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The Role of Information and Communiication Technology Combating Crime in Nigeria in The Post Covid 19 Era: A Study of the Nigeria Police Force, Lagos State Command

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Abstract

The study seeks to examine the impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on combating crime by the security forces in the wake of corona virus pandemic with special reference to the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). Within the framework of cybernetic theory, this study adopts the descriptive survey method to examine the relationship between the two variables under investigation. Multi stage sampling technique was used to draw a sample size of three hundred (300) participants for the study. Data were collected from the sampled population, and formulated hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) statistical tool. The finding of the study reveals that there is a significant relationship between the use of ICT and the effort by the police force to effectively combat crime in Nigeria. The study also discovers that the use of ICT in the fight against crime by the NPF is faced with some challenges, which includes among others; lack of infrastructure, lack of adequate training, uncooperative attitude of ICT service providers and lack of inter-agency cooperation. The paper in conclusion, recommends that the NPF should improve on the usage of ICT especially during this post COVID-19 era by providing a robust training program for her personnel on the usage of ICT in combating crime, the government should provide adequate infrastructure to enhance effective application of ICT in crime fighting and an effective collaboration between ICT service providers and the NPF in fighting crime in Nigeria.

Keywords: Covid-19; Crime; Information and Communication Technology; Crime and Nigeria Police Force.

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INTRODUCTION

The Corona virus of 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic came as a shock to the whole world. The spread of the virus causes government of almost all the countries of the world to imposed different kinds of restriction within their respective countries. This did not only affect the rate and pattern of crime, but also changes the practice of the law enforcement agents globally. Prior to the outburst of the corona virus, the world has being witnessing security threats; which got worsen with the corona virus pandemic.

In Nigeria the first index case of corona virus was witnessed in February 2020 (National Center for Disease Control – NCDC, 2020). However, with poor control of the spread of the disease at the initial time, the disease spread to other states and communities in Nigeria. In reaction to the spread of this deadly infectious disease, the Nigeria Government shuts borders; imposed lockdown, banned interstate travel and other form of restrictions were made. One of the major consequences of these restrictions is the closure of many small and medium scale industries while others retrenched so many of their staff. This according to Alagboso and Abubarkar (2020) affects the economic life of the people especially the low income earners. In line with the above argument, Okolie-Osemena (2021) posits that corona virus has altered the global lifestyles; affecting people's movement and work.

With this new pattern of life that has made many Nigerians to be jobless, the already threaten security situation induced by the activities of bandits, militants, street crime, stealing, burglaries armed robbers and insurgents got worsen. Again illicit economic activities such as financial terrorism, online crime, illegal markets and smuggling increased (Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2020).

This increased criminal activities created more tasks for security forces as criminals attempt to take advantage of the corona virus vis-à-vis the restriction of people to their homes to engage in crimes. In the same vein, the UN-Nigeria (2020) has opined that as a result of crippled business activities by the lockdown over the Corona virus outbreak, the crime rate may increase in the country after the pandemic. During this lockdown period, fewer law enforcement agents were seen on the streets of Nigeria cities, which provided opportunities for criminals to operate especially in shop breaking, robbing motorists, banditry and other criminal vices; thereby posing serious security challenge to the country.

Since the outburst of covid-19, Nigeria Government has developed a lot of policies and reforms in the bit to curb the increasing crime in the country, yet the security situation keeps getting worse. Also, in an attempt to finding solution to the menace of criminality in the post covid-19 era in Nigeria, scholars have carried out a lot of studies.

Despite all the effort made by the Nigeria government and scholars' recommendation towards fighting crime in the post Covid-19 era, security situation in Nigeria keeps deteriorating. Based on the above analysis and the current security challenges in Nigeria, this paper attempts an examination of a paradigm shift from the traditional method of physical man guard to a modern technological approach in fighting crime by empirically investigating the role of ICT in combating crime in the Covid-19 era with special reference to the Nigeria Police Force, Lagos State Command.

Therefore, the central objective of the study is to investigate the impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in combating crime by the security forces in the wake of corona virus pandemic with special reference to Lagos State Police Command (LSPC). For proper analysis, the main objective of the study was structured into three specific objectives, viz~a~vis: to examine the

relationship between ICT and effective crime surveillance by LSPC; to assess the relationship between the ICT and prompt detection and prosecution of crime by LSPC; and to examine the challenges facing the Nigeria Police Force in the application of ICT in combating crime.

To achieve the objective of the study, the following two null hypotheses were formulated and tested.

1. There is no significant relationship between application of ICT and effective crime surveillance by the Lagos State Police Command.
2. There is no significant relationship between the ICT and prompt detection and prosecution of crime by the Lagos State Police Command

ICT is a compound terminology used to stress role of technology in gathering and managing information between and among individuals, group of individuals, communities and States. The term ICT is used to describe the integration of telecommunications and computers in the management of information; enabling the users to access, store, transmit, understand and manipulate information. According to Imaniyal (2020), ICT encompasses all communication devices that enhance gathering, storage, transfer and understanding of information.

Without information decision making would be subjective. Communication is central to all forms of social and economic growth. Globally, ICT has changed the way government conduct its business. According to Aduwa-Ogiebaen and Iyamu (in Agbodike and Igbokwe-Ibeto, 2017), ICT as a management tool has brought lot of changes aimed at reducing cost, better coordination, quick response and satisfaction of the customers. As the world is becoming technologically driven, ICT has become a major tool for responding to security issues.

Crime is generally an occurrence that threats the security of several countries of the world in varying degrees. It is one of the greatest and multidimensional problems that have continuously plagued the existence of mankind. It is a public wrong, an act strongly disapproved by the public/society. According to Sowmyya (2011), each society has its own way of defining crime in line with their law. In Nigeria section 202 of the criminal code CAP 77 of the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1990 define crime as an offence committed by an action or omission which is punishable by law. It is a wrong doing which affects the interest of the community as a whole and for which the offender is punishable. Crime consists of doing an act which is forbidden by law or failure to do an act where the individual has it as a duty to perform.

Crime is classified either according to the nature of the crime, or according to the punishment attached to it. In the classification of crime according to its punishment, the criminal code CAP 77 of the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria identified three types of crime as simple offence, misdemeanor and felony. In this regard, simple offence or crime means any criminal act that is punishable by imprisonment for less than six months. Misdemeanor offence or crime is any offence that is punishable by imprisonment by law for not less than six months but less than three years. Felony is a crime or offence that the offender is liable to imprisonment for not less than three years. This type of crime is of great threat to lives. In another classification, the National Bureau of Statistic (2016) groups crime according to its nature into three groups vis-à-vis crime against persons, crime against properties and crime against public authority.

Crime against persons could be violent in Nature and these include; homicide, aggravated and simple assault, rape and sexual assault, robbery, insurgency and militancy among other, while property crime includes burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

Crimes against public authority include: non-payment of tax, disobedient to traffic law, etc. These are victimless crime. In Nigeria, crimes against persons and properties have been on the increase with the outbreak. World Bank (2022) argues that crime rate in Nigeria has shifted upward with 6% between 2020 and 2022. This shows that with the outburst of corona virus in Nigeria, crime control activities has not be able to control the increasing rate of crime in Nigeria. In line with the above assertion, Sasu (2022) argues that Nigeria has been infested with violent crime which has made her to be included among other countries with least peace in the world.

The argument of Sasu (2022) supports the position of Amachree (in United Nation-Nigeria, 2020) when he posits that with fewer security agencies available in the streets of Nigeria cities due to the lockdown, criminals took advantage to perpetrate property and violent crimes in the society especially in the commercial corridors. It is an arguable fact that due to the corona pandemic, many businesses and industries closed and are yet to re-opened. According to United Nations Development Programme (2021) Covid-19 caused disruption in operations of many enterprises as evident in at least two thirds of businesses currently operating in the country having had to close down during the pandemic. Greater percentage of Nigerians who were relieved of their job are still jobless till date.

Usman (2020) posits that criminally minded Nigerians begin to device means of defrauding people through online messages and getting access to their victims' bank account. It was in recognition of the above, that Adamu (in Usman, 2020) advised Nigerians to take precautionary actions against criminal elements who might want to explore the emergency situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic to defraud them.

Covid-19 is a name given to the group of coronaviruses that was discovered in China in December 2019. This group of virus causes respiratory and intestinal illnesses in human being and animals (Okoye, 2020). Covid-19 is a deadly virus that causes mild colds to severe acute respiratory syndrome in people. This group of virus spreads from the cavity of an infected person to another person. These particles range from larger respiratory droplets to smaller aerosols. One can be infected by breathing in the virus if you are near someone who has COVID-19, or by touching a contaminated surface and then your eyes, nose or mouth. The virus spreads more easily indoors and in crowded settings. According to Okoye (2020), an individual can contract COVID-19 disease by embracing a carrier of the disease, by inhaling and ingesting droplets of sputum or spittle of an infected.

He further argues that when an uninfected person comes into contact with surfaces infected with the COVID-19 disease, the person will contract the disease. In Nigeria, the first index case was in February 27, 2020 in Ogun state (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, 2020). This disease geometrically spread to many states across Nigeria causing panic and confusion among Nigerians. The Federal Government in response to the spread of this disease, authorizes the closure of all non-essential services (businesses and industries) and restricted movement of people in all the states of the country (Onyeji, 2020). This restriction, according to Alagboso and Abubarkar (2020) affected the economic life of the people especially the low-income earners and many becoming jobless.

These ongoing changes affected all aspects of life, with crime being no exception (United Nation Office for Disease Control – UNODC, 2020). In the same vein, Chinedu (2020) posits that the lockdown policy has pushed up the level of poverty in Nigeria resulting to increase in crimes against person and properties in Nigeria.

The NPF is one of the security organisations entrusted with the functions of protecting citizens' lives and property in the country. The basic responsibility of the police force is service to the people in responding swiftly towards prevention and detection of crimes (NPF, 2019; FRN, 2012). The overall command of the NPF is on the shoulder of the Inspector General of Police (NPF, 2019). The NPF has thirty-six state police commands and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) command. Each of the command is headed by a Commissioner of Police. Lagos State Police Command is one and the most largest State Police Commands in the country with a staff strength of about 28, 000.

Combating crime compasses a lot of strategies and measures that seek to reduce criminal victimization in the society. According to Odekunle (in Afolabi, Lawanson & Oyilola, 2016), to fight crime include all the activities undertaken by the government to reduce crime in a particular environment. He opines that having fewer or reduced criminal victimization – perceived and actual; higher proportion of crimes known to the police cleared by arrest; increased recovery of stolen properties; higher rates of arrests which results in conviction; lower traffic accident rates are indices of effective crime combat. Combating crime takes two major approaches; prevention and detection of crime. Preventive security operation is one and the cheapest means of combating crime globally. Security experts and criminologists have affirmed that prevention is the first imperative of justices that seeks to reduce the risk of crime occurring and their potential harmful effect on individual and the society (ECOSOC in UNODC, 2004).

Preventive strategy will not only prevent crimes and victimization, but also promote community safety and enhance sustainable development of the society including fear of crime. This according to Van-Dijk and de Waard (in UNODC, 2019) include; patrol system, surveillance and any other measures or initiatives taken by individual or group (public or private) aimed at eliminating crime prior to its occurrence. Another measure in combating crime is crime detection and prosecution. In many cases, this is purely the responsibility of the police. Detecting crime according to Britannica (2019) falls in three stages vis-à-vis discovery that a crime has been committed, identification of suspect and the collection of enough evidence to link the suspect to the crime discovered.

At outbreak of COVID-19 in Nigeria, one of the major roles of the NPF was to enforce the lockdown order amidst enforcing other regular laws of the land. At the early stage of the outburst of the pandemic, there were fewer security agencies available in the streets of Nigeria cities due to the lockdown. In this era of COVID-19, the effect of social distance has also kept some officers far from the people they are supposed to be protecting. Ewang (2020) argues that the dearth of manpower has reduced the efficiency of the NPF. The criminally minded Nigerians took advantage of this to commit crimes in the society especially in the commercial corridors (Amachree in UN-Nigeria, 2020). During this period according to Adamu (in Usman, 2020) crime in Nigeria took another dimension. Criminals begin to perpetuate crime using more sophiscated technological approach.

However, Aborisade (2021) observes that the Nigeria Police Force, in an attempt to enforce the law during this period has relied more on physical manpower guard which is accompanied by unlawful use of force and violation of human right. Bryne (2011) has earlier argued that for America to avoid militarization approach in combating crime, application of technological innovation is imperative. The indicators of combating crime by the NPF could be seen in their approaches and effects of security operations.

Robust Crime Surveillance: Surveillance is the act of monitoring a target or subject's activities through observation and close watch. Surveillance could also be carried out through visible and accessible policing (effective patrol system). Reiss (1971); Mohammed (2017), noted that visible and accessible policing deters people from committing crime. The police must be visible and accessible to members of the public in times of need. This gives the public the confidence of police performance. Surveillance could also be for the collection of evidence for prosecution.

Prompt Detection and Prosecution of Crime: Another approach to combating crime is quick response to security emergency; early detection and prosecution of crime by the NPF are also seen as means of combating crime. The ability of the NPF to investigate, prosecute and resolve criminal cases in time and effectively is a pre-requisite for combating crime in Nigeria. In this vein, Aina (2018) posits that security agencies should have competent personnel, trained and committed to the usage of modern technology in responding swiftly to situation.

Akindele (2021); Agwu (2016) argue that crime has increasingly become sophisticated. Therefore, the security operators must be technology canny to achieve effecting crime combat. In this vein, Omoleke (2017) argues that technological innovation has become a driving force in crime prevention strategies. In the security sector, Howell (2018) noted that modern technology in information and communication has become imperative in combating crime. He further asserts that law enforcement agencies have always been early adopters of technology; using digital cameras were installed on roads to detect traffic regulation violations, notably speeding; and body worn cameras to record events and gather information for both preventive and prosecution purposes. The use of ICT such as CCTV, drone among others is a major component of smart cities which helps in crime control through effective monitoring of human conduct in the city and area patrol (McLareu & Agyeman, 2015; Johnny, 2020).

Howell (2018) identifies the following among others as areas were technology can be applied in the fight against crime; 1). Recognizing the faces. Facial recognition technology has huge potential in the police's weaponry against fighting crime. 2). Data management - gathering, storing, analyzing, decoding and interpreting information. In this vein, data retrieved from the Internet of Things (IoT) by the Police can be analyzed to create a picture of crime patterns and trends. Howell opined that with proper data analysis using ICT, the Police can predict area(s) where crime may likely occur. This position supports the earlier argument of Byrne and Gary (2011) that ICT is an imperative tool in threat assessment. To these scholars, the purpose of threat assessment strategies is to present areas of targeted violence. Here, Byrne and Gary (2011) are of the optimistic that technological innovation has improved the performance of the police in America. 3). According to Howell (2018), drone assistance is another technological drive that has helps the security agencies in surveillance patrol. In the western world, the security agencies have been using drone technology as a cheaper alternative to helicopters in surveillance.

In support of the above, Jonny (2020); Taiwo and Agwu (2016) argue that in forensic investigation such as DNA analysis, blood stain examination and finger print interpretation, the role of ICT cannot be underestimated.

Byrne and Gary (2011) while affirming the relationship between ICT and crime prevention in America, observe that the mounting of Close-Circuit Television (CCTV) along the streets in America has reduced the criminal activities in America. These scholars also observe that video cameras being attached to patrol vehicles

have helped the security agents in proper surveillance of their area of responsibilities. Byrne and Gary (2011) further argue that following the application of new technologies by the Police in USA, there is a mark reduction in the death rate of America Police. This could be attributed to the reduce energy expedition in physical man-guard with the use of new technology.

Furthermore, Omoleke (2017) while examining the legal implication of using technologies in preventing and detecting crime, identifies areas where ICT are useful in the fight against crime vis~a~viz identifying, restraining and incapacitating fleeing criminals and their vehicles; identifying retinal image of a criminal; and the use of GPS in tracking information about a particular area.

Another area of interface between ICT and crime control is the sphere of information management. Information in the security industry is a raw material that if well processed can lead to effective security service delivery. In this regard, Akindele (2021) opines that ICT is needed to build a platform for effective information sharing between the citizens and the law enforcement agents.

The argument of the scholars above is that technological innovation is crucial to contemporary security operations with the dynamic nature of our modern society. From the above, it is arguable that ICT is significantly related to fighting crime in our society. However, as important and significant ICT is, its usefulness in the fight against crime has not been truly observed by many Nigerians considering the increased criminal activities in Nigeria especially in the post Covid-19 era. Many studies conducted in this regard seem not to have empirically examined the practical application of ICT in the combating crime in the post Covid-19 era in Nigeria. This identified gap in the available studies was what this study filled by empirically investing the role and challenges of practical application of ICT in the fight

against crime in Nigeria with special reference to the Nigeria Police, Lagos State Command.

The theoretical framework that guides this study emanates from Norbert Wiener's concept of cybernetic. Norbert Wiener (1948) derived the word "cybernetics" from the Greek kubernetes or "steersman." Kannangara, Griffiths, and Munasinghe (2017) posit that before Norbert Wiener, the concept "steersman" was used by Amber to designate a science of government. Norbert Wiener linked this concept of steersman to communication, and called the study of this phenomena "cybernetics (the science of control and communication in human being and machine). The Cybernetics is the study of human-machine like interaction guided by the principle of feedback, control, and communications. It compared human interaction to that of machine which functions when given a task to perform.

According to Agbodike and Igbokwe-Ibeto (2017), Weiner coined the term cybernetics to incorporate his idea into the existing transmission theory that people sent message within a system in effort to control their surrounding environment. In the same vein, some scholars see cybernetic theory as related to system theory that interacts within itself and its environments with proper control and feedback mechanism. One of the key assumptions of cybernetic theory is that observation by electronic media is independent of man which eliminates bias. Another assumption is reflexivity. The theory believes that object observed by electronic media reflect the accurate true nature of the object or the scenario. It is also assumed by the theory that information stored by the electronic media can be analysised to established cause-effect relationship and make useful decision towards solving environmental problems (Dent & Umpleby, 1998).

These assumptions are based on the pillars of information, circularity, process and participation.

Here, the theory argues that a message sent into a system either in the form of picture, image, figure and drawings among others can be analyze, interpreted and retrieved as useful information. Cybernetics is characterized by the notion of control and feedback, which is the underlying principle of the technological world. Anchoring on the principle of control and feedback, this school of thought filled a motion that led a generation of scholars to think of computer technology as a means of enhancing human performance. This principle of control and feedback allows human being to command the machine by sending information (through observation and other means of input) into it and retrieving it for the improved performance of man.

To Weiner (1948) therefore, technology is a tool that every organization and system need to survive in its environment. Cybernetic theory is relevant to this study in various ways. First, the theory sees the environment under which the security agents operate as a closed system, where the information (input) from the environment are analyzed within the system and return as feed- back (output) to the security organization, upon which further security decision(s) can be made towards the appropriate means of combating crime. Secondly, the theory argues that observation made by computers and other electronic media are free from bias and it described the object or scene under investigation in its real situation which aid the security agents in getting the accurate information about crime under observation. The theory therefore, throws a search light into the application of ICT in collecting, analyzing and managing data for effective

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed the descriptive survey design. The researcher made use of primary and secondary data. Questionnaire and Key Informant Interview (KII) were used to solicit for primary data. The general characteristics of the participants involved in this study include officers and men of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) irrespective of their rank selected from six Police Divisions in Lagos State Police Command through the Multi-stage sampling technique (stratified sampling and simple sample technique). First, Lagos State Police Command was group into three strata in line with the three senatorial districts. Secondly, through simple random sampling technique, two police divisions were selected from each senatorial district making six police divisions that constitute the study population.

The justification for Lagos State Police Command as the study center is based on the fact that Lagos State is the most urbanized, industrialized and populated state in the Nigeria. Lagos State Police Command has staff strength of about 28,000 out of the 258,205 total staff strength of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF Annual Report, 2020). The state also has the highest number of recorded COVID-19 cases. (NCDC, 2020). The researcher grouped Lagos State Police Command into three strata using the Senatorial District as guide. With the use of simple random technique, two Police Divisions were selected from each Senatorial District to make a total of six (6) Police Divisions with total staff strength of 1204 for the study.

Given the staff strength of the selected Police Divisions as 1204 for this study, Taro Yamani's (1967) statistical formula was used to determine the sample size for the quantitative data collection. The sample size is computed as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

n = sample size (which is yet unknown)
N= Population of study (1204)
e^2 = sample error (constant 0.05%)

In substitution, the sample size for this study therefore is;

$$n = \frac{N}{1+1204 (0.05\%)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1204}{1+ (1204 \times 0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{1204}{1+3.01}$$

$$n = \frac{1204}{4.01}$$

n = 300.245,

n = 300 Therefore n = **300**

With the above sample size determination, 300 closed ended questionnaires with 16 items were used as instrument for collecting primary data from the six (6) police divisions selected for the study. Meanwhile all research ethics were duly considered in carrying out this study. The questions were structured in line with the research objectives. All the questions were based on Liker five point rating scale where respondents were beseeched to rate the items according to the extent to which they align with each of the fundamental characteristics under measurement. In testing the reliability of the instrument used, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.814 was achieved and therefore considered reliable for the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of three hundred (300) questionnaires of sixteen (16) items each to participants from the Police divisions selected for the study. Two hundred and fifty-six (256) usable questionnaires were returned which were used for research analysis.

Testing and Analysis of hypotheses using Data Collected

Data collected from the selected participants of the study population were used to test the formulated hypotheses using PPMCC at p-value of <0.05.

Hypothesis One

H₀: There is no significant relationship between application of ICT and effective surveillance by the Lagos State Police Command.

Tabel 1. Correlation Analysis

		ICT	Effective_Crime Surveillance
ICT	Pearson Correlation	1	.618
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	256	256
Effective_Crime_Surveillance	Pearson Correlation	.618	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	256	256

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation value of the above analysis reads: $r = 0.618$, $p < .05$. Therefore, in line with the rule of thumb, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted, which indicates that there is a positive relationship between the ICT and effective surveillance by Lagos State Police Command. The result of the hypothesis one above implies with ICT improves the effort of Lagos State Police Command in of surveillance of the state which is aimed at effective crime combating.

Hypothesis Two

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the ICT and prompt detection and prosecution of crime by the Lagos State Police Command.

The correlation value of the above analysis reads: $r = 0.778$, $p < .05$. In line with the rule of thumb, the alternate hypothesis was accepted implying that there is a strong positive relationship between the ICT and prompt detection and prosecution of crime by the Lagos State Police Command.

Tabel 2. Correlation Analysis

		ICT	Prompt Detection and Prosecution of Crime
ICT	Pearson Correlation	1	.778
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.022
	N	256	256
Prompt Detection and Prosecution of Crime	Pearson Correlation	.778	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.022	
	N	256	256

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Analysis of the Qualitative Data

The researcher conducted a detail and in-depth interview with 22 key informants using a structured open questionnaire in line with the objectives of the study. The responses were presented and analyzed as followed.

Tabel 3. Responses from KII on nature of crime observed since the outbreak of COVID-19 in Lagos State

Questions	Responses	No of Responses	Percentage
Rate of crime reported during the early stage of COVID-19	High	8 of 22	36.4%
	Low	12 of 22	54.5%
	Unspecified	2 of 22	9.1%
Rate of crime reported at the later stage of COVID-19 outbreak	High	20 of 22	91.9%
	Low	Nil	0%
	Unspecified	2 of 22	9.1%
Reasons for the above answer	Long stay at home Loss of job	20 0f 22	90.9%
	Companies can no longer pay workers	18 of 22	81.2%
	Reduced access and	18 of 22	81.2%
	visibility of security agents	18 of 22	81.2%
Nature of crime recorded more with the outburst of COVID-19	Stealing	22 0f 22	100%
	House breaking	18 of 22	81.2%
	Burglary	16 of 22	72.7%
	Street Robbery	15 of 22	68.2%
	Rape	14 of 22	63.6%
	Cybercrime	18 of 22	81.2%

Generally, the study shows that the outburst of COVID-19 pandemic resulted to the government pronouncing the lock down policy, thereby reducing the number of people outside. At the early stage of this lockdown, there was a reduction in the rate of crime committed in Lagos state. However, with the long stay at home, many citizens begin to loss their job as companies (especially the SMEs) were folding up. This situation leads to an increase in crime rate in Lagos state. As shown in the tables above, the crimes mostly recorded were: stealing, house breaking, burglary, street robbery, rape and cybercrime. As noted by Mbah (2020) that during the lockdown period, most criminal gang stormed the street of Nigeria cities to rob residents of their belonging; that Lagos residence begin to seek for means to defend themselves.

Uman (2020) also posits that at the early stage of the corona virus outburst, crime dropped as few people were seen outside; she further argues that with long period of lockdown, criminal activities resurfaced again. Also, Amachree in UN Nigeria (2020) noted that COVID-19 reduced the number and activities of the security forces on the street; consequently, results to increased criminal activities in the society especially in the commercial corridors. The result of the tested hypotheses and analysis of the responses from KII, there is a significant relationship between the ICT and effective crime surveillance by Lagos State Police

Command. This was shown in the correlation value of the result of the tested hypothesis ($r= 0.618$, $p>.05$). The analysis

of the responses from the KII supports the result of the hypothesis.

Tabel 4. Responses from the KII on the important of ICT in combating crime

Question	Responses	Participants	Percentage
What are the uses of ICT in combating crime	Data collection and analysis	20 of 22	90.9%
	Intelligent gathering	22 of 22	100%
	Smart weapon	7 of 22	31.8%
	Social network.	20 of 22	90.9%
	Forensic analysis	20 of 22	90.9%
	Collection of evidence for prosecution	22 of 22	100%
How effective is ICT in performing the above roles	Effective	4 of 22	18.2%
	Not-effective	16 of 22	72.7%
	Not application	2 of 22	9.1%
Challenges affecting the effective ICT usage in the NPF	Corruption	10 of 22	45.5%
	Lack of technological knowhow	15 of 22	68.2%
	Power shortage	19 of 22	86.4%
	Lack of training	16 of 22	72.7%
	Inadequate funding.	20 of 22	90.9%
	Uncooperative attitude of the ICT service provider	18 of 22	81.8%

Source: Field Survey, August, 2022

It shows that ICT are important tools for surveillance, for example drone, mobile cameras; are used in the monitoring an area towards intelligent gathering about criminal activities in that area. Furthermore, the finding of the study shows that there a strong positive relationship between ICT and prompt detection and prosecution of crime by Lagos state Police Command. This was evidence by the result of the tested hypothesis two ($r= 0.778$, $p>.05$). The analysis of the responses from the KII also supported the above result in establishing correlation relationship between ICT and combating crime. The analysis shows that ICT are used in data collection and analysis, collection of evidence, forensic analysis and social networking in combating crime. The above assertion corroborates the argument of Johnny (2020) that the use of ICT such as CCTV, drone among others is a major component of smart cities which helps in crime control through effective monitoring of human conduct in the city and area patrol.

However, majority of responded affirm that the usage of ICT in the NPF is faced with serious challenges; which among others are; corruption, power shortage, inadequate training, lack of fund and uncooperative attitude of ICT service provider.

CONCLUSION

The goal of the study is to investigate the role of ICT in combating crime by Lagos State Police Command especially with the outbreak of corona virus. The study observes that while the introduction of the lockdown at the early stage was to flatten the spread of the disease, the long period of this restriction without adequate provision from the government brought hardship among Nigerians; consequently, increased criminal activities in the society. The result of the study also reveals that the application of ICT has caused an increase in the effectiveness of the Lagos State Police Command crime-fighting activities such as surveillance duties. Data analysis also shows that the use of ICT has led to a

corresponding improvement in prompt detection and prosecution of crime.

These developments have boosted the overall performance of the NPF in Lagos State. The study furthermore reveals that the application of ICT in the fight against by the NPF in Lagos State is not devoid of challenges. The study identifies corruption, power outages, inadequate knowledge in the use of ICT gadgets by not-well-trained officers, and erratic service by the internet service providers as some of the challenges inhibiting the effective use of ICT in the NPF. The study, however, reveals that, in spite of the numerous challenges confronting the police force in the application of ICT, the Lagos State Police Command recorded remarkable successes in its crime fighting operations during the Covid-19 era.

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