



Residents' Perception on Community Policing in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The fundamental principles of community policing prescribe that there should evolve a platform whereby members of public are willing to cooperate and build partnerships with the appropriate authorities and this is achievable by allowing them access to security decisions that impact on them. Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study while simple random sample technique was used to select 300 participants in Ilorin metropolis. The instrument used to illicit information from the respondents was tagged Community Policing Inventory with reliability value of 0.75. Findings from the study shows that there is a significant correlation between community policing and crime prevention ($r_{(298)} = 0.811$; $p < 0.05$), there is no statistically significant discrepancy between male and female community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention ($t_{(298)} = 1.214$, $p > 0.05$), there is no statistically significant discrepancy between old and young community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention ($t_{(298)} = 1.273$, $p > 0.05$), there is a statistically significant discrepancy between educated and uneducated community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state ($t_{(298)} = 1.622$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, it was recommended that there is need to foster transparency and accountability among security officers and members of community policing.

Keywords: Extent of community policing, crime, community engagement, community policing and crime prevention.

Introduction

Crime is one of the major social problems facing Nigeria today, the manifestation of this, is evident because the rate of crime in Nigeria is on the high level, on daily basis. The national dailies usually publish crime related stories. The Police force have tried to eradicate the crime wave in the state without much success. Thus, there is need for the Police force to work with the community leaders and other members of the state to checkmate these crime waves in the state. The main role of the police is to enforce law and order, safeguard lives and property, and render other essential

services in the society. Fighting crimes and criminals is so difficult that the police and other law enforcement agencies alone cannot perform this task and achieve maximum positive results. Community policing, problem-oriented policing and intelligence-led policing are part of the various movements for the improvement of policing structures in Nigeria. Community policing is a concept that has been defined by various scholars in the field of peace education. Some scholars describe it as a modern-day policing approach in response to the decline in public confidence and trust in the police and

increasing indications that police cannot fight crime by themselves (Skogan, 2018; Virta, 2016). According to Kiarie (2020) believes that policing requires communal involvement both at individual and organizational level outside with law enforcement and beyond the public sector. Community involvement in community policing is crucial in identifying community issues, addressing public fear of crime and increasing police visibility thus encouraging increased trust in police (Skogan, 2020). Miller and Hess (2002) defined community policing as a belief that working together, the police and the community can accomplish what neither can accomplish alone. Community policing is a collaborative effort between the police and the community that identifies problems of crime and disorder and involves all elements of the community in the search for solutions to these problems. It attempts to actively involve the community with the police in the task of crime control by creating an effective working partnership between the community and the police. Community policing focuses on crime and social disorder through the delivery of police services that includes aspects of traditional law enforcement, as well as prevention, problem-solving, community engagement, and partnerships. The community policing model balances reactive responses to calls for service with proactive problem-solving centered on the causes of crime and disorder. Community policing requires police and citizens to work together as partners in the course of both identifying and effectively addressing these issue (Murty, Komanduri, Julian and Smith, 2000)

Community policing is anchored on a systematic relationship between the police and the entire citizenry. Police roles and functions are not simply law enforcement but also include tackling a huge range of community crime related problems. The transition from traditional policing to community policing is a global phenomenon and the Nigeria police cannot be an exception. Indeed, community policing as a philosophy and practice is a veritable vehicle for police reforms (Okoro, 2007). The Nigeria police in 2004 embraced community policing as a pragmatic approach to police reforms. The stage was indeed set for a clear departure from traditional policing, that was reactive and incident based, to a problem

– solving oriented policing that is proactive with the community as the cornerstone of policing objectives (Abdulrahman, 2007). The fundamental principles of community policing prescribe that there should evolve a platform whereby members of public are willing to cooperate and build partnerships with the appropriate authorities and this is achievable by allowing them access to security decisions that impact on them. In this connection, the police are expected to see themselves as part of the community and in similar manner community members are also expected to see themselves as part of the police which in turn results in pursuing crime reduction activities in the neighborhoods (Okeke, 2016). Friedman (2018) has argued that many police forces throughout the world claim to practice community policing, but often the concept is misunderstood and misapplied. It is not untypical for community policing to be perceived as a single model or technical specification that can somehow be transplanted into any policing environment regardless of organizational or cultural context. Rather, community policing is a philosophy and value system against which policing objectives and performance are measured. Historically, community policing as a concept originated from the United States in the 1970s as a philosophy and tactic of policing to integrate the public into police institution, not as police personnel but as collaborators in the security affairs of the nation for optimal efficiency and responsiveness (Young and Tinsley, 2009). Policing and the provision of security services are not of one piece but composed of numerous and diverse goals, objectives and tasks that are judged by different and often conflicting evaluation criteria. Ebo (2005) opined that policing range from general service policing to more functionally specific tasks such as dealing with riots and public disturbances, the investigation of complex domestic and transnational crimes, protecting the state and government, the collection of intelligence to prevent crimes rather than react to them once they have happened, managing border controls and protecting security-sensitive installations and facilities. Clearly, good police-community relations strengthen security network and thus leads to a significant reduction in criminal activities. The huge success recorded so

far by the Nigeria police in crime prevention and control is largely attributed to police partnership with community leaders, youths, age grade associations and other informal security networks (Otu, 2011).

The public perception in relation to lack of public confidence in and the corresponding cultural gap has assumed a level whereby members of community are not willing to give useful information to the police in the task of preventing and controlling crime in Nigeria. This situation has been identified as one of the major problems affecting the implementation of various policing policies and programmes and this actually led to the call for the introduction of community policing in Nigeria. In addition, the promotion of police and community partnership had been carried out by a range of politicians, practitioners, and criminal justice scholars who firmly believe in facilitating effective policing through partnership strategy. This kind of partnership strategy tends to serve as a means to build trust between the local people and the police. Conversely, there is an experience of the increase in the perceptions of crime and insecurity such as insurgency, kidnapping, armed robbery, youth restiveness and cultism in the country.

However, the police-public relationship has long been estranged, thereby making mutual supports very difficult to establish between the two social actors. That is, every effort to bring the police close to the public, and for community members to see the police as their friends, who require their assistance in policing the society that belongs to both of them, an end in futility. In essence, there must be a solution to this problem. According to Siegel (2019, p. 343), "to remedy this situation while improving the quality of their services, police departments have experimented with new forms of law enforcement, referred to as community policing and problem-oriented policing". It was pointed out by Ali (2018), that most officers were not trained in the formation of partnerships; nor had experience in organizing community involvement or empowering the community. With limited training it was unlikely that police would realize the full potential of community policing. The study suggested that training was often ineffective because

community policing is labour intensive. Mastrofski (2015) also establish in his research that, in the United States recruit training has not been substantially revised to promote community policing techniques.

This study attempted to find out the following;

- extent of community policing in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State.
- rate of crime prevention with the communities in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State.
- factors that impede community policing in Ilorin metropolis.
- the correlation between community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin metropolis
- discrepancy between male and female community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state.
- the discrepancy between old and young community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state
- discrepancy between educated and uneducated community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state
- the discrepancy between educated and uneducated community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state

In the study, the following questions were raised to guide this study

- What is the extent of community policing in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State?
- What is the rate of crime prevention with the communities in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State?
- What are the factors that impede community policing in Ilorin metropolis?

The following hypotheses were postulated for this study

- Ho₁:** There is no significant correlation between community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State
- Ho₂:** There is no significant discrepancy between male and female community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State
- Ho₃:** There is no significant discrepancy between young and old community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State
- Ho₄:** There is no significant discrepancy between educated and uneducated community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State

Methods

In selecting an appropriate design for the study, the researcher used ex-post facto research design. The population comprised of all the people in Ilorin East, Ilorin West and South. The study adopted simple random sample technique to select 300 participants in Ilorin metropolis, the study adopted simple random sample technique

to select the participants. The instrument used to illicit information from the respondents was tagged Community Policing Inventory. In selecting an appropriate design for the study, the researcher used ex-post facto research design. The population comprised of all the people in Ilorin East, Ilorin West and South. The study adopted simple random sample technique to select 300 participants in Ilorin metropolis, the study adopted simple random sample technique to select the participants. The four-point Likert scale of always, sometimes, rarely and never pattern was adopted. The instrument was validated by the experts in the Department of Criminology, University of Ilorin, their suggestions were incorporated in the questionnaire. CPI was administered to 40 participants in Asa local Government to test the reliability of the instrument and the value obtained was 0.75. The data collected for the study were analysed with descriptive statistics of mean and t - test, the hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: What is the extent of community policing in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State?

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Table 1: *Extent of Community Policing in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State*

SN	Community Policing	Mean	Rank	Remark
4	Calling the attention of community members on any suspicious act	3.64	1 st	Always
2	There is rearing of dogs to serves as extra eyes and ears for suspicious movement at night	3.59	2 nd	Always
6	Working in collaboration with the community agencies in solving communal problems	3.56	3 rd	Always
8	Detecting and reporting criminals in the community	3.14	4 th	Sometimes
5	Politely challenging strange person in the community	2.82	5 th	Sometimes
3	Engaging in serious monitoring of the neighborhood (watch dog)	2.79	6 th	Sometimes
7	Sharing information to reduce fear of crime and improve the quality of life	2.73	7 th	Sometimes
1	There is a community patrol set up to watch the neighborhood	2.68	8 th	Sometimes

As revealed in Table 2, communities in Ilorin Metropolis were being policed by calling the attention of community members on any suspicious act, rearing of dogs to serves as extra security caution against suspicious movement at night, working in collaboration with the Kwara State?

community agencies in solving communal problems.

Research Question Two: What is the rate of crime prevention within the communities in Ilorin Metropolis,

Table 2: *Rate of Crime Prevention within the Communities in Ilorin Metropolis*

SN	Crime Prevention	Mean	Rank	Remark
5	There is community organization set up for the safety of the community	3.93	1 st	Always
8	There is periodic community meeting against crime-related activities	3.81	2 nd	Always
6	Members ensure that illegal activities do not take place within the community	3.73	3 rd	Always
7	There is maintenance of law and order within the community	3.71	4 th	Always
4	There is an open-door policy to report any crime or suspicious activity	3.67	5 th	Always
3	My community punish/hand over the criminals to the appropriate authority	3.08	6 th	Sometimes
2	There is period of entrance and exist in the community	2.41	7 th	Rarely
1	The community and every house is well lighted	2.27	8 th	Rarely

As shown in Table 2, crime was being prevented in Ilorin metropolis through the setting up of community organization for the safety of the community; always ensure that illegal activities do not take place within the community; always organizing a periodic community meeting against crime-related activities; ensuring the law and

order are maintained within the community and there is always an open-door policy to report any crime or suspicious activity.

Research Question Three: What are the observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin metropolis?

Table 3: *Observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin Metropolis*

SN	Items	Mean	Rank	Remark
5	Lack of commitment of members towards community meeting and minutes towards the security	2.92	1 st	Observed
3	Misuse of information	2.85	2 nd	Observed
2	Poor community leadership	2.79	3 rd	Observed

7	Lack of professional experience among the community members	2.73	4 th	Observed
8	Existence of local politics among the community members	2.61	5 th	Observed
9	Existence of favouritism and nepotism within the community	2.57	6 th	Observed
4	Mismanagement of community generated fund	2.53	7 th	Observed
6	Lack of unity among the community members	2.38	8 th	Not Observed
10	Lack of trust amidst the community members	2.34	9 th	Not Observed
1	Inexistence of transparency among the community members	2.28	10 th	Not Observed

A cut-off score of 2.50 was used as the baseline for determining participants' responses since the questionnaire items were structured in a four-response-type. Therefore, items found with mean scores equal or above 2.50 were observed as factors that impede community policing and crime prevention while items with mean scores below 2.50 were remarked otherwise. As shown in Table 3, ranked 1st 2nd 3rd up to 7th were the

factors observed to impede community policing and crime prevention.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho₁: There is no significant correlation between community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara state

Table 4: correlation between community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara state

Variables	N	Mean	S.D.	Df	r-value	Sig	Decision
Community Policing	300	13.32	1.49	298	0.811	.000	Rejected
Crime Prevention	300	13.76	1.31				

*significant P<0.05

As revealed in Table 4, the calculated r-value (0.811) was obtained with a p-value (0.000) when computed at 0.05 level of significance. Since the p-value (0.000) is less than the alpha level (0.05), the null hypothesis one is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant correlation between community policing and crime prevention in

Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State ($r_{(298)} = 0.811$; $p < 0.05$).

Ho₂: There is no significant discrepancy between male and female community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State

Table 5: *t-test statistics showing the discrepancy between male and female community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state.*

Gender	No	Mean	S. D.	Df	t-value	Sig	Remark
Male	203	14.221	2.409	398	1.214	0.12	Not Rejected
Female	97	13.975	2.454				

*Insignificance at $p>0.05$

Table 5 shows that the t-value 1.214 is obtained with a p-value of 0.12 computed at 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value of 0.12 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis two is not rejected. Therefore, there is no statistically significant discrepancy between male and female community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention in

Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State ($t_{\{298\}} = 1.214$, $p>0.05$).

Ho₃: There is no significant discrepancy between old and young community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State

Table 6: *t-test statistics showing the discrepancy between old and young community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state*

Age	No	Mean	S. D.	Df	t-value	Sig	Remark
Old	172	14.221	2.273	298	1.273	0.17	Not Rejected
Young	128	14.314	2.164				

*Insignificance at $p>0.05$

Table 6 shows that the t-value 1.273 is obtained with a p-value of 0.17 computed at 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value of 0.17 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis three is not rejected. Therefore, there is no statistically significant discrepancy between old and young community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime

prevention in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State ($t_{\{298\}} = 1.273$, $p>0.05$).

Ho₄: There is no significant discrepancy between educated and uneducated community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state

Table 7: *t-test statistics showing the discrepancy between educated and uneducated community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state*

Educational Status	No	Mean	S. D.	Df	t-value	Sig	Remark
Educated	229	15.441	2.116	298	1.622	0.03	Rejected
Uneducated	71	12.319	3.217				

*significance at $p<0.05$

Table 7 shows that the t-value 1.622 is obtained with a p-value of 0.03 computed at 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value of 0.03 is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis four is

rejected. Therefore, there is a statistically significant discrepancy between educated and uneducated community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime

prevention in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state ($t_{298} = 1.622, p < 0.05$).

Discussion

Findings from this study revealed that communities in Ilorin Metropolis were being policed always by calling the attention of community members on any suspicious act, rearing of dogs to serve as precaution against suspicious movement at night, working in collaboration with the community agencies in solving communal problems. However, the communities sometimes hand over the criminal to the appropriate authority, there was rarely period of entrance and exist in the community while the community and every house was rarely well lighted in Ilorin metropolis. This result agrees with the assertion of Fridell (2004) that community policing is emerging as a promising complementary approach to more traditional forms of protecting the lives and properties of the citizens. Also, findings of this study showed that crime was being prevented in Ilorin metropolis through the establishment of community organizations saddled with the protection of the community members; they also ensure that illegal activities do not take place within the community; always organizing a periodic community meeting against crime-related activities; ensure that law and order are maintained within the community and there is always an open door policy to report any crime or suspicious activity. This finding corroborates Innes (2004) whose study indicated that the act of crime prevention which instill better sense of security among residents is prime objective of community policing while Dickson (2007) submitted that curbing crime is believed to enhance people's ability to prosper by empowering them through a safe and secure environment.

In addition, it was found that factors impeding community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State were lack of commitment of members towards community meeting and minutes towards the security; misuse of information; lack of professionalism among the community members; existence of local politics among the community members; favouritism and nepotism within the community and mismanagement of community generated

fund. This outcome substantiates Mitra and Gupta (2008) who submitted that if the public members trust their local police, then it becomes easier for police to get better cooperation, intelligence and support towards sharing common responsibilities while Murphy, Hinds and Fleming (2008) stated that the willingness of public members to partner with the police force depend on public confidence and trust in police. Furthermore, this study revealed that there was a significant correlation between community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. This implies that Diana and Willy (2016) whose study revealed that community policing have had the potential to increase indigenous community safety, they have assisted in the prevention of crime rates, alcohol-related harm and empowerment of the local community.

Moreover, findings from this study revealed that there was no statistically significant discrepancy between male and female community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. This indicates that the factors observed by male and female community members which impede community policing and crime prevention are similar. This is in line with Diana and Willy (2016) whose study revealed no difference in the views of male and female participants on the factor affecting community policing in Kenya. There was also no statistically significant discrepancy between old and young community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. This also agrees with the study of Otu (2011) which found that old and young community members were actively involved in policing the environment in Tirunelveli City, Tamil Nadu. However, findings showed a statistically significant discrepancy between educated and uneducated community members observed factors impeding community policing and crime prevention in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. This result disagrees with the study of Thakre, Jaishankar, and Sivakumar (2015) which submitted that the rise in insecurity saw the establishment of an amorphous vigilante group which are dominated by uneducated members of the community

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it could be concluded that community members have adopted different strategies to prevent crime wave in their communities, these include calling the attention of community members on any suspicious act; rearing of dogs to serve as precaution of suspicious movement at night; working in partnership with the community agencies in solving communal problems in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. However, a number of factors have been observed to affect the extent of community policing and crime prevention among the community members which include lack of commitment of members towards meeting attendance, lack of professionalism among the community members and nepotism within the community among others.

Recommendations

- There should be establishment of clear and credible means of gathering and disseminating security information and management of proper channels of communication between the security organs and members of community policing
- There is need to foster transparency and accountability among security officers and members of community policing.
- Trustworthiness of community policing members should be ensured by scrutinizing them when they are voted in and also taking them through necessary training.
- There should be initial and further regular trainings and meetings of community policing members, this will enhance competent community policing.
- Community policing committee should address the challenges confronting the community policing members by providing the necessary equipment needed for effective community policing and crime prevention.

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