENDER

H₀: There is no significant difference between the perception of gated neighbourhoods among male and female residents of Dekina Local Government Area.

H₁: There is a significant difference between the perception of gated neighbourhoods among male and female residents of Dekina Local Government Area.

Statistical technique: Independent-samples t-test, comparing mean composite Perception scores of male and female residents ($\alpha = .05$, two-tailed). Levene's Test was first used to check the assumption of homogeneity of variance.

Table 10: Group Statistics

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Male	210	3.743	0.845	0.055
Female	171	3.906	0.852	0.071

Table 11: Independent Samples Test

	Levene's F	Levene's Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.
Perception (equal variances assumed)	0.016	0.899	-1.816	379	0.070	-0.162	0.089

95% Confidence Interval of the Difference: Lower = -0.338, Upper = 0.013.

Decision Rule: if Sig. > .05, variances are equal and the "equal variances assumed" row is read. Then reject H₀ if p (Sig. 2-tailed) < .05; otherwise fail to reject H₀.

Result and Interpretation: Levene's Test was not significant, $F = 0.016$, $p = .899$, so the assumption of homogeneity of variance was satisfied and the "equal variances assumed" result was interpreted. The independent-samples t-test produced $t(379) = -1.816$, $p = .070$. Because $p > .05$, the difference between male ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 0.85$) and female ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.85$) perception scores is not statistically significant, although female residents show a slightly more positive mean perception, and the 95% confidence interval for the mean difference (-0.338 to 0.013) straddles zero, confirming the difference is not statistically reliable.

Statistical Decision: Fail to reject the null hypothesis (H₀). There is no statistically significant difference between the perception of gated neighbourhoods among male and female residents of Dekina Local Government Area.

Conclusion: Gender does not significantly influence how residents of Dekina LGA perceive gated neighbourhoods; both male and female residents hold broadly similar views on the value of gated neighbourhoods, with only a small, non-significant tendency for female residents to rate them slightly more favourably.

Implication: Because perception does not differ meaningfully by gender, awareness, communication, and community-policing initiatives around gated neighbourhoods can be designed as unified, gender-neutral programmes rather than being tailored separately to men and women. Resources need not be duplicated to address a gender gap in perception, since none was found.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The study focused on gated neighbourhoods and crime prevention as perceived by residents of Dekina Local Government Area

The findings on the prevalence of crime in Dekina Local Government Area reveal that residents widely perceive crime as frequent and persistent, particularly property-related offences such as burglary, theft, and robbery, with heightened concern during nighttime and festive periods. This outcome aligns closely with the observations of Uloko et al. (2024) and Ata-Agboni et al. (2024), who documented widespread exposure to crime and insecurity across Dekina LGA, including kidnapping, communal violence, and property loss. The strong perception of crime prevalence among respondents supports the argument by Soluade et al. (2024) that weak institutional security and police corruption exacerbate

insecurity in semi-urban and rural communities. The statistical rejection of Hypothesis One further confirms a significant relationship between crime prevalence and the perceived role of gated neighbourhoods, indicating that rising crime serves as a key driver for residents' reliance on gated environments as alternative security arrangements.

Findings related to the types and categories of gated neighbourhoods in Dekina LGA indicate that most gated neighbourhoods are modest, security-oriented residential enclaves rather than prestige or luxury estates. These neighbourhoods primarily rely on physical barriers, community-hired security guards, and informal access control mechanisms. This pattern agrees with the categorisation proposed by Adeniyi et al. (2025) and Makinde (2022), who identified security-driven gated communities as the dominant form in Nigerian semi-urban areas, as opposed to elite, lifestyle-oriented gated estates found in major cities. The findings also reflect Adewoyin et al. (2025), who observed that peripheral gated communities often emerge as practical responses to insecurity rather than symbols of social exclusivity. In Dekina, gating appears functional rather than symbolic, reinforcing the idea that gated neighbourhoods in less urbanised contexts respond more to immediate safety concerns than to prestige considerations.

Regarding the role of gated neighbourhoods in Dekina Local Government Area, the study found that residents largely perceive gated neighbourhoods as playing a significant role in crime deterrence through access restriction, improved surveillance, and collective vigilance. This perception corresponds with the empirical findings of Ajibola et al. (2021) and Nwanegbo et al. (2021), who demonstrated that gated neighbourhoods substantially reduce burglary, robbery, and opportunistic crimes by limiting offender access and increasing the risk of detection. The significant correlation found in Hypothesis One reinforces this position, showing that as crime prevalence increases, residents place greater importance on the security role of gated neighbourhoods. However, the findings also resonate with Landman and Schönteich (2022), who cautioned that while gated neighbourhoods reduce crime internally, they may not address wider community insecurity, suggesting that their role remains spatially limited.

Furthermore, the findings of this study are strongly supported by the Broken Window Theory, which underpins the research. The theory

posits that visible signs of disorder encourage criminal behaviour, while well-maintained environments discourage it. Gated neighbourhoods in Dekina function as controlled and orderly spaces, reducing visible disorder and signaling active guardianship. This aligns with the observed reduction in opportunistic crimes and heightened perceptions of safety among residents. However, the findings also reveal the limits of environmental control, as crime displacement and structural challenges persist beyond gated boundaries. Thus, while the Broken Window Theory helps explain the internal effectiveness of gated neighbourhoods, the study demonstrates that sustainable crime prevention in Dekina LGA requires broader community-wide and institutional interventions beyond gated residential enclaves.

5. Conclusions

Arising from the above findings, the study concluded as follows:

The study concluded that crime remains a notable social problem in Dekina Local Government Area, with property-related offences such as burglary and theft being the most prevalent. Crime occurrence is patterned by time and season, occurring more frequently at night and during periods of reduced economic activity. These realities have heightened residents' fear of victimisation and shaped their security choices. It was also concluded that gated neighbourhoods in Dekina Local Government Area exist in different forms, ranging from formally planned gated estates to semi-formal gated streets and individual gated compounds. These categories differ significantly in terms of security organisation, effectiveness, and management, indicating that gated neighbourhoods in the area are largely security-driven rather than prestige-oriented.

5.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made;

1. In response to the high prevalence of property-related crimes and their patterned occurrence across time and seasons, it is recommended that community-based crime prevention efforts be strengthened beyond gated neighbourhoods. Local authorities and community leaders should support regular night patrols, improve street lighting, and promote neighbourhood watch schemes in both gated and non-gated areas. Addressing youth unemployment through vocational training, agricultural support programmes, and small-scale enterprise development would also reduce the socio-economic pressures that drive opportunistic crimes.
2. Given the varied types and categories of gated neighbourhoods identified in the study, there is a need for minimum security and planning standards for gated developments within Dekina Local Government Area. Local planning authorities should regulate the establishment of gated neighbourhoods to ensure proper access control, emergency entry points, and functional security arrangements. This would help reduce the false sense of security associated with poorly managed or informal gated streets.
3. To enhance the role of gated neighbourhoods in crime prevention, stronger collaboration between private security personnel, vigilante groups, and formal law enforcement agencies is essential. Joint patrols, shared communication channels, and coordinated response protocols should be encouraged to ensure rapid intervention during security incidents. Such integration

would reduce operational gaps and strengthen collective security across neighbourhood boundaries.

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