



## The Extent of the Use of Community Policing in Curbing Kidnapping in Anambra State

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to determine the extent of the use of community policing in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The population for the study was 1,620 (450 executive and 1,170 non-executive) members of the vigilantee group in Anambra State. The sample size was 321 (90 executive and 231 non-executive) members of the vigilantee group in Anambra State and was arrived at using Taro Yamane sample size formula. Muilt-stage sampling technique was used. The instrument for the study was 17 items sructured questionnaire of two clusters titled "Extent of the Use of Community Policing in Curbing Kidnapping Questionnaire" (EUCPCKQ). Using Cronbach Alpha, an overall reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained on the ICPCCKQ instrument. Research questions were responded to using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test. It was found to an high extent, the vigilantee group has assisted in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria. The findings of the study also shows to an high extent, weed and seed has been used in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria. Based on the findings, The state government should recruit more vigilantees and also educate community members on the importance of weeding out the kidnapers and bad ones in the community.

**Keywords:** Community policing, Kidnapping, Weed and Seed, and Vigilante.

### Introduction

Kidnapping is the offspring of terrorism and social vices that spread all over the world. It is one of the social problems that bedevils Nigeria and has greatly affected socioeconomic development. It has been scaring investors away from the country, including some professionals who would have been a plus for the country, among several others (Tzanelli, 2006). The kidnapping menace is worsened by poverty, unemployment, moral degeneration, abandonment of the youth by some politicians, corruption, and the inadequacy of relevant information provided to security agents by citizens on where and when kidnapping incidents are taking place. Also, there is the inadequacy of sophisticated equipment for our security agencies to track down kidnapers. It is an endemic disease that cuts across all the communities in Anambra State (Nwaorah, 2009).

Historically, the root cause of kidnapping in Nigeria can be traced to the rivalry associated with natural resources. The clamor by aborigines of the oil-producing Niger Delta region for a better and bigger share of the fortune made from the resources on their land (Essien & Ema, 2013) The communities of the Niger Delta region have been protesting the injustices peacefully for decades, until recently, when such protests took on a violent form of kidnapping (Essien & Ema, 2013).

The kidnapping activities have created negative headline news in the newspaper reports, which has dented the image of Anambra State and the world at large. This type of report depicts Anambra State as one of the most dangerous places to travel in the world. Moreso, the unsuccessful apprehension of kidnapping culprits and successful collection of ransom by captors have led Anambra State to lose interest in security operatives, whom they christened collaborators with the perpetrators (Akpan, 2010). The major intention of most kidnapping incidents is the extortion of money from the victim or their relatives. This intention is achieved through psychological pressures that include threatening the family or company of the victim to pay the ransom or lose the kidnapped ones (Turner, 2008). These demands are always in millions of Naira, and after payment, the company or family falls back to abject poverty, often with great debts from sources where the paid amount was made up (Tzanelli, 2006). It thus becomes a strategic punishment intended to pull down the wealthy in society. Most of these victims end up closing their accounts and selling off their properties in order to ensure the safety and freedom of their relatives, who were endangered in the incident, by paying the demanded ransom. It debases the victims, bringing them down to the realm of priced worth, wherein life assurance depends on the ability to pay the ransom and at the stipulated condition, even though in some cases, after the ransom has been paid, the victim is killed as well (Demola, 2011).

It is this ugly situation of insecurity about kidnapping experienced in Anambra State that calls for community policing, which, from experience, has been joyfully embraced by vigilante groups at different locations (Ogbonna, 2010). In Anambra State, vigilante service groups were established by the Anambra

State Vigilante Services Law, 2000. The law was amended in 2004 and is now referred to as the Anambra State Vigilante Group Law of 2004. The vigilante group which comprises of executive members and non-executive members are empowered to assist the Nigerian police in performing their constitutional duties of protecting lives and properties (Odetola, 2016). They are, however, expected to hand over arrested criminals to the police because they are not empowered to detain them. Vigilante groups in the state have been in existence since they were established, working hand in hand with the formal police. They operate from the communities, as their presence is visibly present in every community in the state. Vigilante service groups have a role to play in kidnapping control in Anambra State. Among the roles vigilante service groups play in kidnapping control as identified are: partnering with the police, covering and combing all the corners in the community or streets that the formal police have been unable to do effectively, and maintaining a constant presence in the community or street to prevent kidnapers from operating (Grann, 2011). Vigilante service groups partner with the police in every community they operate in, and this partnership has led to a reduction in kidnapping rates. This is also in line with the findings of Chukwuma and Alemika (2008), who found that vigilante service groups are always available whenever they are needed since they maintain a constant presence in the community and streets to prevent kidnapers from operating.

A number of factors may have occasioned the emergence of vigilante groups in Anambra State. Chukwuma (2011) stated that the inability of the police to satisfactorily protect the lives and property of members of society seems to have given rise to community efforts at ensuring their own security. Vigilantism enjoys wide popularity in the state because of the problem of under-policing as well as the lack of mutual trust between the police and the people. The vigilante groups were formed in each village in Anambra to fill the gap in policing. The synergy between the vigilante groups and the police has assisted in no small measure in reducing the menace of kidnapping in Anambra State. The basic mission of the vigilante groups is to weed out kidnapping and ensure peaceful and orderly community interaction. Therefore, there is a need for them to enforce and utilize the weed and seed strategy to remove traces of kidnapping incidents in Anambra State.

The Weed and Seed program was developed to demonstrate an innovative and comprehensive approach to law enforcement and community revitalization and to prevent and control violent kidnapping and gang activity in target areas (Abati, 2010). The program, initiated in 1991, attempts to "weed out" violent crimes, kidnapping, gang activity, and drug use and trafficking in target areas and then "seeds" the target area by restoring the neighborhood through social and economic revitalization. Weed and Seed has three objectives: developing a comprehensive, multiagency strategy to control and prevent violent kidnapping-related activity in target neighborhoods; coordinating and integrating existing and new initiatives to concentrate resources and maximize their impact on reducing and preventing violent kidnapping activity; and mobilizing community residents in the target areas to assist law enforcement agents in identifying and removing violent kidnapping offenders from the community and to assist other human service agencies in identifying and responding to the service needs of the target area. Under this program, law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and other criminal justice partners work to "weed out" kidnapping in targeted communities. Indeed, of all the stakeholders, the community or public is the most crucial to effective security against kidnapping. This is because without the cooperation of the community or the public, the police may be unable to perform optimally. It is on this note that the study intends to investigate the extent of the use of community policing in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State.

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which community policing can be used as a security strategy for curbing kidnapping in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to determine the:

1. extent to which vigilante group has been used in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria.
2. extent to which weed and seed have been used in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria.

The study was also guided by the following research questions

1. To what extent has vigilante group been used curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria?
2. To what extent has weed and seed been used in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria?

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significant.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of executive and non executive paid vigilantee group members on the extent to which vigilantee groups has been used in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of executive and non executive paid vigilantee group members on the extent to which weed and seed has been used in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria.

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## Methods

The researcher used a descriptive survey research design in carrying out this study. Ezeudu, Jolaosho and Dajan (2020) describe research design as a type of design that is meant to describe the behaviour of a particular population in an accurate fashion. The design was considered appropriate for this study because it sought to collect and analyze data elicited from the respondents considered to be a representative sample so as to ascertain the extent of the use of community policing in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State. This study was carried out in Anambra State, Nigeria. Anambra State is made up of 21 LGAs and is located in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria, with its capital situated at Awka. It is bordered by Enugu State to the east, Delta State on the west, Kogi State on the north, and Imo and Rivers States to the south. The choice of Anambra State was based on the fact that there is a seemingly high rate of kidnapping and insecurity, which at the moment lacks empirical backing. Hence the need for this presents study.

The population of this study comprised all the 1620 executive and non-executive members of the 179 registered vigilante groups set up within the 21 local government areas that make up the three senatorial zones of Anambra State. 450 were executive members while 1170 were non-executive members of the vigilante groups. The sample for this study was 321 registered executive and non-executive members of the vigilante groups in the 179 communities of Anambra State and was obtained through the use of Taro Yamane. 90 were executive members while 231 were non-executive members of the vigilante groups. The instrument for data collection was a researchers' structured questionnaire titled "Extent of the Use of Community Policing in Curbing Kidnapping Questionnaire" (EUCPCKQ). The instrument was made up of two clusters namely cluster A and B. Cluster A was on the demographic data of the respondents while the cluster B comprises of cluster A (8 question items) and B (9 question items). The instrument was structured on a four point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE) = 4 points, High Extent (HE) = 3 points, Low Extent (LE) = 2 points and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1 point.

Three experts did face validation of the instrument. Cronbach alpha estimate was used to test the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. Cronbach Alpha was chosen because the instrument was non-dichotomously scored. The reliability co-efficient obtained for clusters A–B were 0.80 and 0.73 respectively, while the grand reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.77. This is an indication that the instrument was highly reliable for this study. Mean and Standard deviation were used to respond to the research questions while t-test was used for the two null hypotheses that guided the study.

## Results

**Research Question One:** To what extent has vigilante group been used in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria?

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the Extent Vigilante Group been used in Curbing Kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria**

*n* = 321

| Item Statement  | Mean        | Std. Deviation | Remarks |
|---|-------------|----------------|---------|
| 1. Assists through village road block to checkmate kidnapers.   | 2.96        | .97            | HE      |
| 2. Promotes open relations between the police and the public.   | 2.98        | 1.04           | HE      |
| 3. Promotes honest relationship between the police and members of the community.  | 2.99        | .93            | HE      |
| 4. Helps by searching every suspected stranger in the community.  | 2.99        | .95            | HE      |
| 5. Ensures that community policing priorities tally with local security needs.  | 2.79        | .97            | HE      |
| 6. Provides a coherent platform for mobilization of local strategies to deal with the safety of the community                 | 2.84        | 1.00           | HE      |
| 7. Monitors every strange person in the community.  | 3.06        | 1.02           | HE      |
| 8. Identifies locations where foot patrols are likely to be most effective at promoting consistent combat against kidnapping. | 2.69        | .98            | HE      |
| <b>Cluster Mean</b>   | <b>2.91</b> | <b>.98</b>     | HE      |

Table 1 shows the mean ratings of the extent the vigilante group has been used in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria. It shows that the mean ratings of the vigilantes on items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 are more than the 2.50 criterion mean, indicating their level of high extent with the statements of the items. Thus, the cluster mean of 2.91 with standard deviation of 0.98 indicates the extent the vigilante group has been used in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of executive and non executive paid vigilante group members on the extent to which vigilante groups has been used in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria.

**Table 2: T-test Analysis of the Difference in the Mean Ratings of Executive and Non-Executive Members on the Extent the Vigilante Group has been used in Curbing Kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria**

| Members       | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation | df  | T    | Sig  | Decision |
|---------------|-----|------|----------------|-----|------|------|----------|
| Executive     | 90  | 2.91 | 0.43           | 319 | .070 | .944 | NS       |
| Non-Executive | 231 | 2.91 | 0.55           |     |      |      |          |

*NS* = Not Significant

Table 2 reveals that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of executive and non executive paid vigilante group members on the extent to which vigilante groups has been used in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria,  $t(319) = .070, p = 0.944$ . This implies that the null hypothesis was not rejected since the associated probability value of .944 was greater than the 0.05 significant level.

**Research Question Two:** To what extent has weed and seed has been used in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria?

**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the Extent Weed and Seed has been used in Curbing Kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria**

*n* = 321

| Item Statement  | Mean        | Std. Deviation | Remarks   |
|---|-------------|----------------|-----------|
| 9. Weed out crimes in target areas.   | 2.83        | .99            | HE        |
| 10. Assist in communication flow with various media in order to discourage the activities of the kidnappers | 2.61        | 1.05           | HE        |
| 11. Mobilize the youth for crime-free lives through functional education                                    | 2.92        | .95            | HE        |
| 12. Sow the seed of cooperation, coordination and hard work for better living condition.                    | 2.66        | .95            | HE        |
| 13. Empower the unemployed with financial support for small to medium scale businesses.                     | 2.84        | 1.10           | HE        |
| 14. Help people to participate in neighborhood watch and other community-based public safety programmes.    | 2.59        | 1.15           | HE        |
| 15. Encourage people to report sensitive information against kidnapping.                                    | 2.60        | 1.17           | HE        |
| 16. Ensure that surveillance strategy impact positively in terms of kidnapping prevention through training. | 2.94        | 1.11           | HE        |
| 17. Provide agencies, government and individuals with opportunity to discuss positive plans for the youths  | 2.60        | 1.23           | HE        |
| <b>Cluster Mean</b>   | <b>2.73</b> | <b>1.08</b>    | <b>HE</b> |

Table 3 shows the mean ratings of the extent the weed and seed has been used in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria. It shows that the mean ratings of the vigilantes on items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9 are more than the 2.50 criterion mean, indicating their level of high extent with the statements of the items. Thus, the cluster mean of 2.73 with standard deviation of 1.08 indicates the extent weed and seed has been used in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria. In other words, weed and seed has been used in curbing kidnapping.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of executive and non executive paid vigilante group members on the extent to which weeds and seed has been used in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria.

**Table 4: T-test Analysis of the Difference in the Mean Ratings of Executive and Non-Executive Members on the Extent to which Weeds and Seed has been used in Curbing Kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria**

| Members       | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation | df  | T      | Sig  | Decision |
|---------------|-----|------|----------------|-----|--------|------|----------|
| Executive     | 90  | 2.60 | 0.51           | 319 | -2.578 | .010 | S        |
| Non-Executive | 231 | 2.78 | 0.60           |     |        |      |          |

*S = Significant*

Table 4 reveals that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of executive and non executive paid vigilante group members on the extent to which weeds and seed has been used in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria,  $t(319) = -2.578, p = 0.010$ . This implies that the null hypothesis was rejected since the associated probability value of .010 was less than the 0.05 significant level.

## Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that the vigilantee groups assisted in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria. The findings also shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of executive and non executive paid vigilante group members on the extent to which vigilantee groups has been used in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria. This study was in line with the finding of Akunne (2011) who found out that the vigilante groups provide a coherent platform for the mobilization of local strategies to deal with kidnapping for the safety of the community. The reason why the vigilante group has been helpful in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State might be because kidnappers don't usually like having encounter with the security (vigilantee in particular) and we always want a smooth operation that nobody will disturb them. Also, since the vigilante are members of the community, they will know everywhere in the community which will make it difficult for the kidnappers to escape with their victims.

The findings of the study showed that weed and seed were used in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria. The findings shows further that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of executive and non executive paid vigilante group members on the extent to which seed and weed has been used in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria. In support of the study was the finding of Ade (2010) which revealed that the aims of the community police officers empower the local people to weed out kidnappers and incidents. Ade findings state further that effective prevention strategies like weed and seed, surveillance, and stop and search helps in curbing kidnapping. The reasons for this finding could be because vigilantee put their best to work when community members weeds out the kidnappers among them and also appreciate their effort by sowing seed.

## Conclusion

From the foregoing findings, and discussion it could be concluded that the vigilante group has been used in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria. Since the study find out that the vigilantee groups helps in curbing kidnapping, then they should not be neglected for any reason when it comes to security

matters. The study also concluded that weed and seed were used in curbing kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria. Therefore, the vigilantee group should be well treated by the people and weed out the bad ones in the community.

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## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and their educational implications, the following recommendations were made:

- The state government should recruit more vigilantees.
- The government should educate the community members on the importance of weeding out the kidnappers and bad ones in the community.

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