The Role of Community Policing in Managing Emerging Insecurity in IMO State: An Analysis of Awareness Levels and Effectiveness

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Abstract

This study examined the awareness levels and effectiveness of community policing as a strategic tool in tackling the menace of emerging insecurity in Nigeria and specifically in Imo State. It adopted cross-sectional type of research design and social control theory as its theoretical framework. In this study, the Krejcie and Morgan statistical table for sample size determination was used to come up with a sample of 384 respondents. A proportionate sampling technique was then adopted which ensures that each local government area is represented in the sample, according to its population size. The data collection instrument utilized was a structured questionnaire. Tables and simple percentages were used to analyse the data that were collected. Results revealed an unappreciable level of awareness of community policing and its ineffectiveness was strongly acknowledged hence no breakthrough story has been recorded as a result of community policing. It is recommended that adequate awareness should be raised about the importance of community policing through effective sensitization efforts in the communities. Government should provide adequate funding of the security outfit and ensure periodic training of officers in line with international best practices to enhance its effectiveness.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Policing, Emerging Insecurity

Introduction

The level of crimes and insecurity in Nigeria is said to be on the increase in recent times, and several efforts of various security agencies especially the police in ensuring peace and security of lives and properties have shown to be a difficult task in curtailing the level of crimes in the society Before the movement for an independent Biafra Republic and government intervention into the Biafran struggle, the Southeast was a fairly, peaceful zone. Now with the sit-at-home order of IPOB, the tension and insecurity in the region have tremendously increased (Nnodim et al., 2024). Imo State presents a compelling case for examining the interplay between community policing and management of insecurity. The region has witnessed increasing reliance on vigilante groups and other informal security actors to complement police efforts. However, challenges such as resource constraints, lack of coordination due to inadequate equipment, insufficient training, and a lack of personnel proficient in modern weaponry and these have hindered the full realization of community policing's potential (Olowolagba et al., 2025)

Imo State, situated in south eastern Nigeria, presents a unique socio-political landscape shaped by its communal traditions and increasing urbanization. Over the years, the state has faced an array of security

challenges, including armed robbery, cultism, kidnapping, and inter-communal disputes. These issues have exacerbated public concerns about safety, further eroding confidence in the state's policing system. The adoption of community policing offers a transformative pathway to tackle these challenges by integrating traditional security structures with modern, community-oriented strategies (Okafor & Aniche, 2015).

Keeping peace and maintaining safety of citizens and property cannot be over emphasized for the progress and survival of any sovereign nation. It can be viewed as a precondition for good governance leading to socio-economic growth, political advancement, national peace building, human capital development, human freedom and proper functioning of a society. The necessity of community policing has increased in recent years as a result of an increase in criminal activity in our various neighbourhoods (Ordu & Nnam, 2017). There can never be enough police officers to effectively police everyone in the society so as to put an end to crime or reduce it. A greater number of crimes are solved through information gathered from community members apart from crimes that has to do with consenting adults such as prostitution and drug trafficking. It is also worthy to point out here that the criminal justice process will suffer major setbacks if the citizens do not volunteer to take up the risk of testifying or supplying intelligence to the police. The community possesses the most suitable resources to detect and report crimes or attempt to prevent them. Wealthy nations such as Japan, China, and Singapore employ a community-oriented approach to law enforcement, whereby they rely on community members to report any suspicious activities they observe (Onyeozili et al., 2021).

Community policing is a crime reduction strategy that envisages a closer partnership between responsible members of the community and the police in reducing crime. It is both a philosophy (a way of thinking) and an organizational strategy (a way of carrying out that philosophy) that allows and enables the police and the community to work together in solving problems of crime, disorder and safety issues in order to improve the quality of life for everyone in the community, Community policing is a potential tactic for thwarting crime. It is a more thorough approach that takes into account the underlying causes of crime. Community-focused law enforcement is a form of reactive public protection that aims to promote and augment communication between law enforcement and local residents. Although the model originated in the USA in the late 20th century, it has become prominent globally and transitioned from its traditional illness-centric approach to a comprehensive community-based response (Abdul et al., 2021).

Community policing is the systematic involvement and inclusion of credible local guards, vigilance groups, able-bodied civilian youths, and traditional rulers and chiefs. The central purpose of community policing is to achieve a far-reaching success in crime prevention and control at the grassroots. Community policing has gained so much attention in the recent past as community stakeholders search for a more effective ways to promote safety of lives and properties in the community. It can only thrive where every member of the community participates in crime prevention and problem-solving efforts in the community which is central to the idea of community policing. This crime management approach simply put in other words entails community member's participation, engagement or involvement of individual community members and stakeholders in crime management in the community. According to World Health Organization (W.H.O), community participation is "a process by which people are enabled to become actively and genuinely involved in defining the issues of concern to them, in making decisions about factors that affect their lives, formulating, implementing policies, planning, developing and delivering services and ultimately taking action to achieve change". Community policing begins with community participation that is involving the community members in identifying the security problems and risk (Lee et al., 2019).

Communities, according to Kpae & Eric (2017), can serve as police officers in their own right. Likewise, community policing, as described by the American Society of Community Police, is a way of thinking that places a high value on collaborating with citizens to prevent crime and resolve crime-related concerns, such as traffic accidents. Partnership is critical to the effectiveness of community policing, as both the police and the general public must work together to effectively combat criminal behaviour in order to be effective in their efforts. In the assertions of Olusegun (2016), residents of a particular community are more likely than others to be able to easily identify and track down those who commit evil within their immediate socioeconomic environment because they have a thorough knowledge and understanding of their geographical surroundings. Instead of using punishment as the main way to stop crime, community policing initiatives use a variety of crime prevention strategies that help police officers build relationships with the people they serve.

As a concept that begun several decades back in the United Kingdom and United States, it did not come to Nigeria until 2004. This policing method has been included into modern policing so that the police will adapt to democratic system of governance. Community policing should be welcomed not only because traditional policing has been falling since it is reactive rather than proactive, but also, the police personnel are part and component of the community that they serve. Three tactics make community policing extremely distinct from traditional policing: community cooperation, organizational reform, and issue solutions. Looking at the present instability in Nigeria, commitment to the principles of community policing can allow the Nigeria Police Force to address the security difficulties.

Community policing as a framework for crime management promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015). Tillman (2000), as cited in Ibrahim et al, (2016) defined community policing "as bringing police and citizens together to prevent crime and solve problems, emphasizing the prevention of crime rather than the traditional policing method of responding to crime after it happens".

The responsibilities of community leaders encompass a wide range of issues, including addressing various problems and social conditions (Agwanwo,2023). The growing demand for community policing, specifically in Nigeria, is rooted in the acknowledgment that community members, despite their lack of scientific expertise in law enforcement, have a significant stake in fostering harmonious cohabitation. Despite the availability of sophisticated technological resources, the police cannot exclusively assume the responsibility of upholding law and order within a community. Nevertheless, the community can cultivate harmonious cohabitation even in the absence of law enforcement (Onyeozili et al., 2021)

In conclusion, apart from strengthening crime prevention efforts in other communities across the nation, this study offers a chance to investigate the awareness levels and effectiveness of community policing and the intricate relationship between community-led security practices and crime management outcomes, which will have a positive impact on policies aimed at fostering a safer and more inclusive society in Imo State.

Statement of the Problem
The increasing rate of crime in Imo state has generated a feeling of insecurity where the citizens are overwhelmed with fear. The citizens are constantly living their lives in uncertainties not knowing who will

be the next victim. Armed robbery, kidnapping, political assassination, one chance syndrome, ritual killing, prison break, murder, burglary, amongst others has become so common that there is confusion and chaos in the state. The state government seems to have lost grip of the situation and has suddenly appeared to become unpopular to the people of the state. Non state actors like IPOB now issues order of sit-at- home which the people are compelled to obey for fear of being a scape goat in the hands of these non-state actors. Economic activities has been grounded, educational institutions are not left out, and corporate organizations most days shut down operations for fear of being attacked. The state government seems to be helpless and clueless on the proper security management approach to be applied in the prevailing circumstance.

Instances of banditry, kidnapping, and indiscriminate violence resulting in the loss of innocent lives and destruction of property have been reported. The prevalence of criminal activities has reached a concerning level, causing residents in more than 600 self-governing communities within the 27 local government areas of Imo state to feel completely helpless. The prevalence of criminal activities has reached a concerning level, causing residents in more than 600 autonomous communities within the 27 local government areas of Imo state to feel completely helpless. The rich and the political elites no longer stay nor visit their home town because of the fear of the criminal activities taking place at home. Numerous individuals, including security personnel, fear for their lives due to the relentless attacks by marauders. Several police stations in certain communities throughout the state have been intentionally set on fire. Unidentified assailants assaulted the Owerri Correctional Centre, located in close proximity to the Imo state Government House, resulting in the liberation of approximately 1,844 prisoners (Premium Times Newspapers,2021). Economic development in the state has been hampered, everyone has been affected in one way or the other and we have all come to terms that this is an evil wind which blows no good to anyone.

Therefore, the quest to address these challenges by analysing the awareness levels and effectiveness of community policing as a strategic tool in the management of crime in Imo has necessitated this social investigation.

Aim and objectives of the study
   a) To examine the level of awareness of community policing among the residents in Imo State.
   b) To investigate the effectiveness of community policing in Imo state.

Research Questions
   a) What is the level of awareness of community policing in Imo State?
   b) How effective is community policing in Imo State?

Literature Review
Policing
Policing encompasses the actions taken to ensure the safety and protection of individuals residing in a specific area, shielding them from harmful activities that pose a threat to their welfare. In the context of policing, a community refers to a specific geographical area with a known population. This population may or may not be similar in nature, but they all share a common goal of safeguarding their lives and property. Further, it may have recognized a common concern or interest regarding security. In Nigeria, communities range from culturally homogeneous to very heterogeneous. However, it is imperative to observe that Nigeria is a multiethnic, multidimensional, and multicultural society. Community groups may have emerged under certain circumstances or through a conscious collective decision. Irrespective of other factors, individuals hold specific anticipations regarding their locality, including the absence of fear and a

longing for a tranquil standard of living, which is encapsulated by the concept of "security." Community policing is a law enforcement strategy that places emphasis on the preservation of order, the prevention of crime, and the reduction of fear within the community. This goes far beyond the traditional notion of targeting only serious street offenses. The topics covered in this broad collection include principles with far-reaching effects on the philosophy and strategy and tactics of policy. In this sense, community policing will be conceptualized as an amalgamation of community-oriented and police-oriented policing.

The concept of "community", as delineated by Ngwu & Ahuruonye, (2017) refers to a group of individuals who share a common bond, which can be based on geographical location, social interactions, or a shared sense of identity, values, or goals. Moreover, community can also refer to a residential area where individuals coexist, or a collective of individuals sharing a specific and shared identity, such as race, ethnicity, or religion. Additionally, it can encompass individuals with similar professions, interests, or requirements, or those who share common experiences. The concept of "policing" revolves around ensuring the safety and security of individuals residing in a specific geographic area, such as a clan or village, by discouraging actions that are harmful to the well-being of the community. Community members cultivate collective beliefs and establish shared norms of behavioral patterns. In essence, communities are characterized by a sense of belonging and the embodiment of morally grounded values and beliefs. They operate within a specific geographical area where social interactions and relationships occur.

Brief History and Evolution of Modern Policing in Nigeria
The police are the most visible representative of the criminal justice system and, by design, one of the few public agencies that respond to calls for service. The history of organized police is traced back to England, where the first modern metropolitan police force was established in 1829 to replace the security constables. Among the many reasons for the institutionalization of law enforcement in Britain were the rampant corruption of the constables and the justices; the Industrial Revolution and consequent growth in wealth and population of towns, which multiplied opportunities for crime; and the breakdown of law and order (Critchley, 1967; Hart, 1951) as cited in Onyeozili et al (2021).

Community Policing
Community policing involves all determined and well-articulated efforts geared towards maintaining law and order, guaranteeing the protection of lives and properties of the citizens, prevention and detection of crime through community partnerships or engagements. Community policing comprises community partnerships, organizational transformation, and problem-solving. It involves collaborative efforts between law enforcement agencies and the community to identify and address issues effectively (Lawrence, Fennelly, & Perry, 2024)

According to Ivorgba. (2024). Community policing is a strategy that emphasizes collaboration between local communities and law enforcement to enhance public safety and crime prevention. It involves community engagement, understanding crime's underlying causes, and fostering trust and social cohesion for effective security management. Community policing involves collaboration between police and the community for public safety. Tools like public engagement, education, guidance, and analysis are key components in implementing this model effectively. (Veselov, et al, 2023) More so, Community policing, as opined by Evelyn, (2023) emphasizes the relationship between police and the community, focusing on collaboration, engagement, and specialized programs to enhance community trust and safety. Community policing is a collaborative approach between police and communities, emphasizing problem-solving and mutual support. It relies on innovative partnerships to address community issues effectively Caroline

(2022). Community policing (CP) is a proactive policing approach that emphasizes community involvement. It seeks to enhance public safety through collaboration between police and community members, fostering trust and addressing local concerns while implementing performance measures to evaluate effectiveness. Community policing is a strategy that emphasizes building partnerships between law enforcement and community members to address public safety concerns proactively. It fosters collaboration, problem-solving, and communication, recognizing that police cannot tackle all issues alone, enhancing overall community security. Community policing is an innovative approach promoting police-community interaction for crime reduction and law enforcement effectiveness through citizen-police affiliation, proactive engagement, and trust-building strategies. (Imam, 2022).

Insecurity

According to Imam (2014), security is the absence of danger or threat in one's day-to-day activities. Security is the state in which a person, a group, or a community can move freely to go about their everyday business without worrying about danger, bodily harm, or property destruction. The government's top priority is to ensure the safety of people and property. This is the reason why governments have set up multiple security forces to protect national security, thwart external threats, and ensure internal security. Lack of security or an uncertain situation occurs when an individual, group, or community is in the process of being subject to or exposed to risk in a specific area. A situation in which someone is not sufficiently guarded, protected, or defended by the authorities who are supposed to provide security is also referred to as insecurity (Webster, 2019). Anywhere it exists, insecurity poses a major risk to people's lives and property, impedes commercial operations, and deters both foreign and domestic investment, all of which impede a nation's ability to develop socioeconomically (Ewetan, 2014).

Furthermore, management of insecurity or Crime management can be referred to as any concerted activities focused towards mitigation or reduction of crime impact in the society. Crime is defined as any conduct that breaches the law. Hence, it is defined according to laws, and changes from society to society or omission, from state to state, from period to time, and from strong enforcement to none. Nevertheless, the argument asserted by postmodern theorists of crime and deviance is that we presently live in a world marked by fragmentation and diversity, where society is divided into a vast array of groups with disparate interests and standards of living, and where change occurs frequently and at a rapid pace. These theorists regard the concept of 'crime' as just a social construct, founded on a confined legal definition, duplicating an old meta-narrative of the law which does not reflect the spectrum of postmodern society. In postmodern culture, people are becoming liberated from the limitations deriving from social conventions and social relationships to others. Crime is merely a manifestation (Onyige, 2018)).

Community policing strategies include the creation of partnerships and the introduction of problem-solving techniques and organizational change within law enforcement agencies (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1998). Evidence suggests that effective community policing is significantly correlated to the management of crimes. A study by Davis et al. (2019) on the relationship between community policing and crime management indicated that areas well-implemented community policing programmes enjoyed a decrease in crime rates and an increase in trust from law enforcement officers. The relationship also proved similar to that of a study by Ekhator (2020) in Anambra State, Nigeria. Ekhator emphasized the importance of community policing strategies, which increased instances of crime reporting by 30% on account of improved police- community relations. Similarly to this work on reform initiatives for policing in Nigeria, According to Ernest et al., (2022) the media serve as a potent conduit for police communication with the community, hence fostering amicable police-public relations. Community policing acknowledges that law

enforcement cannot independently address all public safety issues, thereby fostering collaborative collaborations. The police engage the public to formulate problem-solving strategies and gather intelligence. The comprehensive evaluation of community-oriented policing is favourable, with both police and community people affirming its efficacy in diminishing crime and enhancing the sense of security within the community. Okon et al., (2021) said proactive engagement, town hall meetings, foot patrols and mediation initiatives yielded a 15% decrease in violent crimes. This suggests that inclusive and participatory policing would enhance the effectiveness of crime management.

Theoretical Framework
This study adopted the social control theory
This theory asserts that crime and social disorder can occur more likely in societies where there is weak social structures and low level of social control. There are two control systems that impede people's zeal to deviate or carry out criminal activities which are the inner controls and the outer controls. The inner controls are the internalized morality which consists of the conscience, the ideas as regards to right or wrong, the apprehension of punishment including the desire to be seen as a nice and person. The outer controls are made up of external images of society which also includes friends, family, and the law enforcement agencies which has the influence to compel people to act within the ambits of the law and societal rules. According to Hirschi (1969) this theory posits that bonds can either trigger a good or bad behavior in the society. He further asserts that if there is effectiveness in the inner controls, people are not likely to embrace deviant behaviours. He opined that the stronger the bond that individuals have with the social institutions such as the family and the school, the lesser the propensity to commit crime or deviate from the accepted norms and rules of the society.

Methodology
Research Design
The study was carried out using cross- sectional survey design. A quantitative method which involves the use frequency tables and simple percentages for the analysis and interpretation of data. In the research design, questionnaires was utilized to collect data across research elements.

Study Area
The study area is Imo State. Imo State was created on 3rd February, 1976 under the leadership of General Murtala Mohhamed out of the old East Central State and the capital is Owerri. Imo State is made up of twenty-seven local government areas which are Aboh–Mbaise, Ahiaazu Mbaise, Ehime Mbano, Ezinihitte Mbaise, Ideato North, Ideato South, Ihitte/Uboma, Ikeduru, Isiala/Mbano, Isu, Mbaitoli, Ngor-Okpala, Njaba, Nkwerre, Nwangele, Obowo, Oguta, Ohaji/Egbema, Okigwe, Onuimo, Orlu, Orsu, OruEast, Oru West, Owerri Municipal, Owerri North and Owerri West. The area is currently notorious for high level of insecurity.

Analysis of data
Table 1: Distribution and return rate of Questionnaire

N0. OF RESPONDENTS	QTY DISTRIBUTED	QTY RETURNED	PERCENTAGE %
381	384	384	100
-	-	-	-
TOTAL **381**	384	384	100

SOURCE: Researcher's computation (2025)

Table 1 shows the distribution of questionnaires among the respondents, a total of three hundred and eighty-four (384) copies of the questionnaires were distributed amongst respondents, and all three hundred and eighty-four (384) copies of the administered questionnaires were returned valid. Thus, the data in Table 4.1 implies a one hundred percent (100%) response rate of the administered questionnaire.

Table 2: Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents.

AGE	Frequency	PERCENTAGE %
18-25	150	39.06
26-33	140	36.46
34-41	60	15.63
42-49	24	6.25
50 Above	10	2.60

SOURCE: Researcher's computation (2025)

Table .2 shows the socio-demographic profile of respondents which reveals that the number of respondents within the age of 18-23 years is 105 out of the 384 which represents 27.34%,those within 24-29 years is 85 which also represents 22.14%,30-35 years is 51 representing13.28%, 36-41 is 35 respondents representing 9.115, . those within the age of 42-47 years is 38 representing 9.90%, 48-53 years is 40 representing 10.42% while 54 and above is 30 representing 7.81%.

In all, the table implies that majority of the respondents are within the age of 18-23 which is one hundred and five (105) thereby representing 27.34%.

Table 3 Educational Qualification

Respondents Qualification	Frequency	Percentage%
No Formal Education	4	1.04
Primary	-	-
Secondary	310	80.73
Tertiary	70	18.23
Total	**384**	**100**

SOURCE: Researcher's computation (2025)

Table 3 shows that four respondents representing 1.04% of the total 384 respondents do not have formal education, 310 respondents attended secondary and this represents 80.73% while 70 respondents representing 18.23% attended tertiary institution. In all, those that had secondary education are the majority which represents 80.73% of the total respondents.

Table 4 Religious Affiliation

Religious Affiliation	Frequency	Percentage %
Christianity	320	83.33
Islam	57	14.85
African Traditional Religion	7	1.82
Total	**384**	**100**

SOURCE: Researcher's computation (2025).

Table 4 reveals the religious affiliation of respondents. The table indicates that 320 respondents are Christians representing 83.33% of total respondents, 57 respondents representing 14.855 are of Islamic religion while 7 respondents representing 1.82%   of total respondents. This means that majority of the respondents are Christians.

Table 5 Occupations of respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage %
Civil servants	80	20.83
Business	220	57.29
Unemployed	-	-
Farming/Fishing	-	-
Students	84	21.88
Total	**384**	**100**

SOURCE: Researcher's computation (2025).

Table 5 reveals the occupations of the respondents indicating that 80 respondents are civil servants representing 20.83%, 220 are Business people representing 57.29 while 84 respondents are students representing 21.88%. This implies that majority of the respondents are business people hence they have 57.29%,

Table 6 Marital status of respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage %
Married	250	65.10
Single	80	20.83
Divorced	10	2.60
Widow/Widower	44	11.47
Total	**384**	**100**

SOURCE: Researcher's computation (2025).

Table 6 shows the marital status of respondents thus revealing that 250 respondents representing 65.10 % are married, 20.83% are single, and 2.60% are divorced while 44 respondents representing 11.47% are widow/widower. The data in the above table indicates that majority of the respondents are married.

Table 7 To examine the level of awareness of community policing among the residents in Imo State.

Variables	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	DA (%)	SDA (%)
I am aware of the concept and purpose of community policing in Imo State.	10(2.60)	24(6.25)	-	98(25.52)	252(65.63)
I have received information about community policing through public awareness campaigns, media, or community meetings.	16(4.17)	28(7.29)	-	160(41.67)	180(46.88)
Community policing initiatives are well-publicized and accessible to the general public in my area.	3(0.78)	4(1.04)	14(1.82)	100(26.04)	270(70.31)

SOURCE: Researcher's computation (2025)

Table 7 reveals that 252 respondents out of 384 representing 65.63% strongly disagree that they are aware of the concept and purpose of community policing in Imo State, 98 representing 25.52% disagree, 24 representing 6.25% agree while 10 representing 2.60% strongly disagree. This suggests that majority of the respondents strongly disagree that they are aware of the concept and purpose of community policing in Imo State.

The study also found that 180 respondents representing 46.88% strongly disagree that they have received information about community policing through public awareness campaigns, media, or community meetings, 160 representing 41.67% disagree, 28 representing 7.29% agree while 16 respondents representing 4.17% strongly agree. This implies that majority of the respondents strongly disagree that they have received information about community policing through public awareness campaigns, media, or community meetings,

Furthermore, table 7 revealed that 270 respondents representing 70.31% strongly disagree that community policing initiatives are well-publicized and accessible to the general public in their area, 100 representing 26.04% disagree, 1.82% were undecided, 4 representing 1.04% agree while only 3 respondents representing 0.78% strongly agree. This implies that majority of the respondents strongly disagree that community policing initiatives are well-publicized and accessible to the general public in their area.

Table 8 To investigate the effectiveness of community policing in Imo state.

Variables	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	DA (%)	SDA (%)
Community policing has helped reduce crime and insecurity in my community.	5(1.30)	10(2.60)	25(6.51)	90(23.44)	254(66.1)
The collaboration between community members and the police has improved through community policing efforts.	30(7.81)	60(15.63)	20(5.21)	114(29.69)	160(41.67)
Community policing officers respond promptly and effectively to security concerns in my area.	20(5.21)	40(10.42)	10(2.60)	119(30.99)	195(50.78)

SOURCE: Researcher's computation (2025)

Table 8 shows that 254 respondents out of 384 respondents representing 66.10% strongly disagree that community policing has helped reduce crime and insecurity in their community,90 representing 23.44% disagree, 6.51% were undecided,10 representing 2.60% agree while 5 representing 1.30% strongly agree. This suggests that majority of the respondents strongly disagree that community policing has helped reduce crime and insecurity in their community.

The study also found that 160 respondents representing 41.67% strongly disagree that the collaboration between community members and the police has improved through community policing efforts, 114 representing 29.69% disagree, 20 representing 5.21% were undecided,60 representing 15.63 agree while 30 respondents representing 7.81% strongly agree. This implies that majority of the respondents strongly disagree that the collaboration between community members and the police has improved through community policing efforts.

Additionally, table also indicate that 195 respondents representing 50.78% strongly disagree that community policing officers respond promptly and effectively to security concerns in their area.

119 representing 30.99% disagree, 2.60% were undecided, 40 representing 10.42% agree while 20 respondents representing 5.21% strongly agree. This implies that majority of the respondents strongly disagree that community policing officers respond promptly and effectively to security concerns in their area.

Discussion of Findings

The study examined the role of community policing in managing emerging insecurity in Imo state: an analysis of awareness levels and effectiveness.The first study objective examined the level of awareness of community policing among the residents in Imo State. According to findings, the residents of Imo state are not fully aware of the concept and purpose of community policing in the state. The study also suggests that the residents are yet to received information about community policing through public awareness campaigns, media, or community meetings also that community policing initiatives are not well-publicized and accessible to the general public in their area and therefore hinders the effectiveness of community policing. This finding underscores the the imperatives of public awareness campaign and citizens sensitization on the concept of community policing. This finding also aligns with the postulation of Ernest et al., (2022) who asserts that the media represent a powerful pattern by which the police can communicate with the community and that enhances a cordial police-public relations. Community policing recognizes that police cannot solve every public safety problem alone, so interactive partnerships are created. The police use the public for developing problem-solving solutions and generating information. Also in agreement with this finding is Veselov, et al., (2023) that posit that tools like public engagement, education, guidance, and analysis are key components in implementing this model effectively. (Veselov, et al, 2023) More so, Evelyn, (2023) emphasized the relationship between police and the community, focusing on collaboration, engagement, and specialized programs to enhance community trust and safety.The overall assessment of community-oriented policing is positive, as both officers and community members attest to its effectiveness in reducing crime and raising the sense of security in a community.

The second research objective investigated the effectiveness of community policing in Imo state. According to findings, majority of the respondents posited that community policing has not helped to reduce crime and insecurity in their community. It was also revealed that there is no tangible collaboration between community members and the police. This finding aligns with Okon et al., (2021) who posited that proactive engagement, town hall meetings, foot patrols and mediation initiatives yielded a 15% decrease in violent crimes and Imam, (2022) who maintained that community policing is an innovative approach promoting police-community interaction for crime reduction and law enforcement effectiveness through citizen-police affiliation, proactive engagement, and trust-building strategies.

This also suggests that inclusive and participatory policing would enhance the effectiveness of crime management.

Conclusions

In view of the finding, this study concludes that the awareness level of community policing in the state calls for urgent attention and its effectiveness leaves more to be desired. To tackle the menace of insecurity in the state, proper awareness on the imperatives of community policing and proper funding of this policing model should be prioritized to ensure its effectiveness.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this research, the following recommendations are made:

1. Community policing initiatives should be well-publicized and accessible to the general public in the state.
2. The collaboration between community members and the police should be improved through community policing efforts.

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