RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES ABANDONMENT

An Assessment of the Causes and Consequences of Abandoned Residential Properties in Benin City, Nigeria

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Abstract

Residential property abandonment poses challenges to housing utilization, property market performance and sustainable urban development. This study examined the determinants and socioeconomic consequences of residential property abandonment in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted, targeting 8,450 landlords, real estate agents and building contractors. A sample of 382 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane formula, and stratified and convenience sampling techniques were employed. Structured questionnaires yielded 344 valid responses, representing a 90.1% response rate. Data were analysed using frequencies, means and standard deviations, with a 2.50 decision benchmark. The findings revealed that residential property abandonment is prevalent in established estates and emerging layouts. Major determinants include land disputes, high construction costs, economic instability, inadequate building finance, inconsistent housing policies and inheritance disputes. Reported consequences include reduced housing availability, increased rental prices, uneven housing distribution, declining property values, environmental degradation, crime-related concerns, squatting and increased public management costs. The study recommends strengthening land administration and building regulation enforcement, improving access to housing finance, establishing effective dispute-resolution mechanisms, and promoting property rehabilitation and adaptive reuse through appropriate incentives and public awareness. The study provides location-specific evidence to inform property management and urban housing policies in Benin City.

Keywords: residential property abandonment; determinants; socioeconomic consequences; housing finance; property management; urban development; Benin City; Nigeria

1 Introduction

Human settlement patterns have long reflected and influenced socio-economic development within urban environments. The built environment, particularly residential properties, extends beyond the provision of shelter to encompass cultural, economic, and spatial dimensions of human development (Adeyemi and Aigbavboa, 2022). As cities continue to expand and transform, the functions, values, and uses of residential properties also evolve in response to changes in population dynamics, government policies, and urban planning frameworks. According to Omoboriowo (2023), the spatial distribution and condition of residential structures provide important insights into the socio-political and economic history of urban centres. In rapidly urbanizing societies, particularly across Africa, the provision, management, and sustainability of residential properties remain central to discussions on urban development, housing adequacy, and economic resilience. However, despite the increasing

demand for housing, many residential properties are abandoned, creating significant challenges for sustainable urban development.

The abandonment of residential properties has emerged as a major urban concern that reflects the complex interaction between socio-economic, institutional, and environmental factors. Residential property abandonment is not an isolated phenomenon but a visible manifestation of deeper structural challenges within the built environment (George et al., 2023). Properties that were once occupied and economically valuable may become abandoned due to changing urban development patterns, economic downturns, land ownership disputes, inadequate access to finance, inheritance conflicts, and weaknesses in urban governance. Oyedeji and Olorunisola (2024) observed that these patterns are often associated with broader demographic and socio-economic changes, including rural–urban migration, shifts in household composition, and changes in employment opportunities. Consequently, abandoned residential properties represent not only underutilised physical assets but also indicators of wider transformations affecting land use, housing demand, and urban growth.

Beyond their causes, abandoned residential properties generate far-reaching social, economic, and environmental consequences. As cities expand and redevelopment activities continue, some residential buildings become obsolete, neglected, or strategically abandoned, thereby contributing to urban decay (Babalola et al., 2022). Abidola et al. (2025) noted that abandoned residential properties diminish the aesthetic quality of neighbourhoods, increase security concerns, and negatively affect the social and cultural fabric of communities. Similarly et al. (2024) linked residential property abandonment to declining property values, reduced housing availability, increased pressure on existing housing stock, and additional financial burdens on government through increased expenditure on public security, sanitation, and environmental management. These effects not only reduce the quality of urban life but also hinder efforts toward sustainable housing and orderly urban development.

Benin City, one of Nigeria's oldest and most historically significant urban centres, has experienced rapid urban growth and physical expansion over the years. Despite this growth, the city continues to witness an increasing number of abandoned residential properties, many of which remain unfinished or unoccupied for prolonged periods. The persistence of these abandoned properties raises concerns regarding housing availability, neighbourhood development, environmental sustainability, and effective urban management. Given the socio-economic importance of residential housing and the adverse consequences associated with property abandonment, there is a need to assess the underlying causes and the resulting effects of abandoned residential properties in Benin City. Such an assessment will provide empirical evidence that can inform policy formulation, improve housing development strategies, and support sustainable urban planning within the city.

1.1 Statement of the problem

The increasing incidence of abandoned residential properties in Benin City, where numerous buildings remain uncompleted, vacant, or neglected despite rising housing demand, undermines efficient property utilization, reduces housing availability, and contributes to neighbourhood decline, as noted by Oyedeji and Olorunisola (2024), while reflecting a mismatch between housing supply and occupancy linked to broader socio-economic and institutional challenges (Omoboriowo, 2023), thereby necessitating an empirical assessment of their causes and effects in the study area.

1.2 Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to assess the causes and consequences of abandoned residential properties in Benin City.

The study sought to:

1. determine the prevalence of abandoned residential properties in Benin City;
2. identify the major causes of abandoned residential properties in Benin City;
3. determine the extent to which residential property abandonment affects housing availability in Benin City;
4. examine the effects of residential property abandonment in Benin City; and
5. proffer solutions to the challenges of residential property abandonment in Benin City.

1.3 Research questions

The following research questions which are in line with the objectives were answered:

1. What is the prevalence of abandoned residential properties in Benin City?
2. What are the major causes of abandoned residential properties in Benin City?
3. To what extent does residential property abandonment affect housing availability in Benin City?
4. What are the effects of residential property abandonment in Benin City?
5. What possible solutions can be adopted to address the challenges of residential property abandonment in Benin City?

1.4 Research hypotheses

H_0: There is no statistically significant relationship between residential property abandonment and housing availability in Benin City.

H_a: There is a statistically significant relationship between residential property abandonment and housing availability in Benin City.

1.5 Significance of the study

Residential property abandonment is a major urban development challenge that leads to underutilised housing, financial losses, environmental degradation, insecurity and declining property values in Nigerian cities.

Studies by Atamewan (2020), Obakin et al. (2024), and Yusuf and Oloukoi (2025) examined the causes and consequences of abandoned properties in other Nigerian locations. However, limited evidence exists on the determinants and socioeconomic consequences of residential property abandonment in Benin City, creating a need for this study.

The study will identify the major causes of abandonment, assess its implications for housing availability, and examine its socioeconomic effects. Its findings will guide property owners, investors, professionals and government authorities in developing appropriate strategies for property rehabilitation, effective management and sustainable urban development.

1.6 Scope of the study

This study focuses on the causes and consequences of abandoned residential properties in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. Geographically, it covers selected residential areas where abandoned properties can be identified and investigated. Contextually, abandoned residential properties refer to buildings that have remained incomplete, unoccupied, unused or neglected for a considerable period, with little or no evidence of active construction, maintenance or residential use.

The study examines factors contributing to abandonment, including financial constraints, inadequate funding, high construction and maintenance costs, land ownership and inheritance disputes, changes in property owners' economic circumstances, and planning and regulatory challenges. It also assesses the socioeconomic, physical, environmental and security consequences of abandonment, particularly its effects on property values, housing availability, neighbourhood aesthetics, environmental sanitation, public safety, security and the effective utilisation of residential land.

Analytically, the study identifies the major causes of residential property abandonment, assesses their contributions and examines their relationship with neighbourhood conditions in Benin City. It is limited to residential properties and excludes commercial and industrial properties, except where relevant for contextual purposes. The findings are intended to provide location-specific evidence for recommending measures to prevent abandonment, rehabilitate affected properties and improve property utilisation and sustainable urban development.

2 Literature review

2.1 Concept of residential property abandonment

Residential property abandonment occurs when buildings remain unoccupied, unused, incomplete or neglected for a prolonged period. It may result from economic, legal, social and institutional factors, including ownership issues, insecurity of tenure and reduced property value (Echendu, 2020; Obaje et al., 2023).

Changes in infrastructure, transportation, neighbourhood attractiveness, housing demand and socioeconomic conditions may also contribute to abandonment (Ayotamuno, 2020; Ochedi and Taki, 2021). For this study, residential property abandonment refers to buildings that remain unused, unoccupied, incomplete or neglected for a considerable period, with little or no maintenance or residential activity. This definition guides the investigation of its causes and consequences in Benin City.

2.2 Causes of residential property abandonment

Residential property abandonment is influenced by the interaction of financial, ownership-related, physical, demographic, and institutional factors. These factors may operate independently or reinforce one another, making abandonment a complex process that cannot be adequately explained by a single cause.

2.2.1 Financial constraints and economic conditions

Financial constraints are an important consideration in explaining why residential properties remain incomplete, deteriorate, or cease to be used. Rising construction and maintenance costs, inadequate access to finance, inflation, and declining expected rental returns can reduce property owners' capacity or willingness to maintain and rehabilitate their buildings. Sule et al. (2023) identify rising

building-material costs and reduced rental returns as factors that discourage property maintenance and re-leasing, while Bello et al. (2024) observe that abandonment may occur when rehabilitation costs exceed anticipated income.

These economic pressures may be particularly consequential where property owners lack sufficient resources to complete construction or undertake major repairs. As buildings deteriorate, their attractiveness to prospective occupants may decline, further reducing their income-generating potential. Financial difficulties can therefore initiate a cycle in which inadequate maintenance contributes to declining property utility, which subsequently increases the likelihood of prolonged vacancy or abandonment.

2.2.2 Inheritance and ownership disputes

Inheritance and ownership disputes can cause residential property abandonment by delaying occupation, redevelopment and management, especially when wills or ownership documents are unclear (Odum and Ezezue, 2020; Ihuah and Asa-Ue, 2025). Unresolved disputes also discourage maintenance and investment, leaving properties unused or deteriorating (Adeyemi, 2024; Ogunnusi et al., 2021).

2.2.3 Land tenure insecurity and institutional challenges

Land tenure complexities and weak property administration can contribute to residential property abandonment by creating ownership uncertainty and discouraging long-term investment (Ekemode, 2021; Egunleti et al., 2024). Limited planning authority capacity, weak regulation enforcement, political interference, and fragmented housing policies further hinder effective property management and the prevention of abandonment (Adagba et al., 2023; Samson and Olaolu, 2023).

2.2.4 Structural obsolescence and changing residential preferences

Building deterioration and changing residential preferences may contribute to property abandonment. Older buildings may lack modern facilities and comfort (Idowu, 2021; Henry et al., 2020), while urban sprawl and shifting housing demand may reduce their attractiveness (Olanrewaju and Amietsenwu, 2023; Onyejiaka et al., 2020). When rehabilitation becomes uneconomical, owners may leave properties vacant or abandoned.

2.3 Consequences of residential property abandonment

Residential property abandonment can produce consequences that extend beyond the affected buildings to neighbouring properties, residents, housing markets, and urban management systems. The severity of these consequences may depend on the duration of abandonment, the physical condition of the property, its location, and the effectiveness of neighbourhood management and regulatory oversight.

2.3.1 Environmental deterioration and neighbourhood aesthetics

Abandoned residential properties can cause environmental problems, including poor sanitation, waste accumulation, stagnant water, overgrown vegetation, pollution, and declining neighbourhood aesthetics (Echendu, 2020; Qurix and Doshu, 2020; Ibrahim et al., 2019). These conditions may attract rodents and reduce environmental quality and neighbourhood liveability, although the effects vary by location (Yusuf and Oloukoi, 2025).

2.3.2 Public safety and security

Abandoned residential buildings may create conditions that raise concerns about neighbourhood safety and security, particularly where structures are accessible, poorly maintained, or inadequately monitored. Echendu (2020) reports associations between abandoned residential properties, illegal occupation, and criminal activities. Ibrahim et al. (2019) also identify crime among the environmental consequences associated with abandoned buildings in Osogbo, while Yusuf and Oloukoi (2025) report perceived crime vulnerability among residents in neighbourhoods containing abandoned properties.

These findings highlight the potential security implications of property abandonment. However, the presence of an abandoned building should not automatically be interpreted as evidence that criminal activities occur there. The relationship requires contextual assessment of property conditions, neighbourhood experiences, and residents' perceptions.

2.3.3 Property values and investment decisions

Residential property abandonment may influence the attractiveness of surrounding neighbourhoods and the decisions of existing and prospective property investors. Akande et al. (2023) argue that vacant residential units may suppress the value of nearby properties because of their neglected appearance and lack of productive use. Awoyera et al. (2021) similarly suggest that visible property inactivity can discourage investment, potentially contributing to further deterioration and reduced neighbourhood attractiveness.

The implications may extend to property owners whose buildings remain occupied but are situated near abandoned structures. Where abandonment contributes to perceptions of environmental neglect or insecurity, prospective occupants and investors may become less willing to locate in affected areas. Nevertheless, the magnitude of any effect on property values requires empirical investigation, since values are also influenced by accessibility, infrastructure, location, housing quality, and wider market conditions.

2.3.4 Housing supply and urban development

Abandoned residential properties reduce effective housing supply by leaving potentially habitable buildings unavailable for occupation, contributing to housing shortages (Adakunle, 2025). Rehabilitation and productive reuse can help restore deteriorated properties (Obakin et al., 2024). Abandonment also complicates urban planning and infrastructure management, particularly when ownership and regulatory status are unclear, undermining efficient land use, neighbourhood development, and sustainable urban management (Iliyasu et al., 2023; Peter et al., 2024).

2.4 Empirical review

Empirical studies across Nigerian cities link residential property abandonment to financial constraints, ownership disputes, poor management, weak planning enforcement and environmental problems. Echendu (2020) in Port Harcourt identified pollution, crime and illegal occupation, while Samson and Olaolu (2023) in Lagos highlighted weak regulation and inconsistent housing policies. Adigun et al. (2019) in Ilorin reported spatial variations, while Ibrahim et al. (2019) in Osogbo identified inadequate funding, ownership disputes and poor management. Obakin et al. (2024) in Ibadan emphasised building deterioration and rehabilitation, whereas Yusuf and Oloukoi (2025) in Abeokuta identified spatial clustering and environmental hazards. Adakunle (2025) in Ondo Town linked abandoned buildings to housing deficits and waterlogging.

Overall, these studies associate abandonment with reduced housing availability, crime, pollution, declining neighbourhood quality and property deterioration. However, differences in land tenure, housing demand, infrastructure and institutional conditions create a need for location-specific research. This study therefore investigates the determinants and consequences of residential property abandonment in Benin City to provide context-specific evidence for improved property management and urban development.

2.5 Research gap

The literature review reveals a research gap in the causes and consequences of residential property abandonment in Benin City. Although previous studies examined abandonment in other Nigerian cities, limited location-specific evidence exists on its major causes, effects and relative significance. This study addresses the gap by investigating abandoned residential properties in Benin City to provide evidence for improved property management, neighbourhood development and effective utilization of residential assets.

2.6 Summary of the literature review

Residential property abandonment results from economic constraints, ownership and inheritance disputes, tenure insecurity, structural deterioration, changing preferences and institutional weaknesses. Its consequences include environmental degradation, insecurity, declining property values, reduced neighbourhood attractiveness and underutilized housing. Studies across Nigerian cities, including Port Harcourt, Lagos, Ilorin, Osogbo, Ibadan, Abeokuta and Ondo, reveal varying causes and effects, highlighting the need for location-specific research. Therefore, this study investigates the causes and consequences of abandoned residential properties in Benin City and their implications for property owners, residents and the urban environment.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research design

The study adopted the descriptive research design because it facilitated the systematic collection and description of data without influencing the behaviour of the respondents, thereby making it suitable for assessing the causes and effects of abandoned residential properties in Benin City (Jongbo, 2018).

3.2 Population of the study

The target population for this study comprised landlords, real estate professionals, and building contractors operating within Benin City.

3.3 Sample size and sampling procedure

In this study, the researcher adopted the Yamane (1967) formula to determine the appropriate sample size from the target population. The Yamane (1967) formula provides a simplified and widely accepted method for calculating sample size, thereby ensuring that the selected sample was representative of the study population. The respondents were drawn from the three categories identified in the sampling frame: active landlords, registered real estate professionals, and licensed building contractors. The sampling procedure was intended to ensure that the relevant categories were represented in the study.

Assuming a 95% confidence level, P = 0.5 and an error margin of 0.05, the sample size was calculated as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} \tag{1}$$

where n is the sample size, N the population and e the error margin. Hence:

$$n = \frac{8450}{1 + 8450 \times 0.05^2} = \frac{8450}{1 + 8450 \times 0.0025} = \frac{8450}{22.125} \approx 382 \tag{2}$$

Therefore the sample size of this study was 382 participants.

3.4 Sources and instrument of data collection

3.4.1 *Secondary source*

Secondary data were collected through a review of relevant literature on the causes and effects of abandoned residential properties, with particular emphasis on Benin City and other related urban areas. The literature reviewed included textbooks, scholarly journals, seminar papers, conference proceedings, government publications, and credible internet sources, which provided the conceptual, theoretical, and empirical foundation for the study.

3.4.2 *Primary source*

Primary data were collected through the administration of a structured questionnaire to the selected respondents, providing firsthand information relevant to the objectives of the study.

3.5 Method of data analysis

The data collected for the study were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, namely frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Frequency and percentage were used to summarize and present the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the distribution of their responses to the research questions. The mean and standard deviation were used to determine the respondents' perceptions regarding the causes and effects of abandoned residential properties in Benin City.

4 Results

4.1 Response rate

Table 1. Distribution and response rate of the questionnaire.

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Questionnaires distributed	382	100
Questionnaires retrieved and valid	344	90.1
Questionnaires rejected	38	9.9

Source: field survey, 2026.

Table 1 presents the distribution and response rate of the questionnaires administered for the study. A total of 382 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, representing 100% of the sample size. Of these, 344 questionnaires, representing 90.1%, were duly completed, retrieved, and found

suitable for analysis. The remaining 38 questionnaires, representing 9.9%, were rejected due to incomplete responses and improper completion. Consequently, the analysis and interpretation of the study were based on the 344 valid questionnaires retrieved from the respondents.

4.2 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Table 2. Demographic profile of the respondents.

Demographic variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	220	63.95
	Female	124	36.05
	Total	344	100
Age	18–30 years	80	23.26
	31–45 years	170	49.42
	46–60 years	70	20.35
	61 years and above	24	6.98
	Total	344	100
Occupation	Landlords	150	43.60
	Real estate professionals	110	31.98
	Building contractors	84	24.42
	Total	344	100

Source: field survey, 2026.

Table 2 shows that 220 respondents (64.0%) were male and 124 (36.0%) were female. Most respondents, 170 (49.4%), were aged 31–45 years. Regarding occupation, landlords formed the largest group with 150 (43.6%), followed by real estate professionals, 110 (32.0%), and building contractors, 84 (24.4%). This indicates that the study covered relevant stakeholders involved in residential property ownership, development and management in Benin City.

4.3 Analysis of the research questions

Research Question One: What is the prevalence of abandoned residential properties in Benin City?

Table 3. Mean and standard deviation of responses on the prevalence of abandoned residential properties in Benin City.

S/N	Statement	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	There are many unfinished residential buildings across Benin City.	344	3.36	0.78	Agree
2	Abandoned houses are commonly seen in urban areas of Benin City.	344	3.28	0.82	Agree
3	Most residential buildings are abandoned due to ownership disputes.	344	2.86	0.91	Agree
4	Abandoned properties contribute to urban blight in the city.	344	3.18	0.84	Agree
5	Residential property abandonment has increased over the years.	344	3.12	0.87	Agree
6	Property abandonment is more common in new layouts.	344	3.06	0.89	Agree
	Grand mean		3.14		Agree

Decision rule: mean of 2.50 and above = agree; mean below 2.50 = disagree. Source: field survey, 2026.

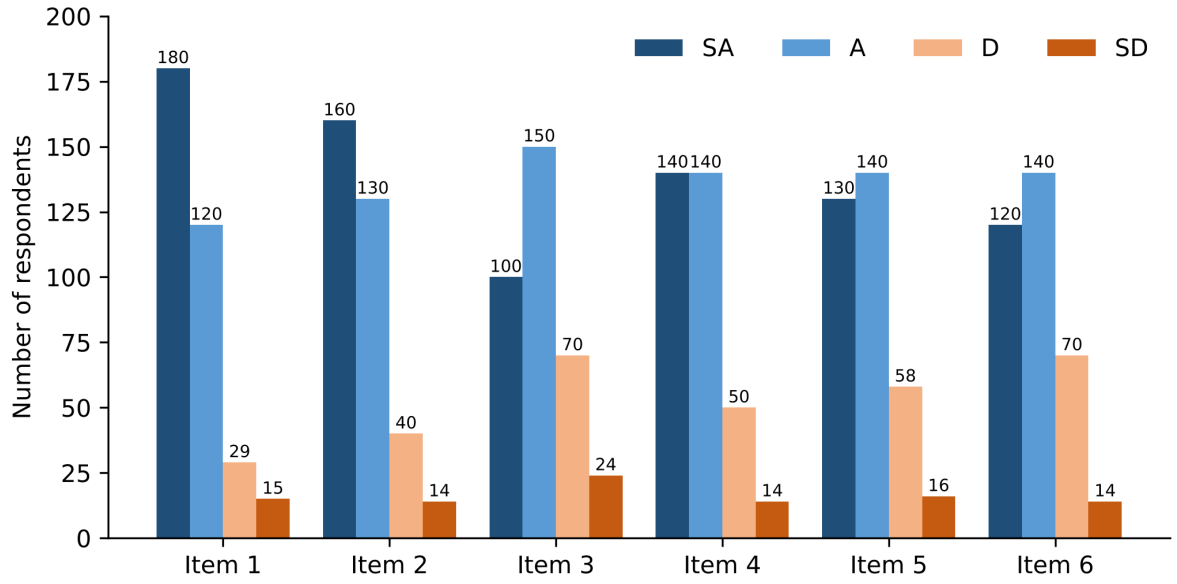


Figure 1. Distribution of responses on the prevalence of abandoned residential properties in Benin City (items as numbered in Table 3; SA, strongly agree; A, agree; D, disagree; SD, strongly disagree).

Table 3 and Figure 1 show that all six statements had mean scores above 2.50, indicating agreement that residential property abandonment is prevalent in Benin City. Unfinished buildings recorded the highest mean (3.36), followed by the widespread presence of abandoned properties (3.28). The grand mean of 3.14 confirms that residential property abandonment is a significant urban challenge in Benin City.

Research Question Two: What are the causes of abandoned residential properties in Benin City?

Table 4. Mean and standard deviation of responses on the major causes of abandoned residential properties in Benin City.

S/N	Statement	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Land ownership disputes discourage completion of buildings.	344	3.28	0.82	Agree
2	High construction costs lead to project abandonment.	344	3.24	0.80	Agree
3	Economic downturn affects property completion.	344	3.20	0.79	Agree
4	Lack of access to building finance causes abandonment.	344	3.12	0.84	Agree
5	Poor planning and government policy inconsistencies are major factors.	344	3.06	0.88	Agree
6	Family disputes over inheritance contribute to property abandonment.	344	2.94	0.90	Agree
	Grand mean		3.14		Agree

Decision rule: mean of 2.50 and above = agree; mean below 2.50 = disagree. Source: field survey, 2026.

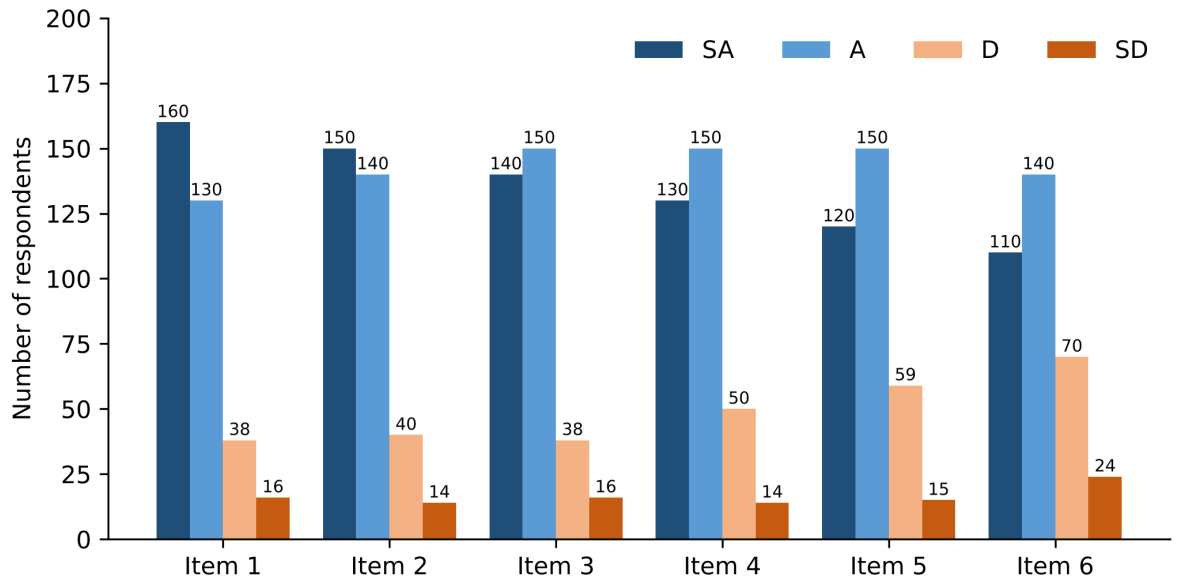


Figure 2. Distribution of responses on the major causes of abandoned residential properties in Benin City (items as numbered in Table 4; SA, strongly agree; A, agree; D, disagree; SD, strongly disagree).

Table 4 and Figure 2 show that all six statements scored above 2.50, indicating that respondents agreed on the factors contributing to residential property abandonment in Benin City. Land ownership disputes ranked highest (3.28), followed by high construction costs (3.24). Other factors include economic downturns, limited access to building finance, poor urban planning, policy inconsistencies and inheritance disputes. The grand mean of 3.14 confirms that abandonment results from a combination of legal, economic, institutional and social factors.

Research Question Three: To what extent does residential property abandonment affect housing availability in Benin City?

Table 5. Mean and standard deviation of responses on the extent to which residential property abandonment affects housing availability in Benin City.

S/N	Statement	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Abandoned properties reduce the number of livable houses in the city.	344	3.24	0.80	Agree
2	Property abandonment increases demand for the few available houses.	344	3.20	0.79	Agree
3	High rate of abandoned properties leads to housing scarcity.	344	3.18	0.82	Agree
4	Rent prices rise due to fewer houses being available for occupation.	344	3.12	0.85	Agree
5	Unfinished buildings occupy spaces that could be used for new housing.	344	3.06	0.88	Agree
6	Abandoned residential buildings create unequal housing distribution in the city.	344	2.94	0.91	Agree
	Grand mean		3.12		Agree

Decision rule: mean of 2.50 and above = agree; mean below 2.50 = disagree. Source: field survey, 2026.

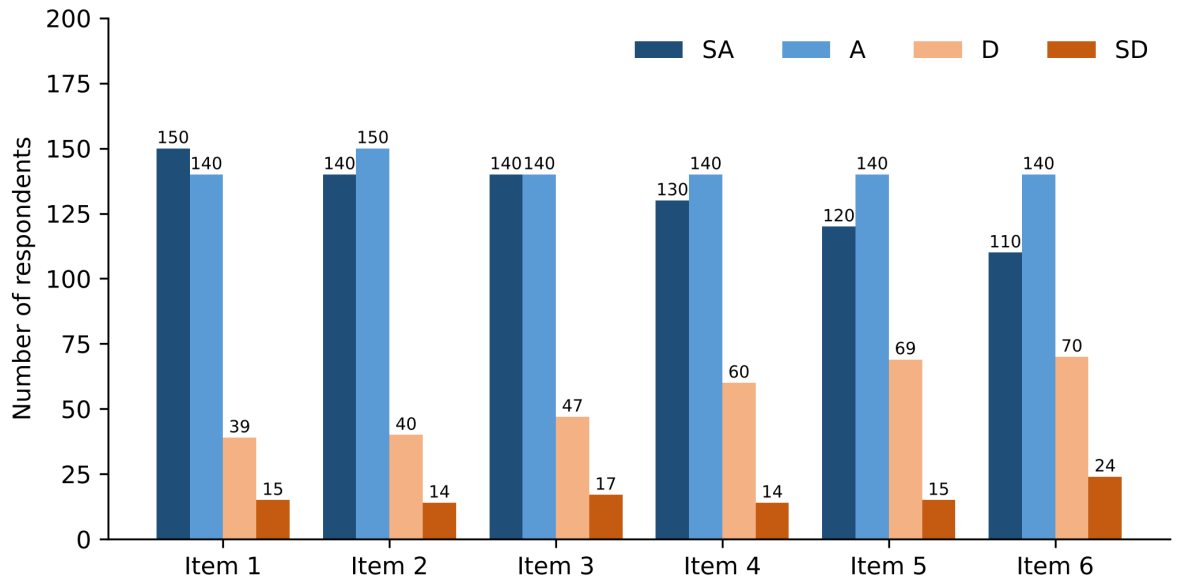


Figure 3. Distribution of responses on the extent to which residential property abandonment affects housing availability in Benin City (items as numbered in Table 5; SA, strongly agree; A, agree; D, disagree; SD, strongly disagree).

Table 5 and Figure 3 show that all six statements scored above 2.50, indicating that respondents agreed that residential property abandonment negatively affects housing availability in Benin City. Reducing habitable houses ranked highest (3.24). Other effects include housing scarcity, increased rental prices, higher housing demand, limited development land and unequal housing distribution. The grand mean of 3.12 confirms that property abandonment negatively affects housing availability in Benin City.

Research Question Four: What are the effects of residential property abandonment in Benin City?

Table 6. Mean and standard deviation of responses on the effects of residential property abandonment in Benin City.

S/N	Statement	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Abandoned properties encourage criminal activities and squatting.	344	3.30	0.78	Agree
2	They contribute to poor aesthetics and urban decay in affected areas.	344	3.24	0.80	Agree
3	Abandoned houses lower the value of surrounding properties.	344	3.20	0.79	Agree
4	They pose safety hazards and become breeding grounds for pests and reptiles.	344	3.12	0.84	Agree
5	Abandoned residential buildings affect community image and investment attractiveness.	344	3.06	0.87	Agree
6	They increase the cost of urban management for local authorities.	344	2.94	0.90	Agree
	Grand mean		3.14		Agree

Decision rule: mean of 2.50 and above = agree; mean below 2.50 = disagree. Source: field survey, 2026.

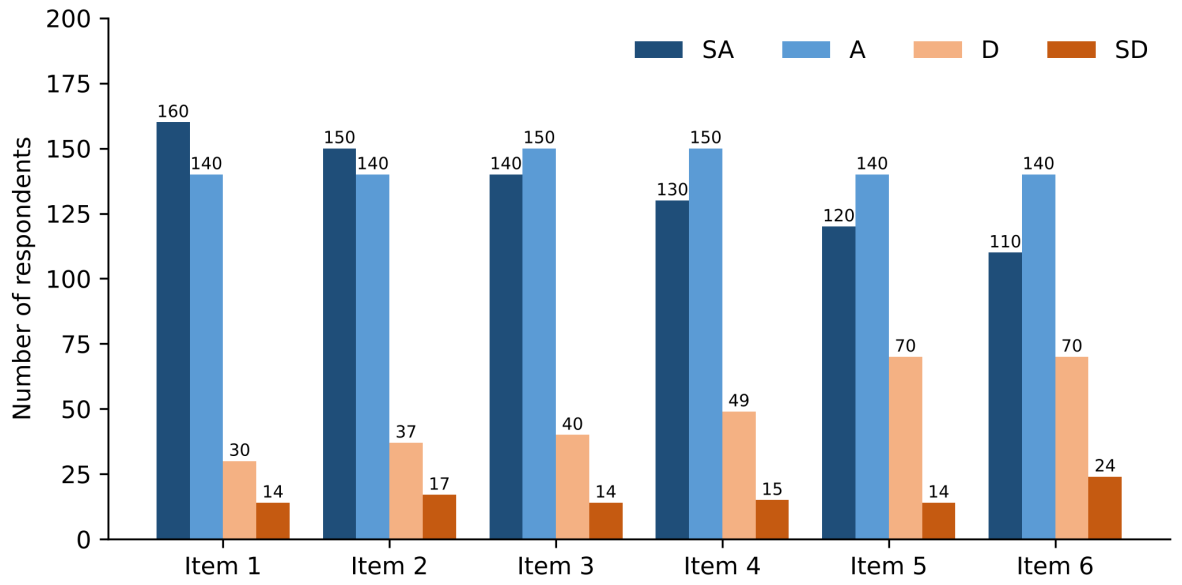


Figure 4. Distribution of responses on the effects of residential property abandonment in Benin City (items as numbered in Table 6; SA, strongly agree; A, agree; D, disagree; SD, strongly disagree).

Table 6 and Figure 4 show that all six statements scored above 2.50, indicating that abandoned residential properties have adverse effects in Benin City. Encouraging crime and squatting ranked highest (3.30). Other effects include urban decay, declining property values, health and safety risks, reduced neighbourhood attractiveness and increased urban management costs. The grand mean of 3.14 confirms that property abandonment has significant social, economic and environmental effects in Benin City.

Research Question Five: What possible solutions can be adopted to address the challenges of residential property abandonment in Benin City?

Table 7. Mean and standard deviation of responses on the solutions to abandoned residential properties in Benin City.

S/N	Statement	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Government should enforce stricter building and land ownership regulations.	344	3.30	0.78	Agree
2	Provision of accessible building finance will reduce abandonment rates.	344	3.24	0.80	Agree
3	Dispute resolution mechanisms should be strengthened for property ownership conflicts.	344	3.20	0.79	Agree
4	Government should rehabilitate or repurpose abandoned buildings.	344	3.12	0.84	Agree
5	Community awareness and stakeholder engagement are vital in reducing property abandonment.	344	3.06	0.87	Agree
6	Tax incentives should be given to complete or renovate abandoned properties.	344	2.94	0.90	Agree
	Grand mean		3.14		Agree

Decision rule: mean of 2.50 and above = agree; mean below 2.50 = disagree. Source: field survey, 2026.

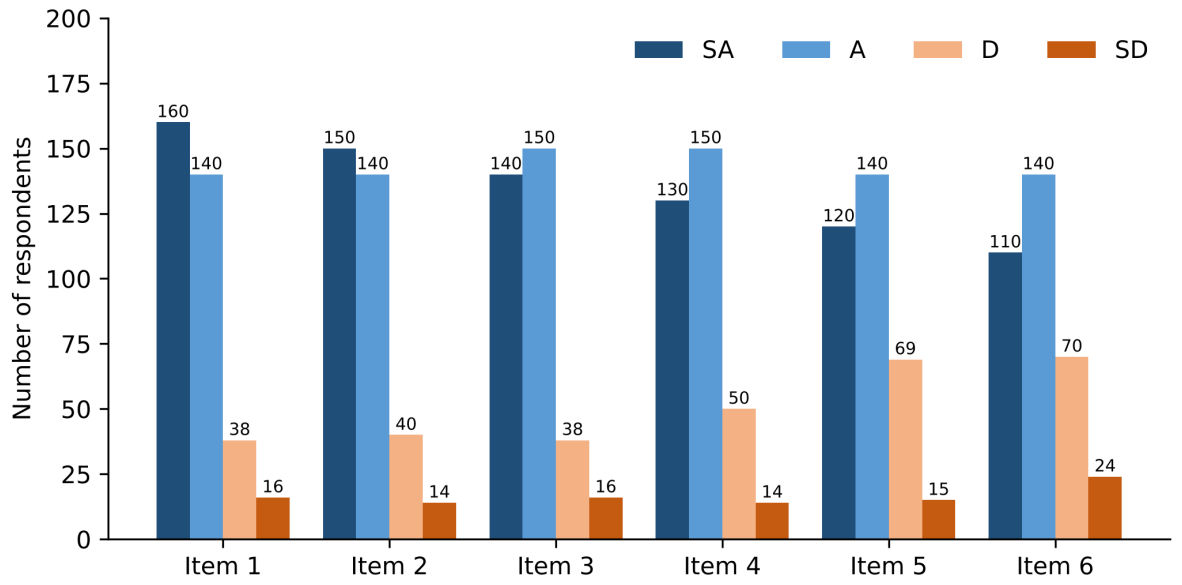


Figure 5. Distribution of responses on the solutions to abandoned residential properties in Benin City (items as numbered in Table 7; SA, strongly agree; A, agree; D, disagree; SD, strongly disagree).

Table 7 and Figure 5 indicate that respondents agreed with all proposed solutions to residential property abandonment in Benin City, as all mean scores exceeded 2.50. Stricter building and land ownership regulations ranked highest (Mean = 3.30), followed by accessible building finance (Mean = 3.24) and improved dispute resolution (Mean = 3.20). The grand mean of 3.14 suggests that regulatory, financial, institutional, and community-based interventions are needed to address property abandonment effectively.

5 Discussion of findings

The findings reveal that residential property abandonment is widespread in Benin City, driven mainly by land ownership disputes, high construction costs, limited finance and inconsistent policies. It reduces housing availability, increases rental prices and contributes to crime, urban decay, declining property values and environmental problems. These findings align with previous studies in other Nigerian cities. The study recommends stricter enforcement of building regulations, improved access to finance, effective dispute resolution, rehabilitation of abandoned properties and community participation to promote sustainable urban development.

6 Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that residential property abandonment is a serious and growing urban challenge in Benin City, resulting from a combination of economic, legal, institutional, and social factors. The problem has significant negative implications for housing availability, urban development, and environmental quality. Therefore, addressing it requires a coordinated and multi-sectoral approach involving government agencies, financial institutions, private developers, and community stakeholders to ensure sustainable urban housing development.

7 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government should strengthen and strictly enforce land tenure and building regulations to minimize disputes and ensure timely completion of residential projects.
2. Financial institutions, in collaboration with government agencies, should provide accessible and affordable housing finance schemes to enable individuals and developers to complete housing projects without financial delays.
3. Urban planning authorities should establish efficient and prompt dispute resolution mechanisms to address land, ownership, and inheritance conflicts before they result in property abandonment.
4. Government and relevant stakeholders should identify abandoned properties and promote their rehabilitation or repurposing through urban renewal programs supported by tax incentives and development grants.
5. Community associations and professional bodies should actively collaborate with government agencies to sensitize property owners on the economic and social consequences of abandoning residential buildings.

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