

Residents' Awareness, Understanding And Support For Police-Community Partnership In Crime Control In Ishielu Local Government Area, Ebonyi State, South-East, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT : There has been a call to search for effective strategy to control crime in the society because of the inability of Nigeria police to control crime. The Nigeria police in this regard introduced police-community partnership as the newest strategy in crime control which is believed to succeed where other strategies failed due to its inherent inclusiveness in attending to neighbourhood problems. To this end, this paper examined the level of awareness, understanding and support for police-community partnership in crime control by residents of Ishielu Local Government Area, Ebonyi State, South-East, Nigeria. The study is anchored on broken windows theory and empowerment theory. The study adopted mixed methods design. The sample size of 349 was generated using Fisher Lang, Stockel and Townsend method of obtaining sample size . The multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted in selecting respondents for the study. Questionnaire schedule was used to collect quantitative data while in-depth interviews were used to collect qualitative data. The quantitative data were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Windows, version 17. Also, descriptive statistics like frequency tables, simple percentages and graphic illustrations were used to analyze the quantitative data while manual content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. Findings of the study indicate that majority of the residents were not aware of police-community partnership in crime control. They also indicated support of police-community partnership in controlling crime in the neighbourhood because members of the community can easily identify a criminal and draw police attention. The study therefore recommended among others that the police should create necessary awareness about police-community partnership, especially in the rural areas through constant seminars and workshops. Also, government should establish neighbourhood watch groups in all communities to serve as direct link between the rural communities and the police.

KEYWORDS: Awareness, Community partnership, Crime, Crime control, Police

I. INTRODUCTION

Police-community partnership in crime control is the newest strategy adopted by the Nigeria police to make members of the community become a part and parcel of the security of their neighbourhood. The strategy is believed to promote public safety and enhance quality of life in the neighbourhood. It emerged as a response to the decline in public confidence in police and growing evidence that the police cannot fight crime by themselves alone without community involvement (Fridell, 2004; Innes, 2003; Skogan, 2006; Tilley, 2003; Virta, 2006). However, police-community partnership can be traced to the introduction of community constables known as 'bobbies', by Sir Robert Peel in the newly created metropolitan London Police District during the early 19th century (Patterson, 2007). Sir Robert Peel rationalised that "the police are the public and the public are the police" (Fridell, 2004:4). This statement is believed to be the key principle of community policing and that police should not be separated from but rather joined in partnership with the community for effective crime control (Fridell, 2004).

This style of policing is not foreign or new to Africa, because long before European colonialism in Africa, the traditional Igbo society, for example, already had this model in place where the age grades and masquerade society among other roles performed the role of law enforcement (Okeke, 2013). Every adult male citizen was a member of the age grade and masquerade society, suggesting that policing or security was the duty of the entire society. Community-police partnership in crime control is perceived as an effective way of promoting public safety and enhancing the quality of life in a community. It was this search for an effective strategy to control

crime and gain public confidence in the Nigeria police which was hitherto in a sour relationship that necessitated community policing in Nigeria. Against this backdrop, seven senior officers from Nigerian police in 2003 went to U.K and U.S.A respectively to do a comparative study of community policing (Anucha, 2007). It was launched on the 27th day of April 2004 by the then Inspector-General of Police, Tafa Balogun during the era of President Olusegun Obasanjo administration and Enugu State was used as the pilot state (Anucha, 2007; Ikuteyijo, 2009).

This effort of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) to enhance community safety, involve communities in the job of policing and to make the security agency a people-friendly force received a boost with the training of 53 police officers at the police college, Ikeja (Okeke, 2013). Maguire, Morgan and Reiner (2002) acknowledged that good police/public relationships are vital to successful policing. Without sustained public contact, officers would be unable to exercise their discretion appropriately and would find themselves isolated, increasingly hostile and unable to empathise with the public. Police-community partnership has been praised in different quarters for being effective in crime control due to its inclusiveness in attending to neighbourhood problem, hence the need to examine the awareness, understanding and support for police-community partnership in crime control by the residents of Ishielu Local Government Area, Ebonyi state, South-East, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The quest of man to have an environment that is devoid of threat to life and property appears to be one of his topmost priorities after satisfying the need for food and shelter (Adinde, 2012). Crime is one of the most obvious events which confront people in the late modern age (Giddens, 2004). Ehindero, the Former Inspector General of Police stated in a lecture delivered to participants of National War College, Abuja that crime is the most potent threat to national security of any country (Ehindero, 2006). The need to control crime is as old as mankind, that is why Alderson (1979:1) observed that “there has never been a crime-free society, for that there has always been crime and there will always be crime”.

In Nigeria, during pre-colonial era, people used cults, secret societies, messengers and palace guards as strategies for crime control (Marenin, 2008). In the colonial epoch, the style and principles of policing or crime reduction have been described as anti-people by several authors (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2000; Ikuteyijo, 2009; Rotimi, 2001). Alemika and Chukwuma (2004) noted that even now, after many years of colonial rule the police still see themselves as existing for the government of the day and wealthy members of the society in much the same way as the colonial government and its European personnel.

Be that as it may, Okeke (2013) noted that European colonialism supplanted for example, Igbo model of community policing with colonial police who alienated the people. This alienation, according to Okeke, continued in the post colonial Nigeria deepening the distrust or mistrust between the people and the police. This lack of cooperation from the people has a serious consequence which is the inability of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) to combat crime and tackle various security challenges in Nigeria leading to the proliferation of vigilante security apparatus particularly in the form of vigilante militia groups.

In order to tackle the worsening security challenges in the country, Okeke (2013) noted that the government and the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) embarked on the reform of the police in Nigeria by reaffirming the need to introduce and implement community policing therefore paving way for the introduction of community policing in 2004.

Nevertheless, police-community partnership in Nigeria is facing serious problems. One of the problems according to Okeke (2013) is low level of awareness about the programme by the Nigerian Police officers as well as the general public, and thus, many police officers and the general public are ignorant of the underlying philosophy of the strategy..

However, since the introduction of the new method in Nigeria in 2004 as a pilot project, its prospects look gloomy considering the unrepentant nature of Nigeria Police and poor human development indices like poverty, mass unemployment, etc, driving people to crime. In view of the foregoing problems, this study examined residents' awareness, understanding and support for police-community partnership in crime control in Ishielu Local Government Area, Ebonyi State, South- East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the level of residents' awareness of the existence of police-community partnership in crime control in Ishielu LGA, Ebonyi State, South-East, Nigeria?

2. How do residents' perceive police-community partnership in crime control in Ishielu L.G.A., Ebonyi State, South-East, Nigeria?
3. What are the reasons for residents' support or lack of support for police-community partnership in crime control in Ishielu L.G.A., Ebonyi State, South-East, Nigeria?

II. THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Broken Windows Theory

The study is anchored on broken windows theory and empowerment theory. Broken windows theory was propounded by James Wilson and George Kelling (Giddens, 2004; Inciardi, 2007). The theory suggests that "there is direct connection between the appearance of disorder and actual crime" (Giddens, 2004: 214). Giddens (2004); Haralambos and Holborn, (2004); Inciardi, (2007) and Jones, (2005) noted that if a single broken window is left unrepaired in a neighborhood (i.e. when residents overlook minor crime like prostitution, public smoking of Indian hemp, drunkenness, pick-pocketing etc), it sends a powerful message to potential offenders that neither police nor members of the community care about what happens in the community. What is more, the broken windows will be joined by further signs of disorder; vandalism and abandoned vehicles (the minor crime will graduate to bigger crimes like kidnapping, assassination, rape, burglary, fraud, cultism, etc). The area will begin a gradual process of decay and social disorder will flourish thereby making the members of the community not to sleep with two eyes closed, they will seek to leave the community thereby paving way for deviant newcomers such as drug dealers, the homeless and people on parole (Giddens, 2004). Broken windows theory has been adopted as the theoretical orientation for this study because police-community partnership in crime control lies more on preventing both minor and major crimes in the society before they occur through community assistance. Also, it can be recalled that this strategy was adopted following the high spate of crime in the society and the need to prevent crime before it goes out of hand by both the police and public, hence the saying that "a stitch in time saves nine".

Empowerment Theory

Empowerment theory was the brainchild of Marc Zimmerman. It was contained in his 1990 book "Taking aim on Empowerment Research: On the Distinction between Psychological and Individual Conceptions". The theory is both a value orientation for working in the community and a theoretical model for understanding the process and consequences of efforts to exert control and influence over decisions that affect one's life, organisational functioning and quality of community life (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995; Rappaport, 1981; Zimmerman & Warshausky, 1998). Zimmerman (1995) posited that empowerment at individual level of analysis includes experiences to exert control by participation in decision-making or problem-solving in one's environment. In line with the above, Berger and Neuhaus (1977) suggested that increased opportunities for people to become involved in community organisation (for example, churches, neighbourhood groups and service organisations) will help to decrease a sense of powerlessness, alienation and withdrawal from community living. This according to Berger and Neuhaus will help to provide an opportunity for learning new skills; develop a sense of community building, a sense of confidence and control thereby improving the quality of life in the neighbourhood.

Again, empowerment theory forms an effective base where police-community partnership can be anchored because an empowered community is one that initiates efforts to improve the community, responds to threats to quality of life and provides opportunities for citizens' participation in solving community problems. The reason for adopting this theory can be justified with the position of Iscoe (1974) that a community is competent when its citizens have skills, desires and resources to engage in activities to improve community life. This theory greatly espoused police-community partnership in crime control as the tenets are hinged on community participation to improve quality of life in the neighbourhood. Broken windows theory and empowerment theories have been adopted as the theoretical framework to guide this study because they are relevant, appropriate and best explain police-community partnership.

III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Awareness of police-community partnership in crime control

Kinsey and Young (1986) in their findings contended that evidence from victimisation studies and other sources show that in United States, 90% of crimes known to the police are notified to them by the public. These findings suggest that the best form of policing is a democratic policing; a situation whereby members of a particular community are not only fully committed to their security of life and property but become part of the security outfit.

Furthermore, Alemika and Chukwuma (2005) conducted a survey in August 2004 in Lagos metropolis and noted that because of high incidence and fear of crime in Nigeria, many communities and individuals took several measures to reduce their feeling of vulnerability and minimise risk of victimisation. The first effort made

by the police to that effect was the formation of Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC). The provision for the establishment of PCRC in police divisions aimed at developing public-police partnership (community policing) in the fight against crime in the society. The study shows that a third (34%) of the respondents stated that PCRC existed in their area, while 66% reported that they are aware of the role of Police Community Relations Committee (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2005).

Also, in a report on the study conducted by Alemika and Chukwuma (2004) on the Poor Peoples' Perception and Priorities on Safety, Security and Informal Policing Access to Justice in four focal states in Nigeria, the findings among others were that communities and individuals in four states involved in human safety activities were Benue state (60%), Ekiti state (69%), Enugu state (53%) and Jigawa state (62%). Findings of the study indicated that the citizens of the states partner with the police in maintaining safety in the neighbourhood.

Finally, in the evaluation of community policing forum project by the Centre for Law Enforcement Education in Nigeria (CLEEN) Foundation, there were evidence of involvement of all groups in the project. Results of the study indicated that 63.3% of the population were aware of the project and supported it. Similarly, the police were aware of the project, identified and participated in it in Abak and Ikpokia LGAs of Akwa Ibom and Ogun states respectively (CLEEN Foundation, 2004).

Public Support for police-community partnership in crime control

Police-community partnership is believed to be an effective strategy to control crime, gain police-community confidence and create an environment where crime cannot flourish. In view of this, it enables police to develop improved police-community relationships (Segrave & Ratcliffe, 2004). This provides the police with the opportunity to meet the community's needs (Ferreira, 1996), while increasing public accountability over police through participation (Skolnick & Bayley, 1988; Palmiotto, 2000).

There is strong anecdotal evidence suggesting that police-community partnership in crime control has positive effects on police through increased job satisfaction and improved interaction with, and confidence in the community (Mayhill, 2006; Patterson, 2007). Mayhill (2006) argues that community policing 'embeds' officers within the community where they become more understanding of the local situations and promote a positive image of police. This provides the officers with the opportunity to make positive community-police experiences and contacts, which is said to increase morale amongst police through the encouragement of a supportive and welcoming community (Palmiotto, 2000).

Furthermore, it is widely accepted that community policing increases the perceptions of safety and decreases the fear of crime. Skogan (2006) argues that there is evidence to suggest that increasing community-police interactions are associated with lower levels in fear of crime. However, police and the community have differing levels of perceptions of safety and it has been suggested that police are more likely to perceive a reduction in the fear of crime than the community (Sadd & Grinc, 1996).

Many evaluations have illustrated positive findings in reducing the fear of crime and increasing perceptions of safety. For example, the UK National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP) measured specific indicators of safety which overall illustrated positive results (Tuffin, 2006). The Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) evaluation demonstrated a significant decrease in the community's perception of crime problems (Ferreira, 1996; Skogan & Steiner, 2004). However, Skogan and Hartnett (1998) found that although the reduction in fear of crimes is widespread, the impacts were inconsistent across different ethnic groups.

Finally, police-community partnership (community policing) is beneficial as a policing approach to address a range of different crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour. For example, community policing approaches have been used to address graffiti and property damage to gang violence and organised crime (Skogan & Hartnett, 1998). More recently it has been an approach adopted to deal with anti-terrorist activities in some communities (Pickering, Wright-Neville, McCulloch, & Lentini, 2007).

IV. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted mixed methods research design. This type of design was deemed appropriate because it offered richer insights into the phenomenon being studied and allowed the capture of information that might be missed by utilizing only one research design, enhanced the body of knowledge, and generated more questions of interest for future studies that can handle a wider range of research questions because the researcher was not limited to one research design (Gail, 2013). The study was conducted in Ishielu L.G.A, Ebonyi State, South-East, Nigeria. Ishielu local government is the most heterogeneous local government area in Ebonyi state as it accommodates people with different cultural background in the three political zones of Orri/Agba, Ezzagu and Igboesa zones. It is a gate way local government area from Enugu to Ebonyi state with her headquarter at

Ezillo. Indigenes of the local government area are called cement people because of the deposit of limestone in Nkalagu. Their major occupation includes farming, fishing, civil/public service etc. It has a total population of 152,581 (NPC, 2006). However, the target population of this study were the adult residents who have attained the age of 18years and above that can at least read and write or respond to the research questions. The rationale behind adopting this set of people for the study was predicated on the fact that they have come of age and are matured in Nigeria to have observed and understood police-community partnership in crime control as the newest strategy to control crime. The sample size for this study is 349. Probability and non probability sampling methods were used to select respondents. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used in selecting respondents who were administered questionnaire; simple random sampling method of handdrawing without replacement was used to select Ohofia/Agba, Ezillo and Azuinyaba communities from the zones. The systematic sampling technique was also used in selecting both the villages and respondents while purposive sampling which is a type of non-probability sampling method was used to select IDI respondents based on the relevance and position they occupy in the society. Questionnaires and in-depth interviews were the major instruments used in collecting quantitative and qualitative data in the study. The questionnaire was administered on a one-on-one (other administered) basis to all the respondents while in-depth interviews were conducted when it was suitable and convenient for the respondents with the help of two research assistants who were resident in the area and were trained on the objectives of the study for three days. The researcher moderated the interviews while one of the research assistants took down note and the other recorded the responses using a tape recorder. The data from the questionnaire were processed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) windows, version 17. Frequency tables, simple percentages as well as graphic illustrations were also used to analyze data collected from the field study. The data from the in-depth interviews were analyzed using content analysis.

Findings/Results

Out of the 349 copies of questionnaire administered to the respondents, only 341 copies were correctly filled, returned and used for quantitative analysis. However, 8 copies of the questionnaire were filled wrongly, discarded and were not included in the analysis. The response rate of the questionnaire is 98%. The results and findings of the study were presented in the tables and graphic illustrations below:

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Sex:		
Male	187	54.8
Female	154	45.2
Total	341	100.0
Age:		
18-27years	132	38.7
28-37years	98	28.7
38-47years	62	18.2
48years and above	49	14.4
Total	341	100.0
Education:		
No formal Education	55	16.1
FSLC	22	6.5
SSC/GCE	44	12.9
OND/NCE	77	22.6
B.SC/HND	132	38.7
M.SC/PhD	11	3.2
Total	341	100.0

Occupation:		
Unemployed	63	18.5
Farming	82	24.0
Civil Servant/Public Servant	101	29.6
Students	47	13.8
Trading/Business	48	14.1
Total	341	100.0
Marital Status:		
Single	96	28.2
Married	229	67.1
Divorced	08	2.3
Widowed	05	1.5
Separated	03	0.9
Total	341	100.0
Religion:		
Christianity	289	84.7
Islam	04	1.2
African Traditional Religion	48	14.1
Total	341	100.0
Total	341	100.0

Table 1 shows that 187(54.8%) were male respondents while the female respondents were 154(45.2%). This implies that men are more involved in security matters than their female counterpart. The table also indicates that the respondents who were within the ages of 18-27 years are 132 (38.7%), the respondents within the ages of 28-37 years are 98 (28.7%), the respondents within the ages of 38-47 years are 62 (18.2%), those within the ages of 48 years and above are 49(14.4%). This implies that majority of the respondents were younger respondents.. This age category is made up of matured adults who can respond to the questions in the questionnaire and might have heard and know what police-community partnership in crime control entails. Also, the table indicates that 55(16.1%) of the respondents had no formal education, 22 (6.5%) of the respondents had First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC), 44(12.9%) of the respondents had WASSCE/SSCE/GCE as their highest educational qualification, 77(22.6%) of the respondents had obtained NCE/OND, 132(38.7%) of the respondents had also obtained B.Sc./HND as their highest educational qualification while 11(3.2%) of the respondents obtained M.Sc./Ph.D. as their highest educational qualification. The implication is that majority of the respondents are educated and enlightened, which also raises high expectation to the quality of data to be collected from this group since they are literate. This is not surprising since people from this geo-political zone attach so much importance to education. A further look at table 1 on occupation of the respondents shows that 63(18.5%) of the respondents were unemployed, 82(24.0%) of the respondents were farmers, 101(29.6%) of the respondents were public/civil servants, 47(13.8%) of the respondents were students, 48 (14.1%) of the respondents were engaged in business/trading. The implication is that people who are educated usually work in government offices as civil servants. The table also shows that 96(28.2%) of the respondents indicated that they were single, 229(67.1%) of the respondents indicated that they were married, 8(2.3%) of the respondents indicated that they were divorced, 5(1.5%) of the respondents indicated that they were widowed, while 3(0.9%) of the respondents indicated that they were separated. This shows that majority of the respondents were married. This is not strange since in this part of the country marriage is seen as an acceptable practice and any person who is of age is expected to get married. Also, separation and divorce are frowned at in this zone and this may be the reason why we have small percentage of couples in this category. In terms of religious affiliation, 289(84.7%) of the respondents were Christians, 4(1.2%) of the respondents were Muslims while 48 (14.1%) were worshippers of African traditional religion. This result is expected because Christianity is the major religion practiced in Ishielu local government area of Ebonyi state, South-East, Nigeria, hence the domination of Christians in the area.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the level of residents awareness of the existence of police-community partnership in crime control in Ishielu LGA, Ebonyi State, South-East, Nigeria?

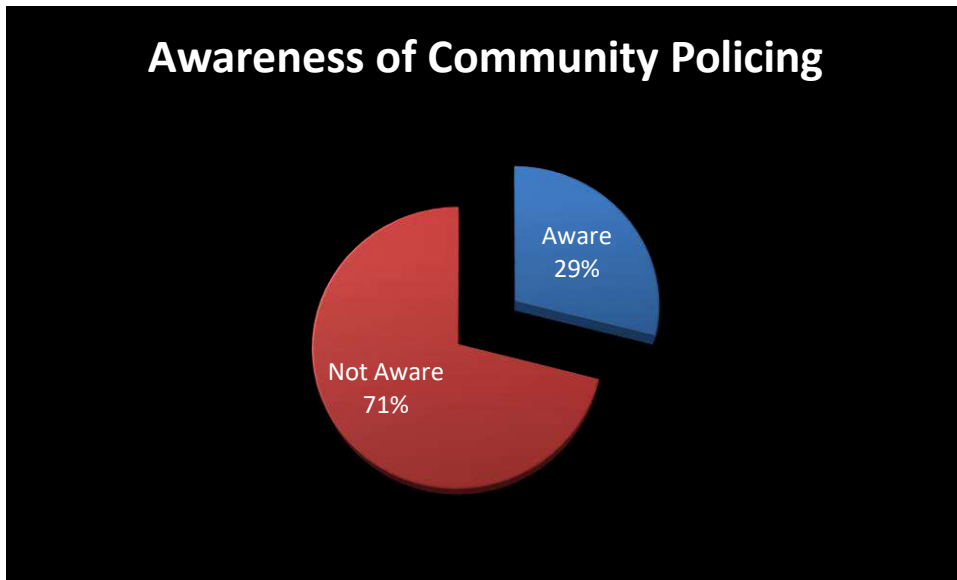


Fig 1: Respondents’ views on their level of awareness of community policing

Figure 1 above summarizes the findings in respect to the above research question in Ishielu local government area, Ebonyi state, South-East, Nigeria. The findings showed that majority (71.0%) of the respondents said that they were not aware of police-community partnership in crime control while only 29.0% of the respondents opined that they were aware of community policing. The finding is not surprising in the study area because the strategy is a new one and appropriate awareness has not been created despite its lofty promises in crime control.

According to an IDI respondent in Ohofia/Agba community :

I have not heard anything like police-community partnership in crime control. I thought the police would come for us to have understanding on how to curb the armed robbery menace in our area. Indeed, the way the police handle our people appears that it would be difficult to have such understanding (Male, 51years, Town Union President, Igwebuikwe village).

Research Question Two: How do residents’ perceive police-community partnership in crime control in Ishielu L.G.A., Ebonyi State, South-East, Nigeria?

Table 2: Respondents’ views on their understanding of police-community partnership

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Police-community partnership is a type of policing where police work together with community members to control crime	13	3.8
It is a collaborative effort between members of the community and police in combating crime in the neighbourhood	47	13.8
Police-community partnership entails community partnership with the police in creating safe and secure environment for all	25	7.3
It is a type of policing where members of the community help the police in controlling crime	14	4.1
Not applicable	242	71.0
Total	341	100

Table 2 above indicates that 13(3.8%) of the respondents saw police-community partnership in crime control as a type of policing where police work together with the community members to control crime, 47(13.8%) of the respondents described it as collaborative effort between police and community members in crime control, 25(7.3%) of the respondents said that it means community partnership with the police in creating safe and secure environment for all, while 14(4.1%) of the respondents described it as a type of policing where members of the community help the police in controlling crime. The implication is that their perceptions emphasize one common idea that police work together with the members of the communities to prevent and control crime.

Research Question Three: What are the reasons for residents' support or lack of support for police-community partnership in crime control in Ishielu L.G.A., Ebonyi State, South-East, Nigeria?

Table 3: Respondents' views for supporting police-community partnership in crime control

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Members of the community can easily identify a criminal and draw police attention	104	30.5
Members of the community can easily work well with the police		
Security of the community is a collective effort between the police and the policed	27	7.9
Members of the community know the terrain and can easily detect the criminal hideouts than an outsider	88	25.8
	67	19.6
Not Applicable	55	16.1
Total	341	100

Table 3 above shows the findings in respect of the above research question. The table also indicates that 104(30.5%) of the respondents said that they are in support of police/community partnership in crime control because members of the community can easily identify a criminal and draw police attention; 27(7.9%) of the respondents were of the opinion that members of the community can easily work well with the police, hence their support for police/community partnership in crime control, 88(25.8%) of the respondents also stated that security of the community is a collective effort between the police and the policed while 67(19.6%) of the respondents stated that they support police/community partnership in crime control because members of the community know the terrain and can easily detect criminal hideouts than an outsider. From these findings, one can rightly say that police-community partnership is an effective strategy in controlling crime in the neighbourhood. A situation where every member of the community has a stake towards the security of their community will be a road map of success in creating an environment where crime cannot flourish since majority of the respondents can easily identify a criminal and draw police attention. Also, findings of the study indicate that the people of Ishielu see police- community partnership as a welcome development and a step in the right direction.

Driving this position home, an IDI respondent in Igboesa zone noted that:

If the police and the community had formed the expected synergy, the security threat that ravaged the community following the Ezza and Ezillo crisis would have been curtailed. Our vigilante group cannot tackle the challenges emanating from the contemporary criminal lifestyle. We need some element of scientific application in crime control from the police which can only be possible if the community forms synergy with the police as our people no longer sleep with their two eyes closed
(Male, 72 years, Traditional ruler, Ezillo community).

Some of the respondents who said that they did not support police/community partnership in crime control were asked to state their reasons and they are presented in Table 3 below:

Table 4. Respondents' reasons for not supporting police/community partnership

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Police cannot be trusted	09	2.6
They are no man's friend	10	2.9
Police are partners in crime	07	2.1
Police are political instrument for suppression	15	4.4
Not applicable	297	87.1
No response	3	0.9
Total	341	100

Table 4 above presented different reasons given by the respondents for not supporting police/community partnership in crime control and they include; that police cannot be trusted 9 (2.6%), that police are no man's friend 10 (2.9%), that police are partners in crime and that police are political instrument for suppression 15 (4.4%); while only 3 (0.9%) of the respondents did not give any reason for their responses. These responses from the study participants do not sound strange considering the fact that the public have negative perception of the police. The Nigerian police are seen as untrustworthy, unreliable, corrupt and brutal.

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study examined awareness, understanding and support for police-community partnership in crime control among residents of Ishielu local government area, Ebonyi state, South-East, Nigeria. In this study, it was observed that majority of the respondents were not aware of the strategy in crime control. This finding lend credence to Okeke (2013) when he noted that one of the problems of police-community partnership in crime control is low level of awareness about the programme by the Nigerian Police officers as well as the general public, and thus, many police officers and the general public are ignorant of the strategy.

Furthermore, one of the in-depth interview participants stated that he had not heard of police-community partnership in crime control, that he thought that the police would come to them to have an understanding on how to curb the menace of crime in their area. However, this finding varies with the result of police-community partnership evaluation in Akwa Ibom state and Ogun state by Centre for Law Enforcement Education in Nigeria (CLEEN) Foundation, where 63.3% of those interviewed were aware of the project and supported it. Similarly, the police were aware of the project, identified and participated in it in Abak and Ikpokia LGAs of Akwa Ibom and Ogun states respectively (CLEEN Foundation, 2004).

Again, the study revealed that a total of 99(29.03%) of the respondents understood what police-community partnership in crime control means. This finding is not surprising since the strategy is a newly introduced one and lack of proper awareness about the programme. Furthermore, the findings of this study showed that majority of the respondents in Ishielu L.G.A. showed support for police-community partnership in crime control because members of the community can easily identify a criminal and draw police attention and that members of the community know the terrain and can easily detect the criminal hideouts than an outsider. This finding is in line with Kinsey and Young (1986)'s findings on victimization studies and other sources showed that in United States, 90% of crime known to the police are notified to them by the public. This is because of confidence and support the members of the public have for the police which necessitated their readiness to give information to the police which is a precursor to effective policing. Again, an IDI respondent in Igboesa zone of the study area also showed his support for police-community partnership in crime control when he noted that if the police and the community had formed the expected synergy, the security threat that ravaged the community following the Ezza and Ezillo crisis would have been curtailed.

Again, results of the study conducted by Alemika and Chukwuma (2004) on the Poor Peoples' Perception and Priorities on Safety, Security and Informal Policing Access to Justice in four focal states in Nigeria, indicated that communities and individuals in four states involved in human safety activities were Benue state (60%), Ekiti state (69%), Enugu state (53%) and Jigawa state (62%). Findings of the study indicated that the citizens of the states partner with the police in maintaining safety in the neighbourhood which corroborated the findings of this study. The findings of this study also lend credence to the finding of Tyler (2003) study conducted in Chicago on "Citizen Satisfaction with Police and Community Policing" and observed that citizens who are satisfied with the police are less likely to fear victimisation, more likely to cooperate with the police, and even less likely to commit crime.

VI. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study showed that police-community partnership in crime control is an effective strategy in crime control due its inclusiveness in attending to crime problems. This is true as research findings showed that most of the respondents applauded the programme as it will bring a good synergy between the police and members of the community which is a precursor for effective policing.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The government should create proper awareness of police-community partnership especially in the rural areas through constant seminars and workshops and not mere media reports.
2. The members of the public should be properly involved in crime control because they know the terrain and can easily identify a criminal.
3. The government should establish neighbourhood watch groups in all communities to serve as direct link between the rural communities and the police. Through this, the performance of the police will be assessed and its acceptance will be enhanced.

4. There should be a stringent punishment to any police officer who indulges in unethical practices which is tantamount to tarnishing the reputation of the police in the eyes of the public. This will therefore strengthen the relationship between the members of the community and the police.
5. The police should engage more on foot patrol programmes which will go a long way to improve citizen's perceptions of the police.
6. The police should have a decentralised command structure to capture all communities because members of the community can work well with officers in their community than the one at the headquarter. This will go a long way in reducing the rate of crime and other vices in their community.

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