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Awareness and Perception of the 2025 Anambra State Homeland Security Law among Residents of Awka, Nigeria

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Abstract

The enactment of the 2025 Anambra State Homeland Security Law represents a critical juncture in the state's governance framework. Yet, the gulf between legislative intent and public reception remains dangerously underexplored. This study examined the awareness levels and perceptual underpinnings of the Homeland Security Law among residents of Awka, the state capital. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted. From a projected population of 1,371,013, a sample of 385 respondents was drawn using multi-stage probability sampling. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions). Residents exhibited high factual knowledge of the law's provisions. However, perception was sharply stratified by four forces: political affiliation, media access, educational attainment, and trust in government. Critically, political allegiance emerged as the dominant lens through which the law was interpreted and either supported or contested. Those with access to digital information ecosystems demonstrated significantly more accurate understanding of the law's purpose. Knowledge of the law does not translate into perceptual consensus. In a politically polarized environment, awareness alone is a weak lever for legitimacy. The Anambra State government must urgently deploy a hybrid information strategy – fusing traditional broadcast media (radio, television, newspapers) with aggressive digital outreach including social media engagement, official web platforms, and mobile messaging – to bridge the perception gap and depoliticize public understanding of the law.

Keywords: Homeland Security Law, Anambra State, Public awareness, Perception, Political influence, Security governance

Introduction

Security is related to the presence of peace, safety, happiness, and protection of human and physical resources. It is a dynamic condition that involves the ability of a state to protect its citizens against threats and danger (Ogbonna, Lenshie, and Nwangwu, 2023). In line with this view, Ibeagwu (2022) asserts that security provides the requisite enabling environment for citizens of any state or country to live and work towards the socio-economic and political development of their society. Hence, the importance of security in the development of any society cannot be overemphasized.

Ratuva (2019) notes that the task of maintaining security in a state is entrusted to the government of a state and is the most important aspect of the governance of the state. Oikhala (2024) similarly states that the government is saddled with the responsibility of maintaining security because, essentially, it is the agency or machinery through which the will of the state is formulated, expressed, and realized. Jeandesboz (2020) states that security challenges are understood and protected from two dimensions: internal and external. To deal with security challenges, the state's claim to the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within its territory is assumed and exercised by the government through its coercive institutions, like the Police, military, and paramilitary forces.

It is worth bearing in mind that the country's diverse ethnic make-up is not itself a cause of insecurity in Nigeria; however, political and religious leaders across the nation sometimes use ethnic sentiments to achieve their selfish ambitions. Adagba (2022) asserts that the elites exploit people's minds to stir up mistrust and resentment among different ethnic groups and among the country's major religions, which causes Nigeria's insecurity. In a multi-ethnic country like Nigeria, the relationship should be cordial, without reciprocal distrust, fear, and a propensity to a violent confrontation between members of one ethnic or religious group and another of that ethnicity or religious group. Achumba (2023) similarly asserted that control of scarce resources, fuel, land, economies, traditional and political offices resulted in mass killings and property destruction in communities in various parts of the country.

Adeyemi (2021) avers that corruption is largely responsible for government failure and systemic infrastructure collapse, resulting in large-scale insecurity in Nigeria. The state of insecurity in Nigeria is unquestionably a result of government failure, traceable to widespread corruption. Corruption is poor not because money and profits change hands in an unequal way, and not because of participants' motives, but because it privatizes important facets of public life, bypassing representation, discussion, and choice processes. Also, the fact that the country's unstable frontiers, where human movements are essentially untracked, has also led to Nigeria's level of insecurity.

There is an unregulated inflow of Small Arms and Light Weapons into the country as a result of the porous borders, which has enabled militancy and crime in Nigeria. Edeko (2021) has reported that Nigeria hosts over 70% of about 8million illegal weapons that have been used to create a security crisis. In addition, the porous condition of both the Nigerian borders has contributed to the uncontrollable influx of migrants, predominantly young people, from nearby countries such as the Republic of Niger, Chad, and the Republic of Benin accountable for some of the insecurity and promoting criminal activities in Nigeria (Adeola & Olayemi, 2022).

Awareness campaigns often precede the implementation of security policies because the success of such measures depends greatly on public understanding and cooperation. Knowledge is closely linked to awareness but differs slightly. Knowledge refers to a deeper understanding and internalization of information received. It involves not just hearing about a policy but comprehending its content, objectives, and implications (Amadi and Uzoho, 2020). A knowledgeable citizen is better equipped to obey security regulations, report criminal activities, and collaborate with security agencies.

According to Qiong (2017), perception, on the other hand, deals with how people interpret and form opinions about issues or phenomena. It shows how residents view the effectiveness, fairness, and necessity of a law or policy (Anaba and Eze, 2021). Perception can influence the level of support or resistance a policy receives. Positive perception encourages compliance, while negative perception may lead to apathy or active opposition (Fang, Cao, and Peng, 2023). When residents understand the provisions of such laws, compliance improves, and collaboration with security agencies is enhanced (Igbo, 2017). Conversely, poor awareness can lead to misinformation, resistance, or unintended violations (Alemika, 2023). Nwagboso (2022) notes that perceptions of security laws influence public trust and participation in security initiatives.

The Anambra State Homeland Security Law, 2025, introduced stringent measures that include mandatory reporting of suspicious activities by community leaders and landlords. It

also prescribes severe penalties for offenses like harbouring criminals or using properties for illicit activities (Anambra State Government, 2025). Such provisions require widespread dissemination and understanding to achieve their intended impact.

Statement of the Problem

Insecurity has remained a major challenge in Anambra State, with lots of kidnapping, robbery, cultism cases, and other crimes threatening lives and property. In response, the government introduced the Anambra State Homeland Security Law, 2025, to establish '*Agunechemba*', a community-driven security outfit aimed at supporting the police and other agencies in maintaining order. However, the success of this law largely depends on the awareness, knowledge, and perception of residents, particularly in Awka, the state capital.

Despite the importance of the law, many residents may not be fully aware of its existence or even understand its provisions. Some may also hold negative perceptions based on distrust or previous experiences with local security systems. Poor awareness and negative perceptions can result in low cooperation, weak enforcement, and eventual failure of the initiative. There is therefore a need to investigate the levels of awareness, knowledge, and perception of the Anambra State New Homeland Security Law among residents of Awka.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. Determine the level of awareness of the Anambra State New Homeland Security Law among residents of Awka.
2. Assess the extent of knowledge among residents of Awka about the provisions and operations of the Anambra State New Homeland Security Law.
3. Examine the perception of residents of Awka towards the effectiveness of the Anambra State New Homeland Security Law.
4. Identify the factors that influence the awareness, knowledge, and perception of the Anambra State New Homeland Security Law among residents of Awka.

Literature Review

The Concept of Internal Security

According to Abdullayev, Begishev, and Prodanova (2023), security is the ability to protect oneself, other people, or society from threats and challenges to safety and existence. In other words, subjectively, security can be measured by the absence of fear that any threat, anxiety, or danger will materialize (Eme and Nnamani, 2021).

Scholars such as Raza (2023) and Chandio and Mahesar (2025) have all defined security from a realist perspective. According to the scholars, national security is the integrity of the national territory and its institutions, as well as the state's ability to defend itself against external threats. For Garayová (2019), security is concerned mainly with such indices as the military aspect of a nation's goals, competition between satisfied and dissatisfied powers, strategic issues of superpowers, alliance-building processes, independence and sovereignty forces, conflict spots in international relations, and the problem of maintaining systematic balance.

Nnoli (2016) provides a radical perspective on the conception of national security and incorporates the safety of individuals and groups in the task of national security. He

furthermore defines national security as a cherished value associated with the physical safety of individuals, groups, or nation – states, together with a similar safety of their other most cherished values.

Recently, Nwolise (2022) has added a spiritual perspective to the discourse of human and national security. He contends that human and national security cannot be fully studied, understood, and predicted without a proper grasp of the spiritual factors at work. Nwolise furthermore notes that since life has two aspects, namely physical and spiritual, then it is a disservice to human and national development efforts to neglect the spiritual aspects of security.

Internal security, as part of the broader concept of security, has also been conceived as the duty of the state. Enns, Andrews, and Grant (2020) also rightly assert that internal security is one of the crucial functions of the state. It includes countering, eliminating, or mitigating the threats to the constitutional system and to law and order (security of state institutions), as well as providing protection of the public interest of members and the society as a whole (personal security), and safeguarding each citizen (security of existence). Thus, internal security operations (ISPOs) refer to actions carried out by domestic security agents, such as the Police, Customs Service, Immigration Service, etc, for the purpose of containing domestic threats to the security of the country. These threats often relate to cases of riots, demonstrations, strikes, communal clashes, terrorism, etc, which normally fall outside the constitutional duty of the military (Nwolise, 2012).

Nwagwu and Enwelum (2024) conceptualized internal security as the total of the nation's equilibrium state, which needs to be maintained so that the nation can carry out its normal functions without unnecessary interruptions from anywhere. It is in this line of thinking that Ezennaya and Ezeonwuka (2024) opine that internal security is the maintenance of security within a country, and it is crucial for the existence of government.

Nigeria, over the years, has been facing serious issues of social vices, insecurity, youth vices, and violence across the various geopolitical zones of the country. Specifically, there are incidences of Boko Haram in the Northeast, Fulani herdsmen terrorists in North Central, banditry in Northwest, Fulani herdsmen terrorists in the Southwest, while unknown gunmen and Fulani herdsmen hold sway in the Southeast, and Niger Delta Militants operate in South-south of the country (Uzor, Eboh & Okafor, 2023).

In recent times, Anambra state has been bedeviled by security challenges that have brought enormous hardship and fear, as youth social vices and insecurity make life unbearable in the state. Though the high rate of insecurity in the state may not be entirely strange to our society, the high rate of drug abuse, secret cult activities, kidnapping, armed robbery, cybercrime, ritual killing, etc., among the youths in the state is worrisome as it appears unabated. Consequently, there is a public concern and sociological interest in the youth in the state. It is noted that a greater number of Nigerian youths are not engaged in viable/formal economic activities even when they are within the productive age (Ojo, Akinola & Peter, 2025).

There was a series of attacks by unknown gunmen targeted at government facilities in the state. On May 23, 2021, the headquarters of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was set ablaze, an attempted attack on the Police 'B' Divisional Headquarters close to INEC (Vanguard, 2021). Some local government headquarters were also attacked by unknown gunmen in the state. It was reported that unknown gunmen attacked and burnt

down the local government headquarters of Nnewi South in Ukpok, Aguta in Ekwuluobia, and Idemili North, with a Magistrate court in Ogidi. There was also a threat by the unknown gunmen to attack more 9 local government headquarters in the future, which were listed as Ihiala, Awka South, Idemili North, Idemili South, Orumba South, Orumba North, and Anambra East (Eleke, 2022).

Sadly, many prominent and innocent people from the state have been killed by unknown gunmen through their attacks in recent times. Prominent among them are Dr. Akunyili, who was murdered at Nkpor Umuoji road in 2021, Chief Gab Ofoma (Ojemba Enweilo Nnewi), Chairman/CEO of Ofoma Associates Ltd, Port Harcourt, murdered (Eleke 2022), and Hon. Okechukwu Okoye, representing Aguata Constituency II, who was abducted and beheaded along with his campaign director, Cyril Chiegboka, in May 2022. A case of kidnap and murder of Chike Okoli, Anambra State Commissioner for Science and Technology, by a gang of criminals; also reported was that the father of Prof. Cheluchi Onyemelukwe, winner of the 2021 Nigeria Prize for Literature, Prof. I.O Onyemelukwe, was killed at Oko in Orumba North LGA. Anambra State is in dire need of peace to enable people to activate their full potential for the quick transformation of the state and the ultimate realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Overview of the Anambra State New Homeland Security Law

The Anambra State Homeland Security Law 2025 was formally signed into law by Governor Chukwuma Charles Soludo on January 18, 2025. It established a new security apparatus known as *Agunechemba*, which is designed to complement federal security forces and foster community ownership of safety measures within the state. This legislative initiative signals a strategic departure toward a more decentralized and engaged model of public safety while integrating local communities into formal security operations (Abunike, 2025).

Following the law's enactment, Operation *Udo Ga-Achi* was launched as a statewide security intervention. This operation deploys around 2,000 personnel drawn from the police, army, navy, Department of State Services (DSS), and *Agunechemba* units, working together across all 21 Local Government Areas of Anambra. Its primary objectives include intelligence gathering, dismantling criminal networks, and enhancing rapid response to emerging security threats.

A notable feature of the law is its emphasis on advanced surveillance technology. Provisions mandate the integration of cameras, tracking systems, and a centralised command-and-control infrastructure. Additionally, the state has established toll-free hotlines and a call centre to improve citizen reporting and situational awareness (Abunike, 2025). This mix of technology and human resources aims to strengthen both detection and deterrence mechanisms in the region. Community participation is central to the law's design. Traditional leaders, community presidents-general (PGs), landlords, hoteliers, and religious institutions are required to submit intelligence reports, verify tenant and guest identities, and install CCTV within their premises. This formalizes a shared responsibility framework, rewarding local vigilance while also imposing compliance obligations for public and private actors (Obiora, Eziakor & Okafor, 2025). To incentivize cooperation, the law introduces financial rewards for communities and law enforcement.

The law also includes strict provisions targeting religious and traditional practices. It criminalizes the use of religious spaces for illicit intent and bars the use of supernatural or ritualistic elements in crime facilitation, with penalties of up to six years' imprisonment or

finest of ₦20 million. While aimed at closing criminal loopholes, this aspect has drawn criticism from traditionalists who claim it unfairly stigmatizes indigenous spiritual practices (Obiora, Eziakor & Okafor, 2025).

Theoretical Framework

Agenda-Setting Theory

Agenda-Setting Theory is one of the most influential theories in the field of mass communication. The theory was originally formulated by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in their seminal 1972 study of the 1968 U.S. presidential election. The theory posits that the media may not always tell the public what to think, but it is remarkably successful in telling them what to think about (Buyanza-Mwidima, 2024).

The agenda-setting theory is directly applicable to the study as the residents of Awka's awareness and perception of the new homeland security law are likely shaped, at least in part, by the prominence or absence of media coverage on the law. If the media in Anambra State have prioritised the law as a pressing security development through frequent reporting, news analysis, and public affairs programming, it is more likely to become salient in the minds of Awka residents. Also, the way the media frames the law, whether as a necessary security intervention, a political move, or a controversial policy, can influence how residents perceive and understand it. For example, if the law is frequently associated in the media with enhanced public safety or successful crime prevention, residents may develop a positive perception. On the contrary, if the law is portrayed as oppressive or poorly implemented, it could lead to skepticism or resistance. This aligns with the second level of agenda-setting, where the media not only tell people what to think about, but also how to think about it (McCombs and Shaw, 1972).

Securitization Theory

Securitization Theory is a contemporary framework in security studies that explains how issues are transformed into matters of "security" through discourse and political processes. Originating from the Copenhagen School of thought, it challenges the traditional view that security threats are objective realities. Instead, the theory argues that security is constructed through speech acts when political leaders or influential actors frame an issue as an existential threat to a referent object, often the state or its citizens. Through this framing, extraordinary measures are justified to address the perceived threat. Thus, securitization involves a process of communication where an issue is "spoken into" the realm of security.

In relation to the study, the law represents a securitization move by the state government to frame issues such as kidnapping, cultism, and drug-related crimes as existential threats to public safety and social order. Doing so, the government justifies the establishment of *Agunechemba*, a local security outfit empowered to assist law enforcement agencies in maintaining internal peace and protecting lives and property. The law institutionalizes community-based vigilance and legitimizes extraordinary actions such as surveillance, citizen reporting obligations, and landlord identification requirements as necessary measures for state survival.

Materials and Methods

The research design adopted for this study is the survey method. Survey design was adopted based on the nature of the study to elicit responses from residents of Awka on their opinion on the Anambra State New Homeland Security Law.

The population of the study comprised residents in Awka, Anambra state. Based on the National Population Commission, 2006, Awka has a total population of 852,617.

However, given that the 2016 figure is becoming statistically outdated, the researcher computed the projected population of the area as of 2025 using the NBS statistics of 3.2% growth. As such, the projected population for 2025 is 1,371,013.

The Australian Sample Size Calculator was used, and the result obtained. Hence, the sample size for the population under study is **385**.

Source: <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/Sample+Size+Calculator>

The multi-stage sampling technique adopted which are: cluster sampling technique, random sampling technique, purposive sampling technique, and convenience sampling technique. Awka metropolis was divided into strata based on administrative and residential areas. For this study, the metropolis was stratified into the following five major communities:

Table 1: Population Estimates of Awka Capital City

Stratum (Towns)	Estimated Population	% of Total Population
Awka South Urban	350,000	25.52%
Awka North	275,000	20.06%
Ifite Awka	300,000	21.88%
Umuokpu	230,000	16.78%
Amawbia/Mbaukwu Area	216,013	15.76%
Total	1,371,013	100%

Source: Awka Capital Territory Development Authority (ACTDA)

Results

Research Question One: What is the level of awareness of the Anambra State New Homeland Security Law among residents of Awka?

Table 2: Level of awareness of the New 2025 Anambra State Homeland Security Law n=378

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	M±SD	Decision
1.	I am aware that the Anambra State government has enacted a new Homeland Security Law.	135	198	27	23	3.56 ± 0.74	Accepted
2.	I have come across public messages, announcements, or jingles about the Homeland Security Law through media (radio, TV, or social media).	130	212	25	11	3.62 ± 0.68	Accepted
3.	The Anambra state government has failed to provide adequate information about this law to residents.	30	14	150	184	2.27 ± 0.91	Rejected
4.	Community leaders and religious leaders have not done enough to inform people about the Homeland Security Law.	148	200	18	12	3.55 ± 0.69	Accepted
5.	I follow social media platforms or pages that frequently update residents about government security policies, including this law.	32	16	170	160	2.16 ± 0.92	Rejected

6.	There is poor publicity about this law compared to other state government policies.	142	190	30	16	3.48 ± 0.76	Accepted
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Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Data from Table 2 above shows the level of awareness of the New 2025 Anambra State Homeland Security Law among residents of Awka. Findings show that there is a high level of awareness of the Anambra State New Homeland Security Law among residents of Awka. The mean scores indicate strong agreement with statements showing awareness and exposure to information about the law, particularly through media channels ($M = 3.62$) and from community or religious leaders ($M = 3.55$). These findings imply that government communication and grassroots engagement are important in sensitising residents. However, the relatively low mean scores for items related to direct information access ($M = 2.27$) and social media updates ($M = 2.16$) show that awareness is not evenly distributed across all information sources. The overall mean rank of the items shows that traditional media and interpersonal communication remain the most effective awareness channels.

Research Question Two: To what extent are residents of Awka knowledgeable about the provisions and operations of the Anambra State New Homeland Security Law?

**Table 3: Knowledge of the Provisions and Operations of Homeland Security Law
n=378**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	M±SD	Decision
7.	I understand the main goal of the Homeland Security Law is to enhance internal security in Anambra State.	143	197	24	14	3.52 ± 0.73	Accepted
8.	I know that the law allows the establishment of neighborhood security outfits, like community security groups.	130	210	26	12	3.55 ± 0.70	Accepted
9.	I do not know the roles or responsibilities citizens are expected to play under this law.	39	24	133	182	2.11 ± 0.94	Rejected
10.	I can identify the specific agency or body mandated to enforce the Homeland Security Law.	152	180	30	16	3.46 ± 0.74	Accepted
11.	I know that the law encourages collaboration between residents and security agents to report suspicious activities.	148	194	26	10	3.53 ± 0.69	Accepted
12.	I am familiar with the penalties or legal consequences associated with obstructing or violating this law.	160	188	20	10	3.51 ± 0.67	Accepted
13.	I know that the security operatives are sometimes biased.	150	192	22	14	3.51 ± 0.71	Accepted
14.	I have knowledge that the operatives treat people badly.	128	154	46	50	3.57 ± 0.68	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Findings in Table 3 above show that residents of Awka possess a high level of knowledge regarding the provisions and operations of the Anambra State New Homeland Security Law. The overall mean rank of 3.47 shows that respondents generally understand the key objectives and functions of the law. Items with relatively high mean scores, such as knowledge that the law allows the establishment of community security outfits ($M = 3.55$) and encourages collaboration between residents and security agents ($M = 3.53$), imply that public awareness campaigns and community sensitization efforts have been effective. However, the rejection of the statement on citizens' roles and responsibilities ($M = 2.11$)

reveals a significant gap in understanding individual participation under the law. This implies that while residents are aware of the law's goals and institutional framework, they lack sufficient knowledge of their own civic duties within its implementation.

Research Question Three: What is the perception of residents of Awka towards the effectiveness of the Anambra State New Homeland Security Law?

Table 4: Perception towards the effectiveness of the New Homeland Security Law n=378

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	M±SD	Decision
15.	I believe the Homeland Security Law is an effective strategy for combating local security threats in Anambra State.	100	168	60	50	3.31 ± 0.85	Accepted
16.	Since the introduction of the law, there has been a noticeable improvement in neighborhood security in Awka.	140	180	28	30	3.38 ± 0.82	Accepted
17.	The law has reduced incidents of criminal activities such as robbery, cultism, and kidnapping in my area.	150	174	30	24	3.38 ± 0.77	Accepted
18.	The implementation of this law has been poor and inconsistent.	60	80	98	140	2.18 ± 0.91	Rejected
19.	There is corruption or favoritism in the enforcement of the Homeland Security Law.	220	128	16	14	3.60 ± 0.66	Accepted
20.	I trust that the government is committed to the successful implementation and monitoring of the Homeland Security Law.	210	130	24	14	3.58 ± 0.69	Accepted
21.	I don't trust the state government because it is all politics.	118	184	46	30	3.67 ± 0.71	Accepted
22.	The operatives often behave like criminals and are not serious.	146	190	30	12	3.55 ± 0.69	Accepted
23.	The personnel are not trained like professional security men.	152	180	27	19	3.51 ± 0.71	Accepted
24.	I believe that the government is not really serious, even with this new law, because they are not training the security men.	133	211	19	15	3.56 ± 0.67	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Data in Table 4 above shows the perception of residents of Awka towards the effectiveness of the Anambra State New Homeland Security Law. Findings revealed that residents of Awka generally perceive the Anambra State New Homeland Security Law as effective in addressing security concerns. With mean scores such as (M =3.38) for improvement in neighborhood security, (M =3.56) for government unseriousness due to inadequate training and (M =3.67) for distrust in government, respondents acknowledge the law's positive impact but doubt the sincerity and professionalism in its implementation. The high mean rank of (M =3.67) indicates that political distrust remains a major challenge, which suggests that while the law is seen as useful, confidence in its long-term effectiveness and fair enforcement is low.

Research Question Four: What factors influence the awareness, knowledge, and perception of the Anambra State New Homeland Security Law among residents of Awka?

**Table 5: Factors influencing awareness, knowledge, and perception of the New Homeland Security Law
n=378**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	M±SD	Decision
25.	Lack of education is preventing many residents from understanding this law.	141	189	29	18	3.52 ± 0.73	Accepted
26.	Access to digital devices and the internet has made it easier for me to learn about security laws in the state.	150	194	22	12	3.53 ± 0.70	Accepted
27.	Political affiliation and loyalty influence how people interpret and support the Homeland Security Law.	148	198	20	12	3.55 ± 0.69	Accepted
28.	Some community members mistrust government policies, which affects the acceptance of this law.	160	188	20	10	3.51 ± 0.67	Accepted
29.	Lack of transparency and accountability makes residents skeptical about the Homeland Security Law.	160	182	24	12	3.49 ± 0.68	Accepted
30.	Cultural or religious beliefs in my community may affect how people view and respond to government security policies.	152	190	20	16	3.50 ± 0.71	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Data in Table 4 above shows the factors that influence the awareness, knowledge, and perception of the Anambra State New Homeland Security Law among residents of Awka. Findings revealed that several socio-cultural and political factors shape residents' awareness, knowledge, and perception of the Anambra State New Homeland Security Law. Political affiliation had the highest mean score ($M = 3.55$), which shows that party loyalty strongly influences interpretation and support for the law. Access to digital devices and the internet ($M = 3.53$) is also important, which indicates that technology enhances information access and awareness. Similarly, lack of education ($M = 3.52$) limits understanding of the law among many residents. The mean rank shows that political factors exert the strongest influence, followed by technological access and educational background, which highlights that information exposure and political alignment largely determine how residents perceive and accept the law.

Discussions of Findings

Findings to the first research question revealed that Awka residents are largely aware of the Anambra Homeland Security Law, but that awareness stems mainly from traditional media (radio/television/newspapers) and community sensitisation rather than social media or direct government messaging, which matches patterns seen in other subnational Nigerian security communication studies. Research on security-related public messaging in southeastern Nigeria finds that radio and community outreach remain important vehicles for spreading knowledge about security initiatives and reporting channels; people frequently learn about security programs through locally produced broadcasts and community meetings rather than official online portals. Moreover, investigations of media use in Nigerian states show that despite the rapid growth of digital platforms, traditional outlets continue to reach broad segments of the population, especially older adults and those outside major digital networks, so policies that rely mainly on social media risk missing non-connected groups.

Findings to the second research question revealed that respondents knew that they broadly understood the law's purpose and institutional structure, but lacked clarity about individual duties and rights under it. This resonates with empirical literature on civic legal literacy and security reforms. For instance, research on community policing initiatives

indicates that awareness of program aims does not automatically translate into understanding of citizen responsibilities (what to report, how to interact with operatives) nor into the practical capacity to participate (contacts, forms, timelines). This gap between general knowledge and actionable civic literacy helps explain why communities may nominally “support” a law’s aims while failing to engage constructively with its mechanisms.

Findings to the third research question revealed that most Awka respondents judged the law’s goals of improving safety and reducing crime to be desirable and potentially effective. However, optimism is tempered by concerns about transparency, favoritism, corruption among operatives, and inconsistent professional standards. Public trust in the law’s effectiveness is therefore conditional on perceptions of fair and consistent enforcement. These findings are consistent with wider empirical findings, which showed that citizens can endorse a policy’s goals while simultaneously distrusting the institutions charged with enforcement (Ordu, 2017). These findings are salient because institutional trust is an important mediator of policy acceptance: when citizens suspect corruption or arbitrary enforcement, they are less likely to cooperate or to view outcomes as legitimate even when the law itself is sound.

Lastly, findings to the fourth research question revealed that political affiliation or loyalties, the degree of access to information (especially digital access), respondents’ educational level, and pre-existing trust in government institutions significantly predict levels of awareness, depth of knowledge, and positive perception of the law. This composite of predictors shows themes from political communication, media studies, and governance research. Political partisanship shapes how citizens interpret government initiatives (motivated reasoning); citizens aligned with the ruling party are more likely to view the same policy positively, while opponents may be suspicious. Access to information, especially via digital platforms, predicts not only awareness but also the nuance of knowledge.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that the Anambra State New Homeland Security Law has achieved considerable recognition among residents of Awka, primarily through traditional media and community sensitisation efforts. However, communication through digital channels and direct government outreach remained weak. This indicated that while the law’s visibility was strong, information dissemination was uneven, creating gaps in public understanding. Many residents were aware of the law’s purpose and structure but lacked knowledge of their specific roles in its enforcement. This showed that civic education and citizen engagement were not adequately addressed, reducing the level of active public participation and ownership needed for effective implementation.

It was also concluded that although residents generally viewed the law as a positive step toward improving local security, doubts persisted regarding transparency, corruption, and favoritism among operatives. These concerns weakened public confidence in the system and underscored the importance of accountability and professionalism in maintaining trust. The study further established that political loyalty, access to information, education, and trust in government strongly shaped how people perceived and supported the law. Thus, for the policy to be sustainable and effective, there is a need for enhanced public enlightenment, equitable information access, and transparent security practices that prioritize citizens’ trust and inclusive governance.

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

1. The Anambra State government should intensify its publicity efforts by combining traditional media (radio, television, newspapers) with digital communication platforms such as social media, government websites, and mobile messaging. A multi-channel communication strategy will ensure that information reaches different demographic groups.
2. The government, in collaboration with educational institutions and civic organizations, should develop structured civic education programmes to enlighten residents on the specific provisions of the Homeland Security Law. This will bridge the knowledge gap and promote active public participation in security management.
3. The government should therefore communicate the objectives of the law in a politically neutral manner and ensure that education materials are simplified and translated into local languages to increase acceptance and understanding.

The State Ministry of Homeland Security should increase collaborations with the Nigerian Police, traditional rulers, journalists, and local media houses to strengthen coordination, reduce misinformation, and foster synergy in maintaining public safety.

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