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## **ABSTRACT**

The objectives of this research are to demonstrate the process of applying perception of safety in an environment to actual crimes and to use the results to better implement safety improvements within the area. The focus of the research is the design on a college campus. University of Benin main campus was selected as a case study.

The survey was developed and tested to better understand how people perceive their surroundings and to incorporate the findings of perception of safety to improve design and planning decisions for the UNIBEN campus. The criteria for a safe design was developed from research gathered on crime prevention and the psychological reactions of users to design features. The aim of this thesis is to enlighten designers on the subject of crime prevention and the perception of safety in design. Further research on the UNIBEN campus that leads to actual improvements of public safety is encouraged for persons involved in campus planning and maintenance.

## **CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY**

Each year prospective and returning students flood university campuses all across Nigeria. From state universities to renowned private universities, students attend higher learning institutions to gain knowledge in various fields in hopes of a better future in the job market when he or she attains a degree. Institutions entice prospective students with glossy brochures that speak highly of the school's academic programs. One topic that might not be mentioned in the brochure is the safety record on campus. Yet, each university in the country has to consider the safety of the persons that inundate the campus by day and night. The college campus is not in an academic bubble that repels potential criminals. It is part of the greater community in which it lies, from large metropolitan areas to small rural communities. Cities across the nation are continually combating crime and so are universities. There is a growing concern among parents and students alike of the rising crime rates on college campuses. Whether students live on campus or off campus in the surrounding area, it is important that university administrators take a progressive role in keeping the campus safe. This article examines how the physical presence of a building/structure can influence the rate of crime and security on campus. It also argues a connection between environmental design and security through prevention of 'squatter settlement', 'prison walls' and empty or uncompleted buildings aiding 'fewer eyes on the street.' The process of designing security into architecture is known as "Crime Prevention through Environmental Design" (CPTED).

### **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Buildings designed years ago need to be reevaluated to include today's concern for public safety. Understanding the relationship between crime and architecture is especially important as it becomes increasingly clear that conventional methods are, at best, partially effective in the fight against crime. Over the past century, advances in architecture have far outpaces those in law. Rather than following long-standing precedent, architecture has often stressed innovation and has been subject to market forces that promote better and cheaper designs. This study seeks to provide an account of effective crime control that focuses more on architecture and less on conventional methods of law enforcement. Architectural improvements that control crime can be adopted and implemented locally with real effect.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions were formulated to guide this study:

What are the factors that influence how safe or unsafe an area is perceived to be?

How can the design of a structure improve security?

What are the main distinctive considerations that should be taken into account to create the right design?

### **1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF STUDY**

The main aim of this study is to demonstrate the process of applying perception of safety in a campus environment to prevent crimes and to use the results to better implement safety improvements within the campus. The objectives are as follows:

Examine how students react to certain spaces.

Examine design styles and patterns that can help improve security.

Examine factors that can improve the design of a building to satisfy the security needs.

### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

The purpose of the thesis is to enlighten professionals on how important perception is in how people move through and interact in an environment. By combining a well-planned, safe landscape along with understanding the human perception of a space, an architect can create a balanced environment that creates a positive effect on the human psyche. In addition, unlike a homeowner who may make safety improvements to their home, a student cannot. They must rely on campus officials to provide adequate safe guards to ensure safe passage while on campus. Students must rely on their gut feeling to keep them from harm's way. This study, to an extent, will concern itself with identifying and highlighting the effects, caused and means of perpetuating crime. Having studies these, suggestion on improving the design of a building or area to prevent the perpetuation of crime and improve security with little or no additional cost can be made. Hence, it is important to architects, interior designers, environmental designers and other professionals in the built environment to help in design, orientation, and placement of building components during their course of design and construction. To the student and fellow researchers, it reveals the impact of construction and design on occupants and also serves as addition to knowledge as well as basis for further research.

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