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THE IMPACTS OF SCHOOL LOCATION ON NEIGHBOURHOOD CRIME RATE IN ILORIN METROPOLIS: AN EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

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Abstract
Schools play a significant role in every society. They create opportunities by bringing out the socio-economic potentials of the neighbourhoods and also attract both economic and social activities to the area. Nonetheless, schools are also a cause of social vices such as crime and violence. Just as criminality in communities that surround a school can spill over into the school and disrupt learning activities, so does criminality among students, can spill into the immediate environment. This study investigates the extent to which the presence of public secondary schools is linked to the crime rate in some neighbourhoods where schools are located in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey was the research design adopted and purposive and simple random sampling methods were used in selecting 476 respondents for the study. The study employed a structured questionnaire for data gathering and information gathered was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSSS). The results indicated a statistical relationship between the presence of schools, age of perpetrators and neighbourhood crime rate in communities understudy. The study, recommends the need for more effective and efficient school-management strategies among schools and adequate control measures in communities where schools are located in Nigeria.

Keywords: Nigerian secondary schools, neighbourhood crime, school location, youth criminality

Introduction
Schools play a significant role in every society. They serve as a place of learning and a foundation for human development and are a major source of development to places they are located (Lupton &Hempel-Jorgensen, 2012). Generally, schools create opportunities by bringing out the socio-economic potentials of the neighbourhoods and also attract both economic and social activities to the area. In this way, schools bring a unique and autonomous effect to the nearby communities (Willits et al., 2013).

Nonetheless, schools are not only invulnerable to but also a cause of social vices such as crime and violence. Just as crime in communities that surround a school can spill over into the school and disrupt learning activities, so does crime at school or criminality among students, can spill into the immediate environment and beyond (Willits et al., 2013). Conversely, schools can be a cause of criminality and other vices to the neighbourhoods where they are located due to the nature of students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and life experiences (Willits et al., 2015). However, the negative effects of schools on the neighbourhood depend largely on school-specific organizational patterns and control strategies put in place to checkmate students' behaviour (Willitset al., 2013).

Many studies on school crime and student criminality around the world have largely focused on the dynamics of the crime (Burrow, 2008; Veenstra et al., 2005; Wilcox et al., 2005). Most of them explored the causes and consequences, characteristics of the offender and victims, and school-based measures adopted in addressing issues and averting future occurrence (Burrow, 2008; Veenstra et al., 2005). Moreover, previous academic investigations on neighbourhood crime rates have focused on its influence on nearby schools, particularly on learning activities. A considerable number of these studies found statistical relationships between neighbourhood crimes and disruption of learning activities in nearby schools (Kautt&Roncek, 2007; Wilcox et al., 2005). However, the opposite relationship on whether school location and student criminality influence neighbourhood crime patterns in communities where schools are located is unclear, this is due to scanty empirical studies in this area.

For instance, available literature consistently indicates that the existence or presence of high schools in the United States of America (USA) increases crime rates in nearby communities. Gouvis-Roman, (2004) like LaGrange (1999), and Roncek and Faggiani (1985) stressed that the location of high schools in some communities in Texas, California and Denver predicts neighbourhood crime. In the same way, Murray and Swatt (2013) suggested the same trend in places where higher institutions of learning are located and/or where college students reside. However, such inclination is barely evident in neighbourhoods with elementary schools (Murray &Swatt, 2013). Virtually all these studies relied on secondary data from the law enforcement agencies and were analysed based on patterns of crime, socio-demographic characteristics of the offenders and social control measures in communities in the USA. Whereas such evidence is yet to be replicated in other countries around the world, particularly in Africa.

Generally, secondary schools in Nigeria are considered independent factors that influence and elevate rates of crime and threat in neighbourhoods they are located. Intellectuals with this interpretative notion try to lay emphasises on the extent to which the presence of secondary schools has predicted crime that extends beyond the school environment (Ogba&Igu, 2019). The fundamental basis for this argument is the perception that the criminogenic tendency of students strongly influences

neighbourhood crime in most communities in Nigeria. Across all the intellectual (subjective and objective) views, it is unclear as to whether school location contributes to crime independently, this is because much works have not been done in this area in Nigeria. To this end, this paper attempts to fill this gap.

While much of the available literature and anecdotal reports suggest that the presence of schools (independent variable) influences neighbourhood crime rates(dependent variable) have not been subjected to scientific investigation, this research aims to provide empirical evidence on the relationship between the two variables. Specifically, the study gauges the extent to which the presence of public secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis is linked to the crime rate at the local neighbourhoods or communities where the schools are located. To test whether there is a significant relationship between the variables, the study postulates (hypothesis) that communities, where public secondary schools are situated in Ilorin metropolis, will not have or experience more crime rates. The study also aims to fill in the gap in the literature and knowledge about the impacts of school location on neighbourhood crime. To this end, the study relies on the routine activity theory to support and justify the findings.

Literature Review

School Location and the Immediate Communities

Schools are generally charged with the responsibility of performing academic functions of increasing knowledge and career preparation and opportunities (Walden, 2009). In addition to these, they are meant to change and improve student attitudes and behaviour (Bucher& Manning, 2005).Central to the attainment of these functions is the local communities where they are located. This is because the immediate school environment plays a significant role in determining student enrolment, staff strength and providing a conducive and appropriate learning environment for the realization of the objectives (Willits et al., 2013). In this way, the school automatically becomes a community within a larger community (Walden, 2009). Members of the school will be part of the local community reflecting its values through exemplary behaviour of learners and staff (Louis, 2006).

In the same way, the school reflects the community's social and educational needs. Essentially, it exists to enable and facilitate teaching and learning process to take place, and helps the immediate communities to organise the future of their members through investments in the young generation (Lubienski, 2013). Through its curriculum and instructional methods, the school develops different kinds of skills including intellectual, vocational, and problem-solving capabilities to help others and to preserve and maintain social relationships and process of community development (Bucher & Manning, 2005).

Additionally, schools teach students how to obey rules and regulations and dissuade them from delinquent behaviour that would undermine the progress and development

of the community (Brint, 2020).Furthermore, schools employ teachers and administrators from educated members of the community who would otherwise be unemployed (Lubienski, 2013). The location of a school thus predicts members' access to reasonable educational and employment opportunities (Brint, 2020).These suggest that schools are significant players in the development of communities they are located.

In Nigeria, schools, particularly public primary and secondary schools are generally located in local communities to bring formal education closer to the indigenous people. The agenda of successive governments in Nigeria is to provide access to a complete and quality education to all children no matter where they live and their circumstances, within a safe and enabling learning environment (Ajaja, 2012). Therefore, some schools are named after philanthropists and the communities they are located.

Student Volatility in the Nigerian Community

The wave of criminality among youths of school age is increasingly alarming in Nigerian society. Instability, violence and criminality are common occurrences in school settings (Ajaja, 2012). Hardly a day goes by without a report or news of a crime committed by a school-age boy or girl. They are either caught by the school authorities or arrested by the police for various kinds of delinquencies and despicable acts such as stealing, drug dealings (abuse and addiction), assault, homicide and sexual-related offences among others (Fawole et al., 2018). These conundrums, according to some scholars, are a manifestation of the conglomeration of learners from diverse backgrounds, religions, ethnicity, and life exposure who are placed together under one community (school) for the purpose of acquiring knowledge and experience social relations (Omisoreet al., 2012).

Generally, this composition and its varying consequences, according to Omisore et al. (2012) have been an issue of contention among school administrators in Nigeria due to the enormous effects it has on the value of learning and the larger society. Specifically, criminality among public secondary school students in Nigerian schools and their immediate local communities has reached an unprecedented proportion in recent decades. It ranges from external attacks to internal student outbreaks which in most cases result in serious injuries and even deaths of fellow students, teachers and members of immediate school communities, disruption of education system and learning process, and destruction of (school) public and private properties among others (Fawole et al., 2018; Owoaje&Ndubusi, 2010; Uko et al., 2015). The impulsiveness has been credited to the emergence of crisis and rivalry between student gangs and confraternity groups, peer group influences, students' exposure to violent movies and video games, parental neglect and lack of supervision and guidance, failure of religious institutions to preach love and patience, deficiency in school control measures etc. (Ogba&Igu, 2019; Ezemenaka, 2021).

Students' disruptive behaviour in schools and neighbourhood communities have received extensive coverage from both conventional and social media. There are numerous reported cases of students clash with teachers and school management, law enforcement agents, community members and drug dealers which occasioned destabilisation of community peace and resulted in wrongful profiling and arrest of some innocent students by the police force (Ajayi&Ingwu, 2006). In addition, there are reported cases of theft of property, livestock, burglary and sexual related offences perpetrated by students in some communities where schools are located (Ajayi et al., 2004;Uko et al., 2015;Omisore et al., 2012).All these in turn have triggered public panic, fear of crime and violence (Ajayi&Ingwu, 2006).

Theoretical Underpinning

This study centred on the routine activity perspective. The theory is predominantly associated with the work of Cohen Lawrence and Marcus Felson (1979). Routine activity theory focuses on how daily activity of social life could motivate or lead to crime. The theorists held that in every given social setting, some individuals or groups will always have the inclination to commit a crime. The decision to engage in it largely depends on their access to unguided opportunities and a rational evaluation of the associated risks and benefits (Felson, 2000). Thus, criminal activities usually result from individuals' access to opportunities that often emerged in the course of daily life routines (Salihu, 2020).

According to Cohen and Felson (1979), there will be a convergence of three indispensable elements for a criminal act to take place. These elements include motivated offenders, suitable targets, and the absence of capable guardians (such as control measures).If any one of these elements is absent, crime is less likely to occur. To Cohen and Felson, specific places are relatively prone to crime, due to the convergence of these elements. For instance, school, by its nature, is a social setting expected to bring people from different backgrounds together. Its location increases neighbourhood criminality by bringing together groups of young or underage children under a condition that provides insufficient social control (Felson, 2000).Accordingly, it brings potential offenders in contact with material targets or victims under limited guardianship (Felson, 2000). In another words, schools bring together an aggregate of school-aged adolescent that are more likely to compromise the value and collective existence of nearby communities and consequently inflate crime rates.

Using routine activity theory to explain hot spots location such as schools and neighbourhood crime rates, Kautt and Roncek (2007), like LaGrange(1999) and Sherman et al.(1989)found that certain places (hot spots) designated as criminogenic locations (places with presence of high-level offenders and targets) are prone to crimes because of suitable targets. They become more vulnerable with the presence of potential offenders and less capable of control measures to protect the victims. For instance, the density of students in communities where schools are located can increase the possibility of crime in the area due to the availability of, and easy access to

the immediate residential communities (Kautt&Roncek, 2007).According to Veenstra et al.(2005), given the compositions, the hot spots will generate crime due to the convergence of the motivated offenders, targets and lack of guardianship. The immediate communities are expected to be infiltrated by the activities of the motivated offenders.

In another study, Roncek and Lobosco (1983)adopted routine activity theory and found that communities that contain or are near public high schools in San Diego, California city blocks, the United States of America, have higher crime rates than other blocks in the city. Similar results were found in Cleveland, Ohio (Kautt&Roncek, 2007). Hence, from the position of routine activity theorists, secondary schools are places with risks of harbouring potential or motivated offenders. According to Willits et al. (2013), secondary schools are largely populated by adolescents and/or young adults who have high tendency to engage in criminal activities than individuals in other age groups. Evidence shows that individuals in this age group are generally considered to have criminogenic patterns because they have a higher rate of offending. Therefore, the presence of schools in some communities ensures the convergence of motivated offenders and targets (victims)(Rand & Catalano, 2006).

Research Methods

The study was carried out in Ilorin, the capital city of Kwara State, located in the North-Central geopolitical region of Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey was adopted. The population for the research included all the communities where secondary schools are located and where crime and violence are prevalent within Ilorin metropolis. Some communities were purposely selected due to persistent incidence of violence and reported cases of students' attacks on the residents. They include Adeta community (comprising Aromaradu and Apalara), Ita-nmo community (covering Alfa-Yahaya, Oke-foma and Iderade), Oloje community (including IpataOloje, Federal Low Cost Estate, Agunbiade), and Ansaru community (covering Ogidi, Aajare and Onilaru). With regards to the selection technique, simple random sampling method was employed to select the respondents for the study. This method gives all the residents of the selected communities the opportunity to participate. A total of 476 (n=476) respondents participated in this study.

A structured questionnaire was used in gathering data from the respondents. The questionnaire was designed in 5-point Likert format (a psychometric response scale which allows research respondents to identify their level of agreement to a statement in five points; usually Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, and Strongly agree) and divided into 3 parts: socio and demographic information of respondents (such as age, gender, and education), questions relating to respondents' views on location of schools in their neighbourhoods, and issues concerning crime rate and students' activities in the area.

In administering the questionnaire, the researchers met with some elders in the selected communities to seek permission and their support for the research. Following this, the researchers were allowed to attend community meetings where issues affecting these communities were discussed. Through this, members were provided with information about the research and its implications, their rights to participation, assurance of anonymity and confidentiality of any information shared. Finally, information gathered was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) in generating frequency distribution and simple percentage of respondents' responses and the regression analysis to test the hypothesis and answer questions relating to the research objective.

Findings and Discussion

Table 1: Respondents' demographic information

Items	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender- Male	257	54
Female	219	46
Total	**476**	**100**
Age- 20-25 years	76	16
26-30 years	171	36
31-35 years	129	27
36 years -above	100	21
Total	**476**	**100**
Education		
Secondary School	67	14
NCE/ND	171	36
HND/Degree	90	19
Informal Education	**148**	31
Total	**476**	**100**
Religion		
Christianity	105	22
Islam	371	78
Total	**476**	**100**
Occupation		
Civil servant	162	34
Private employee	57	12
Self-employed	119	25
Unemployed	138	29
Total	**476**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 1 presents respondents' socio-demographic information. The table indicates that 54% of the respondents were male and 46% were female. Also, 16% of the respondents were between the ages of 20-25 years old, 36%fell between 26-30 years old, 27% were between 31-35 years old and 21% were between the age of 36 years old and above. In addition, it can be observed that 14% of the respondents had secondary education, 36% have National Diploma and National Certificate in Education, 19% had Higher National Diploma and Degree and 31% have informal education. Moreover, 22% of the respondents were Christians and 78% were Muslims. Additionally, 34% of the respondents were civil servants, 12% were employees of private organizations, 25% were self-employed and 29% were unemployed.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents' responses to the level of neighbourhood crimes and violence

Item	Frequency	Percentage%
Very High	271	57
Somewhat high	86	18
Neither high nor low	67	14
Somewhat low	38	8
Very low	14	3
Total	**476**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 2 presents respondents' responses to the question on the existence and extent of crime in their neighbourhoods. The table shows that the majority (57%) of the respondents were of the view that crime is very high, 18% said it is somewhat high and 14% held that it is neither high nor low, while 8% believed that it is somewhat low and 3% said it is very low. These results imply that the majority of the respondents held that crime is widespread in their neighbourhoods.

Table 3: Respondents' responses to the presence of school and the widespread criminality, and the level of effects

Item	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	14	3
Neither agree nor disagree	33	7
Somewhat Agree	138	29
Strongly Agree	291	61
Total	**476**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 3 presents respondents' view on whether the presence of schools in their neighbourhood is responsible for the widespread criminality in the areas. The results indicate 61% of the respondents strongly agreed and 29% somewhat agreed that the presence of school in their communities has effects on local crime rates. However, 7% neither agreed nor disagreed while 3% somewhat disagreed and none of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 4: Respondents' response on the common types of crime

Items	Percentage (%)
Drug dealing and abuse	73%
Theft of livestock	97%
Burglary	83%
Theft of property	61%
Sexual harassment	53%
Violence (fight and instability)	81%

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Respondents were asked to pick (6) common crimes experienced in their neighbourhoods. Thus, Table 4 presents crimes respondents identified as the most pervasive. These include drug dealing and abuse, theft of livestock, theft of property, burglary, sexual related crimes and violence (in terms of instability and persistent fights).The table shows that 97% of the respondents identified theft of livestock as the most prevalent crime, 83% and 81% ticked burglary and violence, 73% ticked drug dealing and abuse, 61% theft of property, and 53% sexual harassment. These results clearly indicate that theft of livestock is very high in the communities under study followed by burglary, violence including persistent fights, drugs, property and sexual-related crimes.

Table 5: Respondents' response on the age and gender of perpetrators of crime

Item	Below 15 year old	Between 15 and 20 years old	Between 21years old -above	**Total**
Age	205 (43%)	248 (52%)	23 (5%)	476
Gender	Male (boys)	Female (girls)		476
	362 (76%)	114(24%)		

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 5 presents respondents' opinions on the age and gender of the perpetrators of crime. Respondents were asked to tick from the provided options, the gender and age circle they consider perpetrators of crime in their neighbourhoods fall. For the age, the options provided include: below 15 years old, between 15 and 20 years old and between 21yearsold and above. From the table, it can be observed that 43% of the respondents believed that the age of the perpetrators falls below 15 years, 52% said between 15 and 20 years old while 5% held that perpetrators are between 21 years old and above. The results, thus, suggest that perpetrators of crime in the communities under study are teenagers of secondary school age. Moreover, the table indicates that the majority (76%) of respondents believed that most of the perpetrators of the crime are boys, while 24% held that they are girls. These results indicate that both the boys and girls engage in crime in the communities under study, though it is more common among the boys than the girls.

Table 6: Regression analysis of the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable

Predictors	B	T	P	R	R^2	F	Sig.
Presence of school	.468	3.436	<.05	.748[a]	.586	54.574	.000
Age of perpetrators	.263	2.651	<.05				

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 6 presents the summary of regression analysis indicating the influence of the presence of school and age of perpetrators of crime on neighbourhood crime. The results in the table show that R2 (R-Square) which measures the extent of variance in the dependent variable is 59. This indicates that the presence of school and age of perpetrators of crime significantly predict the occurrence of neighbourhood crimes in the communities under study in Ilorin metropolis. Besides, the analysis of variance that estimates if R2 is considerably greater than (>) 0 is 0.000. In other words, F= 54.574, Sig. value 0.000 < .001, and R2 = .58. The results show that the P-value for the predictor is less than the alpha value; thus, there are statistical relationships between the predictors and neighbourhood crime.

Results presented indicate that crime is pervasive in the communities under study; and the common crimes identified include drug dealing and abuse, theft of livestock and property, burglary, sexual related crimes and violence as a result of persistent fights by students. Moreover, the regression analysis on the predictors (independent variables) is in general consistent across all the types of crime reported. It clearly indicates that the location of secondary schools in these communities and the age of perpetrators reported are significant and positive predictors of all types of crime included in this analysis. This thus suggests that neighbourhoods characterised by the existence of senior secondary schools are most likely to experience a higher level of crime including theft, violence and drug crime among others.

These findings are consistent with a number of positions (both the academic literature and public speculations) that linked neighbourhood crime to community structure (Willits et al., 2015; Kautt&Roncek, 2007; Willits et al. 2013). In the same way, the findings invalidate some viewpoints that disregard the connection between the variables (Roncek&Faggiani, 1985). Scientifically, the study reinforces the impression that schools have some influence on the neighbourhood crime rate; thereby contributing to the scientific knowledge on the relationship between school location and neighbourhood crime. Besides, the study largely supports routine activities theory and illuminates how the established relationships can best be described using the theory. The routine activities theory contends that communities with schools (secondary school in this case) would experience higher crime rates due to the convergence of three essential elements: motivated offender, a suitable target (victim) and effective control measure (security system).Given that crime is a product of opportunities that emanate from these elements, secondary school students (due to the loose restrictive system in Nigerian public secondary schools)are typically unsupervised and unrestrained adolescents who rarely attend lessons in the class and move around the neighbourhood during and after school hours. It therefore not surprising that residents are vulnerable to crimes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research investigates the nexus between school presence and crime rates in some communities where secondary schools are located in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State,

Nigeria. Based on the results presented, conclude that the presence of secondary schools in some communities in Ilorin tends to have a significant relationship with crime counts at neighbourhood level. In order words, communities with secondary schools in Ilorin are more likely to report high crime rates such as theft, burglary, drug dealing and abuse, sexual related offence and violence among others. Accordingly, there is a need for more effective and efficient school-management strategies among the secondary schools in Ilorin and other cities in Nigeria. The stakeholders should come up with an efficient modality such as adequate security measures and constant student headcounts to manage and control the movement of students during and after the school hour. Moreover, communities, where schools are located, need to put in place adequate and effective control measures to protect members of the community from crime and violence.

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