AL-HIKMAH JOURNAL OF EDUCATION

Editorial Board

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All papers should be written in English and they must be computer- typed, double line spaced and not more than 15pages of A4paper length.

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COMMUNITY POLICING AS A TOOL FOR SECURITY IN ILORIN METROPOLIS: PERSPECTIVE OF VIGILANTE GROUP OF NIGERIA.

R.M.O. MOHAMMED & M.S. ABOLARIN

Abstract

This study examined perspectives of Vigilante groups on community policing as a veritable tool in community security. The descriptive survey research design was used in this study. The paper has one research question and one research hypothesis to guide the study. The population for the study comprised both members of Vigilante Group and member of the community. Multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted. At the first stage, a purposive sampling technique was used to select two hundred (200) members of vigilante group. Simple random sampling technique was used to draw three hundred (300) respondents (members of the community) at the second stage. A structured questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The reliability co-efficient of the instrument was done using test re-test technique and 0.87 was obtained which revealed that the instrument was reliable enough to carry out the study. The data collected were subjected to appropriate statistical analysis; mean rating and t-test. Hypothesis formulated for the study was tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance. One of the findings revealed that vigilantes adopt the use of problem solving technique to pro-actively address crimes in the community. It is therefore necessary to see the vigilantes as major security stakeholders in securing the immediate environment.

Keywords: Community Policing, Vigilant group, Security

Introduction

Ensuring the security of life and properties within the local communities and the country as a whole is the responsibility of every individual which does not exclude the local government, managers and administrators. As the society grows, social vices and crime rates increase. In recent times, Nigeria has recorded several forms of social vices that could be traced down to the grass root level, such as raping, armed robbery, car snatching, illegal drugs and communal clashes among others. All of these vices have been seen as threat to national security and violation of fundamental human right (Nigeria Constitution, 1999). Therefore, government took concerted efforts in reducing crime rate at all level by reinforcing the law enforcement agencies. Since the modern law enforcement agencies alone could not manage the spate rate of crimes in the community, the trend is to incorporate traditional way of preventing crime by partnering with the members of community who volunteer to uphold the law in their neighborhood such as vigilantes.

There are different names given to vigilantism based on socio-cultural settings. i.e. Odua People Congress (OPC) in Yoruba settings. Community policing has been evolving slowly since the civil rights movement in 1960s exposed the weakness of the traditional policing model. Its origin can be traced to this crisis in police-community relations; its development

has been influenced by a wide variety of factors over the course of the past forty years. Individual elements of community policing, such as improvements in police-community relations, emerged slowly from the political and social upheavals surrounding the civil rights movement in the 1960s. Wide spread riots and protest against racial injustices brought government attention to sources of racial discrimination and tension, including the police. As visible symbols of political authority, the police were exposed to a great deal of public criticism. In respect to this civil unrest, president's commission on law enforcement and the administration of justice (1967) recommended that the police become more responsive to all challenges of a rapidly changing society. In an attempt to facilitate a closer police community relationship, police operations were re -structured according to geographical boundaries (community beats). In flint, foot patrol was part of a much broader program designed to involve in community-solving (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux, 1990)

Community policing is a community oriented approach to policing to combat crime. Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnership and problem solving techniques to proactively address the immediate condition that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder and fear of crime. It is collaborative partnership between the law enforcement agency and individuals and organization they serve to develop solutions to problems and increase trust in police. (U.S Department of Justice). The emergence of community policing can be traced to the mid-1980s as a result of the realization that formal and non-formal means of crime reduction/order maintenance were complementary and that the commonly and conventional police should work together to define community crime prevention (Rosenbaun, 1989). It is the collaboration between police and community that identifies and solve community crime problems (Samuel, 2012; Bakare, 2014). It is widely accepted that community policing increases the perceptions of safety and decreases the fear of crime (Coquilhat, 2008). Skogan (2006) argues that there is evidence to suggest that increasing community-police interactions are associated with lower levels in fear of crime.

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 join together as partners in the course of both identifying and effectively addressing these issues (Office of Community Oriented Policing, 2007). The other dimension is the selection of group people to liaise with the state police in ensuring security in the community. In view of this, community policing is a local method of preventing crime and other social vices with the use of traditional weapons. This method of policing was based on the idea that "local policing have local responsibility to minimize the effect of stranger to stranger policing". (New Zealand Police, 1989). Training in the concept of community policing for those already in police service should not be undermined because the way ideas are presented is critical and since the revised strategies relevant to problem solving and community orientation will require many officers to change their manner in which they perform their duties. Similarly, Andy (2006) outlines some identified benefits of local policing among which are:

- Improving police-community relationships and community perceptions of police;
- Increasing community capacity to deal with issues;
- Changing police officers' attitudes and behaviours;
- Increasing perceptions of safety; and
- Reducing crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour.

Essentially, community policing is a philosophy with operating principles (Caroll, et`al, 2007), based on the assumption that changes today will make communities safer and more attractive tomorrow (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux, 1990). Local communities across Nigeria, as in many other countries in Africa and elsewhere, have created their own informal or sometimes formal structures to try to ensure the security of the population. These groups have usually been composed of individuals from the local community. They have derived their credibility, and unofficial authority, from the community in which they serve. One of the main purposes of these initiatives has been to complement the police in identifying and handing over criminal suspects to the appropriate judicial authorities. They have also sometimes tried to settle other conflicts between individuals in the community. Since the late 1980s, local forms of vigilantism have been common in Nigeria. Most villages have some form of watch or protection, either through organized systems of night guards or through more informal networks to monitor the local situation. Throughout the mid-1990s, state authorities, the police, and traditional rulers called upon villages to set up vigilante patrols; these often involved contests for rights and privileges and negotiations between young men and their elders, as well as the formal judicial bodies. In more recent years, mounting frustration with the steady increase in violent crime in Nigeria, exacerbated by the inefficiency and widespread corruption of the police force, has led to the formation of many more vigilante groups across the country.

Statement of the Problem

Against the back ground provided, the need to integrate community policing in combating crime in our society cannot be over emphasized. As society grows, different forms of deviant behaviors outrageously grow along with it. As a result of this, it becomes difficult for the law enforcement agency to manage crimes and other social-vices efficiently. In addition to this, trust and confidence of people in conventional Police is deteriorating, hence, the need for community policing. Lack of adequate information about local communities by the police to carry out their duties as expected, all these have been seen as impediments to an effective policing. As a result, virtually every community in the country, especially in Ilorin metropolis initiate vigilante groups for the purpose of policing the community concerned. The question is, has emergence of vigilante groups made any difference in the security of the various communities in the metropolis?

Research Question

What are the impacts of community policing in Ilorin metropolis as perceived by community members and vigilante groups?

Research Hypothesis

HO_1: There is no significant difference in the perspective level of community members and vigilante group on the impacts of community policing in Ilorin metropolis.

Methodology

The descriptive research design was employed in this study. The design is relevant because it sought to obtain the opinions of the respondents on the Impact of community policing as a tool for community security in Ilorin Metropolis: perspective of vigilante group of Nigeria. The population for the study comprised members of Vigilante Groups and general public. Multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted. At the first stage, a purposive sampling technique was used to select two hundred (200) members of vigilante group. At the second stage, simple random sampling technique was used to draw three hundred (300) respondents (members of the community). A structured questionnaire was used as a major instrument for data collection.

The questionnaire consisted of two (2) Sections: Section A covered demographic data of the respondents while, Section B contained ten (10) items on the impact of community policing as a tool for community security in Ilorin Metropolis: perspective of vigilante group of Nigeria. Responses to these items were taken on Four Points Likert's Scale type. The items in the instruments were validated by experts in the fields of adult education, test and measurement through a cross-examination by peer review in relation to the research question raised for the study. The reliability co-efficient of the instrument was carried out using test re-test technique and 0.87 was obtained which revealed that the instrument was reliable for the study.

The administration of the instrument was done by the researcher and four research assistants who were trained by the researcher on how to administer it. Researcher identified Ilorin Zonal Office of the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN) and instrument was administered to them during their monthly general meeting by the research assistants who understand the local language and familiar with the language of the environment. The data collected were subjected to appropriate statistical analysis Mean and t-test. All decisions were taken at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Results

This section of result deals with collation, analysis and interpretation of data collected as illustrated below:

Demographic Analysis of the Respondents

Frequency counts and percentage were used to describe personal characteristics of respondents as shown in tables below.

Table 1: Demographic distribution of the respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	260	52.0
Female	240	48.0
Total	500	100.0

Table 1 shows demographic distribution of the respondents by gender. Out of 500 respondents sampled, 260 representing 52% of the respondents were male, while 240 (48%) of the respondents were female.

Table 2: Demographic Distribution of the Respondents by Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18-25	381	76.2
26-35	77	15.4
36 above	42	8.4
Total	500	100.0

From table 2, the age distribution of the respondents shows that 76.2 percent of the respondents are within the age of 18-25 years of age, 15.4 percent are within 26-35 years of age and 8.4 percent are 36 years of age and above. This indicates that more youth are involved in Vigilante Group in Kwara State than any other age group.

Table 3: Demographic Distribution of the Respondents by Status of the Community

Status in Community	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Vigilante Members	200	40
Members of the community	300	60
Total	500	100

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In table 3 above shows that about 40 percent of the respondents are Vigilante Group Members while 60 percent are members of the community.

Table 4: Demographic Distribution of the Respondents by Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	377	75.4
Married	123	24.6
Divorced	0	0
Total	500	100

From table 4, among the respondents 75.4 percent of them are single, while 24.6 percent are married. Hence, majority of the respondents are single.

Answering the research question

What are the impacts of community policing in Ilorin metropolis as perceived by community members and vigilante group?

In order to answer this research question, responses of the respondents to items that addressed impact of community policing in Ilorin metropolis, were collated and subjected to mean calculation and the result is shown in the table 5 below.

Table 5: Mean and ranking order the impact of Community Policing in Ilorin Metropolis

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	Rank	Decision
	Impact of Community Policing			
1	Community policing helps to curb crime rate in my environment	2.86	6th	Accepted
2	Life and properties of the people are secured in my community through vigilante's activities	3.94	1st	Accepted
3	Vigilantes helps in the recovery of lost items in my community	3.72	2nd	Accepted
4	Vigilantism promotes peaceful co-existence in my community	2.69	7th	Accepted
5	Vigilantes are always ready to pay attention to people's complain in my community	2.91	5th	Accepted
6	Vigilantes treat matters with fairness in my community	2.59	8th	Accepted
7	Vigilantes intervene in settling of disputes when the need arises in my community	2.58	9th	Accepted
8	Vigilantes mount their designated area very well in my community	3.15	4th	Accepted
9	Vigilantes promote organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnership in my community	2.54	10n	Accepted
10	Vigilantes adopt the use of problem-solving techniques to proactively address crime issues in my community	3.46	3rd	Accepted

From table 5 above shows that, out of ten (10) items that addressed the impact of community policing in Ilorin metropolis, it was found that, life and properties of the people are secured in my community through vigilantes activities, had a mean score of 3.94 which ranked first. Vigilantes' help in the recovery of lost items in my community attracted mean score of 3.72 which is ranked second. The mean score of the ranked third is 3.36 which are vigilantes help in the recovery of lost items in my community. Vigilantes mount their designated area very well which attracted the mean score of 3.15 and ranked fourth. All other items followed with the least as "Vigilantes promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnership in my community" having the mean score of 2.54. In all, the grand mean of 2.51 which is above the mean point of 2.5 indicates that community policing through the activities of the vigilantes impacted the communities positively by answering effective policing of the community.

Hypothesis Testing
One research hypothesis was formulated in the course of this study.
Ho: There is no significant difference in the perspective level of community members and vigilante group on the impacts of community policing in Ilorin metropolis.

Table 6: The t-test difference in the impact of community policing in Ilorin metropolis based on the opinion of community members and vigilante group.

Variables	N	Mean	Std.	Df	Cal.t-value	Sig.	Decision
Vigilante	200	32.9850	4.18838				
				498	1.472	0.332	Accepted
Members of Community	300	33.5686	4.43648				

$P<0.05$

In table 6 above, it reveals that the calculated t-value 1.472 with degree of freedom 498 and level of significance 0.332. Since the calculated level of significance (0.332) is greater than chosen alpha level of 0.05, the hull hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the impact of community policing as perceived by the community members and the vigilante group.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of this study revealed that the impact of community policing is high as the mean score of each item obtained is above a cut-off score of 2.50. Life and properties of the people are secured in my community was ranked 1st with 3.94 Mean. Vigilantes adopt the use of problem-solving techniques to proactively address crime issues in the community ranked third with 3.46. These findings lend support to Bayle (1988) that, community police officers develop affinity for community security and consequently succumb to providing them with a larger share of policing resources and the practice is reinforced by orthodox rank-and –file culture. Vigilantes treat matters with fairness in my community ranked 8th with 2.58 which is in accordance with Eck & Rosenbaum (1994), who argue that for more active community groups equity is more about participatory management and power sharing. This perspective of Eck & Rosenbaum has to do with citizen involvement in decision–making, in community defense, in problem –solving, in various community empowerment schemes and even distribution of police resources. Vigilantes intervene in settling of disputes when the need arises in the community which is ranked 9th of 2.58 mean score and is in accordance with Bulakarima, et'al (2007) who remarked that management of conflict using peaceful, non-violent methods has been around for a long time. Violent is normally frowned at. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the perspective level of community members and vigilante groups on the impact of community policing in Ilorin metropolis which shows that community policing takes pro-active and reactive actions towards improvising security among the communities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper examined the impact of community policing in Ilorin metropolis: perspective of vigilante. The findings of this study invariably indicated that, community policing remains an important way of securing life and properties of the people at the grassroots level. Community policing in the locality play a significant role and effectively used to foster relations with the community and as a means of increasing positive attitudes towards the conventional police and perceptions of their legitimacy in the local community. In addition, trust and confidentiality of people in local security agents is higher than they do in public police officers according to the findings of this study.

It is therefore necessary to see the vigilantes as major security stakeholders in securing the immediate environment.

The vigilantes need to be trained and educated about their role in policing to encouraged active participate. Government should institutionalize some of these community-based crime prevention groups; Provision of incentives for effective policing, Recognizing their status in the society serve as a motivation factor for effective services.
The communities should synergize with the conventional and community police providing good quality information about crime in their local area for effective policing and in most cases the identities of the informant should be protected.

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