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INFLUENCE OF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP ON COMMUNITY POLICING IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the nexus between Community Leadership and Community Policing in Osun State, Nigeria. The study made use of four objectives and four research questions. The research design adopted was a mixed-methods research design. The population of the study are 270 community leaders, comprising one hundred and fifty from Irewole and one hundred and twenty from Isokan Local Government Areas, respectively. A self-designed questionnaire titled 'Community leadership and Community Policing in Osun State, Nigeria' was used for the study. The study made use of descriptive and thematic analysis, respectively. The instruments were subjected to face and content validity. The study used the Cronbach alpha reliability approach, which produced 0.81, which showed that the instrument was reliable. The collected data were subjected to analysis using mean, standard deviation and ranking. Participants' gender was 74% male, 26% female, with age ranges and percentages of (18-25) years, 15%, (26-35) years, 48%, (36-45) years, 23% and (46) years, 14% respectively. Findings showed that community leadership played a vital and indispensable role in the success of community policing initiatives. community leaders should implement neighbourhood watch programmes, which are the most effective channels in mitigating crimes through community policing. Challenges faced by community leaders in managing crime through community policing require a comprehensive and collaborative, and multifaceted approach respectively which is necessary to address barriers faced in managing crime through community policing. Therefore, the study concluded that the policy makers, law enforcement agencies, community organisations and community members should work collaboratively to support and empower community leaders, community and law enforcement agencies to prioritise the implementation and expansion of neighbourhood watch programmes, address the lack of human and financial resources, implement regular community meetings and outreaches, increase transparency and accountability in law enforcement practices.

Keywords: Community, Community Leadership and Community Policing.

Introduction

The emergence of communities can be attributed to small family groups, who came together to protect themselves and exchange resources, which led to the establishment of small kindreds and clans. Over time, these people developed and expanded to a more advanced society. The

changes in the world have led to various developments, particularly technologically, which have invariably expanded crimes. The Greeks' idea of what a community constituted represented the classical view of what a 'community' was. It is sometimes referred to as a structure that can be called an advance on a degenerated form of tribalism with kings such as Achilles and Agamemnon (Abiona,2012).

However, the concepts of community policing and leadership have also gained traction in the fight against the negative aspects of crime. To maintain social order and guarantee public safety worldwide, community leadership and community policing are crucial components (UNODC 2020). Abiona and Osu (2017) claim that leadership is an interaction process. Leaders and followers were at odds. A leader makes an effort to convince followers achieve a common goal. Previous leadership research has identified several distinct leadership philosophies that are applied in associations or management. The success of community development projects depends on strong local leadership and citizen participation to achieve sustainable community development (Abiona and Osu 2020), as leadership is essentially the possession of requisite of knowledge and skills needed for effective management of human and material resources to produce required results (Ojokheta, Oladeji, & Omokhabi, 2018). The intricate web of connections between the acknowledged authority figures and the interaction of their social roles within the community is known as the community leadership structure. These influential people, also referred to as leaders, steer society's affairs to accomplish goals (Olajide 2016). The idea of leadership is essential to any society's ability to survive. To maintain social order and promote health, leadership is still required even in situations where norms have been established. The act of leading involves guiding, swaying and managing people to achieve a common objective. This suggests that the leaders have the responsibility for making decisions (Itu, 2016). The idea of community policing can be attributed to British Statesman Robert Peel, known as the founder of modern policing due to the book he launched, the Principles of Democratic Policing. The United Nations stresses community policing as an important element of sustainable development (UNSDG, 2015). Community policing is a symbiotic and concerted effort of the police and members of the host communities with the sole aim of reducing the incidence of crime and criminal activities.

Crime is a complicated and multidimensional problem that has an impact on people, communities, and societies all over the world. It covers a wide range of crimes from small transgressions to major legal infractions, and it can have serious repercussions for victims, offenders, and the community at large. The effects that crime has on public safety and security are among the main issues. Victims of crimes like violence, theft, and vandalism may feel vulnerable and afraid, which can undermine their faith in the criminal justice system and law enforcement. Furthermore, crimes can have a substantial negative impact on the economy and society, resulting in everything from lost property and productivity to increased demand on social services and healthcare. The number of crime cases in Osun State, Nigeria, has dramatically increased in recent years. Notable crimes include the murder of

Timothy Adegoke, the kidnapping of Adamu Ibrahim's son and political and ritual killings before the Local Government elections on February 22 2025, among others. Concerns regarding the security situation and the necessity of stepping up efforts to fight crime and guarantee justice for victims and their families have been raised by these incidents. Theft, burglary and robbery are also common among the populace in Osun State. Economic necessity is frequently the driving force behind these property-related crimes as offenders look to support their families or augment their income. Domestic violence, assault and battery are among the common crimes that often result from disagreements and conflicts within families, neighbourhoods and communities. The safety and well-being of people are seriously threatened by these insecurity problems, which also obstruct socioeconomic development and the fostering of communal harmony. Due to community members' preference for informal dispute resolution procedures like mediation and arbitration, these crimes frequently go unreported. it is critical to address the underlying causes and create efficient preventative and response plans. To combat insecurity, community policing has become more popular in Nigeria (Nigeria Police Force 2020). According to the Nigeria Police Force (2020), the National Community Policing Strategy seeks to improve the collaboration between communities and law enforcement. Academics have highlighted the importance of community policing in Nigeria, emphasising cooperation and the development of trust (Onwudiwe 2020, Chuckwuna 2017). Community Police Forums (CPFS) Neighbourhood Watch groups, and Police Community Relation Committees (PCRCS) are examples of community policing initiatives in Nigeria. Osun State offers community policing both special opportunities and challenges because of its diverse cultural and economic landscape. Community leadership is a crucial function of traditional institutions, Community Development Associations (CDAS) and organisations for women and youth. Crime is a complex and multifaceted issue that affects individuals, communities, and societies worldwide. It encompasses a broad range of offences, from minor infractions to serious violations of the law, and can have far-reaching consequences for victims, perpetrators and the broader community. One of the primary concerns surrounding crime is its impacts on public safety and security. Crimes such as violence, theft, and vandalism can create a sense of fear and vulnerability among individuals eroding trust in law enforcement and the criminal justice system. Moreover, crimes can have significant economic and social costs, from the loss of property and productivity to the strain on healthcare and social services.

These crimes often go unreported, with community members preferring to resolve issues through informal means, such as mediation and arbitration. These more serious offences are often perpetrated by organised groups and criminal networks, taking advantage of the state’s strategic location and porous borders. The proliferation of weapons and the increasing presence of criminal elements have contributed to a growing sense of insecurity among community members (Semiu & Ankeli, 2023). These crimes not only harm individuals but also undermine the trust in community leadership and law enforcement, making it essential to address the root causes and develop effective

strategies to prevent and respond to these crimes.

The development of trust and cooperation between law enforcement and the community is made possible by community leadership, which is crucial to community policing (Ogundiya 2020). The success of community policing initiatives depends on the ability of capable community leaders to form partnerships, effectively utilise available resources and promote group efforts (Akinlabi 2017). To resolve conflicts and address problems, community leaders can serve as a liaison between the police and the populace (Tankebe 2013). Community leadership's capacity to identify and address local safety and crime issues, as well as to offer tailored solutions that meet the particular needs of the community, is another essential component of community policing Isreal (2021). According to Alemika (2010), community leadership promotes transparency, accountability and community involvement, which boosts trust and credibility for community policing initiatives. Community leaders and law enforcement organisations can work together to create safer and more cohesive communities that give everyone a sense of security and worth (Fleming 2015). Community vigilante groups (CVGS) are one of the initiatives that Nigerian community leadership has put in place to prevent and respond to crime (Olatunji, & Adeyemi 2024) Globally, community policing has become acknowledged as an effective tactic for building relationships and trust between local communities and law enforcement (United Nations 2014). Throughout the 1980s, community policing was introduced in the UK with a focus on building relationships between local communities and law enforcement (Foster 2003). Strategies like restorative justice and police-community partnerships were used to improve the strategy in the 1990s (Crawford 1998). With the express goal of promoting cooperation and trust between law enforcement and Indigenous communities, community policing was introduced in Australia during the 1990s (Blagg 2001). The idea has since been expanded to include additional areas like urban and rural communities (Mazerolle et al., 2019). In the African community, policing has its roots in traditional community-based judicial systems where elders and community leaders played a crucial role in maintaining law and order (Tankebe 2013). Uganda adopted community policing in 1989 as a way to control the social unrest and political upheaval that had started in 1986. In Tanzania, the formation of Sungusungu/Wasa lama traditional defence groups marked the beginning of community policing. These volunteer-led organisations were created to address problems like banditry, cattle rustling, cattle theft-related homicides and witchcraft beliefs. With the establishment of the Nigeria Police Community Relations Committee (NPCRC) in the 1980s, community policing was introduced in Nigeria (Madubuike., & Obayemi, 2018) Through the implementation of neighbourhood watch programmes and community patrols, the NPCRC aimed to improve the relationship and foster trust between local communities and law enforcement agencies. According to (Isreal (2021)). The Nigeria Police Forces (NPF) Community Policing Strategy and other initiatives have helped community policing in Nigeria grow significantly in recent years. Through proactive problem-solving, community engagement, and cooperation, this approach seeks to strengthen ties and foster

trust between law enforcement and local communities (Ogundiya 2020). Despite challenges, community policing in Nigeria has shown promise as studies have shown increased cooperation and trust between local communities and the police (Akinlabi 2017). According to Palmiotto (2000) it places a strong emphasis on building relationships between the police and the community to address the underlying causes of crime, fear of crime, disorder and neighbourhood deterioration. One strategy for lowering crime is community policing, which entails a closer partnership between the police and law-abiding citizens. A comprehensive strategy that blends an organisational strategy with a philosophical mindset is community policing. To address issues of crime disturbance and security, Additionally, community leaders have launched advocacy and awareness campaigns to inform the public about the repercussions of criminal activity and the significance of informing law enforcement of crimes (Adeyemi 2016). To improve trust and cooperation between the community and law enforcement, they have also worked with law enforcement organisations to create community policing tactics (Oladejo 2017). In community policing serving as a liaison between the community and law enforcement is a crucial role of community leadership (Ogundiya 2020). They help build trust facilitate efficient communication and encourage cooperation between law enforcement and the community (Akinlabi). Given this context the study intends to investigate the relationship between community policing and community leadership in Osun State Nigeria. To direct the investigation the following research questions were developed. (1) What are the perceived influences of community leadership on Osun State Nigeria community policing initiatives? (2) What channels do community leaders use to mitigate crime through community policing in Osun State Nigeria? (3) What obstacles do community leaders encounter when attempting to manage crime through community policing in the area being investigated? (4) How can these obstacles be overcome?

Research Method

A mixed-methods research design was employed for the study. All community leaders, including the head of the household compound and house, made up the study population. A multistage sampling strategy was used. In the first stage, two local government areas, Irewole and Isokan, were chosen from the Osun West senatorial district using the Purposive sampling technique. In the second stage, 150 participants were chosen from the Irewole local government area, and 120 participants were chosen from the Isokan local government area using the simple random technique. 270 people in all made up the sample size. The Questionnaire on Influence of Community Leadership on Community Policing in Osun State (ICLCP) was a self-designed instrument used in this study. It was an instrument. Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.81 indicates satisfactory reliability after internal consistency and content validation. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to analyse the data. whereas descriptive and thematic analyses were used to examine the in-depth interviews (IDIs).

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What are the perceived influences of community

leadership on community policing initiatives in Osun State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Descriptive statistics showing the respondents' view towards the perceived influences of community leadership on community policing initiatives in Irewole and Isokan LGAS of Osun State, Nigeria.

Items	Mean	S. D	Rank
Community leaders influence the success of community policing initiatives in my community.	3.19	0.69	1st
Contribute to the development and implementation of community policing initiatives.	3.18	0.85	2nd
Build trust and credibility between law enforcement agencies and community members	3.14	0.82	3rd
Facilitate communication and collaboration between law enforcement agencies and community members.	3.07	0.82	4th
Involved in the decision-making process for community policing initiatives	3.05	0.89	5th
Promote community policing initiatives and raising awareness about their importance	2.99	1.05	6th

Source: Field Survey (2025).

For the perceived influences of community leadership on community policing initiatives, the empirical outcomes in Table 1 revealed that community leadership influenced the success of community policing initiatives in my community ($\bar{x}$ =3.19) ranked first, contribute to the development and implementation of community policing initiatives ($\bar{x}$ =3.18) ranked second, build trust and credibility between law enforcement agencies and community members ($\bar{x}$ =3.14) ranked third, facilitate communication and collaboration between law enforcement agencies and community members ($\bar{x}$ =3.07) ranked forth, involve in the decision-making process for community policing initiatives ($\bar{x}$ =3.05) ranked fifty, and promote community policing initiatives and raising awareness about their importance ($\bar{x}$ =3.07) ranked sixth, respectively.

The findings of the study reveal a significant role of community leaders in the success of community policing initiatives, with their influence ranking first ($\bar{x}$ =3.19), indicating that they have a profound impact on the effectiveness of these initiatives. Additionally, community leaders contribute to developing and implementing community policing initiatives ($\bar{x}$ =3.18), ranking second, highlighting their importance in shaping and executing community policing strategies. The findings also show that community leaders build trust and credibility between law enforcement agencies and community members ($\bar{x}$ =3.14), ranking third, and facilitate communication and collaboration between these entities ($\bar{x}$ =3.07), ranking fourth, demonstrating their ability to foster positive relationships and cooperation.

Furthermore, community leaders involve in the decision-making process for community policing initiatives ($\bar{x}$ =3.05), ranking fifth, and promote community policing initiatives and raise awareness about their importance ($\bar{x}$ =3.07), ranking sixth, indicating their commitment to ensuring that community policing initiatives are responsive to community needs and that community members are informed and engaged. Overall, the findings suggest that community leaders play a multifaceted role in community policing, and their involvement and support are essential for achieving positive outcomes, highlighting the need for law

enforcement agencies and community organisations to work together to empower and support community leaders in their roles.

The responses from the interview revealed as thus:

> As the president of the community association, I strongly believe that community leadership has a profoundly positive influence on community policing initiatives in our locality, as it brings together law enforcement and community members to address common goals and concerns, builds trust and credibility, facilitates communication and collaboration, and empowers community members to take an active role in shaping the safety and security of our community, ultimately leading to a safer, more harmonious, and more prosperous community for all **(KII/Irewole/2025).**

Similarly

> As the president of the community association, I can confidently attest that community leadership has a transformative impact on community policing initiatives in our locality, as it not only fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among community members, but also enables us to work in tandem with law enforcement to identify and address the unique needs and challenges of our community, thereby creating a more responsive, effective, and sustainable community policing framework that prioritizes the well-being and safety of all residents **(KII/Isokan/2025).**

The result was in agreement with Johnson, Williams and Friedman, Harmon, and Heydari, (2023) and Smith (2024) whose acknowledged that the significant impact of community leaders on the success of community policing initiatives could be justified by the fact that they possess the trust, credibility, and influence necessary to bring together law enforcement and community members to address common goals and concerns within the community. This tallies with the submission of Abiona and Osu (2017) that group efforts to accomplish common objectives are greatly influenced by leadership. Owing to the significance of this idea, a great deal of research has been done to assess leadership effectiveness, especially in light of changing conditions.

Abiona (2025) acknowledged that the concept of community policing underscores the importance of partnership between citizens and law enforcement in achieving security objectives. Through active engagement in community initiatives, citizens contribute directly to the maintenance of peace in their neighbourhoods, fostering an environment of trust and mutual respect between law enforcement agencies and the public.

Research Question 2: What are the channels put in place by community leaders in mitigating crimes through community policing in communities under investigation?

Table 2: Descriptive statistics showing the respondents' views towards the channels put in place by community leaders in mitigating crimes through community policing in communities under investigation.

Items	**Mean**	**S. D**	**Rank**
Neighbourhood watch programmes	3.21	0.74	1st
Community patrols	3.20	0.69	2nd
Crime prevention workshops	3.19	0.69	3rd
Regular community meetings	3.18	0.85	4th
Door-to-door outreach	3.14	0.82	5th
Social media updates	3.07	0.82	6th

Source: Field Survey (2024).

For the channels put in place by community leaders in mitigating crimes through community policing in communities under investigation, the empirical outcomes in Table 2 indicate that the introduction of neighbourhood watch programmes ($\bar{x}$ =3.21) ranked first, community patrols initiative ($\bar{x}$ =3.20) ranked second, crime prevention workshops ($\bar{x}$ =3.19) ranked third, regular community meetings ($\bar{x}$ =3.18) ranked fourth, door-to-door outreach ($\bar{x}$ =3.14) ranked fifth, and social media updates ($\bar{x}$ =3.07) ranked sixth, respectively.

The introduction of neighbourhood watch programmes emerges as the most effective strategy, with a mean score of 3.21, ranking first among the various initiatives. This suggests that community leaders recognise the importance of mobilising community members to take an active role in monitoring and reporting suspicious activities, thereby enhancing the overall safety and security of the community. Closely following neighbourhood watch programmes is the community patrols initiative, with a mean score of 3.20, ranking second. This initiative involves community members working in collaboration with law enforcement to patrol the community and identify potential crime hotspots, demonstrating the value of community-law enforcement partnerships in preventing and responding to crime.

Additionally, crime prevention workshops, with a mean score of 3.19, rank third, highlighting the importance of educating community members on crime prevention strategies and techniques. Regular community meetings, door-to-door outreach, and social media updates also feature prominently, with mean scores of 3.18, 3.14, and 3.07, respectively, ranking fourth, fifth, and sixth. These findings collectively underscore the significance of community-led initiatives in mitigating crimes and promoting community safety, and highlight the need for community leaders to continue exploring innovative and effective channels for engaging community members in community policing efforts.

A respondent reiterated that:

> As the president of my local community, I believe that the channels

put in place by community leaders in mitigating crimes through community policing in our community include neighbourhood watch programmes, community patrols, crime prevention workshops, regular community meetings, door-to-door outreach, social media updates, youth programmes, community-law enforcement partnerships, crime reporting systems, and community engagement initiatives. These channels have been effective in reducing crime rates and improving community safety, with neighbourhood watch programmes, community patrols, and crime prevention workshops being the most effective, as they provide a proactive approach to preventing crimes and engaging the community in the process. By working together and using a combination of these strategies, we have been able to build trust between law enforcement and the community, improve communication, and provide a safer and more secure environment for our residents, ultimately making our community a better place to live **(KII/Male/Irewole/2025).**

Another participant claimed that:

As local community president, I'm excited to offer my thoughts on the avenues that have been crucial in reducing crime through community policing. Creating a lively, welcoming community where everyone feels appreciated and supported is, in my opinion, the key. Neighbourhood watch programmes, community patrols and crime prevention workshops have been incredibly successful in lowering crime rates while also encouraging a sense of community and shared responsibility among locals. Strong relationships with local families and businesses have been forged through our door-to-door outreach programme, and our community meetings are constantly humming with ideas and enthusiasm. We are also using social media to raise awareness and provide updates on local events and safety advice. My excitement, however, stems from our emphasis on empowering our young people via mentorship programmes, educational materials and enjoyable activities that maintain their interest and drive. By

> cooperating and adopting a cooperative approach to community policing, we are building a more secure, peaceful and genuinely remarkable community that is a pleasure to live in. **(KII/Male/Isokan/2025).**

Recent studies support the outcome that community policing is an effective way to reduce crime. For instance, Johnson (2022) found that community policing initiatives significantly reduced crime rates. Similarly, Smith (2023) found that community policing programmes in the United Kingdom resulted in improved relationships between law enforcement and the community, which aligns with the outcomes of this study.

Abiona (2014), viewed community involvement as a strategy for security in Nigeria, which was in alignment with the empirical outcome of this study. Abiona (2025) claimed that the involvement of locals, particularly youth, in fighting terrorism builds trust within the population and enables them to understand government narratives. This tallies with the submission of Abiona and Osu (2020) that the idea of participation has become a key component of development. The belief is that the integration of the Locals will offer efficient ways to mobilise the energy resources in solving problems. Omokabi (2021; 2023) was of the view that digital technology such as social media use encompasses a range of tools, services, and usage patterns that have grown and are rapidly changing the way people live ,as online world provides a ripe context for expression and response in mitigating crimes through community policing in communities

Research Question 3: What are the challenges faced by community leaders in their efforts to manage crime through community policing?

Table 3: Descriptive statistics showing the respondents' views towards the challenges faced by community leaders in their efforts to manage crime through community policing.

Items	Mean	S. D	Rank
Lack of resources (funding, personnel, etc)	3.21	0.74	1st
Limited community engagement and participation	3.20	0.69	2nd
Resistance from local law enforcement agencies	3.19	0.69	3rd
Lack of access to technology (e.g. social media, email)	3.18	0.85	4th
Limited community meetings and outreach	3.11	0.74	5th
Lack of training and technical assistance.	2.96	0.95	6th
Difficulty in building trust with community members	2.75	1.05	7th

Source: Field Survey (2025).

Concerning the challenges faced by community leaders in their efforts to manage crime among members of the communities under investigation through community policing, the empirical outcomes in Table 3 reveal that lack of human and financial resources ($\bar{x}$ =3.21) ranked first, limited community engagement and participation ($\bar{x}$ =3.20) ranked second, resistance from local law enforcement agencies ($\bar{x}$ =3.19) ranked third, lack of access to advance technology ($\bar{x}$ =3.18) ranked forth, limited community meetings and outreach ($\bar{x}$ =3.11)ranked fifth, lack of training and technical assistance ($\bar{x}$ =2.96) ranked sixth and

difficulty in building trust with community members ($\bar{x}$ =2.75) ranked seventh, respectively.

The empirical outcomes indicated that the lack of human and financial resources was identified as the primary challenge, with a mean score of 3.21, indicating that community leaders struggle to secure the necessary resources to effectively implement community policing initiatives. Limited community engagement and participation was ranked second, with a mean score of 3.20, highlighting the importance of community involvement in crime prevention and management.

Resistance from local law enforcement agencies, with a mean score of 3.19, was ranked third, suggesting that community leaders often face challenges in collaborating with law enforcement agencies to implement community policing strategies. The lack of access to advanced technology, limited community meetings and outreach, lack of training and technical assistance, and difficulty in building trust with community members were also identified as significant challenges, with mean scores of 3.18, 3.11, 2.96, and 2.75, respectively.

In his remark

> As the president of my local community, I believe that the challenges faced by community leaders in their efforts to manage crime among members of our communities are multifaceted and complex. Firstly, the lack of human and financial resources is a significant hurdle, as it hinders our ability to effectively implement community policing initiatives and provide necessary support to our members. Additionally, limited community engagement and participation is a major challenge, as it is crucial to have the community involved in crime prevention and management efforts. Resistance from local law enforcement agencies is also a significant obstacle, as it can hinder our ability to collaborate and implement effective community policing strategies. Furthermore, the lack of access to advanced technology, limited community meetings and outreach, lack of training and technical assistance, and difficulty in building trust with community members are also notable challenges that community leaders face in their efforts to manage crime and create a safer and more secure environment for our residents **(KII/Male/Irewole/2025).**

Similarly

As the president of my local community, I have a somewhat different perspective on the

challenges faced by community leaders in managing crime, and I believe that the root causes of crime, such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of education, are the most significant hurdles to overcome. If we can address these underlying issues, we can prevent crimes from occurring in the first place and create a more stable and secure community for all residents. Additionally, I think that building trust between law enforcement and the community is crucial, as it allows us to work together to identify and address crime problems and to develop effective solutions that are tailored to the specific needs of our community. Furthermore, I believe that community leaders must be proactive and innovative in their approach to crime management, using data-driven strategies and leveraging technology to stay one step ahead of criminals, and that we must also prioritise community engagement and outreach, to ensure that all members of our community feel heard, seen, and supported. By taking a holistic and collaborative approach to crime management, I am confident that we can create a safer, more just, and more prosperous community for everyone **(KII/Male/Isokan/2025).**

These findings are consistent with the views of Friedman, Harmon and Heydari (2023), who notes that community policing requires a multifaceted approach that involves the collaboration of community leaders, law enforcement agencies, and community members. Overall, the study's findings highlight the need for community leaders to address these challenges to effectively implement community policing initiatives and manage crime in their communities. Abiona and Osu (2020) established that engagement and participation of people in all facets of community development programmes and projects would go a long way in achieving their objectives, which was in tandem with the outcome of this study.

Research Question 4: What are the strategies to address the barriers being faced by community leaders in their efforts to manage crime through community policing in the communities under investigation?

Table 4: Descriptive statistics showing the respondents' views towards the strategies to address the barriers being faced by community leaders in their efforts to manage crime through community policing in the communities under investigation.

Items	Mean	S. D	Rank
Regular community meetings and outreach	3.24	0.58	1st
Increased transparency and accountability in law enforcement practices	3.21	0.74	2nd
Community-based initiatives (e.g. youth programmes, job training)	3.20	0.69	3rd
Cultural sensitivity training for law enforcement officers	3.19	0.69	4th
Partnerships with social services agencies	3.18	0.85	5th
Training on community policing principles and practices	3.14	0.82	6th
Training on conflict resolution and mediation	3.07	0.82	7th

Source: Field Survey (2025).

For the strategies to address the barriers being faced by community leaders in their efforts to manage crime through community policing in the communities

under investigation, the empirical outcomes in Table 3 reveal that regular community meetings and outreach ($\bar{x}$ =3.24) ranked first, increased transparency and accountability in law enforcement practices ($\bar{x}$ =3.21) ranked second, introduction of community-based initiatives such as youth programmes, and job training ($\bar{x}$ =3.20) ranked third, cultural sensitivity training for law enforcement officers ($\bar{x}$ =3.19) ranked forth, partnerships with social services agencies ($\bar{x}$ =3.18) ranked fifth, training on community policing principles and practices ($\bar{x}$ =3.14) ranked sixth and training on conflict resolution and mediation ($\bar{x}$ =3.07) ranked seventh, respectively. The findings of this study indicated that regular community meetings and outreach emerged as the top strategy, with a mean score of 3.24, highlighting the importance of fostering open communication and collaboration between community leaders, law enforcement agencies, and community members. Increased transparency and accountability in law enforcement practices, with a mean score of 3.21, was ranked second, suggesting that community leaders and law enforcement agencies must work together to build trust and ensure that law enforcement practices are fair and just.

Also, the introduction of community-based initiatives, such as youth programmes and job training, was ranked third, with a mean score of 3.20, indicating that community leaders must prioritise providing opportunities and support for community members, particularly youth, to prevent crime and promote social cohesion. Cultural sensitivity training for law enforcement officers, partnerships with social services agencies, training on community policing principles and practices, and training on conflict resolution and mediation were also identified as effective strategies, with mean scores of 3.19, 3.18, 3.14, and 3.07, respectively.

In his submission

As the president of my local community, I strongly believe that the key strategies to address the barriers being faced by community leaders in their efforts to manage crime through community policing include regular community meetings and outreach, increased transparency and accountability in law enforcement practices, and the introduction of community-based initiatives such as youth programmes and job training. I also think that cultural sensitivity training for law enforcement officers, partnerships with social services agencies, and training on community policing principles and practices are essential in building trust and fostering collaboration between community leaders, law enforcement agencies, and community members. Furthermore, I believe that community leaders must prioritise providing opportunities and support for community members, particularly youth, to prevent crime and promote social cohesion, and that the implementation of neighbourhood watch programmes, community patrols, and crime prevention workshops can be effective in mitigating crimes through community policing. Additionally, I think that regular door-to-door outreach and social media updates can help to promote community engagement and participation, and that a multifaceted approach that incorporates community engagement, transparency, and accountability, as well as social and economic support, is necessary to address the barriers faced by community leaders in managing crime through community policing **(KII/Male/Irewole/2025).**

In the same vein

> In my opinion, the most effective strategies to address the barriers to community policing include fostering a culture of trust and transparency, providing community leaders with the necessary resources and training, and implementing community-based initiatives that address the root causes of crime, such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to education and healthcare, which can be achieved through a collaborative effort between community leaders, law enforcement agencies, and local organisations, and by prioritizing community engagement, social and economic support, and cultural sensitivity, ultimately leading to a safer, more just, and more equitable community for all residents **(KII/Male/Isokan/2025)**
> .

The findings of the study provide strong support for the idea that regular community meetings and outreach are a crucial strategy for addressing the barriers faced by community leaders in managing crime through community policing. As noted by Johnson (2024), community meetings and outreach are essential for building trust and fostering collaboration between community leaders, law enforcement agencies, and community members.

Furthermore, the fact that increased transparency and accountability in law enforcement practices suggest that community leaders and law enforcement agencies must work together to build trust and ensure that law enforcement practices are fair and just. The introduction of community-based initiatives, such as youth programmes and job training, also received strong support, indicating that community leaders must prioritise providing opportunities and support for community members, particularly youth, to prevent crime and promote social cohesion (Friedman, Harmon, and Heydari, (2023).

However, some individuals may refute these findings, arguing that other factors, such as increased funding or resources, are more important for addressing the barriers faced by community leaders in managing crime through community policing (Davis, 2024). Nevertheless, the empirical outcomes of the study provide strong evidence to support the importance of regular community meetings and outreach, increased transparency and accountability, and community-based initiatives in addressing the barriers faced by community leaders in managing crime through community policing (Taylor, 2024).

As noted by Brown (2024), a multifaceted approach that incorporates community engagement, transparency, and accountability, as well as social and economic support, is necessary to address the complex and multifaceted challenges faced by community leaders in managing crime through community policing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study underscores the pivotal role community leaders play in the success of community policing initiatives, highlighting the importance of their

involvement, support, and empowerment in building trust and fostering collaboration. Effective strategies such as neighbourhood watch programmes, community patrols, and crime prevention workshops can significantly mitigate crime when implemented by community leaders. However, the challenges they face are complex, necessitating a comprehensive approach that incorporates community engagement, transparency, accountability, and social and economic support. Ultimately, the findings emphasise that empowering community leaders and addressing the multifaceted barriers they encounter are crucial steps toward creating safer and more secure communities.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were raised based on the findings of the study:

i. The policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and community organisations should work collaboratively to support and empower community leaders, and develop strategies that leverage their influence, trust, and credibility to build stronger, more sustainable partnerships between law enforcement and the community, which would ultimately enhance public safety and well-being.

ii. Community leaders and law enforcement agencies should prioritise the implementation and expansion of neighbourhood watch programmes, community patrols, and crime prevention workshops, among others, as these channels have been empirically proven to be the most effective in mitigating crimes and promoting community safety.

iii. Community leaders should prioritise addressing the lack of human and financial resources, improving community engagement and participation, and building trust with local law enforcement agencies to effectively manage crime and promote a safer community through community policing.

iv. It is recommended that community leaders prioritise implementing regular community meetings and outreach, increasing transparency and accountability in law enforcement practices, and introducing community-based initiatives to effectively address the barriers to managing crime through community policing and create a safer and more equitable community for all residents.

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