

Perceived Personal Risk of Victimization as Predictors of Place Attachment in Festac Estate, Lagos, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Scholars have observed that residents who perceive their neighbourhoods as unsafe may eventually become distant, reducing their sense of attachment, community participation, and pride in their surroundings. This study examines the influence of perceived personal risk of victimization on place attachment in an urban residential setting. The study uses a quantitative survey method to explore the relationship. The findings indicate that the most rated element of place attachment is place identity in both types of housing. There is also no significant difference in perceived personal risk of victimization and place attachment in both single and multiple-family house types. The findings also indicated that perceived personal risk of victimization is a significant predictor of place attachment in single-family neighbourhoods but not in multiple-family neighbourhoods. Nonetheless, perceived personal risk of victimization is a significant predictor of place attachment in the entire study area.

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Keywords: Place Attachment, Victimization, Perceived Personal Risk, Residential.

1. Introduction

Place attachment is the emotional and cognitive connection people develop toward specific places, deeply shaping their identity, sense of belonging, and overall quality of life. Perceived personal risk can erode positive feelings toward a place, leading to decreased satisfaction, weakened bonds, and even detachment [1]. However, in some cases, high levels of perceived risk can paradoxically reinforce attachment for those who interpret risk as a challenge to be endured or overcome. The intricate relationship between risk and attachment emphasizes how crucial it is to comprehend locals' subjective perceptions of their surroundings and the psychological mechanisms influencing their ties to the area [2].

Perceived personal risk is defined as the subjective interpretation of threats that may cause harm or discomfort. This perception of

risk frequently results from a confluence of experiences, media portrayals, and community interactions, and can vary widely depending on demographic factors, social influences, and physical conditions of the environment [3]. In urban environments with high crime rates, environmental degradation, or decaying infrastructure, perceived personal risk is often amplified, affecting how residents emotionally relate to their surroundings [4]. High perceived risk can induce feelings of insecurity, distrust, and psychological stress, which may undermine positive associations with place [5]. Conversely, certain residents may exhibit resilience, forming or maintaining place attachment even in risky environments [6].

Risk perception is a multifaceted, dynamic process that provides a foundation for creating viable environments where people feel secure and empowered, thereby fostering a stronger

sense of attachment and belonging in their neighborhoods. Perception of personal risk is a person's subjective evaluation of possible danger or injury in their surroundings [7], by various psychological, social, and environmental factors that influence how people interpret and respond to their surroundings. Factors such as previous experiences, cultural norms, media reports, and neighborhood interactions play critical roles in shaping risk perception [8].

Communities with strong social cohesion may diffuse perceptions of risk by promoting feelings of security and shared responsibility, while communities with low cohesion may increase residents' sense of vulnerability [9]. The physical environment and urban landscape heavily influence risk perception [10]. This spatial context shapes how residents interpret personal safety, influencing both individual and collective perceptions [11].

Media coverage, particularly of crime and environmental hazards [12]. Cultivation theory posits that viewers' views of reality are shaped by repeated exposure to specific media messages, causing them to overestimate risk. However, psychological theories suggest that risk perception is a cognitive process filtered through personal biases and emotional states [13].

Emotional states, such as anxiety or fear, further amplify these perceptions, creating a feedback loop that reinforces the perceived threat level [14].

Victimization is the harm individuals or groups suffer from crime, abuse, or aggression, impacting their mental health, relationships, and sense of safety [15]. It can manifest as personal, property, institutional, or cyber victimization, each with distinct consequences like trauma, social isolation, or behavior changes [16].

Forms of Victimization

Victimization can take various forms, each affecting individuals in different ways. [17]: involves direct harm to individuals, such as physical assault, sexual violence, theft, or harassment [18]. When an individual's property is targeted, such as in cases of burglary, vandalism, or theft [19]). When individuals experience harm due to systemic issues or the actions of institutions, such as discrimination, neglect, or abuse within organizations or government bodies [20]. With the rise of the internet and social media, cyber victimization has become increasingly common. It includes online harassment, cyberbullying, identity theft, and other harmful activities [8].

Several theoretical frameworks have been developed to explain the factors that increase the likelihood of victimization [21]. These include: Implies that the actions and conduct individuals engage in may expose them to a greater risk of victimization [1].

When three factors converge: a suitable target, a motivated offender, and the lack of a capable protector [22]. That individuals may become more susceptible to victimization or engage in harmful behaviors themselves based on their learned experiences from their environment. [23].

Theories of Victimization

The elements that raise the risk of victimization have been explained by a number of theoretical frameworks. These include [24]:

- **Lifestyle-Exposure Theory:** Suggests that the activities and behaviors individuals engage in may expose them to greater risk of victimization. For example, frequenting high-crime areas or participating in certain activities may increase one's vulnerability to becoming a victim [25].
- **Routine Activities Theory:** Proposes that victimization occurs when three factors

converge: a motivated offender, an appropriate target and the lack of a competent guardian (such as security or a protective individual). This theory emphasizes the role of opportunity and situational factors [11].

Neighbourhood Types

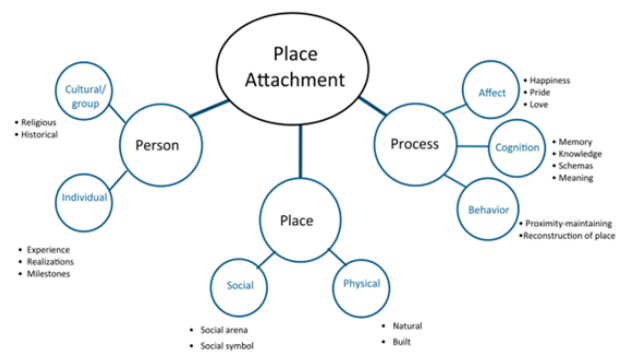
House types primarily fall into two categories: single-family and multi-family homes, each offering distinct characteristics and catering to different needs and lifestyles [7].

1. These are standalone structures designed for one household, typically surrounded by private yards. They offer greater privacy, space, and independence, making them ideal for families or individuals seeking more personal space [26].
2. The other category includes apartment buildings, condos, where multiple units are within one structure or complex. Multi-family homes offer shared amenities, reduced maintenance responsibilities. However, they offer less privacy and may have rules set by a homeowners' or tenants' association [27].

The operational measurement of perceived personal risk of victimization involves assessing an individual's subjective sense of vulnerability to crime or harm within their environment. This perception is typically evaluated using surveys or questionnaires that ask individuals about their fear of specific crimes, likelihood of victimization, and feelings of safety in various settings [24].

Place attachment is a complex and multifaceted emotional bond that shapes individuals' perceptions of and interactions with the spaces they inhabit. This connection influences not only personal well-being but also social cohesion, community dynamics, and environmental sustainability [28]. Understanding the elements and factors that contribute to place attachment can help policymakers, urban planners, and designers

create environments that nurture positive relationships between people and places, leading to healthier, more resilient communities. Place attachment refers to the emotional bond or connection individuals develop with specific locations or environments. Poli & Adianto, [29] citing Kim et al 2015 also stated that neighbourhood attachment among others can enhance housing satisfaction and proximity to public amenities [30]. This attachment is shaped by personal experiences, memories, social interactions, and the physical characteristics of the place. It can enhance a person's sense of identity, belonging, and security, influencing their attitudes and behaviors toward that place. Place attachment is often observed in residential settings, where people may feel a strong attachment to their homes or neighborhoods, leading to a greater sense of well-being and attachment to the community. This emotional connection can also affect how individuals respond to changes or disruptions in their environment [31].



Source: [31]

Figure 1: The Tripartite Model of Place Attachment

The conceptual elements of place attachment such as emotional connection, place identity, place dependence, social bonds, and resilience offer a comprehensive understanding of how individuals form and maintain attachments to places [13].

The relationship between perceived personal risk of victimization and place attachment is a critical aspect of understanding how individuals perceive and engage with their environment, especially in urban settings. Both concepts influence people's experiences and behaviors in places, but they often have contrasting effects on individuals' emotional connections to their surroundings [32]. Perceived personal risk of victimization refers to an individual's subjective assessment of the likelihood of experiencing crime or harm within a specific environment. This perception is often influenced by a combination of personal experiences, community reputation, media coverage, and the physical environment of a place. The higher the perceived risk of victimization, the greater the sense of vulnerability and fear an individual may feel when engaging with a space [21].

Individuals who perceive a high personal risk of victimization are more likely to avoid certain places or limit their time spent in them. This avoidance can lead to social withdrawal, reduced community involvement, and diminished sense of belonging [33].

A heightened sense of risk may cause anxiety, stress, and hypervigilance, affecting an individual's overall well-being. Over time, this fear can create psychological barriers to forming meaningful attachments to a place, as individuals may associate it with danger and insecurity [21].

The relationship between perceived personal risk of victimization and place attachment is complex and dynamic. While a heightened sense of risk can erode place attachment by fostering fear and disengagement, strong place attachment can foster resilience and reduce the perception of risk by encouraging social solidarity and proactive efforts to improve safety [17] promote positive social connections, emotional well-being, and a sense of security within communities [24].

A person who feels at risk of being a crime victim in their neighborhood might distance themselves from the community and disengage from activities that foster place attachment. Over time, the perceived danger can erode trust and social bonds, weakening individuals' ties to the place [34].

People who are emotionally connected to their neighborhoods or communities may feel more empowered to address safety concerns, report crimes, and work together to create a safer environment [19]. Their attachment to the place can foster a sense of collective responsibility, resilience, and solidarity, which may reduce the perceived personal risk of victimization [14]

Cognitive Dissonance: People who are strongly attached to a place but perceive high risks may experience internal conflict or emotional discomfort [35].

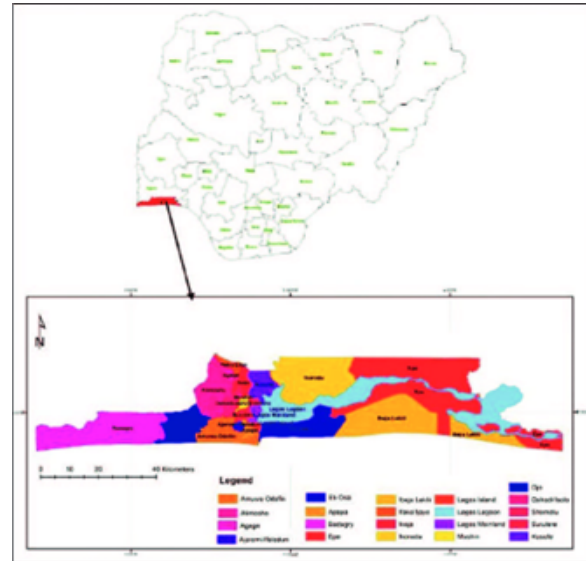
The presence of strong social networks, community policing, or neighborhood revitalization efforts can reduce the perceived risk of victimization and, at the same time, strengthen place attachment [25].

The Study Area: FESTAC

FESTAC Housing Estate, established in 1977 for the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC), it was envisioned as a planned residential community offering high standards of urban living [36]. However, FESTAC has faced numerous challenges, including a decline in infrastructure, environmental issues, and increasing crime rates. Consequently, perceptions of safety among residents have been affected, potentially influencing their sense of attachment to the estate. The town is originally conceived as a model residential and commercial estate, but one that now faces various forms of physical and social degradation [37].

FESTAC Town (Festival Town) is located in the Amuwo-Odofin Local Government Area of Lagos, Nigeria. It is situated along the Lagos-Badagry Expressway, about 20 kilometers southwest of the central business district of Lagos Island. It remains a prominent residential and commercial area in Lagos. The location is situated at Latitude: 6.4950° N and Longitude: 3.3280° E, bordered by neighborhoods such as Mile 2, Alaba International Market, and Ojo. It is well-connected by road to other parts of Lagos and beyond, making it an important location within the city [36]—Figure 1.

The study area was delineated into nine (9) identified neighbourhoods. Four (4) of them—A, C, F, and I—are made up of Single Family Units, while the remaining five (5) comprise Multiple Family Units. Figure 2. These are further illustrated by photographs in Plates 1-8.



Source: Google maps (2024)
Figure 2: Location of Festac



Source: Google maps (2024)
Figure 3: Location of Festac



Plate 1: Single Multiple Neighbourhood



Plate 4: Single Family Neighbourhood



Plate 2: Single Family Neighbourhood



Plate 5: Multiple Family Neighbourhood



Plate 3: Single Family Neighbourhood



Plate 6: Multiple Family Neighbourhood



Plate 7: Multiple Family Neighbourhood



Plate 8: Multiple Family Neighbourhood

3. Materials and Methods

The study utilized the survey method. Systematic sampling strategies were employed to administer the questionnaire in the study, resulting in a 10% sample of 1132 respondents. Secondary data was collected from the Federal Housing Authority (FHA). The study collected data on elements of place attachment, namely place dependence, place identity, place affect, and place social bonding. As for perceived risk of victimization, it was operationalized by four questions, namely: “How often are you worried about being attacked by a stranger in the street?” “How often are you worried about having your property vandalized or defaced?” “How often are you worried about having someone break into your home while inhabitants are there?” and “How often are you concerned about having someone break into your home while inhabitants are away?” The responses were on a 10-point Likert scale, with 1 being the lowest rating and 10 being the highest rating. The results are analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study

aimed to achieve the following: making comparisons between elements of place attachment across two main housing types; investigating the perceived personal risk of victimization across the constituent neighbourhoods and the house types; and ultimately investigating the influence of perceived personal risk of victimization on place attachment in the study area.

4. Results and Discussions

Socio-Demographic Variables

The mean age of the study participants was 50 ± 13 years, although the majority, 43.37% and 30.30%, fell within the age categories 31-50 years and 51-70 years, respectively. The average household size was 3.63 ± 3.238 , as more than three-quarters (82.33%) of the study participants had between 0 and 5 members of the household. Many of the study participants, 83.57%, were male, while the proportion of female respondents was 16.43%. Most respondents (41%) have resided in the study area for more than 15 years, 25.8% had resided for between 9 and 15 years, while 18.7% and 14.5% had resided in the study area for between 5 and 8 years and 0 to 4 years, respectively. More than half of the study participants, 53.36% are homeowners, 43.46% are home renters, while 3.18% belong to the other tenancy groups. The study also found that most participants, 47.79%, held either a BSc or an HND degree, while 65.72% identified as Christians.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics (Festac Town)

| | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Age | | |
| <= 30 | 37 | 3.27 |
| 31-50 | 491 | 43.37 |
| 51-70 | 343 | 30.30 |
| >70 | 261 | 23.06 |
| Gender | | |
| Male | 946 | 83.57 |
| Female | 186 | 16.43 |
| Marital Status: | | |
| Single | 302 | 26.68 |
| Married | 763 | 67.40 |
| Divorced | 56 | 4.95 |
| Separated | 7 | 0.62 |
| Others | 4 | 0.35 |
| Tenancy Status | | |
| Homeowner | 604 | 53.36 |
| Renter | 492 | 43.46 |
| Others | 36 | 3.18 |
| Education | | |
| Less than WAEC | 50 | 4.42 |
| WASC/ O Level | 242 | 21.38 |
| OND/Tech Schl | 171 | 15.11 |
| HND/BSc. | 541 | 47.79 |
| M.Sc/Ph.D | 128 | 11.31 |
| Religion | | |
| Christianity | 744 | 65.72 |
| Islam | 341 | 30.12 |
| Traditional Religion | 24 | 2.12 |
| Atheist | 7 | 0.62 |
| Others | 16 | 1.41 |
| Household_size | | |
| <6 | 932 | 82.33 |
| 6-10 | 153 | 13.52 |
| 11-15 | 44 | 3.89 |
| >15 | 3 | 0.27 |
| Length_of_Residence | | |
| 0-4yrs | 164 | 14.49 |
| 5-8yrs | 212 | 18.73 |
| 9-15yrs | 292 | 25.80 |
| above 15 yrs | 464 | 40.99 |

Place Attachment

Place identity, the place affect, and the place social bonding. The Place identity was the most highly rated place attachment indicator,

with a mean index score of 3.75, while place social bonding had the lowest mean index score. The place attachment rating was good

throughout the study area, with an average mean index score of 3.32.

Elements of place attachment across the two main housing unit types in Festac town (Table 3).

Table 2: Place Attachment by Neighbourhood Type

| | Neighbourhood | | | | | | | | | Total Mean |
|-----------|---------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------------|
| | A Mean | B Mean | C Mean | D Mean | E Mean | F Mean | G Mean | H Mean | I Mean | |
| PLDEP | 3.44 | 3.43 | 3.13 | 3.28 | 3.05 | 3.43 | 3.13 | 3.32 | 3.32 | 3.29 |
| PL_ID | 3.95 | 3.79 | 3.54 | 3.79 | 3.84 | 3.71 | 3.66 | 3.70 | 3.80 | 3.75 |
| PL_AF | 3.59 | 3.45 | 3.16 | 3.17 | 3.33 | 3.38 | 3.29 | 3.40 | 3.67 | 3.39 |
| PL_SB | 3.15 | 2.98 | 2.73 | 2.74 | 2.77 | 2.82 | 2.75 | 2.75 | 3.02 | 2.86 |
| PLA ATTCH | 3.53 | 3.41 | 3.14 | 3.25 | 3.25 | 3.34 | 3.21 | 3.29 | 3.45 | 3.32 |

Table 3: Place Attachment by Housing Units

| | Single Family Unit | Multiple Family Unit | Diff | p-value |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------|---------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| Place Dependence | 3.34 | 3.25 | -0.10 | 0.1364 |
| Place Identity | 3.75 | 3.74 | -0.01 | 0.8259 |
| Place Affect | 3.44 | 3.34 | -0.10 | 0.0775 |
| Place Social Bonding | 2.93 | 2.81 | -0.11 | 0.1091 |
| Place Attachment | 3.37 | 3.29 | -0.08 | 0.0985 |

Perceived Personal Risk by Neighbourhood Type

A non-significant difference was observed between the perceived personal risk of residents in single-family units and those in multiple-family units ($p > 0.05$), although the single-family units rated slightly higher (MIS = 5.99) in perceived personal risk compared to their counterparts residing in multiple-family units (MIS = 5.91).

Neighbourhood A (single-family) was best in terms of how residents perceived their risk, while Neighbourhood I had the worst rating (2.40).

Table 4: Perceived Personal Risk by the Neighbourhood Types

| | Neighbourhood | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | Total |
| | Mean | Mean | Mean | Mean | Mean | Mean | Mean | Mean | Mean | Mean |
| How often are you worried about Being attacked by a stranger in the street | 6.35 | 6.10 | 5.85 | 5.44 | 5.95 | 6.00 | 5.85 | 6.03 | 5.64 | 5.95 |
| How often are you worried about Having your property vandalised or defaced | 6.40 | 6.03 | 6.23 | 6.03 | 6.21 | 5.91 | 5.87 | 5.92 | 5.51 | 6.02 |
| How often are you worried about Having someone break into your home while inhabitants there | 6.26 | 5.99 | 6.29 | 6.18 | 6.15 | 6.25 | 5.76 | 6.07 | 5.74 | 6.06 |
| How often are you worried about Having someone break into your home while inhabitants away | 5.79 | 5.80 | 5.66 | 5.78 | 5.78 | 5.87 | 5.65 | 5.90 | 5.53 | 5.75 |
| Perceived Risk | 6.20 | 5.98 | 6.01 | 5.86 | 6.02 | 6.01 | 5.78 | 5.98 | 5.61 | 5.94 |

Table 5: Perceived Personal Risk by the Housing Units

| | Single Housing Units | | Multiple Housing Units | | Diff | pvalue |
|---|----------------------|------|------------------------|------|-----------|----------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| How often are you worried about Being attacked by a stranger in the street | 6.00 | 1.41 | 5.91 | 1.41 | -.0881225 | .2986482 |
| How often are you worried about Having your property vandalised or defaced | 6.05 | 1.31 | 5.99 | 1.34 | -.059718 | .4526101 |
| How often are you worried about Having someone break into your home while inhabitants there | 6.17 | 1.35 | 5.98 | 1.45 | -.1910442 | .0236455 |
| How often are you worried about Having someone break into your home while inhabitants away | 5.74 | 1.61 | 5.76 | 1.54 | .0267276 | .777147 |
| Perceived Risk | 5.99 | 1.06 | 5.91 | 1.05 | -0.0800 | 0.2193 |

Multiple Linear Regression Model of the Influence perceived personal risk on place attachment in Festac Town

Model 1 examines the influence of perceived personal risk on place attachment in single-family units of Festac Town, and Model 2 investigates the influence of perceived personal risk on place attachment in multiple-family units of Festac. In contrast, the third model examines the influence of perceived

personal risk on place attachment in Festac Town as a whole.

According to the table, the linear grouping of the predictor variables in Model 1 significantly predicted place attachment, $R^2 = 0.049$, $F(6, 487) = 6.25$, $p < .05$. This indicated that the model accounted for approximately 5% of the variance in place attachment. Being worried about attacks by strangers on the street and being worried about someone breaking into the

home while away were found to have significantly influenced place attachment. Although, in the second model, none of the predictor variables were found to be significantly associated with place attachment, but in the third model, that comprises the residents of the entire Festac town, the linear grouping of the predictor variables significantly predicted place attachment, R^2

$=0.0367$, $F(6, 487) = 10.73$, $p < .05$. This was an indication that the model accounted for about 4% of the variance in place attachment—being worried about someone breaking into the home while at home and being concerned about someone breaking into the home while away from the house was found to have a significant influence on place attachment (Table 4.6).

Table 6: Regression table of the Influence of Perceived Personal Risk on Place Attachment in Festac Town

| | Model 1(SHU) | | Model 2(MHU) | | Model 3(Festac Tiwn) | |
|--|---|----------|---|----------|---|----------|
| Perceived Personal Risk | Coeff | Stderror | Coeff | Stderror | Coeff | Stderror |
| Beign Attacked by strangers | -0.094 | 0.038** | 0.006 | 0.033 | 0.044 | 0.025 |
| Having your property Vandalised | -0.068 | 0.047 | -0.056 | 0.039 | -0.061 | 0.03 |
| Having someone break into your home | -0.068 | 0.041 | -0.055 | 0.036 | -0.055 | 0.027** |
| Having someone break into your home while away | -0.074 | 0.030** | -0.057 | 0.03 | -0.066 | 0.021** |
| Constant | 3.874 | 0.244 | 4.031 | 0.227 | 3.941 | 0.166 |
| | $F(4, 487) = 6.24$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.049$ | | $F(6, 485) = 5.74$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.035$ | | $F(6, 485) = 10.73$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.0367$ | |

*Significant at $p < 0.001$, **Significant at $p < 0.01$, ***Significant at $p < 0.05$, C.I-Confidence Interval

4. Conclusions

The issue for consideration in the study was first to investigate the level of place attachment and perceived personal risk of victimization in both the various house types and the entire study area, FESTAC.

The result indicated that, firstly, the most rated place attachment element is place identity. Secondly, there is no significant difference in place attachment scores by house type, although the overall score is good.

Thirdly, there is no significant difference in the perceived risk of victimization score between single-family and multiple-family neighbourhoods. Finally, the result indicated that perceived personal risk of victimization is an essential predictor of place attachment. This implies that the emotional connection that

residents have developed towards FESTAC is influenced by their subjective interpretation of threats to their lives and property. Therefore, efforts to mitigate these threats must be pursued by administrators, policymakers, and professionals in the built environment.

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