



## ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF VIGILANTE PATROLLING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ON CRIME PREVENTION IN DEKINA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

**Abdulkadir Usman, Edime Yunusa, Thomas I. Gomment and Julius O. Owoyemi**

Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Prince Abubakar Audu University,  
Anyigba - Kogi State, Nigeria.

Correspondent Email: [yunusaedime@gmail.com](mailto:yunusaedime@gmail.com)

### Cite this article:

Abdulkadir U., Edime Y., Thomas I.G., Julius O.O. (2023), Assessing the Impact of Vigilante Patrolling and Community Engagement on Crime Prevention in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria. African Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research 6(4), 22-59. DOI: 10.52589/AJSSHR-QTGO9K9P

### Manuscript History

Received: 30 May 2023

Accepted: 19 July 2023

Published: 12 Aug 2023

### Copyright © 2023 The Author(s).

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0), which permits anyone to share, use, reproduce and redistribute in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

**ABSTRACT:** *It is worrisome that despite the existence of both the police and vigilantes in the various districts and communities within Dekina Local Government Area, there are still some elements of insecurity, lawlessness, intimidation, kidnapping, daylight assassinations, armed robbery and burglary etc. Hence, in assessing the impact of vigilantes in this regard, the study examined the prevalence of crime in Dekina LGA; examined crime prevention and control mechanisms adopted by the vigilante group; assessing the effectiveness of their roles while ascertaining the factors militating against the operational efficiency of the vigilantes and suggested measures to improve on their performances in crime prevention and control in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State. Structural strain theory and social contract theory were used for the study. A survey research design was employed for the study in which a systematic simple sampling technique was utilized to select the respondents from the sample of 297 out of the total population of the study, which was 1304. A pre-test was conducted on every question in the questionnaire to ensure that the research instrument was valid. Two hypotheses formulated were tested using Multiple Linear Regression and Chi-square. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between effective vigilantism and the prevalence of crime in Dekina Local Government Area. The study also revealed that beat patrol, stop, detain and search, undercover work, personality escorts, and static guards, among others, were the mechanisms adopted for vigilantism in Dekina LGA. The study further revealed that inadequate operational equipment, improper training, inadequate funding, corruption and godfatherism were some of the factors militating against the operational efficiency of the vigilantes. Recommendations include providing more funding, proper training, and better welfare for vigilante group members to prevent similar situations that erode public confidence in the Nigeria Police Force. Vigilante members should receive proper orientation on handling sophisticated weapons, and exceptional individuals within the vigilante group should be acknowledged with awards to enhance their contributions to crime prevention and control in Dekina Local Government Area.*

**KEYWORDS:** Vigilantism, Vigilante Patrolling, Community Engagement, Impact, Crime Prevention.



## INTRODUCTION

A society's survival depends on its ability to provide enough security, and consequently, government of every nation takes the necessary precautions to safeguard the lives and property of its citizens. Without sufficient protection, businesses and social activities may be hampered, and this fundamental aspect of security explains why societies have attempted to regulate their communities since the dawn of time in order to protect them from criminal exploitation. The act of preventing and protecting particular facilities, equipment, people, or operations from damage, pilferage, destruction, murder, or disturbance is referred to as security. The proliferation of vigilante groups in contemporary Nigeria, particularly in the Dekina Local Government Area, is a response to crimes and criminality that have not only increased in degree, scope, and volume, but have also seen an unprecedented change in techniques, mode of operation, and sophistication between 1998 and 1999 (during the fourth republic's wake) and the apparent failure of the Nigeria police. The seeming failure of Nigerian police to contain the expanding wave of crime has led to unilateral popular action against crime and criminals in various major cities of Nigeria, particularly in the country's South East according to Ojomo et al., (2022).

According to Beland (2018), insecurity is a state of fear or anxiety, absence or lack of protection. For security and stability to be sustained in all societies, there is need for all members of a society not only to set up mechanisms for minimizing crime but to collaborate and synergize towards controlling crime. Crime control can be referred to as methods of minimizing crime in any society. It is an effort to deter crime and criminals for peaceful existence (Lambert et al., 2010). In all societies, there exists formal and informal crime control mechanisms set up for minimizing crime for peaceful existence. The police is an example of formal crime control mechanism. It relies on the law and official government agencies to curb criminal actions. The informal crime control mechanism relies on social and moral institutions which include vigilante, family, church, mosque and philanthropy to curb crime and promote lawful behaviour (Beland, 2018).

In Nigeria, Vigilante can be defined as a voluntary security enforcing group who has full legal and legislative backing to complement the work of police in intelligence gathering and minimizing crime (Elekwa, 2019). Vigilante helps people to protect their lives and properties, reduce fear of crime by means of improved home security, greater vigilance and accurate reporting of suspicious incidence of crime to the police (Okeke, 2013). The police as a formal mechanism for minimizing crime gained its acceptance during the colonial era. However, according to Garba (2012), the colonial police was seen as a scheme to advance the economic and political agenda of colonial masters, hence, in Garba's viewpoints, the colonial police was established neither as agent for promoting the rule of law, human rights, community safety nor for delivering social services. Garba noted that police was used as an instrument of oppression, riot control, suppression and violence. The use of violence by the colonial police alienated the police from the citizens and caused some level of distrust among the citizens (Ikuteyijo & Rotimi, 2012). This alienation of the police from the people contributed to leaving crime unabated because the police were seen as anti-people (Ikuteyijo & Rotimi, 2012). The distrust and disconnect from the people led to formation and strengthening of vigilante groups in most communities to collaborate with the police in curtailing crime. Phenson (2014) observed that



close liaison or networking of vigilante with police is important especially with intelligence sharing, security planning and operations. In the same vein, for effective vigilantism and policing, community members must pass across relevant information to the police and the vigilante concerning criminal activities and hideouts of criminals in their communities.

According to Umar and Bappi (2014), crime has multiple causes and the solutions must be equally multifaceted and cannot be handled by only the police force. Adejoh (2013) noted that community policing is more effective when it is carried out as a collaborative and collective responsibility among the Police, Vigilantes and community members. Indeed, most of the studies on vigilante groups are dominated by conjectural and teleological approach. For instance, Jibrin & Musa (2019) investigated the impact of vigilante groups on crime control and management in contemporary Nigeria, Obidiegwu (2019) on the other hand examined the extent vigilante security group collaborate with the police in minimizing crime in Abia State, Onwuegbusi (2017) investigated public perceptions of the services of vigilante group in Anambra State while Stephen & Ignatius (2016) examined the role of vigilante services in crime control for sustainable development in Anambra State. However, these studies have established the importance of vigilantism in crime prevention and control but an assessment of how effective are the roles of vigilantism in crime prevention and control for the maintenance of law and order is abruptly lacking in the literature, and that is the gap filled by this study and have contributed to the body of knowledge.

Moreover, it is impossible to overestimate the significance of security in the growth and development of communities and nations. Security of lives and properties are one of the most basic human requirements, without which life would be jeopardized. This is why every responsible government seeks to ensure that its citizens are safe. It is necessary to integrate the informal mechanisms of crime detection and prevention into formal policing techniques in order to ensure the safety of lives and property of members of any society. According to Inyang & Abraham (2013), informal and formal policing tactics are combined to help formal policing institutions when they face challenges in detecting perpetrators of specific crimes.

Meanwhile, in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State, it is still worrisome that although there is an existence of both the police and vigilante in the various districts and communities within the Local Government Area. But despite that, there are still some elements of insecurity, lawlessness, intimidation, kidnapping, daylight assassinations, armed robbery, burglary, the threat of cattle herders with farmers and other forms of violent crimes experienced by people living in the communities. This state of affair affects lives and properties of those living in the area and it portends a doubt in the activities of the security outfits especially the vigilante groups. Those who commit these crimes and elude discovery and arrest by formal policing may be readily captured and made to face the full wrath of the law if this strategy of community policing and procedures are implemented. In this regard, the Kogi State Government proliferated the vigilante groups in 2016 to work in tandem with the police to battle crime and defend lives and properties. It is argued that vigilante group members had turned their loyalty to the State authorities, helping in actualizing the nefarious motives, objectives or goals of State authorities and have often played along with their preferences because of monetary benefits (Umeagbalasi, 2012). The same trend is obtainable in various communities where the vigilante group members



would always submit to the wishes of powerful individuals in the society or where they are used as instruments of power tussle between individuals aspiring for leadership positions.

The law establishing the vigilante groups in Nigeria stipulates that vigilante groups should work in collaboration with the Nigeria police to ensure security of lives and properties. It is unclear if the vigilante groups observe this law to the latter in their day to day activities (Umeagbalasi, 2012). Hence, with the proliferation or the increasing number of vigilante groups in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State and the inherent challenges facing their operational efficiency, it becomes worrisome if the motives for the establishment of the vigilantes are being achieved or marred because the rate of crime is on the increase, and the increasing rate is yet to be curbed, as new tactics in such crimes emerge daily in our society. Hence, this study sought to assess the impact of vigilante patrolling and community engagement on crime prevention in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State.

### **Research Questions**

- i. What is the prevalence of crime in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State?
- ii. What are the crime prevention and control mechanisms adopted by the Vigilante group in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State?
- iii. How effective are the roles of the vigilantes in crime prevention and control in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State?
- iv. What are the factors militating against operational efficiency of the vigilantes in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State?
- v. How can the performance of vigilante groups in crime prevention and control be improved in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State?

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study is to assess the impact of vigilante patrolling and community engagement on crime prevention in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- i. To examine the prevalence of crime in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State.
- ii. To examine the crime prevention and control mechanisms adopted by the vigilantes in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State.
- iii. To assess the effectiveness of vigilante patrolling and community engagement in crime prevention and control in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State.
- iv. To ascertain the factors militating against operational efficiency of the vigilante patrolling and community engagement in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State.



- v. To suggest how the performance of vigilante groups in crime prevention and control be improved in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State?

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study:

#### **Hypothesis I**

**Ho:** There is no significant relationship between vigilante patrolling/community engagement and the prevalence of crime in Dekina Local Government Area.

#### **Hypothesis II**

**Ho:** The crime prevention and control mechanisms adopted by the Vigilantes are not significantly effective in crime prevention in Dekina L.G.A.

### **The Scope of the Study**

This study assess the impact of vigilante patrolling and community engagement on crime prevention by focusing majorly on the roles of the vigilantes in curbing the menace of crime and criminal activities, their mode of operations and loopholes, the crime prevention and control mechanisms adopted by the group and how effective the vigilante group are in crime prevention and control especially in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria.

## **LITERATURE REVIEWS**

Based on the objectives of the study, the review of relevant and related literature was done under the following subheadings:

### **Conceptual Reviews:**

#### **The Concept of Crime**

According to Iwarimie-Jaja (2012), crime is any act or omission resulting from human conduct which is considered in itself or in its outcome to be harmful and which the state wishes to prevent which renders the person responsible liable to some kind of punishment as a result of the proceedings which is usually initiated on behalf of the state and which are designed to ascertain the nature, extent and the legal consequences of that person's responsibility. Crime in the legal sense is viewed as any behaviour which is prohibited by the criminal code. In line with the legal view, Tappan (1960) defined crime as an intentional act or omission in violation of a criminal law committed without defence or justification and sanctioned by the state as felony or misdemeanour. However, for the purpose of this research work, crime is seen as the intentional commission of an act usually deemed socially harmful or dangerous to individual, property or authority and which is specifically defined, prohibited, and punishable under criminal law.





## **Vigilantism**

Vigilantism is of English origin which means “watchman” or “guard” but its Latin root is vigil, which means “awake” or “observe” (Johnston, 1996). The author went further to show six elements of vigilant activity which includes; minimal planning, preparation or premeditation, private agents acting in a voluntary capacity, activity undertaken without the states authority or support, a reaction to the real or perceived transgression of institutionalized norms, aims to offer people the assurance that established order will prevail. Vigilante groups as security outfits are mostly composed of volunteers, operating under the mandate of communal consensus to fight crime. According to Baker (2003), vigilantism is a category of non-state or self-policing. It is characterised by reactive, ad hoc and often violent methods of crime control. A vigilante is a group of committed people at the micro level of the community, set up to collate information on suspected criminals in its area, for use by the police in the detection and prevention of crime.

## **Classes of Vigilante Groups**

According to Joseph (2019), the vigilante group can be classified into three different groups. For example, there is this vigilante group, whose members are made up of some young men with an able body. They are found in villages. What this set of vigilante group does is to get themselves organized, and they will patrol these villages during the night with the aim of safeguarding villagers. These villagers would include their family members and their neighbours. The vigilante group indeed has served a great deal of purpose by protecting these villagers against robbery attacks during the night hours. This set of vigilante groups may not be paid, they are doing it voluntarily. The second group of the vigilante can be recruited by a community, and the community would be contributing money to pay them at the end of every month, whereas, the third group are those with uniform, sponsored by the government, and they are entitled to every machinery that would help them in carrying out their functions, including monthly salaries (Joseph, 2019).

## **The Concept of Crime Prevention**

According to the United Nations (2002), crime prevention comprises of strategies and measures that seek to reduce the possibility of the occurrence of crimes, and their potential harmful effects on individuals and society, including fear of crime, by intervening to influence their multiple causes. Crime prevention is the attempt to and deter crime and criminals. It is applied specifically to efforts made by governments to reduce crime, enforce the law, and maintain criminal justice. Crime prevention involves any activity by an individual or group, public or private, which attempts to eliminate crime prior to it occurring or before any additional activity results. By drawing on the public health model, some theorists have distinguished between primary crime prevention (universal), secondary crime prevention (at-risk) and tertiary crime prevention (known offenders).



## **Brief Overview of Vigilante Service in Dekina Local Government Area**

Vigilantism is a new name for an old practice in Dekina LGA, and before its current proliferation, it has been in existence since 1990s with the traditional hunter guards authorised by the traditional chiefs to serve as community police, informally known in Igala native language as the “Alodes”, but later translated to be called community vigilantes. The modern vigilante services started recently in the year 2016 established by the Kogi State Government to complement the efforts of the police and to monitor the activities of the local/community vigilante. The vigilante Groups in Dekina Local Government Area have operational offices that runs for 24 hours daily with 3 vehicles. At least 10 men must be on ground at night in the offices, aside those outside operators. However, the most senior rank is the Commandant who's Deputy Superintended of Vigilante (DSV) with 3 star. Next to him is the Assistant Supervisor of Vigilante 1 (ASV 1) with 2 star, and the next is the ASV2, with 1 star. The 4th rank is the Inspector, with 3 Bar, followed by Inspector 2, with 2 Bar, and Inspector 1, with 1 Bar. The next one is Sergeant with 3V and Corporal has 2V while the last rank are the members.

## **The Prevalence of Crime in Nigeria and particularly in Dekina Local Government Area**

Crime is one of the human security problems confronting humanity across the world. Several nations have grappled to contain the rising incidence of homicide, armed robbery, and kidnappings, drug trafficking, sex trafficking, illegal gun running and host of others. Every society across the globe has its peculiar problems and challenges. Dekina L.G.A in Nigeria is not an exception. As a developing society, it has its own share of social, political, economic and cultural problems which has in no small measure affected the well-being of the populace. According to the report, economic crisis; food insecurity; inflation; and weak or limited rule of law are factors that drive crime. However, the drivers of crime are not restricted to the aforementioned causative factors. In Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State, crime manifest in the convulsive upsurge of both violent and non-violent crimes. Incidents of armed robbery, assassination and ransom-driven kidnapping are now ravaging the polity like a tsunami and spreading a climate of fears and anxieties about public safety (Jibrin & Musa, 2019:24).

## **The Impact of Vigilante Patrolling and Community Engagement in Crime Prevention and Control in Nigerian Society**

It is expedient that the expected impacts of vigilante organisations in any particular security situation be spelt out. For instance, Aina and Odiji (2019) postulated that there are numerous importance assigned to the vigilante groups in Nigeria and it includes the following:

**1. Vigilante Group Protects Lives And Properties:** Due to the insufficient police force in Nigerian society to carried out their functions, the Nigerian vigilante group was introduced to assist in meeting this demand, and one of such demands has been the protection of lives and properties. This function on the part of the Nigerian vigilante group is very necessary, given the important attached to human lives, and much more important too, their properties must be protected, the Nigerian vigilante group has been functioning in protecting the lives of Nigerian and their properties.



**2. Vigilante Group Maintains Peace and Order:** This aspect of function has been attached to the vigilante group. It is expected of it to maintain peace and order within society. For instance, anytime there are social functions or public functions, the services of the vigilante group can best be employed to assist in ensuring that, peace and order are maintained in order to guarantee the success of such event particularly, those recruited by the government.

**3. Vigilante Group Assist in Combating Crimes:** This is another function of the vigilante group, they assist in fighting crimes in the Nigerian society, particularly, in the night. During the night hours, the vigilante group will organize itself and go for patrolling for the purpose of ensuring that any robbery attempt is averted. By so doing villagers, whose family members of the vigilante group are among are being protected from robbery attack.

**4. Vigilante Group Arrests Crime Offenders:** The vigilante groups do not only prevent crimes, they can go as well as arresting any individual caught committing crime, because crime commission is invariably the same thing as encroaching or infringing the rights of the members of the public, and when you are caught, you are going to be arrested by the members of the Nigerian vigilante group, and once you got arrested by the Nigerian vigilante group, they will immediately hand you over to police for prosecution.

**5. Vigilante Group Handovers Everything Recovered During Operation to The Relevant Authority:** Anything recovered during operations by the Nigerian vigilante group is returned to the appropriate quarters, nothing recovered is expected to remain in the custody of the vigilante groups. Therefore, it is one of the major functions of the Nigerian vigilante group to return all exhibits to help in further investigation purposes.

### **Mechanisms adopted by Vigilantes in Crime Prevention in Nigeria**

Preventive measures employed by the vigilante group to forestall or reduce the opportunity or avenue for committing crime is in appreciation of the fact that it is cheaper to prevent crime than to detect it. The measures usually employed to prevent and control crime by the vigilantes as posited by Jibrin and Musa (2019:9 -10) includes but not limited to the following:

- i. Feasible operational method of checking the menace of criminals.
- ii. Surveillance on building and suspected criminal individuals: This method affords the vigilantes the motorized patrol and foot patrols including highway and border patrols as this remains the most opportunity to collate intelligence on criminals.
- iii. Cultivation of information: - information is the key to all policing functional activities as it is an essential part of police duty and this is achieved by building relationship as well as developing rapport with the Vigilantes and members of the public. Every investigation has a moral, professional and ethical obligation to safeguard the identity of an informers. Failure to follow the ethics may result in death, injury, or intimidation of the informer and/or his or her family. As a general rule an informer should not be exposed unless he or she has agreed (for example if he or she is willing to give evidence in court).





- iv. Decoy methods are strategies employed by the police and the Vigilantes destabilize the set plans of the criminals. This is sequel to the intelligence gathered on the activities of the criminals and their preparedness to commit crime.
- v. Raiding of criminal hideouts to apprehend criminals and recover arms and ammunition.
- vi. Arrest and interrogation of suspected criminals.
- vii. Simulation of crime situation: the vigilantes create scenario by engaging in some activities aimed and selling dummies to criminals who mistakes such actions for real life situation and unwittingly expose their identities.

### **Factors Militating Against Operational Efficiency of Vigilantes in Crime Prevention in Nigeria**

Despite the perceived effectiveness and commitment of vigilante groups, their operations have been noted to face many challenges right from the time of its existence.

As noted by Marx and Archer and cited in Adejoh (2013), there are five outstanding organisational problems which the vigilante groups are facing. These problems are their relationship to the police and legal system; their legitimacy in the eyes of the communities they wish to serve; the recruitment and management of personnel; the choice of appropriate operations; and the maintenance of resources, incentives, and motivation for the groups' survival. Alemika and Chukwuma (2003), identified their problems as: lack of funding by the government; harassment from the police when carrying out their duties; lack of proper training with adequate arms; lack of basic operational equipment such as flashlights, warm clothing, rain boots, rain coats, identity cards, whistles, uniforms etc. Other shortcomings experienced by the groups include, poor screening of new members and presence of touts or 'bad eggs' among the vigilante members, multiplicity of the organisations, and poor accountability by the groups.

While reacting to shortcomings of the Nigerian Police, Eke (2002) reasoned that, many Nigerian communities no longer rely on the police for their security; rather they have resorted to unregulated and violent reprisal against suspected sources of their collective endangerment. Expectedly, the preference of the vigilante groups to the police by the people would generate rift and mutual distrust between the two security bodies, the vigilante group would always accuse the police of corruption, while the police would accuse the vigilante of indulging in extrajudicial executions and illegal detention of suspects. This scenario creates a serious setback to the security activities of the two bodies, and thereby worsening the security challenges in the country. To Olaniyi (2005), vigilante groups often encounter threats from hoodlums who use sophisticated weapons in their robbery operations. He equally noted that the vigilante groups have problem of lack of cooperation among the members of the group particularly from the higher ranking officers who do not respect certain decisions made.

Also, the pilot project carried out by the CLEEN Foundation (2004) observed that partisan community leaders with political ambition weakened the cohesion of the community-policing forum. Hence the existing structure, which is an awful imitation of community policing (the



police community relations groups), in some places already has this factor to contend with. Many 'powerful' politicians, who constitute most of the membership of these bodies, often use their position in society to shield criminals who are loyal to their cause. Most of these miscreants, who are used by politicians during electioneering campaigns and as body guards, are often shielded from the arm of the law by these political demagogues. Corruption is another canker which threatens the success of vigilantism in Nigeria as a whole and Dekina Local Government Area in particular. Police officers who had benefited from the status quo of traditional policing may find it difficult to adjust to the radical diversion from the traditional style of policing. This implies that for vigilantism to be successful, there is a need for a massive reorientation of the rank and file of the Nigerian police force.

According to Alemika and Chukwuma (2000) CLEEN Foundation pilot project further observed the following as challenges to the effectiveness of vigilantism: lack of proper training and orientation for the vigilante members; Inadequacy of funding; Lack of monitoring and evaluation of the activities of vigilantism; Illiteracy and ignorance on the part of some vigilante members; and politicising the leadership of vigilantism.

### **Empirical Reviews**

Surajudeen et al. (2020) examined youth violence and the failure of the Nigerian state, with focus on Onyabo Vigilante Groups (OVG), as a crucial actor in curtailing violence in Ikorodu Local Government of Lagos State. Using a qualitative method as a frame of analysis, the study argues that the lack of state capacity, resulting in unemployment, abject poverty and poor socio-condition is responsible for the widespread incidences of youth violence instigated by land grabbing and cultism in Ikorodu Local Government. The study concludes on the imperative of overhauling the security architecture of the state, to recognise vigilante groups legally and institutionally, as a complementary security outfit to the Nigerian police. More importantly, questions of poverty, unemployment and social dislocation should be put on the front burner of government developmental agenda to forestall hopelessness and frustration which are frequent condition breeding violence in Nigeria. Meanwhile, this study was limited to using only qualitative method, it lacks empirical evidence. Moreover it fails to explicitly spell out the roles and impact of the Vigilantes in crime prevention. However, this current study bridged the gap in the body of literature.

Jibrin and Musa (2019), investigated the impact of vigilante groups on crime control and management in contemporary Nigeria, particularly in Gezawa L.G.A of Kano State. One hundred and twenty (120) respondents were sampled from Gezawa L.G.A of Kano State. Multi-stage, cluster and simple random sampling methods were used as the sampling techniques. Questionnaires were administered to respondents by two (2) research assistants whereas interviews were conducted with various stakeholder (2) traditional rulers, chairman of Gezawa L.G.A or his representatives, 2 Commandants of vigilante groups and 5 vigilante group members from various units. The result indicated that Nigerian Police is ineffective with regard to crime control and vigilante groups in its current form sprang up to make up for this ineffectiveness and fill the gap of insecurity at grassroots' level.



It also showed that vigilante groups are gaining prominence as an agents of crime control in contemporary Nigeria, particularly, Gezawa L.G.A of Kano State. The result equally revealed that vigilante group members are recruited and monitored through their communities and that they are effective in crime control and management. Also, the result indicated that the best way to solve the problem of crime in Nigeria is by increasing the activities of vigilante groups through training and support from local communities and Government. However, lack of working tools, poor funding, and lack of patrol vehicles are the major problems confronting vigilante groups. More so, based on the major findings, it was recommended that vigilante group members should operate within the frame work of law, Vigilante groups need to have support from both local communities and other relevant stake holders in the process of discharging their responsibilities security at grassroots level.

Onwuegbusi (2017) investigated public perception of the services of vigilante group in Anambra State. The study employed the cross-sectional survey design. The target population for the study included male and female adults from 18 years and above who were resident in Anambra State. The study covered the three senatorial zones of Anambra State where two Local Government Areas were selected from each of the three senatorial zones. The six Local Government Areas selected were; Onitsha South, Awka North, Nnewi North, Idemili North, Oyi and Ekwusigo Local Governments. The sample size comprised 540 respondents who were purposefully sampled and administered with the structured questionnaire. It shown that lack of adequate training, loyalty to political stalwarts etc are major setback and challenges confronting the vigilante members of the State. And even though the citizens of the State are not uniformly in agreement with the continual use of the vigilante groups for crime control in the State, yet majority of the citizens are at home with their services. His study equally revealed that the activities of the vigilante groups in the state can be enhanced in order to improve their performance. On the best way to enhance the performance of the vigilante members, it was found out that providing all their basic needs will enable them to be more focused and committed to security services. The author failed to bring to light the roles and impacts of the vigilantes which determine how the public perceive their services. The current study did justice to that by covering the gap.

Richard (2010) investigated the impact of vigilante groups on crime control in contemporary Nigeria, particularly in Udenu L.G.A of Enugu State. Seven hundred and twenty (720) respondents were sampled from Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State. Multi-stage, cluster and simple random sampling methods were used as the sampling techniques. Copies of questionnaire were administered to respondents by six (6) research assistants whereas interviews were conducted with two (2) traditional rulers, chairman of Udenu L.G.A vigilante group, chairman of vigilante monitoring group and 24 vigilante group members. The result indicated that Nigeria Police is ineffective with regard to crime control and vigilante groups in its current form sprang up to make up for this ineffectiveness. It also showed that vigilante groups are gaining prominence as agents of crime control in contemporary Nigeria, particularly, Udenu L.G.A of Enugu State. The result equally revealed that vigilante group members are recruited and monitored through their communities and that they are effective in crime control. Also, the result indicated that the best way to solve the problem of crime in Nigeria is by increasing the activities of vigilante groups. Howbeit, lack of fire arms, poor funding, and lack of patrol



vehicles are the major problems confronting vigilante groups. More so, based on the major findings, it was recommended that vigilante group members should operate within the framework of law. Finally, security committees should be established at the local government level and these committees should meet periodically to discuss security matters in their areas. From the review of the empirical literature above, one cannot over emphasize the complementary and essential roles played by the Vigilante Group of Nigeria in the security architecture of Nigeria. However, the authors of this current study replicated the above study in Dekina Local Government of Kogi State to compare and contrast their findings using the same methods.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study utilized social contract theory.

### **Social Contract Theory**

The major proponents of social contract theory are Thomas Hobbes, John Lock and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1778). The social contract is an agreement between the state and its citizens that spells out the relative rights and duties of both of them. In the theory of social contract, Hobbes, pointed out that the citizens owe the sovereign absolute obedience in exchange for protection against domestic law violators (criminals or deviants) and foreign enemies. For Hobbes, order could be achieved if all citizens enter into a contract to surrender their individual powers to the sovereign in return for the protection of life and property. Rousseau on his own suggested a contract that is based on equality and democratic participation. This contract is based on “general will”. The general will rely on the coming together once in a while of the entire democratic body, every citizen to reach a consensus on how to live together. The social contract theory is said to have raised many fundamental questions about the nature and objective of government and what an ideal society should look like (Marshall, 1998).

One of the greatest strengths of the social contract theory is that it acknowledges the need for consent from the population before a government can attain legitimacy. Consent, in this case, might be considered synonymous with democracy because consent can, in most circumstances, only be achieved through the active participation of the population. Most democratic states in the world today have developed constitutions that require elections to be carried out regularly so that governments of their choice can be selected and Nigeria is not an exemption. This theory is very relevant to this study because the effectiveness of the roles of vigilantism cannot be achieved without the general will and consents of the members of the communities in which they operate, and the contract is what necessitate public cooperation and collaboration with the vigilante to ensure a crime free and peaceful coexistence which is one of the roles of vigilantism in Dekina Local Government Area, of Kogi State.

Despite the strength of social contract theory as explained above, it has been criticized that it grants significant power to the government in exchange for protection. This power imbalance could lead to abuses by the government, such as passing intrusive laws or restricting individual freedoms under the pretext of maintaining public safety. In the context of vigilante groups, there is a risk that the government could exploit the social contract to manipulate or control these groups, potentially compromising their autonomy and effectiveness. Furthermore, while the



social contract theory establishes a general framework for the rights and duties of citizens and the state, it may not provide specific guidelines or mechanisms for operationalizing vigilante groups. In this study, it is crucial to have clear rules, regulations, and oversight mechanisms to ensure that vigilante groups operate within the bounds of the law and respect human rights. The social contract theory alone may not adequately address the practical challenges and complexities involved in implementing and managing these groups.

## **RESEARCH METHODS:**

### **Research Design**

This study adopted survey research design because, it is most helpful in describing the characteristics of a large population, studying individuals' attitudes either by interviewing or asking respondents to fill out a questionnaire.

### **Area of Study**

The study was conducted in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria. The area lies between the latitude 7<sup>0</sup>27'N-7031'N, longitude 7<sup>0</sup>9'E-7<sup>0</sup>12E with a land mass of 261km<sup>2</sup> (950 miles) and experiences two marked seasons of wet and dry. The wet is the raining season that comes between April to October and the dry season comes between October to March. The local government is one of the twenty one (21) local government areas in Kogi State and also one of the nine local government areas in Kogi Eastern Senatorial District and bounded by Bassa Local Government Area to the North, Ofu Local Government Area to the West, Omala Local Government Area to the East and Ankpa Local Government Area to the South (Adejo & Ademu, 2018). Dekina Local Government Area is named after the ancient town of Dekina and has three major districts namely; Okura, Dekina and Biraidu districts with twelve (12) political wards namely; Abocho, Anyigba, Ojikpadala, Dekina, Emewe, Odu I, Odu II, Egume, Iyale, Oganenigu, Ogbabede and Okura wards respectively. The Local Government Area is predominantly inhabited by the Igala speaking people of Kogi State (Dekina L.G.A Information Office). The major occupations of the people include farming, hunting, and craft works such as basket making, blacksmithing and so on. They also engage in petty and major trading activities with cashew business as the major seasonal economic activities. The population of Dekina Local Government Area according to the projected result of 2016 National population census was 352,300 (Adejo & Ademu, 2018).

### **Population of the Study**

The population of this study were Vigilante Group members in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State, which according to Kogi State Vigilante Service (KSVS) desk has a total number of 1304 personnel formally set up by Kogi State Government to provide security within Dekina Local Government Area.





## Sample Size

Sample is the portion of the population selected for study. In this study, the selection of the sample becomes necessary because it is difficult and almost impossible for the researcher to study or interview the entire members of the vigilante group in Dekina local government area, Kogi State, due to the economic and time constraint. As such, Krejcie and Morgan statistical table of determining sample was applied to determine the actual sample size for the study from the total population, which is 1304.

## Sampling Techniques

The researcher adopted non probability sampling technique (purposive) to select the study participants from the sample because the various districts and wards have no equal population. Meanwhile, since the Local Government Area is politically stratified into 3 District namely; Okura, Dekina and Biraidu districts with 12 political wards namely; Abocho, Anyigba, Ojikpadala, Dekina, Emewe, Odu I, Odu II, Egume, Iyale, Oganenigu, Ogbabede and Okura wards respectively, the purposive sampling was adopted to select 23 respondents from each of the 12 political wards within the Local Government Area to give a total of 276 respondents. And then 3 Traditional Chiefs, 4 Citizens in the Communities and 2 Police Inspectors from each of the 3 Districts of the Local Government Area were selected for oral interview to give a total of 9 (i.e 3 + 6) interviewees, i.e Ogohi of Anyigba (Okura District) Ejeh of Dekina (Dekina District) and Onuh of Abocho (Biraidu District), the 2 police inspectors were selected from Dekina Police Division, Anyigba Police Division and Abocho Police Division while the citizens selected were also from each of the main town to have an in-depth information on the subject under study to give  $276 + 9 + 12 = 297$  in all respectively. See Table 3.

**Table 1: Distribution of Districts and Wards in Dekina Local Government Area with the sampled Participants**

District	Wards	Vigilantes	Sampled Participants		
			Citizens	Police	Traditional Chiefs
Okura	Anyigba	23	4	2	1
	Ojikpadala	23			
	Egume	23			
	Okura	23			
Dekina	Dekina	23	4	2	1
	Ogbabede	23			
	Iyale	23			
	Oganenigu	23			
Biraidu	Abocho	23	4	2	1
	Emewe	23			
	Odu I	23			
	Odu II	23			
		<b>276</b>	12	6	3
		Grand Total=297			

Source: *Field Survey, 2023*



## **Methods of Data Collection**

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. For the instruments of data collection, closed headed questionnaire and oral interview were used to elicit information from the respondents. Closed headed questionnaire gives the respondents several alternative options from which he/she chooses the one closest to his/her view, or requires the respondent to fill in the actual figure(s) related to the question asked. While oral interview was used to gather more information on the subject matter. The interview schedules with 3 traditional rulers, 12 Community Citizens and 2 Police Inspectors selected each from the three (3) district of Dekina L.G.A were conducted by the researcher to elicit more information regarding the research questions and objectives.

## **Methods of Data Analysis,**

The quantitative data generated for the study were presented and analyzed in tables and percentages to give a clearer understanding, enhances and clarifies the data collected from the field using descriptive statistics. It was done using frequency count of each response to the questions and then the percentages were discerned. The response to the questionnaire were coded and studied, in order to help in the comparative description, interpretation and general discussion while the interview schedules conducted by the researcher with the 3 traditional rulers and 6 Police Inspectors were translated, transcribed and content analyzed.

The two hypotheses of the study were tested using Chi-square and Multiple Linear Regression respectively with the aid of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 as the tool of analysis because it includes new statistical tests, enhancements to existing statistics and scripting procedures necessary for this study.

## **Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument**

The validity of the research instrument was determined by 3 experts (Criminologists) in the Department of Sociology, Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria through paper scrutiny by making necessary corrections, after which their observations and corrections were effected. This is aimed to ascertain if the instrument is free from errors, ambiguity of instruction or wording, time inadequacy and measurability of construct. These instruments were considered appropriate for this study because they clarify and test pre-conceived notions and findings on a subject such as vigilantism in crime prevention and control to understand the met and unmet needs of the respondents in their own languages and voices. But for statistical purpose, further validation is required.

The validation was done with the aid of data obtained in a pilot study conducted. The pilot study was conducted among the population of the study who did not participate in main study. Thirty copies of questionnaire was distributed for participants to provide answers from which validity and reliability was ascertained before the main research survey. Validity was analysed with the use of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) where the item communality and item loading of 0.7 was considered acceptable; also, inter-item correlation or item total correlation determined construct validity while Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) used to measure variable adequacy to



which 0.7 and above is considered acceptable (Beaves et al., 2013; El hajjar, 2018; Robinson et al., 1991). Cohen (2013) states that if inter-item correlation lies within 0.10 and 0.29, then there is a weak correlation for both positive and negative values, and when inter-item correlation lies within 0.30 and 0.49 a medium correlation, and lastly if inter-item correlation is between 0.50 and 1.00 a strong correlation. Moreover, Robinson et al (1991) recommends that, in an empirical approach and as a rule of thumb, if the score of the item-total correlations is more than 0.50 and the inter-item correlations exceeds 0.30, the construct validity is satisfied.

**Table 2: Validity Test Results for the Questionnaire**

Measure Name	Number of Items	Item Communnality range	Construct Validity ( <i>Item total Correlation range</i> )	KMO Measure of Variable Adequacy
<b>The Prevalence of Crime in Dekina Local Government Area</b>	5	0.71 - 0.83	0.72 - 0.82	<b>0.88</b>
<b>Effectiveness of the Roles of Vigilante Groups in Crime Prevention and Control in Dekina Local Government Area</b>	4	0.75 - 0.89	0.71 - 0.83	<b>0.86</b>
<b>Mechanisms of Crime Prevention and Control by the Vigilante Group in Dekina Local Government Area</b>	7	0.70 - 0.84	0.70 - 0.81	<b>0.81</b>
<b>Factors Militating Against Operational Efficiency of the Vigilantes in Dekina LGA</b>	4	0.71 – 0.92	0.75 – 0.87	<b>0.83</b>
<b>How to Improve the Performance of Vigilante Members in crime Prevention and Control in Dekina Local Government Area</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.69 – 0.78</b>	<b>0.74 – 0.84</b>	<b>0.87</b>

Source: *Field Survey, 2023*

Based on Table 2, five different scales (The Prevalence of Crime, Effectiveness of the Roles of Vigilante Groups in Crime Prevention and Control, Mechanisms of Crime Prevention and Control by the Vigilante Group, Factors Militating Against Operational Efficiency of the Vigilantes, and How to Improve the Performance of Vigilante Members in crime Prevention and Control) that were used to assess various aspects Effectiveness of the Roles of Vigilantism in Crime Prevention and Control in Dekina Local Government Area. For each scale, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was used where item communality of item loading was obtained at figures between 0.69 to 0.89, which is considered acceptable (El hajjar, 2018); also, inter-item correlation or item total correlation using bivariate analysis was used to determined construct



validity and figures obtained ranged between 0.70 to 0.87 which was also considered acceptable (Robinson et al., 1991); while Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was used to measure variable adequacy to which figures range of 0.81 to 0.88 obtained were acceptable (Beaves et al., 2013). In this study, all the scales have good content validity, which means that the items in the construct accurately represent the content domain of self-medication in Dekina Local Government, Kogi State, Nigeria.

To test for reliability of the research instrument, a test re-test method was adopted in which 30 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to 30 personnel of vigilante groups understudy (10 copies) in 3 towns (Abocho, Anyigba and Dekina) each representing the 3 districts of Dekina LGA.

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was used in estimating the reliability. According to Nunnally (1978) the major way to tests internal consistency reliability is Cronbach's alpha. A general accepted rule is that  $\alpha$  of 0.6-0.7 indicates an acceptable level of reliability, and 0.8 or greater a very good level (Hulin, Netemeyer, & Cudeck, 2001; Wim et al, 2008). Cronbach Alpha Coefficient is chosen as it gives a numerical coefficient of the internal consistency of the variables under study.

**Table 3: Reliability Test Results**

Measure Name	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
<b>The Prevalence of Crime in Dekina Local Government Area</b>	5	<b>0.71</b>
<b>Effectiveness of the Roles of Vigilante Groups in Crime Prevention and Control in Dekina Local Government Area</b>	4	<b>0.82</b>
<b>Mechanisms of Crime Prevention and Control by the Vigilante Group in Dekina Local Government Area</b>	7	<b>0.91</b>
<b>Factors Militating Against Operational Efficiency of the Vigilantes in Dekina LGA</b>	4	<b>0.86</b>
<b>How to Improve the Performance of Vigilante Members in crime Prevention and Control in Dekina Local Government Area</b>	4	<b>0.82</b>

Source: *Field Survey, 2023*

Table 3 showed the five different scales (The Prevalence of Crime, Effectiveness of the Roles of Vigilante Groups in Crime Prevention and Control, Mechanisms of Crime Prevention and Control by the Vigilante Group, Factors Militating Against Operational Efficiency of the Vigilantes, and How to Improve the Performance of Vigilante Members in crime Prevention and Control) that were used to various aspects Effectiveness of the Roles of Vigilantism in Crime Prevention and Control in Dekina Local Government Area, Kogi State, Nigeria. For each measure, the study conducted a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha as the reliability coefficient. The table showed the number of items in each measure and the corresponding Cronbach's Alpha value, which indicates the internal consistency of each measure. Note that a



Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.70 or higher is generally considered acceptable for research purposes. In this study, all the scales have a Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.70, which suggests that they are reliable scales for assessing the various aspects Effectiveness of the Roles of Vigilantism in Crime Prevention and Control in Dekina Local Government Area, Kogi State, Nigeria.

## RESULTS

The presentation and analysis of the data were based on questionnaire administered to the various vigilante groups in Dekina Local Government Area, Kogi State in which a total number of two hundred and ninety seven (297) copies of questionnaires were distributed to the respondents by the researcher, out of which a total of two hundred and seventy eight (278) copies were filled, returned and used. While nineteen copies (19) were not returned because some of the respondents who took the instruments home misplaced it while some mishandled the instruments and got it torn as at the time the researcher went to retrieve the remaining instruments. Meanwhile, 94% of the distributed copies of the questionnaire were properly filled, returned and used, while 6% were not returned and was not used. Hence, the analysis was based on the retrieved instruments.

**Table 4: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (Note: N = 278)**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Sex</b>	Male	191	<b>69</b>
	Female	87	<b>31</b>
<b>Age</b>	21-25	14	<b>05</b>
	26-30	27	<b>10</b>
	31-35	65	<b>23</b>
	36-40	87	<b>31</b>
	41-50	71	<b>26</b>
	51 and above	14	<b>05</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	97	<b>35</b>
	Married	168	<b>60</b>
	Divorced	07	<b>03</b>
	Widowed	02	<b>01</b>
	Separated	04	<b>01</b>
<b>Religion</b>	Christian	110	<b>40</b>
	Islam	129	<b>46</b>
	Traditional	39	<b>14</b>
<b>Educational Level</b>	Primary Certificate	81	<b>29</b>
	Tertiary Certificate	140	<b>50</b>
	Others	- 57	<b>21</b>





<b>Working Experience</b>	0-5	69	<b>25</b>
	6 -10	56	<b>20</b>
	11-15	43	<b>15</b>
	16-20	44	<b>16</b>
	21-25	31	<b>11</b>
	26-30	25	<b>09</b>
	31 and above	10	<b>04</b>
<b>Ranks</b>	<b>Junior Cadre</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>66</b>
	<b>Senior Cadre</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>34</b>

Source: *Field Survey, 2023*

On the sex distribution of the respondents, Table 4 shows that 191 representing 69% of the respondents were male while the remaining 87 representing 31% of the respondents were female. The high figure of male respondents is an indication that more male than female were recruited into the vigilante service. This could however be attributed to the strong physical attribute of male as the work of crime prevention and control requires a lot of physical agility/fitness. Women vigilante members are observed to be doing the work of recording of statements from witnesses, female accused persons, and from children, as well as assistance of school children in crossing the road and crowd control among others.

The age distribution of the respondents in Table 4 shows that 14 representing 5% of the respondents were within the age of 21-25 years, 27 representing 10% of the respondents were within the age of 26-30 years, 65 representing 23% of the respondents were within the age of 31-35 years, 87 representing 31% of the respondents were within the age of 36-40 years, 71 representing 26% of the respondents were within the age of 41-50 years while the remaining 14 representing 5% of the respondents were within the age of 51 years and above. The high proportion of those whose age ranges between 36-40 years indicates that most of the respondents were in their active working age.

On the marital status of the respondents, Table 4 reveals that 97 representing 35% of the respondents account for singles, 168 representing 60% of the respondents account for married, 7 representing 3% of the respondents account for divorced while 2 representing 1% of the respondents lost their spouses, whereas the remaining 4 representing 1% of the respondents were separated from their partners. This implies that majority (60%) of the respondents were married. This was expected because most of the respondents were adults and matured enough for marriage, hence the high proportion of the married among the respondents.

The religious affiliation of the respondents in Table 4 shows that 110 representing 40% of the respondents account for Christianity, While 129 representing 46% of the respondents were of Moslem faithful whereas the remaining 39 representing 14% of the respondents were of African Traditional beliefs. The implication of these findings is that majority (46) of the respondents were of Moslem religious affiliation.



Educational levels of the respondents in Table 4 shows that majority (140) representing 50% of the respondents has Secondary/Technical certificate, 51 representing 21% of the respondents had Tertiary education while the remaining 81 representing 29% of the respondents had Primary certificates. This implies that the study population was literate.

The respondents working experience in the vigilante service as shown in Table 4 indicates that 69 representing 25% of the respondents have been in the vigilante service within the range of 0-5 years, 56 representing 20% of the respondents account for 6-10 years, 43 representing 15% of the respondents account for 11-15 years, 44 representing 16% of the respondents account for 16-20, 31 representing 11% of the respondents account for 21-25 years while 25 representing 9% of the respondents account for 26-30 years whereas the remaining 10 representing 4% of the respondents account that they have been in the vigilante service for 31 above years. The implication of these findings is that majority of the respondents have so far spent about 5 years in the vigilante service. This could be attributed to the recent proliferation and recruitment of conventional vigilantes by the Kogi State Government in the 2016 which made a significant number of youths in the Dekina Local Government to pick interest in vigilantism.

The ranks of the respondents in table T reveals that 183 representing 66% were in the category of junior cadre while the remaining 95 representing 34% of the respondents were of senior cadre. The high proportion of the respondents in the junior cadre is an indication that they are the main group in the crime prevention and control activities. The major duty of those in senior cadre is to give directive to the junior ones on what to do, how and when to do it.

**Research Question 1.** What is the prevalence of crime in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State?

**Table 5: Prevalence of Crime in Dekina Local Government Area (N=278)**

Rate of Crime Before the Current Form of Vigilantism	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
<b>High</b>	103	37
<b>Low</b>	91	33
<b>Normal</b>	84	30
Rate of Crime After the Current Form of Vigilantism		
<b>High</b>	91	33
<b>Low</b>	112	40
<b>Normal</b>	75	27
Prevalent Crime		
<b>Armed Robbery</b>	90	32
<b>Murder</b>	56	20
<b>Burglary</b>	42	15
<b>Kidnapping</b>	60	21
<b>Rape</b>	10	04
<b>Others</b>	22	08



<b>Time of Occurrence</b>		
<b>Morning</b>	94	34
<b>Afternoon</b>	73	26
<b>Night</b>	113	41
<b>Causes of Crime</b>		
<b>Poverty</b>	120	22
<b>Unemployment</b>	43	08
<b>Bad Company</b>	61	13
<b>Drug Abuse</b>	22	05
<b>Inadequate parenting</b>	52	10
<b>Others</b>	19	03

Source: *Field Survey, 2023*

On the rate of crime before the current form of vigilantism, Table 5 reveals that 103 representing 37% of the respondents account for high rate, 91 representing 33% of the respondents account for low rate while the remaining 84 representing 30% of the respondents indicated normal rate. This implies that majority (37%) of the respondents claimed that the rate of crime was high in their community and that gave rise to the establishment and proliferation of the current form of vigilantism in Dekina Local Government Area.

On the rate of crime after the current form of vigilantism, Table 5 shows that 91 representing 33% of the respondents indicated high rate, 112 representing 40% of the respondents indicated low rate while the remaining 75 representing 27% of the respondents indicated normal rate. The high percentage (40%) of the respondents who account for low rate is an indication that the rate of crime has decreased after the current form of vigilantism in Dekina Local Government Area. This could be attributed to the importance of the current formations and proliferation of vigilantism, in various communities within Dekina L.G.A which has led to the reduction of crime rate and it signifies the benefit of its formation in crime management and control.

On the crime that is prevalent in Dekina LGA, Table 5 shows that 90 representing 32% of the respondents indicated armed robbery, 56 representing 20% of the respondents indicated murder, 42 representing 15% of the respondents indicated burglary, 60 representing 21% of the respondents indicated kidnapping while 10 representing 4% of the respondents indicated rape, whereas the remaining 22 representing 8% of the respondents indicated other form of crime, perhaps assassination, abduction, pickpocketing etc. These findings imply the availability of armed robbery cases which made it to be the crime that is more prevalent in Dekina Local Government Area followed by murder (assassination). This could be attributed to the fact that Dekina Local Government Area has major communities that are commercial centers with various business enterprises which made the area attractive to armed robbers who perhaps burgle into various shops and houses to rob.



On the time of crime occurrence, Table 5 shows that 94 representing 34% of the respondents indicated morning time, 73 representing 26% indicated afternoon time while the remaining 113 representing 41% which is the highest percentage of the respondents indicated that the prevalent crime (armed robbery and murders) majorly took place in the night hours and it shows the most time of crime occurrences in the study area.

On the causes of crime, Table 5 reveals that 120 representing 43% of the respondents account for poverty as the cause of crime, 61 representing 22% of the respondents account for unemployment as the cause of crime, 52 representing 19% of the respondents indicated bad company as the cause of crime, 22 representing 8% of the respondents indicated taking of hard drugs as the cause of crime, while 13 representing 5% of the respondents indicated inadequate parenting, whereas the remaining 10 representing 3% of the respondents account for other causes of crime perhaps indiscipline, laziness and negative exposure etc. These findings is an indication tthat poverty and lack of opportunities to be engaged with just course are the major causes of crime in the communities within Dekina Local Government Area

### **Qualitative Analysis of the Interview Schedule on the Prevalence of Crime in Dekina LGA before and after the Proliferation of Vigilante Groups in its Current Form**

A traditional chief had this to say that:

"Crime rate was on the increase before the current proliferation of vigilantism, but however started to decrease after the proliferation of current vigilantism and I think that the vigilante groups are doing well in the area of forceful apprehension of criminals as it seems they know the hideouts of these bad boys in the community more than the police who don't know much about our terrains" (**IDI/1/MALE/56/TC/2022**).

On this also, a Police Inspector in one of the council districts expressed his own views thus:

"To say that the vigilante groups are not trying in the area of crime control and prevention is an understatement. They are assisting the police, in as much as they independently handle most cases themselves until when the case is getting out of control before they reach out to us for proper prosecution. They are really complementing our efforts since it's proliferation in the community." (**IDI/2/MALE/49/INSPECTOR/2022**).

In any case, according to the respondents, vigilante group were doing well in the control and prevention of crime in the community.

**Research Question 2:** What are the crime prevention and control mechanisms adopted by the Vigilante group in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State?



**Table 6: Mechanisms of Crime Prevention and Control by the Vigilante Group in Dekina Local Government Area**

<b>Mechanisms of Crime Control</b>	<b>Frequency (f) N=278</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Beat Patrol</b>	55	20
<b>Stop, Detain and Search</b>	33	12
<b>Use of Decoy Vehicles</b>	10	04
<b>Static Guards</b>	15	05
<b>Under Cover Works</b>	19	07
<b>Intelligence Gathering</b>	31	11
<b>All of the Above</b>	109	39
<b>Others</b>	06	02

**Source: Field Survey, 2023**

As shown in Table 6, 55 representing 20% of the respondents indicated that they adopted beat patrol as one of the mechanism used to prevent and control crime in the study area, 33 representing 12% of the respondents accounted for Stop, Detain and Search as mechanism of crime control, 10 representing 4% of the respondents indicated the use of Decoy vehicles, 15 representing 5% of the respondents indicated static guards as crime control mechanism, 19 representing 7% of the respondents indicated that they employed under cover works in crime prevention and control, 31 representing 11% of the respondents indicated that they adopted intelligence gathering in their crime prevention and control while 109 representing 39% of the respondents indicated that they adopted all the mechanisms listed above in their crime prevention and control whereas the remaining 6 representing 2% of the respondents indicated other methods perhaps the use of flash tough, koboko and whistle blow in crime prevention and control. The implication of these findings is that the current form of vigilantism is well equipped with necessary mechanisms for effective crime prevention and control in Dekina Local Government Area.

### **Qualitative Analysis of the Interview on the Mechanisms for Crime Prevention and Control by the Vigilante in Dekina LGA**

As weapon used by the vigilante groups in crime prevention and control, the traditional chiefs interviewed were on the same page as they mentioned:

"Automatic double barrels, matches, koboko, torch light, rope, guns and whistle as the weapons they use. On further enquiry, they stated that certain crime requires giving the culprits some latches of koboko or tying him or her with rope"

These findings imply that severe punishment is part and parcel of the weapon used by the vigilante groups in crime control and prevention in Dekina L.G.A.





On the Vigilante groups' relationship with the police in the crime prevention and control, the Police Inspectors interviewed revealed that the vigilante groups had cordial and collaborative relationship with the police. They held that the Nigeria Police Force inaugurated them and when arrests were made, normally, the offenders supposed to be handed over to the police for prosecution but nowadays, the vigilante groups would handle the case until when it gets out control before they hand over the case to us.

On how members of the community supports vigilantism, to the monarchs interviewed explained that from the onset of vigilantism each village will designate groups of volunteers according to families kept vigil in the community. However, they said that heads of households and other persons who were selling provision stores and engaged in other business enterprises paid some amount of money on monthly basis for the upkeep of the guards in terms of provision of torch lights, battery, cutlasses, double barrels, whistle etc. They however revealed that before now, the vigilantes were not paid anything in form of stipends since each volunteer male members of the community contributed to vigilantism in one way or the other. Meanwhile, the monarchs interviewed added that the current proliferation and recruitment of vigilante personnel by Kogi State Government is being funded as the recruited members were placed on monthly salaries by both the Local and State Government in the study area.

**Research Question 3:** How effective is vigilantism in crime prevention and control in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State?

**Table 7: Effectiveness of the Performance of Vigilante Groups in Crime Prevention and Control in Dekina Local Government Area**

Effectiveness of Vigilantism	Frequency (f)	N=278	Percentage (%)
Effective	89		32
Very Effective	78		28
Ineffective	61		22
Very Ineffective	50		18

Source: *Field Survey, 2023*

As shown in Table 6, 89 representing 32% of the respondents indicated effective, 78 representing 28% of the respondents indicated very effective while 61 representing 22% of the respondents indicated ineffective, whereas the remaining 50 representing 18% of the respondents indicated that the operation of vigilantism has been very ineffective in Dekina Local Government Area. The implications of these findings is that the operation of vigilantism in the various communities in Dekina LGA has been effective and this justifies the formation of current vigilantism.

The Traditional rulers interviewed were of the opinions that the operation of the vigilante groups in crime prevention and control have been effective in Dekina LGA. The Ejeh of Dekina had this to say thus:



"Policemen are not many enough to cover the entire communities in terms of crime controls and the few ones are not everywhere, but the vigilante groups are everywhere penetrating the nooks and crannies of the community. Where the police cannot go the vigilante will go as they know the various hide out of the bad boys and offenders in the community. The vigilante have been very helpful also in handling the crisis between the farmers and herdsmen in our various communities more than the police. So I want to say that they are effective in controlling and preventing criminal activities" (**IDI/ 3/MALE/56/TC/2022**).

A Dekina Division Police Inspector interviewed posited that the collaborative efforts of the vigilante groups with the police in preventing and controlling crime is commendable. He said as quoted:

"With the advent of the proliferation of vigilante groups, the police now have full confidence to visit the volatile areas of the communities and this is an attestation to their effectiveness in crime prevention and control in Dekina L.G.A" (**IDI/3/MALE/46/DPO/2022**).

**Research Question 4:** What are the factors militating against operational efficiency of the vigilantes in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State?

**Table 8: Factors Militating Against Operational Efficiency of the Vigilante Groups in Dekina Local Government Area, Kogi State**

<b>Inadequacy of Basic Operational Equipment</b>	<b>Frequency (F) N=278</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Yes</b>	119	43
<b>No</b>	107	38
<b>Don't Know</b>	52	19
<b>Lack of Public Cooperation</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	97	35
<b>No</b>	94	34
<b>Don't Know</b>	87	31
<b>Lack of Proper Training</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	151	54
<b>No</b>	92	33
<b>Don't Know</b>	35	13
<b>Corruption/Godfatherism</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	178	64
<b>No</b>	74	27
<b>Don't Know</b>	26	09

**Source: Field Survey, 2023**



Table 8 reveals that 119 representing 43% of the respondents indicated yes, 107 representing 38% of the respondents were of contrary opinion that lack of basic operational equipment have nothing to do with the operational efficiency of the vigilante groups while the remaining 52 representing 19% of the respondents claimed that they don't have an idea on whether inadequacy of basic operational equipment has connection with operational efficiency of the vigilante groups or not. The high percentage of the respondents (43%) who agreed in affirmation is an indication that of inadequacy of basic operational equipment available for the vigilante groups can however militate against their operational efficiency in crime prevention and control in Dekina Local Government Area.

Table 8 also shows that 97 representing 35% of the respondents indicated yes, while 94 representing 34% of the respondents indicated nay that lack of public cooperation has no relationship with the operational efficiency of the Vigilante groups, whereas the remaining 87 representing 31% of the respondents were neutral and claimed that they don't have an idea on whether lack of public cooperation can affect the operational efficiency of the vigilante groups. The higher percentage (35%) of the respondents who accounted in affirmation signifies that lack of public cooperation can significantly affect the operational efficiency of the vigilante groups in Dekina Local Government Area. This could manifest in a situation where members of the public refuse or are reluctant to disclose meaningful information for the apprehension of a suspected criminal in the community.

When the respondents were asked on whether lack of proper training giving to vigilante groups could militate against the operational efficiency of the groups, table 8 also shows that 151 representing 54% of the respondents indicated yes, while 92 representing 33% of the respondents indicated in contradiction that lack of proper training has no connection with operational efficiency of the vigilantes whereas the remaining 35 representing 13% of the respondents claimed that they don't know whether lack of training could affect the operational efficiency of the vigilantes. The implication of these findings is that majority of the respondents agreed in affirmation that lack of proper training is a challenge affecting operational efficiency of vigilante group in crime prevention and control in Dekina LGA. This is attributed to the inability of the vigilante groups to professionally interrogate suspected criminals on investigation during intelligence gathering. Even training on how to properly handle guns in order not to miss targeted criminal and victimize innocent citizens, and lack of training on how to moderately torture an offender of a particular crime.

The respondents were asked on whether corruption coupled with Godfatherism can affect the operational efficiency of the vigilante groups, table 8 above further reveals that 178 representing 64% of the respondents indicated yes while 74 representing 27% of the respondents were of contrary opinion, whereas 26 representing 9% of the respondents claimed neutrality that they don't know whether corruption/God-fatherism has any connections with operational efficiency of the vigilantes. The highest percentage of the respondents who indicated in affirmation is an indication that corruption / Godfatherism is really a factor militating against the operational efficiency of the vigilante groups in Dekina Local Government Area. The implication of these is that corruption in vigilantism/Godfatherism, regardless of the amount involved, promotes and facilitates, rather than checks criminal activities in Dekina Local Government Area.



## Qualitative Analysis of the Interview on the Major Problems Militating Against Operational Efficiency of the Vigilante Groups

A traditional ruler interviewed pointed out that:

"Lack of sophisticated fire arms, poor funding, lack of adequate patrol vehicle and lack of proper training were among the major problems confronting them and when provided them with what is needed, will improve their performance" (IDI/ 4/MALE/67/TC/2022).

The above finding suggests that vigilante group members were confronted with some major problems which affect their operational efficiency in a negative way.

**Research Question 5.** How can the performance of vigilante groups in crime prevention and control be improved in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State?

**Table 9: How to Improve Vigilantism in Crime Prevention and Control in Dekina Kogi State**

How to Improve Vigilantism	Frequency (F) N=278	Percentage (%)
Vigilantes should be well funded	113	41
Vigilante should be provided with modern weapons	98	35
The public should cooperate with the vigilantes	56	20
Others	11	04

Source: *Field Survey, 2023*

When the respondents were asked on what they think can be done to improve on the performance of the vigilante groups, Table 9 above shows that 113 representing 41% of the respondents suggested that if only vigilantism can be well funded and remunerated then their performance would be improved upon, 98 representing 35% of the respondents indicated that if the vigilantes can be provided with modern sophisticated weapons then their performance will be improved upon, while 56 representing 20% of the respondents were of the opinion that if only the public can cooperate with the vigilante groups in fight against crime then their performance will be improved upon, whereas the remaining 11 representing 4% of the respondents were of other suggestions. The highest percentage of the respondents who voted for better pay as the only way through which the vigilante activities can be motivated for more performance is an indication that the salary structure or stipends of the vigilante groups should be reviewed. This could however be attributed to the over reliance of the members on the stipends in the vigilante service for their daily survival.



## **Quantitative Analysis of the Interview on how best can the problem of crime in Nigeria be solved**

A monarch interviewed was quoted thus:

"The problem of crime in Nigeria could be solved by providing employment opportunities to our youth. if our youths are gainfully employed or empowered to be engaged in one thing or the other, the tendency to be involved in social vices would be reduced to a barest minimum"(IDI/ 2/MALE/71/TC/2022).

Another Traditional ruler said thus:

"The vigilante groups should be funded properly, provide them with modern sophisticated weapons and increase their pay packets to enable them combat crime adequately and effectively" (IDI/ 2/MALE/46/TC/2022).

These findings suggest that the problem of crime could be solved through provision of employment, youth empowerment and proper funding of the vigilante groups.

### **Testing of Hypotheses**

In testing the two (2) hypotheses formulated in chapter one, Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used. Chi-square was employed for hypothesis one while Multiple Linear Regression was used in testing hypothesis two to determine the relationships of one research variable (vigilantism) with the other (crime prevention and control). Below are the analysis and the testing of the hypotheses formulated to answer the research questions asked to guide the study.

### **Hypothesis One**

**Ho:** There is no significant relationship between vigilante patrolling/community engagement and the prevalence of crime in Dekina Local Government Area.

### **The Test**

The goal is to test if there is any significant relationship between vigilante patrolling/community engagement and the prevalence of crime in Dekina Local Government Area. Using the designated appropriate questions in the questionnaire administered to test hypothesis one. Chi-square was adopted with the aid of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). The result below emerged.



**Table 10: Cross Tabulation of Chi-Square on the Relationship between Effective Vigilantism and the Prevalence of Crime in Dekina Local Government Area (N=278)**

Rate of Crime Before the Current Form of Vigilantism	Frequency (F) (N=278)	Percentage (%)				
High	103	37				
Low	91	33				
Normal	84	30				
Rate of Crime After the Current Form of Vigilantism						
High	91	33				
Low	112	40				
Normal	75	27				
Prevalent Crime						
Armed Robbery	90	32				
Murder	56	20				
Burglary	42	15				
Kidnapping	60	21				
Rape	10	04				
Others	22	08				
Variables	Observed value	Expected Value	Residual	X <sup>2</sup>	DF	P-
Effective	89	69.5	19.5	380.5	5.4	12.88 <sup>a</sup> 3
Very Effective	78	69.5	0.08.5	72.25	1.04	
Ineffective	61	69.5	-8.5	72.5	1.04	
Very Ineffective	50	69.5	-19.5	380.5	5.4	
<b>Total</b>	<b>278</b>					

Source: *Researcher's SPSS Computation, (2023)*

From the cross tabulation above, a close observation of the computed value of chi-square for degrees of freedom (3) using two tail test ( $X^2_{cal} = 12.88$ ) shows that chi-square computed was statistically significant at 1 percent level of significance. From the decision rule this result is further confirmed with the chi-squared calculated (12.88) greater than chi-square tabulated (7.815) at 1 percent level of significance. The above result therefore accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between effective vigilante patrolling/community engagement and the prevalence of crime in Dekina L.G.A while rejecting the null hypothesis.





## Hypothesis Two

**H<sub>0</sub>:** The crime prevention and control mechanisms adopted by the vigilantes are not significantly effective in crime prevention in Dekina L.G.A.

### The Test

The goal is to test if the mechanisms adopted for the vigilantes in crime prevention and control do significantly affect their operational efficiency in Dekina L.G.A. using the designated appropriate question in the questionnaire administered to test hypothesis two. Multiple regression was adopted with the aid of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). The result below emerged:

**Table 11: Multiple Linear Regression Result of the mechanisms adopted by the vigilante groups in crime prevention and control in Dekina L G A**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Co-efficients	T	Sig.
	$\beta$	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	39.427	4.124		10.894	0.000
Beat Patrol	3.148	1.215	0.215	2.157	0.005
Stop, Detain and Search	3.215	1.124	0.369	2.159	0.005
Use of Decoy Vehicles	3.871	1.506	0.278	1.245	0.001
Static Guards	3.412	1.215	0.124	2.147	0.361
Under Cover Works	3.215	2.154	0.124	2.364	0.005
Intelligence Gathering	3.025	1.214	0.789	0.248	0.005
All of the Above	5.214	3.214	1.296	3.14	0.007
Others	1.246	1.214	0.057	0.147	0.000

**R<sup>2</sup> = 0.751**

**R = 0.281<sup>a</sup>**

**Std. Error of the Estimate = 5.50016**

**F = 10.458**

**P = 0.001<sup>b</sup>**

Source: *Researcher's SPSS computation, (2023)*

As shown in Table 11, the R<sup>2</sup> of 0.751 shows that beat patrol, stop, detain and search, use of decoy vehicles, static guards, under cover works, and intelligence gathering contributes about 75% to crime prevention mechanisms for effective vigilantism. The stated hypothesis is therefore rejected. This indicates that the mechanisms adopted by the vigilante groups in crime prevention and control significantly affects their operational efficiency in Dekina L.G.A.



## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study was evaluated through the use of structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews with questions tailored towards analysing vigilantism in crime prevention and control in Dekina Local Government Area. Chi-square and Multiple Linear Regression were employed in the testing of the two hypotheses with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) in the analysis to ensure accuracy and eliminate mistake arising from manual computations.

Hypothesis one was tested using Chi-square to test if there is any significant relationship between vigilante patrolling/community engagement and the rate of crime in Dekina Local Government Area. And it was discovered that there is a significant relationship between the effective performance of the vigilantes and the prevalence of crime in Dekina Local Government Area. Based on the Chi-square results, the calculated value is (12.88) greater than tabulated value (7.815) at 1 percent level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected giving rise to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, leading to the conclusion that the effective performance of the vigilante has a significant relationship with the prevalence of crime. Although crime is an inevitable feature of every society, if the vigilante groups are well equipped with modern sophisticated weapons with effective operational tactics and with minimum challenges, there is no way that the rate of crime will not be contained or curtailed to a barest minimum. This is because a society without adequate security of lives and properties is a breeding ground for crimes and criminal behaviour but an effective performance of the vigilante groups is no doubt a threat to potential criminals in Dekina Local Government Area.

The findings of this study are in tandem or in conformity with the submissions of scholars such as Okechukwu (2011), Osawe (2015) and Dambazau (2007) who posited that in Nigeria, crime manifest in the convulsive upsurge of both violent and non-violent crimes (Incidents of armed robbery, assassination and ransom-driven kidnapping are now ravaging the polity like a tsunami and spreading a climate of fears and anxieties about public safety arising from inadequate and weak security architecture. These seemingly upsurge of crimes are traceable in Dekina Local Government Area are traceable to poverty, unemployment, poor parental upbringing, and greed amongst the youth; get rich quick mentality, inadequate crime control model of national security among others have crime to be inevitable but contain able if the vigilante groups among other security apparatus are effective in their performance. As the submission of these scholars rightly supports the findings of this study that crime portrays the inability of government to provide a secure and safe environment for lives, properties and the conduct of economic activities considering the alarming increase in criminal activities in Nigeria such as armed robbery, terrorism and other related crimes. This implies that if the government is able to provide an unending and uncompromised security outfit through effective vigilantism then the prevalence of crime will be contained in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State.

Hypothesis two was tested with Multiple Linear Regression because of the many observed variables in the mechanisms of vigilantism, to analyze if the mechanisms adopted by the vigilante groups in crime prevention and control can significantly affect their operational efficiency in Dekina Local Government Area. It was discovered that based on the regression analysis of the sum of squares (0.751) against the residual sums of squares (0.281) the null



hypothesis was rejected and the alternate accepted. Giving rise to the conclusion that the mechanisms adopted by the vigilante groups in crime prevention and control significantly affect their operational efficiency in Dekina L.G.A. affirmatively, the effectiveness and/or the operational efficiency of the vigilante groups is however rooted in the effectiveness of the mechanisms of operations. The arduous tasks of crime prevention and control cannot be carried out effectively with empty handed and archaic or traditional methods, and as such, criminals devise various techniques of committing crimes daily and as new tactics of crime commission emerge in Dekina LGA on the daily basis, there supposed to be a new tactics of crime prevention, detection and control by the vigilante groups for their operations to be efficient. There cannot be any operational efficiency without effective mechanisms of crime prevention and control in vigilantism. The findings of this study is in conformity with the position of Eke (2002), Balogun (2002) and Otubu and Coker (2006) among others who opined that for any crime to occur, three major factors must come together which are as follows; an individual or group must have the desire or motivation to participate in a banned or prohibited behaviour at least some of the participants must have the skills and tools needed to commit the crime and an opportunity must be acted upon. And as such, for prevention and control of crime to be effective and the operations of the vigilantes to be efficient, these factors and the measures including Beat Patrol Stop, Detain and Search Use of Decoy Vehicles, Static Guards, Under Cover Works, Intelligence Gathering have to be worked upon to reduce the occurrence of crime and the tendency to commit one to the barest minimum or if possible, eradicate them completely.

The study further discovered that the operations of the vigilantism has been effective as 89 (32%) which account for the majority of the respondents indicated. This can be interpreted to mean that irrespective of the inherent challenges facing vigilantism in Dekina L.G.A, the groups are trying their best in their operation of crime prevention and control. This finding supports the views of scholars such as Smith (2007); Owumi and Ajayi (2013) who however maintained that neighborhood-watch organizations and vigilante groups are still functioning effectively and people consult them on security issues probably because of the perceived ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the official law enforcement organisations. This view is similar to the view of Burton *et al.*, (2003), who had the view that people repose confidence on vigilante services for the very fear they have of crime and for the loss of faith in the Police's ability to protect them.

The results of this study also tallies with the submission of Alemika & Chukwuma (2003) who was of the view that the vigilante groups were committed to their duty and this level of commitment and effectiveness lay primarily in the fact that the members are from within the communities in which they operate; also for the fact that they have a determination to ensuring security, and vested interest in curbing crime and are under the control of, and are mostly accountable to the community in which they operate. Because affirmatively, since the proliferation of vigilantism in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State, daylight armed robbery, rape, cultism, burglary among others are no longer making rounds on the news.

The study also revealed that factors such as inadequate weapons, lack of public cooperation, lack of proper training, corruption and Godfatherism were the factors militating against the operational efficiency of the vigilante groups in Dekina L.G.A and this was expected because it accounts for why the operations of the vigilante groups has not being very effective in their quest



for crime prevention and control. These findings collaborate with the positions of scholars such as Eke (2002) and Alemika and Chukwuma (2003) who opined that the problems facing vigilantism include but not limited to lack of proper training with adequate arms; lack of basic operational equipment such as sophisticated modern weapons, flashlights, warm clothing, rain boots, rain coats, including threats from hoodlums who used sophisticated weapons.

The findings of this study also tallies with the submissions of Olaniyi (2005), Onyeozili (2005) and CLEEN Foundation (2004) who submitted that another factor that may pose a challenge to effective vigilantism in Nigeria is the concept of ‘Godfatherism’ which is a form of corruption. This is the funding and abetting of vices and shielding of ‘connected’ criminals from justice by government agents and highly placed officials entrusted with the power and authority to investigate and prosecute such vices. This God-fatherism and corruption manifest in the fact that partisan community leaders with political ambition weakened the cohesion of the community policing forum in such a way that the existing structure, which is an awful imitation of community policing (the police community relations groups), in some places already has this factor to contend with. Many ‘powerful’ politicians, who constitute most of the membership of these bodies, often use their position in society to shield criminals who are loyal to their cause. Most of these miscreants, who are used by politicians during electioneering campaigns and as body guards, are often shielded from the arm of the law by these political demagogues. These problems are not different from what is affecting the operational efficiency of vigilantism. These findings also conformed with the position of Alemika and Chukwuma, (2004) who posited that so many crimes go uninvestigated by the vigilante groups where influential persons, including powerful persons in government are fingered as suspects or where the suspects “sort the vigilantes investigators”, a slang for bribe payment, to avert investigation of suspected criminals in the communities.

The findings of the study equally revealed that for vigilantism to be effective and enhanced, the group should be well funded, provided with modern sophisticated weapons and the public should cooperate with them for a successful operations in crime prevention and control in Dekina Local Government Area. These findings agreed with the postulation of scholars such as Knowland (2014), Adejoh (2013), Alemika & Chukwuma (2003) and The Justice for All Group (2012), who in their submissions remarked that the vigilante group members in most places relied heavily on charms and voodoo, while few of them had matchets, bows and arrows, and locally made guns and double barrel guns. He indicated that if proper security is to be ensured from the groups, there is need to provide the groups with better arms and give the members required training. Noted that in order to improve the overall performance of the vigilante groups, constant technical support and funding must be given the group to enhance the knowledge of its members on crime prevention. Justice for All Group also supports the findings of this study by emphasizing that relevant information about the growing trend and sophistication in crime including but not limited to the overall direction of crime prevention and policing; observance of guidelines on human rights and policing must be given to the vigilante groups in the course of their training. The scholars stated that the meager remuneration paid to the vigilante groups has been one of the factors limiting the effectiveness of the groups in their security services. They maintained that the meager remuneration may provide a temptation to engage in (more lucrative) criminal activities, as well as deter good men from entering the service.



The findings of this study also have justified the theoretical framework used in the study i.e the social contract theory which posited that the citizens should surrender their individual powers to the state in exchange for their protection of life and property to enhance crime control. This theory was chosen for the study because in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State, the Council Executive Chairman is the chief security of the Area and the Government is saddled with the responsibility of protecting the lives and properties of citizens who obey the laws of the land by providing adequate security. This has manifested in Kogi State's government proliferation of the vigilante service and their duties in the study area have been established to be seldom effective in crime prevention. This theory supports the findings of this study in the sense that an effective vigilante patrolling and community engagement cannot be achieved without the general will and consents of the members of the communities in which they operate, and the contract is what necessitate public cooperation and collaboration with the vigilantes to ensure a crime free and peaceful coexistence which is one of the impacts of vigilante patrolling and community engagement in Dekina Local Government Area, of Kogi State.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study assess the impacts of vigilante patrolling and community engagement on crime prevention in Dekina Local Government Area, of Kogi State. Arising from the findings of the study, it can therefore be concluded that vigilante patrolling and community engagement has been effective in the study area with their various adopted mechanisms in crime prevention and control as it crawls the prevalence of crime in Dekina Local Government Area. But the inherent challenges militating against their operational efficiency which are mostly beyond their control have prevented vigilantism from becoming very effective in crime prevention and control. Hence, if their necessary needs are provided with the collaborative efforts of the members of the various communities in which they operate then their activities would be very effective in crime prevention and control in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher put forward the following recommendations:

Having found out that there is a significant relationship between proliferation of vigilantism and the rate of crime in Dekina LGA, vigilantism should be entrenched by providing them with modern tools for fighting crime, more funding, proper training and better welfare to boost the morale of the members of the vigilante group in order to keep curtailing the prevalence of crime at its barest minimum in Dekina LGA.

Having discovered that the mechanisms adopted by vigilante groups in Dekina LGA for crime prevention and control were effective, the government and security stakeholders in the state should incessantly review the modalities to retain their functionality considering the complex





nature of crime and criminal behaviour and to ensure that the security measures and mechanisms of crime control conform with the national and international standard.

Government at all levels should encourage vigilante activities by providing incentives and adequate logistics such as more motorbikes and security vans for the vigilante groups. This is to ensure more effectiveness in their operations, and members of the vigilante groups should be encouraged to discharge their duties without fear or favour.

A concerted effort towards having a synergistic relationship between members of the public, the vigilante groups and the conventional policing outfits in the state is highly recommended. This is particularly important due to the fact that the presence of this would ensure a complementary working relationship that would further improve on the efforts and progress made so far in terms of vigilantism and policing.

Outstanding members of the vigilante groups should be recognized and motivated to boost their morales. This can be achieved by setting up an excellence award unit in the office of the governor of the state to enable them get more dedicated to service.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The limitation of this research work are as follows:

The study was limited to using only a questionnaire and an interview for data gathering, and even the interview involved only 17 respondents, which may not be enough for diverse responses. Focus Group Discussion (FGD), on the other hand, would have helped to get more detailed responses from more than 17 people in the entire Dekina Local Government Area.

The study relies on closed-headed questionnaires and oral interviews as the primary methods of data collection. While these methods can provide valuable insights, they have limitations in capturing the full complexity of the research topic. Questionnaires often limit respondents to predefined options, potentially overlooking nuanced perspectives or additional information that may arise in open-ended discussions. Similarly, oral interviews may be influenced by the biases or limitations of the interviewer, potentially leading to incomplete or biased data.

The use of closed-headed questionnaires may introduce response bias. Respondents may feel compelled to select the closest option even if none of the provided choices accurately represents their views or experiences. This can result in data that does not fully reflect the true diversity of opinions and experiences within the study population. Additionally, oral interviews may be subject to interviewer bias, where the researcher's presence or questioning style influences the responses of the participants.

The study conducted interviews with a small sample of 3 traditional rulers, 12 community citizens, and 2 police inspectors from each of the three districts in Dekina L.G.A. While the sample size may be appropriate for a qualitative study, it may not provide a comprehensive representation of the entire population or capture the full range of perspectives and experiences





---

related to vigilantism and crime prevention. The findings may lack generalizability and may not be representative of the larger context.

The quantitative data analysis in this study mainly relies on descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages. While these analyses can provide a basic understanding of the data, they may not fully explore the relationships or associations between variables. The use of more advanced statistical techniques, beyond chi-square and multiple linear regression, could have provided deeper insights into the research hypotheses and relationships between variables.

Again, the purposive sampling technique as adopted in this study is not the best and most appropriate for a study of this nature. Using probability sampling techniques would have made the findings of this study more reliable, generalizable and less biased.

### **Acknowledgements**

The authors express their profound gratitude to all the lecturers in Sociology Department, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba who have added value through constructive criticisms towards improving on the quality of this research paper. Thank you all.

### **Competing Interests**

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

### **Funding**

There was no special funding whatsoever from anywhere regarding this research work.

### **Authors' contributions**

AU and EY drafted the manuscript and carried out the research work.

TIG supervised the research work.

JOO proofread the manuscript.

All authors read and approved the final manuscript.



### Authors' information

AU is a Masters' student and EY is a Ph.D. candidate both in the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba - Nigeria.

TIG is an Associate Professor of Criminology and JOO is a Professor of Medical Sociology both in the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba - Nigeria.

### REFERENCES

- Adejoh, P. E. (2013). An assessment of the performance of informal security structures in community crime control in metropolitan Lagos. *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*. Available at <http://www.bjornal.co-uk/paper/BJASS>
- Aina, M. & Okpanachi, O. (2019). The role of vigilante groups in war against terrorism in North Eastern Nigeria. *Global Journal of Politics and Law Research*. Vol.7, No.2, pp.49-58
- Alemika, E. E. O., & Chukwuma, I. C. (2003). Analysis of police and policing in Nigeria. Adesk study of the role of policing as barrier to change or driver of change in Nigeria. Lagos: *Centre for Law Enforcement Education in Nigeria (CLEEN, FOUNDATION)*.
- Alemika, E. E. O., & Chukwuma, I. C. (2000). Criminal victimization and fear of crime in Lagos Metropolis, Nigeria. CLEEN Foundation.
- Beland, D. (2018). The political construction of collective insecurity from moral panic to blame avoidance organized irresponsibility. Retrieved from [www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~ces/pub](http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~ces/pub).
- Baker, B. (2002). When the Bakassi Boys came: Eastern Nigeria Confronts Vigilantism. *Journal of Contemporary African Affairs*, 20, 223-244.
- Baker, B. (2008). Multi choice policing in Africa. Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute.
- Chukwuma, I. (2019). Police transformation in Nigeria: Problems and prospects in crime and policing in Transitional Societies Seminar Report No. 8 Johannesburg: South Africa.
- Chukwuma, I. (2002). Responding to vigilantism. *Human Rights Dialogue*, Series 2, No. 8.
- Cohen L. (2013). Research methods in education, sixth edition - STIBA Malang. URL: [www.stiba-malang.ac.id/.../RESEARCH%20METHOD%20COHEN%20ok](http://www.stiba-malang.ac.id/.../RESEARCH%20METHOD%20COHEN%20ok).
- Clifford, W. (1974). An introduction to Africa criminology: Nairobi: African University Press.
- Hulin, C., Netemeyer, R., & Cudeck, R. (2001). Can a Reliability Coefficient Be Too High? *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 10, 1, 55-58.
- Igbo, E. M. (2001). Introduction to criminology. University of Nigeria press Limited. Nsukka.
- Igbo, E. U. M. (1999). Introduction to criminology. Afro-Orbis publishing & co. Ltd. Nsukka
- Joseph, A. (2019). Functions of the vigilante group of Nigeria. Infoguide Nigeria with May. <https://infoguidenigeria.com/functions-of-nigerian-vigilante-group/>
- Jibrin, U. Y. & Musa, M. B. (2019). The Impact of Vigilantism and Crime Control in Contemporary Nigeria: A Study of Gezawa Local Government Area, Kano State, Nigeria (2010-2015). *International Journal of Recent Innovations in Academic Research*. 3(1): 115-138.



- Okeke, D. U. (2006). Community Policing: Nigeria in Focus Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd Garba, A.S. (2012). The place of community policing under the shariah and the advent of hisbah. Retrieved from <http://www.gamj.com/article>.
- Phenson, U. (2014). Government and the management of security challenges in Nigeria: A case of Akwa Ibom State (1999-2011) (Unpublished Ph.D Thesis) University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.
- Omojo, O. A., John, O., Tajuddeen, A.Y., Chukwunika, C.A.C., & Abdullahi, A. (2022). Impact of Vigilantes on crime control in Kano metropolitan area of Nigeria: An appraisal. *Research Journal of Criminal Policy and Social Justice*. 10 (3). December, 2022.
- Onwuegbusi, C. A. (2017). Public perceptions of the services of vigilante group in Anambra State. *International Journal of Religion & Human Relations Vol. 9 No 1 June, 2017*.
- Olaniyi, R. (2002). Crime control, police and vigilante groups: Community action for security in Sabon Gari, Kano, 1953- 2001. *IFRA Ibadan Newsletter, Vol.XI, N. 2*
- Onyeozili, E.C. (2005). Obstacles to effective policing in Nigeria. *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies*, 1, (1).
- Obidiegwu U. J. (2019). The extent vigilante security group collaborate with the police in Minimizing crime in ABIA State. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)*, vol. 9, no. 4, 2019, pp. 41-45.
- Lambert E., Elechi, O., & Jiang, S. (2010). Formal and informal crime control views in Nigeria and United State: An exploratory study among college students. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice*. 8(2) 104-126.
- Marshal, G. (1998). Oxford Dictionary of sociology (2nd ed.). Oxford University press. Merton, R. (1957). *Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York: Free Press
- Iwarimie-Jaja, D. (2012). *Criminology: The study of crime*. Fourth Edition; Owerri: Spring field Publishers. Chapter 2: 12-14.
- Richard, N. I. (2010). Vigilantism and crime control in contemporary Nigeria. A study of Uudenu Local Government Area of Enugu State. M.Sc Thesis Department of Sociology University of Nigeria Nsukka.
- Robinson, J. P., Shaver, P. R., & Wrightsman, L. S. (1991). Criteria for scale selection and evaluation. *Meas Pers Social Psychology of Attitude*, 1(3), 1-6
- Rotimi, K. 2001. *The Police in a Federal State: The Nigerian experience*. Ibadan: College Press).
- Surajudeen, O. Mudasiru, A. & Abiodun, F. (2020). State, vigilantism and youth violence in Nigeria: A study of 'Onyabo' in Ikorodu Local Government Area of Lagos State. *African Journal of Political and International Relations*.
- Tappan, P. (1960). *Crime, Justice and Correction*. New York: McGraw-Hill. Umar, M. & Bappi, U. (2014). Community policing and partnership: opportunities and challenges for Gombe State Nigeria. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19 (4), 11-15.
- Umeagbalasi, E. (2012). Focus on Anambra State (1) security and crime under review. *Inter society of Nigeria*.