



ISSN: 2321-8819 (Online) 2348-7186 (Print) Impact Factor: 1.498 Vol. 5, Issue 4, April 2017

## Selected Demographic Variables and Community Policing Participation among Citizens in Nigeria: A Pilot Study

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### Abstract

*In consideration of increase in crime rate and societal ills, Nigeria must improve upon its security architecture and policies to ensure security of live and property in the country. Effective community policing through increases citizens' participation is of paramount importance. This paper is a pilot research study of the upcoming main study which intends to investigate community policing participation intention among Nigerian citizens. Thus, the paper examines small sample of data on the impact of ethnicity, religion, trust in the police, and attitudes toward the police on intention to participate in community policing program in Nigeria. The study utilizes survey questionnaire to obtain data. The survey questionnaire was at the beginning subjected to content validation. The reviewed version of the survey was distributed to the pilot sample. The returned survey was scrutinized for reliability using SPSS version 16.0. The results indicate that the instrument attained the threshold, therefore valid and reliable. Additionally, the data shows evidence of practical consistency.*

**Keywords:** community policing Participation, Ethnicity, Religion, Trust, Attitudes, Pilot test, Nigeria.

### INTRODUCTION

Security issues has been very relevant to the peaceful existence of people in every society or community. The goal of security is protection of people's lives and property. Police service, like all other professions, learn from past experiences, this indicates that, as contemporary police institutions search for more viable strategies of policing, they are guided by lesson of the past (Kelling & Moore, 1988). Thus, this assertion supports the need for police-public partnership in securing their neighbourhood (Nathan, 1998). Community policing convey attention to police officers involving citizens in their operations through restructuring of police organization, among such is changing operational activities of the police (Segrave & Radcliffe, 2004). Therefore, community policing that anchored on a structured relationship between the public and the police was introduced in Nigeria in 2004 by the United Kingdom's Department for International

Development (DFID). This effort was geared toward ensuring, a more democratic policing, effective security of lives and property, and to tackle incessant rise in crime rate in the country. As appealing as community policing might be, it is permeated by intractable difficulties, ranging from its applications and citizens' aversion to participate in the program. Statistics indicates that crime rate (homicide) decline in Kenya after implementing community policing, as follows; between 2004 and 2005 with -9.68%, 2005 and 2006 with -2.02%, 2006 and 2007 with -0.39%, and between 2007 and 2008 with -2.11% (UNODC, 2015). Whereas, in Nigeria, even after community policing implementation the crime rate (homicide) surge up, as follows; between 2009 and 2010 with 0.99%, 2010 and 211 with 17.90%, conversely, between 2011 and 2012 it decreases with -5.12%, but shot up between 2012 and 2013 with 1.54% (NPF Headquarters, Abuja Nigeria, 2015). These difficulties can be attributed to ethnic and religious identity politics, and distrust in the police service, that has become part of Nigerians daily lives. Therefore, given the rise in crime rate and associated challenges in a country faced with security challenges, it has become necessary to examine these challenges that hampered effectiveness of community policing within Nigerian context.

Wu, Su, and Hu (2015) have indicated that, race/ethnicity has been recognized as fundamental elements in influencing public perceptions of police agency. Similarly, Osaghae and Suberu (2005) confirm that religion and ethnicity have consistently been alluded as amongst the most striking mechanism of Nigerian national identity. There is therefore the need for empirical investigation on those factors that could potentially hamper community policing participation, and ways to reduce the pervasiveness of non-participation in the program. Although, there are other range of factors that could influence participation decisions, ethnic identity and trust in the police remain essential determinant in public



perceptions and partnership in community policing (Wu, 2014; Tyler, 2004; Tyler & Huo, 2002).

This study focuses on citizens' intention to participate in community policing program. This concern is motivated by the viability of community policing efficacy in addressing crime and other related social problems compared to traditional policing. Accordingly, Grabosky (1992), Sherman and Eck (2002) posit that, community policing recognizes public support as essential to police effectiveness, as positive public perceptions of police legitimacy lead to low level of crime. Furthermore, effective police actions are heavily dependent on public support both in respect to provision of intelligence to police and for obeying law and order (Abubakar, 2013).

Therefore, this paper proposes to conduct a pilot assessment of the main study on the predictors of religion, ethnicity, trust in the police, attitudes toward the police, and intention to participate in community policing. A pilot study is a miniature feasibility study conducted prior to the main study in order to gather essential information that can help in enhancing the quality and value of the main study. Accordingly, this paper is a pilot study to enable the researcher get feedback that can be used to improve the procedure of data collection of the main study. It is envisaged that, in the end, findings from this pilot study will contribute to a better understanding of community policing participation among citizens, and in turn decrease incidences of crime and social vices. The next segment of the paper provides review of extant literature; segment three discusses methodology employed in the pilot study. Segment four dealt with results, whereas, segment five presents conclusion of the paper.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Community Policing Participation

Community policing is a collaboration and partnership with the residents of the neighbourhood, and the police officers not only enforces the law but also perform other non-criminal activities, such as being facilitators, advisors, and supporters of the newly introduced community based policing (Kumar, 2012; Segrave & Radcliffe, 2004; Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990). Engaging community members in crime prevention and control permits a more targeted approach in identifying and responding to community concerns (with wide-range benefits) extending from improved police-public relations to reduction in the fear of crime (Anderson, 2005). These definitions emphasize on partnership between the police and the public, and that is the crux of community policing program.

As per Srite (2006:7) behavioural intention to use signify "the strength of an individual's intention to

perform a specified behaviour." Whereas participation intention was defined by Yao and Murphy (2007:110) as "the extent of the voter's intention to participate in a particular public election using 'remote electronic voting system' REVS." Systematic look at the various usage of these phrases; intention to use and participation intention by scholars in research areas point to the articulation of semantic difference, the semantic refers to 'behavioural intention'. So that to improved understanding of individual decisions regarding phenomenon of concern to the researcher. Therefore, it becomes obvious that researchers utilized these phrases; intention to use, and intention to participate interchangeably (Carter & Belanger, 2005; Khorshidi, 2012). Participation is being characterized as feeling to participate in some common decisions or activities, therefore, community policing participation in this study intends to investigate citizens' choice to either participate or not to participate in community policing program. The literature documents on quite a lot of determinant of community policing participation.

Generally, the determinants of community policing participation are classified into contextual and demographic variables (Cao et al., 1996; Madan & Nalla, 2015). The contextual variables include neighbourhood culture (O'Connor, 2008), experience with the police, and victimization (Decker, 1981); whereas demographic variables include race/ethnicity, gender (Benedict et al., 2000), religion, and age (Cao et al., 1996; Wu & Sun, 2010), place of residence, and education (Tyler, 2005). The variables in both perspectives are significant in determining community policing participation, however, Decker (1981); Webb and Marshall (1995) emphasized the importance of demographic variables. Moreover, partnership theory of crime prevention posits that citizens' preference to engage in community policing or not, depend on police trustworthiness (Rosenbaum, 2003). Similarly, group position theory suggests that cooperation and participation is determined by in-group bias against out-group members (Bobo & Tuan, 2006). Furthermore, the theory assume that orientation of group members comes from sagacity of group position which includes "preferred group status, group identity, out-group stereotype, and perceived threats" (Blumer, 1958), in this case in-group/out-group indicates ethnic and religious groups. This study conjures the two theories to focus on the influence demographic variables, specifically, ethnicity and religion, additionally we look at the influence of trust in the police on community policing participation.

Focusing on community policing participation behaviour, previous studies of community policing did not pay premium attention to citizens'



participation intention in community policing program, even though participation is the crux of the program (Segrave & Radcliffe, 2004; Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990). Among the rare studies investigated community policing participation, almost all of them were conducted in western countries, such as US, Asia, and Europe (Choi & Lee, 2016; O'Connor, 2008; Wu, 2014). Thus, this study attempts to fill these gaps by investigating community policing participation behaviour in a different context, specifically, Nigeria. Additionally, this study adapts variables measurements from earlier studies to confirm and extend the scope of community policing literature to include different setting.

### **Religion and Community Policing Participation**

Surviving literature on policing research has little documented empirical studies connecting religion and community policing, but due to the salient nature of religion as a remarkable component in Nigerian national identity (Abdullahi & Saka, 2007; Aleyomi, 2012; Agbibo, 2013; Okpanachi, 2010; Osaghae & Suberu, 2005;), this study proposed to use it to explain participation intention in the program. McFadyen & Prideaux (2014) posit that, placing of religion in modern-day policing has not, yet, matched with corresponding upsurge in scholarly attention. The only significant exception being counterterrorism, it seems largely to have eluded the attention of the scholarly discourses centered around criminology, police studies, and law enforcement literature. Furthermore, literature on the influence of religion on group (out-group) hostility (Koopmans, 2015) found that religious fundamentalism nurture out-group hostility. Whereas, other literature linked religion and terrorism (Adamczyk & Lafree, 2015; Greer, 2010; Choudhury, 2010). Conversely, Adamczyk and Lafree (2015) confirm the proposition that religious individuals are more likely than non-religious people to show concern on terrorism and more likely to collaborate with the police in terms of addressing the scourge of terrorism. Therefore, this study intends to fill in this gap in literature and use religion as a variable to mean, police officers religious background.

### **Ethnicity and Community Policing Participation**

For ethnicity, in Nigeria ethnicity has always been the most remarkable determinant of national identity (Osaghae & Suberu, 2005). Similarly, Doornbos (1991), Nnoli (1978), and Osaghae (1995:11) posit that religion and ethnic identity play a great role in societal agreement; yet the concepts are regularly utilized as tools for the advancement of social and political interests at the detriment of societal peace and harmony. However, Wu, Sun, and Hu (2015) states that race/ethnicity

has at all times been among the most important and unswerving predictor of citizens' views of the police in the western countries, with racial/ethnic minorities displaying unfavourable attitudes toward the police compared with their white majority counterparts. Furthermore, Wu, (2014) asserts that, race/ethnicity has reliably been recognized as fundamental components in determining citizens' perceptions of the police. Ethnicity has unceasingly been recognized as a noteworthy stratification feature in determining people's views of the police. For instance, in the US, Blacks are normally found to have less favourable attitudes toward the cops than whites (Brown & Benedict, 2002) along these lines making them have unfavourable assessment of police services. It is resolved from these studies that ethnicity appear to be a strong predictor of citizens' perceptions of the police services (community policing) and invariably influence their participation. Nonetheless, Hagan, Shedd, and Payne (2005) investigated the determinants of police perceptions by African American and Latinos adolescents, and found that race/ethnicity have no influence on police perceptions.

### **Trust in the Police and Community Policing Participation**

Trust has always been an issue of concern in any meaningful relationship including that between police-public. Procedural justice theory posits that, to enhanced police legitimacy and trustworthiness, it is essential for the police to exercise authority and treat people in a fair style that fits in with standard procedure (Tyler, 1990, 2004; Tyler & Huo, 2002). Furthermore, the theory has been recognized as the major forerunner of evaluation in relation to police legitimacy (Gau et al., 2012; Gau, 2011,2013; Reisig et al., 2007; Tankebe, 2013; Tyler, 1990). Procedural theory admits that, people assigned value on the procedure used to attain results more than the result itself (Thibaut & Walker, 1975). Perceived legitimacy and trustworthiness are an important contemplation of police agencies; the normative assessment can lead to compliance, cooperation, and principally empowerment from the people (Tyler, 1990). Alternative to forceful pressure to gain compliance, and cooperation from the people is for the police to guarantee legitimacy and trust (Nix et al., 2015). Additionally, trust in the police allow the people to report crime and collaborate with the police to enforce societal norms and values. Even though performance is occasionally used to assess police by the people, the effects are less than the fairness with which the police treat the public (Tyler, 2001). Therefore, peoples' reflection of police fairness in dealing with them, may lead to favourable views of the police. From Tyler's findings, it is indicated that, people rate the effectiveness of its police



service lower than the value they assign to police fair treatment (Nix et al., 2015). Procedural justice theory assumed that, police unfair treatment poses a grave danger to citizens' attitudes toward the police services, particularly, community policing. Consequently, produce deficiency in citizens' community policing participation.

### **Attitudes Toward the Police and Community Policing Participation**

Finally, attitudes toward the police significantly influences citizens' partnership and cooperation with the police. As asserted by Wu (2014), public attitudes and perceptions toward community policing is discouraging, these attitudes and perceptions obstruct effectiveness of the program. He further notes that:

*Public perceptions of police performance are distinctive from, yet as important as, actual police performance. Positive attitudes promote cooperation and support, whereas negative attitudes weaken police ability to control crime, undermine police legitimacy and lower public trust in the criminal justice system (Wu, 2014).*

Conversely, unfavourable attitudes toward the police is unlikely to prevent successful community policing implementation. Findings from a study conducted by Reisig and Giacomazzi (1998) revealed that, unwillingness on the side of the citizens to participate with the police is not the consequence of negative attitudes toward the police. Thus, the study's findings postulate that, in forging a meaningful partnership between police and public, attitudes toward the police do not matter. Notwithstanding Reisig and Giacomazzi's results, current and empirical studies established and confirm that, attitudes toward the police play a noteworthy role in forging a meaningful partnership between the police and the citizens (Okeshola & Mudiare, 2013; Wu, 2014; Wu, Su, & Hu, 2015). Accordingly, the present study extends on the existing literature by examining the influence of attitudes toward the police on community policing participation in different context, specifically Nigeria.

### **Significance of the study**

Most of the studies that examined community policing program, and community policing participation were conducted in developed and developing countries of Europe, America, and Asia (Choi & Lee, 2016; Grabosky, 1992; O'Connor, 2008; Sherman & Eck, 2002; Tyler, 2004; Wu, 2014). Consequently, this study extends the

aforementioned studies by examining the predictors of community policing participation in another context.

### **Methods of the Study**

Given the purpose of this study as a pilot test, a small trial sample was carefully chosen for the study based on simple random sampling technique. The samples were carefully chosen from a population of 24,461 indigenes-residents of metropolitan city of Bauchi state (NPC, 2006). These sampled unit are citizens who are currently living in the study area, where community policing program was first introduced as a pilot area in Nigeria, thus they are familiar with the operations of community policing program. Some of them participate fully in the program as either vigilante, community leaders, religious leaders or representing business group. The population/list of the people were assign random values in excel sheet using 'rand function' that assigned random value to each unit of the population. Thereafter, the list was further sorted based on ascending form and then 60 people were selected as the sample for the pilot study, thus, questionnaire was administered to the selected samples.

### **Instrument and Measurement of Variables**

As previously stated, the survey instrument used in this pilot study is a questionnaire, that was constructed on items adapted from earlier studies of community policing. Consistent with Miller (1991) who hold Likert scale as most reliable and appropriate scale, this pilot study utilized 5 points Likert scale to measure the items in the questionnaire. Specifically, religion, ethnicity, trust in the police, and intention to participate in community policing. The scale has a range from '1' to '5', with '1' indicating strongly agreed, progressing to '5' indicating strongly disagreed respectively. Regarding community policing participation, the respondents were asked to indicate their participation intention in community policing program. The items used in the survey questionnaire are based primarily on the latent constructs of the study, and that all the constructs are unidimensional. The survey questionnaire is separated into three main areas, section one comprise of items that measure dependent construct, section two measure all the four independent constructs of the study. Whereas, the final section three consist demographic features of the respondents.

### **Demography Features of the respondents**

The selected respondents of this pilot study comprised of indigenes-residents who are currently living in the study area (Metropolitan city of Bauchi), some of whom are active members of



community policing program. In this part, we present the demographic characteristics of the respondents that comprise of the age, gender, religion, ethnicity, and employment of the respondents. Table 1 shows the respondents demographic information.

Demography	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>		
18 - 30	13	40
31 – 45	8	24
46 – 55	5	15
56 – 65	4	12
66 – Above	3	9
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	27	82
Female	6	18
<b>Religion</b>		
Islam	21	64
Christianity	10	30
Traditional	2	6
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Hausa-Fulani	12	37
Yoruba	7	21
Igbo	5	15
Others	9	27
<b>Employment Status</b>		
Permanently employed	7	21
Temporarily employed	5	15
Self-employed	8	25
National Service Personnel	4	12
Unemployed	3	9
Students	4	12
Retired	2	6
<b>Educational Background</b>		
No formal education	2	6
Primary school	4	12
Secondary school	6	18
Diploma	10	31
Bachelors/HND	5	15
Masters	4	12
PhD.	2	6

Starting with the age of the respondents, the table indicates that majority of the respondents have falling between the age range of 18-30 years (40%). This illustrates that majority of the respondents are youth who are mostly found to be engaged in community self-help and are conversant

with community policing program. As for gender, most of the respondents are male (82%), reflecting Nigerian communal culture where women are mostly encouraged to be engaged in domestic house work. In the case of religion, 64% of the respondents are Muslim, 30% Christians, whereas only 6% are followers of traditional religion. This religious inclination shows the extends of majority-minority regarding religious identities of the people in the study area. Looking at ethnic affiliations of the respondents, 37% are Hausa-Fulani, 21% Yoruba, 15% Igbo, and other ethnic groups took (29%). This point to the fact that majority of the respondents are indigenes and Muslims in the study area. However, majority of the respondents are employed (36%), and 25% are self-employed, this indicates that the respondents are responsible citizens whose responses can be relied upon. The table further indicates that, majority of the respondents have formal education (94%), indicating that they do not have problem of reading and writing. Finally, the demographic statistics of the respondents revealed that, respondents that completed the survey questionnaire are matured and responsible citizens with the knowledge of community policing. Looking at the respondent's occupation, age, educational background, and employment status, it is clear that they meet the minimum requirement to enable me have knowledge of community policing program.

#### Content Validity

The initial draft of the survey questionnaire was exposed to the content validation procedure. The content validity procedure entails subjecting the instrument to professional assessment of the suitability of the items selected to measure the constructs (Hair, Money, Samouel, & Page, 2007). Thus, the initial draft was sent to nine experts, they include four academics, three police officers working in community policing units, and two stakeholders of the program for content validation. After the initial validation procedure, the questionnaire was modified accordingly, and we proceeded with the pilot study to get the reaction to enable us enhanced the main data collection procedure. However, the entire exercise was completed within the specified periods of four weeks in the month of September, 2016. In line with Malhotra (2008), sample size used in pilot study starts from 15-30 respondents, thus, a total of 60 survey questionnaires were distributed to the selected respondents. Given the problems of non-response, improper completion, and/or unusable questionnaire, the questionnaires were distributed in excess (Salkind, 2012). Out of the 60-survey questionnaire, 44 were completed and returned. Eleven of the returned survey questionnaire were removed from the analysis due to improper



completion. Therefore, a total of 33 survey questionnaires were utilized for further analysis.

### Reliability Tests Results

The 33 valid questionnaires were further subjected to reliability test. Reliability refers to the capability of the items to measure the same variable more than once and be able to produce same results (Salkind, 2012). Even though Cronbach's alpha coefficient is frequently used in testing reliability (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). This pilot study used both Cronbach's alpha, and Composite Reliability to evaluate the internal consistency of the survey instrument of the study utilizing IBM SPSS version 16.0 software.

The data were at that moment coded and inputted into the SPSS software. The aftereffect of the

reliability test, showed that the entire instrument attained high reliability with Composite Reliability ranging from .88 to .97 and Cronbach's alpha coefficient having between .79 to .95. The results of the reliability test falls within the required range of .75 to .95. Thus, the test meets the required level of .70 and above, that is regarded as highly reliable (Nunnally, 1978; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The Table 2 show the reliability coefficients test results of the five latent constructs in the pilot study. The composite Reliability values for the respective variables under examination are all above the threshold of .70, likewise the Cronbach's alpha values. Thus, it is evident that all the variables are reliable, and hence no need to take away any item at this stage.

**Table 2: Summary of Reliability Test**

Construct	No of Items	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
IPCP	3	.97	.95
ATP	5	.94	.92
ETH	5	.95	.94
REL	3	.88	.79
TP	5	.94	.93
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>		

### Limitation and Recommendation for Future Research

Nonetheless the contribution of this pilot study, it is with some limitations that should be taken care of by future studies. This pilot study considered demographic variables and trusting construct to explain community participation intention. However, community policing participation is a complex concept that may better be explained by the combination of contextual and socio-demographic factors such as neighbourhood culture, experience with the police, perceptions of policing, police fairness, victimization, age, gender, income, place of residence, education etc. together with institutional factors. Thus, upcoming studies should consider the combinations of these factors, additionally, present study has a narrowed focus on only one of the geo-political zones among the six zones in Nigeria. And that the study utilized only one state among the twelve-state used as initial pilot states for community policing program. Hence, upcoming studies should extend the scope to include more states.

### Conclusion

Nigerian community policing program efficacy in reducing crime and societal ills, is far below expected level, in fact the program has not yielded any meaningful results. This point to the problem of participation among citizens as the crux of the program. The problem of participation is attributed

to ethnic and religious identity politics and conflicts that permeated every relation in Nigeria. Additionally, mutual distrust and suspicion between police and the members of the community has led to public antipathy to participate in the program. Giving the state of Nigerian security and the imminent danger of disintegration, it has become binding on the government to device security architecture (Alemika, 2013), and to strengthened law enforcement agents, particularly the police, so as to curve the menace of insecurity. Community policing program stands to be most suitable and effective strategy in this era of democratization, if implemented accordingly. This paper, however, is a pilot investigation of the main study which goes for the examination of the influence of demographic and trusting variables on intention to participate in community policing in Nigeria context. The focal point of this pilot study is to evaluate the validity and reliability related to the study instrument before the main research study. The first draft copy of the instrument comprises of measures which were adapted from previous studies, was subjected to content validation. The result of the validation was used to modify the instrument, and further exposed to the reliability test. Furthermore, the outcomes of the reliability test that was based on both Cronbach's alpha coefficient and Composite reliability showed that all the measuring items were reliable with coefficient way above the thresh hold of .70.



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