Perception of Police and Policing: An Investigation of People's Perception of Police Stop and Search Method of Crime Prevention in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study discussed public perception of police stop-and-search method of policing towards crime prevention. Cross-sectional survey study design, involving the use of qualitative and quantitative methods was adopted. Data was collected from 840 respondents from purposively chosen Local Government Area of the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State selected from multistage probability and non-probability methods of sampling. The means of gathering of information was questionnaire which comprised loose and closed-type questioning and unstructured oral interviews. A simple percentage system of analyzing data was employed for the interpretation of the research question while correlation statistics tool was employed to test the research hypothesis. The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between public positive views of police stop-and-search method of crime prevention and police and policing work. The study concluded that, virtually all the examinees generally supported the use of stop-and-searches as a method of policing and police work vis a vis crime prevention as Table 1(a) shows, while reiterating that the manner, and attitude of the officers must change and that there should be reason given for every stop-and-search if it has to be an effective method of policing. Given the results, the subsequent policy suggestions were made which include: Police Service Commission should recommend policies and programmes to decrease the negative effects of stop and search through focusing on improving officer conduct to inculcate in the officers the strict compliance to the principles of procedural justice during police citizen encounters particularly with respect to application of stop and search. This can be achieved through training and retraining of policemen quarterly or yearly to meet with both local and international best practices standard worldwide among others.

Keywords: *Public Perception, Police Stop-and-Search, Police and Policing, Method of Crime Prevention, Negative Perception, Positive Perception.*

Introduction

There is a high level of public interest in the level of Police and policing vis a vis crime prevention. Public awareness of the Police and policing is very essential. Positive perception of Police and policing is an indispensable condition for valuable as well as productive Police public relation with reference to crime prevention. As observed by Jackson and Bradford (2010), positive perception of Corps positiveness and uprightness stimulate commitment and conformity. Furthermore, if people do not have the conviction that

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their local Police Force is open-minded, the Police Force suffers loss of genuineness and people's connection with the Police Force and other agencies of crime prevention are disintegrated (Jackson & Bradford, 2010).

Weber (1968) further observed that the evolution of the State as an existence with the assertion to the means of genuine power over brute force in humanity led to the invention of specially designed instrumentalities such as the Police Force and Armed Forces to serve as a check on the use of brute force by other groupings in society.

Public awareness of the Police Force generally, indicates that in the U.S most persons are contended with and have assurance in the Police Force (Nofziger & Williams, 2005; Frank et al., 1996). Nevertheless reaction differ from race, to sex and age (Nofziger & Williams, 2003). Preponderance of investigated Mexican university students viewed the Police as ineffective in controlling and preventing crime and claim that they often treat citizens unfairly (Brown et al., 2006). Based on a sample of India residence, it was observed that most persons feel that the Police were corrupt (Nalla & Madan, 2011 as cited in Khondaker et al., 2013).

The necessity for this kind of work can be too accentuated at the moment wherein the Nigeria Police Force is seen as ineffective, brutal, and corrupt, together with the hue and cry to restructure and reorganise the Nigeria Police Force plus worsening security situation of the Nigerian state. One can argue that in a democratic society; the citizen deserves to tell the police what their exercise is and how to go about it out (Marenin, 1989). The Police should be uptight exactly how they are judged by the citizen, for they are government worker (Fleek & Newman, 1969). Presumabl**y,** adverse discernment of the police aids to a sequence of lessened Police output, increase rate of criminality and to a marked degree disbelief of the Police by the citizenry.

Correspondingly, due to situation of lawlessness, the conviction persons have in the Police especially in the forestallment and superintending of crime has disintegrated substantially. The police are also regarded as being not polite to the Nigerian public. The competence of the Nigerian police to maintain the safety of the inhabitants of Nigeria and its populace still remain a mirage. Unless there is a genuine relationship which will promote expectations amidst the Police and the populace the Police Force will continue to be distrusted among the community they ought to save from harm.

Against this background, the examination of credibility in the Police Force has often been given a discourse to by various social science investigators (Sharp and Johnson, 2009; Tyler, 2005; Goldsmith, 2005; Macdonald and Strokes, 2006; Ayodele & Aderinto, 2014). Faith in the Police Force is meaningful since with no societal confidence in the Police, policing would be devoid of approval as well as constitutionality, which will be easier said than done (Goldsmith, 2005). Consequently, despite the efforts at repositioning of the Nigeria Police Force to carry out its constitutional duties of providing range of protection and defense of citizen's belongingness, their degree of proficiency as an officer of law enforcement is not commendable. From the foregoing, there is an urgent need to examine the public perception of Police and policing with specificity on stop- and- search method of policing *vis a vis* crime prevention. The discussion of stop -and -search as method of policing cannot be dealt with in isolation to the general public perception of police and policing by the public. This implies that there is convergence, one start where the other stopped. This validates the conception, adoption and discussion of the topic. It has been claimed that the application of the police power to stop-and-search the general public is one that has long generated public controversy and debate. Little wonder, Mcfarland et al., (2019) observed that stop and search have generated debate and concern over their likely effects on crime. Hence, this implies that negative or positive perception of the Police and policing by the person stopped will determine the amount of support provided to the police in the cause of the exercise. Stop- and- search is often defined as the process by which an officer or officers stop and potentially question and search people in the environment they are patrolling(Lachman, et al., 2012)

By examining the citizen's view point of Police and Policing from Cross River State outlook, a more comprehensive understanding of Police and Policing activities with specificity to stop and search method

of crime prevention across the state will be uncovered. Again, taking into consideration the relationship that exists between cultural realities and citizen's perception of Police and Policing methods of crime prevention, this study contributes to knowledge in terms of broadening scientific understanding of principles, thoughts and viewpoint in relation to the suitableness of Police and policing practices, this comprehensive understandings will help towards building a synergy for a sustainable crime control strategies in order to achieve sustainability. The merit such understandings can be judged in relation to the global and local need for an urgent reassessment of current crime strategies in order to achieve sustainability. Thus, understanding their attitudes and opinions are important for future police reform.

The Police Act 2020 accord law enforcement officer the power to arrest, detain and search a person or vehicle when there are good reasons of suspicious of an unlawful act. After so many years of usage of these powers, stop and search remains one of the highly complicated powers vested with police in Nigeria. This power seems to function as a signal for the practice of policing as a whole. Stop- and- search very often fall into two contrasting direction of the discussion of the enforcing of policing on individuals and communities on one hand as well as the discussion as one of the resources available to Nigerian Police Force to combat criminality. Public argument on the strength and otherwise of stop- and- search irresistibly focuses on the degree to which stop and- search- combat crime. Thus, signifying that, its progress can be measured by its effect as a deterrent to crime both specific and general.

Looking at how stop and search has been used over the years and across the country, there is no sole model of how stop- and- search should be used. This causes its achievement and the support giving by the people during stop- and- search difficult. There have been a number of accounts of cruelty, intimidation and bribery and the unreasonable use of the- stop- and search powers that is often targeted at the lower class. This undue use of stop- and- search led to the End SARS Social Movement witnessed in Nigeria late (2020) which ultimately led to the ban of SARS (Special Anti-rubbery Squared) by the then Inspector General of Police.

While the evidence of disproportionate use stop- and- search is overwhelming, data concurring stop- and- search as an effective instrument of policing in deterring and investigating crime is less coming. Surprisingly, there has been little or no research assessing its effectiveness in reducing crime in Cross River State. Given the forgoing, this study is designed to investigate people's perception of Police Stop- and- Search method of policing *vis a vis* crime prevention. This is the lacuna this work is determined to fill out.

Research Question

The following research question was raised to guide the study;

How do people view police –stop and search method of policing towards crime prevention?

Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis were developed and tested in order to give direction to the study.

H_O: There is no significant relationship between public negative views of police stop-and-search method of crime prevention and Police and Policing.

H_1: There is a significant relationship between public positive views of police stop-and-search method of crime prevention and Police and Policing.

Review of Related Literature

The Concept of Police and Policing

All through prior to the establishment of a modern Police Force, people were for the most part culpable for preserving public order with each other. Conversely, persons who performed duties as Police Officers and district judges undertook so, on their own free will and as a result were not remunerated for their kindness. County, commissioners or marshals were engaged all the time to administer public security inside their shire in England as well as other countries in their protectorates (About. Com, 2014). Though, this weakly connected method of group action was useful and good enough for ages mostly in more rural and fewer inhabited areas.

On the other hand, later 1700s and earlier 1800s witnessed rapid population growth in main cities in the United States and England. Uprisings along with social upheaval were widespread as such it turned out to be more and more clear that there was a necessity for a much more enduring and specialized type of public security agent that will be saddled with responsibility of carrying the authorized command to the corridors of government. Philosophers, sociologists, other stakeholders and most importantly persons in the rapidly developing area of criminology, as well as legal philosopher Jeremy Bentham started to demand for a centralized Police Force that will have the sole responsibility of protecting the citizenry as well as law enforcement.

Cohen (1979) observed that, the most likely and influential promoter with regard to a specialized Police Force was Sir Robert Peel, a Minister of a legislative bloc who ones performed duties as a Home Secretary for the United Kingdom in the 1820s. Conversely, during the year 1829, Peel instituted the Municipal Police Service in London. Thereafter, Peel becomes extensively considered by criminologists as well as historians as the originator of contemporary Police Force (Cohen, 1979).

Nevertheless, in the year 1901 precisely within April, the British Consul in Lagos gained consent from his controller in London to institute a Consular Guard consisting of thirty (30) able bodied men. Though, a little after two years precisely in the year 1903, this small able bodied men turned out to be categorized as the "Hausa Guard". This "Hausa Guard" was moreover legalized in 1979 by a Decree establishing a Police Force in the Protectorate of Lagos. An Inspector General of Police superintended this Police Force, which was enlisted predominantly from Hausa and come to be branded as the "Hausa Constabulary" (Nigeria Police Force, 2013). In predominantly rural societies, security was the sole duty of every grown person in the neighbourhood. Weber (1968) noted that the surfacing of the Nation State, with its substantial officialdoms tethered on unification, chain of command as well as class structure, in addition to specialized personnel altered the long-established policing thinking embedded along the thought of policing as everyone's business. Weber (1968) observed that the developing of the Nation State as a body with the right to exercise lawful authority in excess of violence in human race occasioned the formation of dedicated organizations such as the Police Force and Military to serve as a check to the use of violence by other groups in society. In a broader perspective, contemporary Police Force is assigned the chief responsibility of law enforcement and order preservation. However, the substance of the rule in addition to what constitutes command differs extensively with the passage of time as well as within state, and is more or less occasioned by the political economy prevailing in the nation (Alemika & Chukuma, ND).

Multicultural Perspective of Police Enquiry and Police Work

Ever since the beginning of 2000s, a lot of researchers have been probing the public's perception of police across nations (Pfister, 2019., Schaap, 2018). These examinations are indeed very important steps on the road to theoretical advancement of police and policing work. Public institutions like the Police require public trust and confidence to go about their work; hence Pfister (2019) observed that trust and legitimacy are interdependent. Little wonder, Liebertz and Bunch (2019) observed that as the account of crime and violence by the media increases, there exist a consistent decrease in the masses support and trust in the police and policing work. Similarly, Liebertz (2020) examined trust in the police in about 12 South American

countries and findings revealed that the research subject were less critical of the police in nations where politicians emphasized authoritarian response to crime. Relatedly, Malone and Dammert (2021) likened levels of self-reported trust in the police in 17 Latin American Nations, and found that trust in police and policing work was lowest in countries where the police were viewed as unproductive and dishonest. To provide information and cooperate with police officers; Tyler (2021a) noted that when the masses view their police and justice system to be civil and reasonable, they are more willing to obey the law and consequently seek help when victimized or serve as witness in court(Coltler, 2015).

Veritable literature review of the police in the U.S. abound (Brown & Benedict, 2002). Research in the U.S. revealed that   the inhabitants *en* masse generally were delighted as well as have credence in law Enforcement Agencies (Frank, et al., 1996; Nofziger & Williams, 2005) Nonetheless, approach differ from sex, to race, and age (Brown & Benedit, 2002; Nofziger & Williams, 2005). Despite the fact that there exist relatively fewer researches on policing viewpoints in other climes, there are an increased number of multicultural enquiries on policing perspectives.

Current data suggest that levels of confidence in police and policing work in Britain have fallen when compared with other countries. The Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Index of 2022 surveyed over 18,000 study   participants within 26 countries to compare global view of trust in the Police and Policing work. Evidence from the findings showed that Great Britain dropped from 6th place in 2021(48% of adults from Britain trusted the police), to 9th place in 2022(44% of adults from Britain trusted the police) (Global Trustworthiness Index, 2022).

Consequently, data from the CSEW indicate that approach towards the police in

 England and Wales differ by gender and ethnicity. It was reported that people from Asia (77%), White (74%) and other ethnic groups (75%) had greater confidence in their local police than Black people(64%) in 2020, also in December , 2022, the Mayor's Office for Police and Crime(MOPAC) Attitude Survey reported that 55% of Black Londoners is of the view that police is an organization they can trust, compared to 71% of Whites British Londoners (as cited in Peterson, K. et al., 2023).

In the thick of 60 surveyed Nigeria institution of higher education students, the preponderance of the respondents were of the viewpoint that the Police were swift in their action, were discourteous to the populace, were dishonest, as well as employed disproportionate power on the people (Alemika, 1988).

Preponderance Mexican colledge students regarded the police force as being ineffectual in combating criminal offence and also served residents unethically (Brown et al., 2006). In a convenience study of inhabitants of St. Petersburg (Russia) and the Queens region of New York City (US), United States examinees were more probable to believe that the Police Force were effectual than Russian examinees, while Russian examinees were to some extent more probable to believe that the Police stopped the populace without a genuine reason (David et al., 2003). In a new investigation that made up of colledge students, U.S. undergraduate had a far greater contentment with Police Force as well as believed in the Police Force as having better honesty and worth when compared with their Chinese colleagues, after considering age, sexual category, and educational attainment (Wu, 2010). United State colledge undergraduates reported greater degree of conviction, confidence in addition to being courteous when compared with undergraduates from Bangladesh, Canada, and Nigeria (Lambert et al., 2010). Based on a sample of India residents, it was found among others that preponderance of the examinees are of the viewpoint that the Police Force were dishonest, complicit and are not satisfied with the Indian Police (Nalla & Madan, 2011 as cited in Khondaker, 2013).

Public Perception of Police Stop-and-Search Method of Policing

The uses of stop and search by the police have been one of the most commonly used but yet controversial proactive strategies in contemporary policing (Weisburg & Majmunder, 2008). Little wonder Braga et al., (2019) noted that stop and search have been used as a major constituent in several proactive policing activities as well as hot spots policing operations. However, critics have observed the apparent low success

rate of stop and search as well as the racial prejudices linked to these strategies and it shown that such strategies represent an illegitimate and unfair use of Police Power (Rosenfeld & Fornango, 2014). Correspondingly, subject to the nature of contact, individuals may be of the view that they are being stopped for no good reason and/or that their personal liberty is being unreasonably restricted, leading to a reduction in attitudes favourable to police and policing work (Bacak & Apel, 2021; Harris & Johns, 2020). But despite the aforementioned challenges, scholars and practitioners still view stop and search as an important element of proactive crime prevention efforts (D'Onfrio, 2019; Terkel, 2013)

Skogan (1994) maintained that negative and bizarre experiences of police stop-and-search have a propensity to be more widespread than positive ones and the populace have a tendency to mirror on and have a discussion about these experiences frequently. Consequently, unfavourable occurrences were to a greater extent unforgettable. Black respondents were least probable to bring to mind encouraging experience. Stone and Petigrew (2000) reported that in a search, citizens were time and again requested to empty their pouches and subsequently the police would investigate them. Being investigated was believed by the people to be so much more embarrassing, frightening, scared, and sober as well as "an invasion of privacy" when compared with a simple halt. For this reason, it was supposed that the raison d'être meant for the investigation were tremendously vital, and there ought to be more permission for a hunt. The idea of permission is for the most part challenging with regard to searches, particularly with regard to "voluntary" investigations. Dixon (1997) highlighted that masses collaboration (or in any case the lack of some clear protest) with a hunt may often be reasoned by officers as approval. Section 25 of the Nigeria police Act gives power to a Police Officer to arrest and investigate anyone whom he convincingly suppose of having in his or transmitting in whatever form, something he has raison d'être to consider to have been stolen or if not illegitimately acquired.

In a hunt, the populace gave information that they were over and over again requested to empty their pouches and afterward the Police would investigate them. Being investigated was believed by the populace to be much more menacing, terrific, more grave and "an invasion of privacy" when juxtaposed with simple halt. For this cause, it was assumed that the raison d'être for the hunt were tremendously essential, furthermore, there should possibly be better permission for a hunt. The concept of approval is predominantly challenging principally in regard to "voluntary" hunts (Stone & Pettigrew, 2000). Dixon (1997) noted that citizens collaboration (or in any case the lack of one clear protest) with a hunt may over and over again be reasoned by the Police Force as approval. Examinees possibly demonstrate a deficiency in comprehending of Police authority to arrest somebody for the intention of search wherever realistic doubts subsist.

Writing on what influences public satisfaction with being stopped Skogan (1994) investigated the associates of contentment in the Police Force management of stop and search experiences via the 1992 British Crime Survey (BCS). Skogan established that the associates of contentment with Police performance included:

- Either the populace believed that they were reasonably cared for by the Police Force

- Either the Police Officer performed respectfully

- Either the Police Officer demonstrated adequate attention to what the citizens said

- Either the citizens were hunted or punished; and

In the light of the above reason, the Police Force has expressed the significance of civility for a good number of many years (Scarman, 1981., Hogan-Howe 2012). Consequently, it is will be reasonable enough to further express the significance of civility and to also embed same across stops and searches, with this it will beginning to make difference as intended.

Nevertheless, there exist observations that only being courteous even as one is carrying out a alleged unreasonable action may possibly be observed as an planed reaction by the Police Force, recognizing the

useful importance of acting this way, to cause persons be exposed to the action just look happier about it, but not addressing immediately the problem provoking apprehension (Tankebe, 2009). However, with regard to stop and search, that civility is just a clever compulsion ploy utilized by the Police Force, in that case it is contended that this fundamentally may be counter-productive and may perhaps give rise to extensive and profound disconnection from powers that be, along with those that carry out the law or exercise authority (Murphy & Chemey, 2012).

Bowling and Philips (2007) observed that there exists little discussion around the way in which a hunt is accomplished and they recommended that politeness is capable to augment for more short comings.

Halt and search is frequently rationalised by Police Force in connection with the benefit it affords in dissuading lawbreakers, averting unlawful activities, as well as enhancing the possibility of lawbreakers being predisposed to punishment (Hogan-Howe, 2012).

On the other hand, some people are saying that halt and search is not an effectual technique of deterrence or uncovering of crime, moreover it is an inefficient redirection of Police resources (Lustgarten, 2002., Walker & Starmer, 1993). That is, police initiated stops and search may decrease feelings of police legality among individuals stopped or the populations in which stops are implemented. Rooted in this deep seated distrust of policing and policing work and a history of perceive oppression within high crime minority populations (Braga et al., 2019)

Theoretical Framework

The following theory was used as a basis for the study.

Max Weber's Social Action Theory

Max Weber conceptualized sociology as an all-inclusive science of collective interaction (Aron 1970., Coser, 1977). His first conceptual assiduity lies on the inner meanings that humanity attaches to their behaviours along with interrelationships in selected societal setting. Weber's categorization is preconceived to be a broad record of the varieties of interpretation humanity give to their demeanour across socio-cultural system (Aron, 1970).

The underlying rationale that Max Weber advocated is that sociology is an exhaustive science of the intrinsic interpretations of the "understandable" reasons of individual actors attach to their behaviour in their collective directions in selected societal as well as humane context. For that reason, any behaviours farther of this web, Max Weber persists, do not belong to the domain of the science of sociology. Secher (1962) attributed Max Weber with the stance that an action is "social" if the acting human beings takes account of the conduct of others and is accordingly situated in its plan. The semblance of this theory is on how practices, moral principles, beliefs and standards, inspirit or dispirit individual action on emergent issues oriented in its course such as the public perception of police and policing.

The propositions of Weberian social action theory are that:

- Social action may be swayed by an action of the past, present or upcoming.

- Necessity of subjective meaning

- Social action necessitated the presence of another person and some action by him.

- Social action is accustomed in its plan.

Weber focused on the mutual attitude of social actors and on the "understandable" reasons of their actions which was tethered in procedural consideration, which account for countless of the distinction of his point

of view to sociology. Social action may be influenced by the action of the old, present-day and upcoming. So, social action is an outcome or an adjustment of some action of other individual or individuals.

Social action necessitated the presence of other individual and some action by him. This means that there can be no social action in severance. Thus social action is possible if there is another individual whose action or behaviour is persuading the giving individual to act in a particular way. In a social act, it is imperative that it should have an inner interpretation. An incomprehensive simulation devoid of any comprehension of the nature of act being copied is not social action. Max Weber's principal spotlights were on the intrinsic interpretation that human beings attach to their actions in their mutual attitude within specific social as well as historical contexts. Any way an action is depleted of such understanding, it falls farther the sphere of competence of sociology. "Action is social" Weber says. According to Weber, it is action when humans give a certain interpretation to his conduct and the action is social when, by the explanation he gives it, it connects the way of acting of other person and is aligned towards their conduct.

For Weber, human action is social in so far as "the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to it". Mere conduct metamorphoses into action when it obtains dealings with others and when it is purposeful and conformed in its course. The bare necessity is that the actor is conscious of what he or she is doing which can be examined in terms of their purpose, rationales and sensitivities on how they are practiced.

The justification or the applicability of this theory to the study is as follows.

- That the public perception of police and policing *vis a vis* crime prevention as negative or positive may be swayed by the police action of the old, present-day and the upcoming.

- That the public perception of police and policing *vis a vis* crime prevention as positive or negative necessitated the actuality of other person and some activity by him i.e. the activity of police and police authorities. This means that public perception of police and policing *vis a vis* crime prevention cannot be done in isolation, it presupposes the action(s) of others.

- That the public should attach a subjective meaning to the perception of police and policing *vis a vis* crime prevention. This is because behaviour bereft of such meanings falls beyond the scope of sociology. Action is social, Weber says it is action when man assigns a certain meaning to his conduct and action is social when by the meaning he gives it.

- Another applicability of this theory to this study is on how customs, values, beliefs, and norms inspirit or dispirit individual action on emergent issues oriented in its course such as in the variable raised in the study.

Research Methodology

Research Design

Research design is concerned with specific idea and method adopted in conducting this inquiry. This inquiry exploited the survey research design. Survey research design aids in the collection of relevant data that should be useful for explaining phenomena.

This study specifically employed cross-sectional survey research design. The advantage of this survey design stems from its ability to empower investigators to juxtapose diverse variables concurrently and also compare different groups in a selected population at the single point in time. Additionally, cross sectional survey study provides an interpretation of an event or define a set of outlooks, stand points or behavior that are been remarked or considered at a particular time and locality.

Hence, this survey investigative technique was appropriate in this inquiry of the notion and standpoint of persons in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State.

Research Area

The present inquiry was 0rganised in Cross River State of Nigeria. Cross River State is among the states that make up the South-South subdivision of the country. Cross River is situated on latitude 4^030^0 and 7^000^0 N, and longitude 7^050 and 9^028^0 E. The state has natural frontiers alongside Ebonyi, Abia and Akwa-Ibom States to the West, Benue state to the North, Republic of Cameroon to the East, also the Atlantic Ocean to the South. The state occupies an area of about 20,156km². Its central administration headquarter is situated in the historical city of Calabar.

Specifically, this academic work is organized in the Southern Senatorial Region of Cross River State. It incorporated of six Local Government Areas viz; Calabar South, Odukpani, Biase, Akamkpa, Calabar Municipality, and Akpabuyo. Three local government areas were selected purposively for the inquiry. The Southern Senatorial Region of the nation state is encircled with other Municipal Council District in the state besides regional-state with Nigeria and the Republic of Cameroon. These districts are surrounded by Abia state in the East, Ebonyi state to the West, Yakurr and Abi Local Government Areas in the North, Akwa Ibom State in the South and an international demarcation with Republic of Cameroon in the North.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised of inhabitants 18 years beyond residing in Cross River South Senatorial District. The study focused on intelligible groups, the espoused, single, and widowed. This grouping of the interviewees incorporated the educated and the workers.

Sample Size

The inquiry did not possibly cover all the people in Cross River Southern Senatorial District, against this backdrop, the researcher decided to pick out a sample through which data were collected. Therefore, a sample size of 840 respondents which included 420 men and 420 women were purposively selected from three (3) Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State was used. This is because the three (3) LGAs house tertiary institutions, ministries and agencies.

Sampling Procedure/Technique

The inquiry adopted multi- stage random and non-random sampling techniques. The purposive non-random sampling technique were used to select Local Government Areas (LGAs), / and tertiary institutions, probability sampling technique were used to select the faculties as well as units studied, and accidental or convenience method of sampling were used to hand-pick the individual interviewees. As stated earlier, Cross River Southern Senatorial District is made up of six local government areas from which three local government areas were purposively selected thus: Akampka, Calabar Municipality, and Calabar South were selected. This is because the three LGA houses tertiary institutions, ministries and agencies.

The inquiry made use of structured and non- directive questionnaire and unstructured oral question which comprised 840 interviewees, 420 women and 420 men gathered from a segment of well-informed Nigerians inhabiting the three (3) purposively selected Municipal Council Areas in the study population. The rationale for using this singled out was built on the postulation that the preponderance of the popular belief heads and point of view makers represent the class of the enlightened workers while the views of the hoi polloi is not found unacceptable. It is believed that it is the view of the singled out category that assist to educate and enlighten the folks and the hoi polloi concerning the operation of police and policing work. Hence, the "public" consisted of students, the tutorial and non-tutorial workforce from four purposely selected institution of tertiary learning which included; University of Cross River State, Colledge of Education Akamkpa, University of Calabar, and School of Health Technology Calabar as well as the working-class in both private and public institutions, departments and ministries viz: banks, the State and Federal agencies. The researcher utilised the hat and draw technique of random sampling procedure. The designations of the faculties in each of the four purposely picked institutions penciled on different leaf of paper and crimped; the folded papers were thoroughly merged in a container, various folded documents were taken out without

replacement. Four faculties were picked from University of Cross River State, and University of Calabar. Hat and draw procedure was also employed to pick one department each from the four randomly picked faculties. Additionally, in College of Education Akamkpa and School of Health Technology Calabar, hat and draw method was also exploited to pick four departments each.

In order to ensure proportional delineation from the students, the tutorial and the non-teaching staff, and workers, the respondents (subjects) were chosen using the multi-stage random and non-random sampling procedure. The first step included the random picking from the list of students, tutorial and the non-tutorial workforce in the four purposely picked higher institutions. Two hundred respondents were hand-picked apiece from the higher institutions. Consequently, a total of fourty respondents were picked from both public and private establishments from middle class workers. The second stage entailed the use of accidental sampling to handpick the answers. The students were picked at convenience via: classrooms, departments, amusement parks inter alia. However, the tutorial as well as non-tutorial staff was also picked at convenience via: departments and classrooms inter alia. One hundred oral discussions were organized in totality.

However, to complement the major data sources, the investigator exploited secondary data sources. These are existing information in the form of textbooks, journals, magazines, vital records, vital statistics, published and unpublished materials relevant to study.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire contained closed and open ended questions. The questions were based on the key variable to be measured and examined. The close ended questions in addition to ensuring standardization of responses by respondents also provided information/data for quantitative analysis while the open ended questions in addition to give respondents the liberty to express freely whatever opinion they may have also provided information/data for qualitative analysis.

Before the real administration of questionnaire, pretest set of questionnaire was carried out. This helped to test the design for the study and also give the researcher the opportunity to know the peoples attitude toward the survey as well as their several sensitivity to some of the questions. The pretest was carried out on a sample of 18 respondents consisting of ten tertiary institution students and eight civil servants in order to establish accuracy of content and to ensure that one and the other interviewees and investigator had the similar understanding of the issues under study. This, however, was helpful in identifying variety of possible response.

The unstructured oral interview comprised open ended questions which sought specific information on various aspects of the research objectives. Interview guide was used in order to generate qualitative data, and as such to obtain a comprehensive discernment of the masses disposition of Stop-and-Search method of Policing. The unstructured oral interview questions stimulated follow-up-questions which were not part of the initial guide but which is useful to the inquiry objectives and which similarly elicited a wide gamut of information or comprehensive clarifications of the problem raised in the study objective. Above all, numerous answers were interviewed due to the reality that it has the leverage of making sure that the reasonableness of data presented by lone interviewee can be scrutinized against that granted by alternative interviewee (Meyer, 2001). This helped to improve standardization and categorization of responses into themes.

Administration of Research Instruments

For easy administration and collection of data for this study, the researcher recruited four (4) research assistants, who are fluent in Efik and English languages and are also conversant with the study areas. The justification for this is that majority of those three purposively selected local government areas are predominantly Efiks this reduced the problem of gaining entry and provided the insider angle to the issue under consideration. Furthermore, awareness of local norms also facilitated the researcher's acceptance

among the people. Generally, this was to ensure that the research assistants were effective in data collection process. The research assistants were trained by the researcher for a period of two days to enable the research assistants to be well informed about the study objectives and the methodology. The minimum qualification for selection of the research assistants was first degree. The researcher supervised the administration and collection of the questionnaire. The means for data gathering was foretested at random on chosen population other than the study population to guarantee clearness of contents as well as to guarantee that interviewees, research associates and the investigator are on the same page concerning the problem under consideration.

The questionnaire guide was self-administered. The researcher himself moderated the interview guide, while one of the research assistants took notes. Thereafter, the notes were categorized into themes. The conduct of the interview and the distribution and collection of the questionnaire were carried out on week days and it lasted for a period of five (5) weeks.

Method of Data Analysis

The study exploited the mixed method, that is, the investigator combined elements of qualitative and quantitative approaches of information collection, analysis of information and inferential technique.

Data collected were largely qualitative and quantitative with two sets of statistical instrument used in this study for processing and analyzing data. They included:

*Descriptive Statistical Measures***:** This involved the use of percentages to analyze the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and the research questions.

*Inferential Statistical Measures***:** This comprises the use of chi-square (X^2) statistical significance in the testing of the research hypothesis.

The data from the unstructured oral interview was grouped into themes to make sense of   the interview conducted. Accordingly, each of the matters was discussed to aid and elucidate the qualitative data. Data from the closed fixed-choice questions from the questionnaire were classified which provided the grounds to evaluate the hypothesis set. Consequently, qualitative and quantitative analyses complemented each other.

Ethical Issues

This research work addressed the basic principles of research ethics in social sciences. The researcher obtained informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality and data protection by attaching a formal letter to the questionnaire schedule. With regard to avoiding deceptive practices, the questions raised by the researcher in both questionnaire and oral unstructured interview schedule were the questions that addressed only the variable raised by the researcher to address the topic under study.

To address the ethical principle of thoroughness; the researcher defined all the key concepts around which the study is built, the selection of adequate samples for the study , as well as identification of the strengths and the limitations of the research design used in the study. Additionally all the results and findings of the study both the positive and negative aspect were thoroughly communicated.
                                                                    In terms of the principle of objectivity, the researcher remained objective and impartial in all aspects and phases of the study. The researcher did not introduce his subjective feelings and biases to bear into the research design, selection of respondents, communication of the results and findings, and writing and /or asking questions. The questions introduced in the research instruments are worded in such a way as to avoid leading questions (i.e. question leading the respondents to a predetermined answer). The questions are worded in such a way as to allow respondent's views determine the outcome of the results as against allowing the researcher's own values and thinking influence the findings of the research.

Findings

Testing Of Hypothesis and Analysis of Findings

Hypothesis 1

H_0 there is no significant relationship between public negative views of Police stop-and-search method of crime prevention and Police /policing work.

H_1 there is a significant relationship between public positive views of Police stop-and-search method of crime prevention and Police/policing work.

Table 1(A): Respondents' Views on Police Stop-And-Search Method of Crime Prevention and Police/Policing Work

Views	Male (n=420)	Female (n=420)	Total (n=840)
Positive	316(A)	337(B)	653
Negative	90(C)	61(D)	151
Don't know	14(E)	22(F)	36
	420	420	840

Source: Authors fieldwork 2023.

Table 1 (B): Correlation Result of Relationship Between Police Stop-And-Search and Police/Policing Work

		police stop-and-search	police/policing work
police stop-and-search	Pearson correlation	1	.872**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Sum of squares and cross-products	138.58	171.21
	Covariance	.250	.236
	N	840	840
police/policing work	Pearson correlation	.872**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Sum of squares and cross-products	176.41	622.44
	Covariance	.336	1.51
	N	840	840

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

Source: Authors fieldwork 2023.

Independent variable: police stop-and-search method of crime prevention

Dependent variable: police/policing work.

Test statistic: Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient

The analysis demonstrated a correlation coefficient of 0.872 indicating the presence of robust positive relationship between police stop-and-search method of crime prevention and police/policing work. The test was significant at 0.01 significant level which resulted in repudiation of the null hypothesis which asserts that there is no significant relationship between police stop-and-search method of crime prevention and police/policing work. Accordingly, the alternative hypothesis was established leading to the inference that there is a significant relationship police stop-and-search method of crime prevention and police/policing work.

The finding depicts that preponderance of the interviewees have a favourable disposition of police stop-and-search method of police and policing *vis a vis* crime prevention. Majority of the respondents vehemently supported the principle of stop-and-search as a method of crime prevention and Police/Policing work *vis a vis* crime prevention. The respondents also reiterated that the manner and attitude of the officers must change if it were to be an effective method of Police and policing work vis a vis crime prevention. The study also reveals that there is a substantial consciousness that the procedure and manner over which stop-and-search method of crime prevention and police/policing work is currently used leads to antagonism, intimidation, victimization, distrust, and resentment than any positive results and or effects we think it can bring. Despite these short comings, the outcomes further constitute proof that the bulk of respondents believed that there should be an urgent change in the ways stop-and-search method of crime prevention are used, targeted, attitudes and manner of the police, and that there should be meaningful reason given for every stop-and-search method of crime prevention to enable it take its proper place as a veritable tool of police and policing work.

The findings also reveal the negative encounters of stop-and-search method of crime prevention. Some of the respondents were of the view that stop-and-search method of crime prevention had affected how the public relate with the police in other situations, especially in crime reporting. One female interview respondent drove home the point thus: "I was robbed in my house, but did not report it to the Nigeria Police Force because of my ugly experience I had during police stop-and-search". Additionally, one male respondent also put it this way "I do not consider the Nigerian police as a force you can look up and go for help for now".

Some of the respondents in the study population who have had experience of being stopped-and-searched maintained that their experiences are frightening and a nightmare considering the procedure and attitude of the officers of the law. Even when some of the respondents think that they more or less experience a sense of anxiety and fear about being stopped, this may not be unconnected to the consequences of their previous experience and the suspicion they already have with the police.

Analysis Of the Research Questions

Table 2(A): Respondents Views of Police-Stop-And Search Method of Police and Policing Work Vis A Vis Crime Prevention

Views	Male (n-420)	%	Female (n=420)	%	Total (n=840)	%
To obtain material evidence to be used in court	35	8.3	32	7.6	67	8.0
Acts as a deterrent measure	40	9.5	47	11.2	87	10.4
To find instrument used in crime commission	52	12.4	55	13.1	107	12.7
To find the fruits of crime	54	12.9	60	14.2	114	13.6
To find illegal/contraband goods	50	11.9	54	12.9	104	12.4
For safety reasons	48	11.4	46	11.0	94	11.2
Arrest suspects in connection to a crime	48	11.4	46	11.0	94	11.2
To find trafficked persons	36	8.6	26	6.2	62	7.2
To find drugs and other hydrotropic substance	40	9.5	44	10.5	84	10
To antagonise and victimize the public	17	4.0	10	2.4	27	3.2

Source: Authors fieldwork 2023.

Field observation from Table 2(a) regarding respondents' views on Police stop-and–search method of police and policing work *vis a vis* crime prevention, the respondents reported a long list of opinions/views about Police stop-and-search method of Policing. Out of the total respondents: 8.0% were of the view that police-stop-and-search helped in obtaining material evidence to be used in court; 10.4% of the total respondents observed that Police stop-and-search acts as a deterrent measure; also, 12.7% of the overall interviewees were of the notion that police-stop-and-search method of policing helped to find out the instrument used in crime commission. Furthermore, 13.7% of the entire answerers were of the thought that it helped to find the fruits of crime; 12.4% of the total population have the opinion that it is a veritable tool used to find to illegal/contraband goods, 11.2% were of the opinion that the method is for safety reasons; while 11.2% were also of the view that it helped to arrest suspects in connection with crime commission. Additionally, 7.4% of the total population were of the opinion that it can help to find trafficked persons, 10% of the total population were of the view it can be used to find drugs and other hydrotropic substances while 3.2% of the total population were of the view that police use stop-and-search to intimidate and antagonize the populace.

The emerging implication from the qualitative data is that preponderance of the interviewees has a favourable view point of police-stop-and search method of police and policing *vis a vis* crime prevention. Consequently, despite the positive views of stop-and-search method of policing, the respondents observed that the way and manner in which it is currently used leads to distrust and displeasure than any positive results or effects the public can benefit from it.

The general consequences is that police hierarchical structures should put programmes and guidelines in place to educate individual police officer to always give a valid reason for each search. To this extent, the public will see themselves as a collaborative agent to reduce crime and also reduce the impression that they are being targeted, and that the police are out there to antagonize and victimize the public.

Table 2(B): Respondents' Views on The Factors That Influence Police Stop-And-Search Method of Policing and Police Work *Vis A Vis* Crime Prevention

Factors	Male (n=420)	%	Female n=420	%	Total (n=840)	%
Police discretion	180	42.9	157	37.4	337	40.1
Police set targets	120	28.6	95	22.6	215	25.6
Gender	38	9.0	52	12.4	90	10.7
Mode of dressing	42	10	60	14.3	102	12.1

Age	28	6.6	36	8.5	64	7.6
Type of car	12	2.9	20	4.8	32	3.8
	420	100	420	100	840	100

Source: Authors fieldwork 2023.

When asked by the respondents to enumerate the factors *or* reasons that influence police halt-and-search method of crime prevention and policing/police work *vis a vis* crime prevention, the respondents suggested a vast majority of reasons. The reasons include: police discretion, police targets, gender, and mode of dressing, age and type of car.

The computed qualitative results as summarized in Table 2(b) show that a total of 337 respondents constituting (41.1%) of the respondents i.e. 180 (42.9%) males and 157 (37.4%) females were of the view that police discretion constituted a unique component that prompts police-stop-and-search method of crime prevention. Officer's discretion is the power of the law enforcement officer to act or not to act as well under a given circumstance. Point was made that the experience of stop-and-search method of crime prevention depends solely on the individual police officer. The police officer decides who to stop-and-search, what to look out for, and how to conduct the search, who to apprehend, if apprehended who is sent to court. This exercise/activity gives so much power to the Police officer that abuse and corruption may set in. The general consequence is that the police hierarchical structures should put programmes and quidelines in place to check abuse of discretion by individual police officer which may lead to police corruption. Furthermore, a total of 215 (25.6%) of the respondents, comprising 120 (28.6%) males and 95(22.6%) females were of the view that Police set target is also a factor that influence Police halt-and-search style of Policing. The respondents observed that goal objectives are structured for the police officer regarding how many people as well as motor vehicles to be stopped-and-searched on a particular day, and at a particular time.

Additionally, a total of 90(10.7%) of the respondents believed that gender is another factor that influences Police stop-and-search method of combating criminality. Ezikeudu (2010) ascertained that women substantially dissuaded from engaging in crime because they are raised up to see themselves as the champion of household integrity They have poor possibility to engage in crime because they are more closely observed than males, foremost by parents and subsequently by spouses. Traditionally, women have been viewed as dependent and passive, males as strong, outgoing and assertive. As Inyang (1989) as cited in Ezikeudu (2010) also observed, the policemen or women feel less threatened by female than by male suspects.

Furthermore, the findings show that mode of dressing also influence Police stop-and-search method of crime prevention. In all, a total of 102 (12.1%) consisting of 62 (10%) males and 60 (14.3%) females were of this view. The respondents also observed that the way an individual dress, the type of cloth worn, and the hair style influenced Police stop and search. Age and type of car also influence Police stop-and-search method of crime prevention. With regards to age, a total of 64 (7.6%) of the respondents' consisting of 28 (6.6%) males and 36 (8.5%) females were of the view. The respondents noted that young men have the greater chances of being stopped-and-searched than do the older respondents. With regards also to the type of car, the respondents believed that the type and model of car an individual drove influenced Police stop-and-search. A total of 32 (3.8%) of the respondents consisting of 12 (2.90%) males and 20 (4.8%) females share the above view.

Discussion of Findings

There exists sublime community consciousness in the level of policing and police work **vis a vis** crime prevention as authenticated in the information gathered. This may not be unrelated with the police as a force that is bound to control, unmasking and forestallment of crime, the implementation of laws and rules, defense of life and possessions among others. . How the public view policing and police work is very important. As this research and other researchers have shown, public positive perception of law enforcement conviction and uprightness encourage good cordial association among the community and

the Police Force that could trigger commitment and conformity as well as effective and efficient crime control and prevention.

Virtually, almost all the examinees generally supported the use of stop-and-searches as a method of policing and police work *vis a vis* crime prevention as Table 1(a) shows. This finding reechoes the findings of Braga et al., (2019) who noted that stop and search have been used as a major constituent in several proactive policing activities as well as hot spots policing operations. However, the respondents are of the view that, the manner and attitude of the officer and/or officers must change if it has to be an effective method of policing and police work. This finding also reechoes the findings of Brown & Hobbs, (2023) who noted that unjust and ill-directed stop and search generates and strengthens suspicion between those exposed to it and the police and policing work. There existed a highly potent insight that the process and manner that police-stop-and-search is presently used causes displeasure than any positive effect the public can get from it. Furthermore, bulk of the interviewees believed that there should be a change in the way stop-and-search is utilized, which it is intended, stand point of the Police Officer, and that the Police should try as much as possible to give a meaningful and not a bizarre reason(s) for any stop-and-search. The respondents also noted that when these changes are effected, then stop-and-search method of crime prevention will take its pride of place as a method of Policing and Police work *vis a vis* crime prevention. . The study result re-echoes the findings of Milner et al., (1999), Skogan, (1994) and Quinton et al. (2000) which observed that the Police should always be polite and respectful while engaging in stop-and- search with the public and should also endeavour to give a reason/ or reasons for each stop-and-search. Correspondingly, The study also re-echoes the recent findings of Bacak & Apel, (2021) and Harris & Johns, (2020) who observed that subject to the nature of contact, individuals may be of the view that they are being stopped for no good reason and/or that their personal liberty is being unreasonably restricted, leading to a reduction in attitudes favourable to police and policing work. The implication of the findings is that, the examinees alleged that at any time somebody is halted- and- searched that the police officer ought to try as much as possible to give a valid and not a bizarre reason(s), and also be polite, Additionally, police officer or officers must indicate their names, the police station they are coming from, must be in uniform or alternatively wear a valid and visible identity card while on stop and search duties. By engaging in such practices the people will likely to be cooperative with the police, feel comfortable about been stopped and searched. Additionally, the people will also see themselves as part of the process of crime prevention which could be advantageous in reducing the negative impression of thinking that they are been specifically targeted. These will further reduce the unconstructive impression that the Police are all out to antagonize and victimize the public. By engaging in such good practices it will reduce the impression that the police are just out there to exercise their powers and above all, create a good positive perception of Police and Policing work. However, the findings of Rosenfeld & Fornango, (2014) noted that critics have observed the apparent low success rate of stop and search as well as the racial prejudices linked to these strategies and it shown that such strategies represent an illegitimate and unfair use of Police Power. The finding of this study is not in consonance with the above findings as the finding of this study shows that virtually, almost all the examinees generally supported, approved and recommended the use of stop-and-searches as a method of policing and police work *vis a vis* crime prevention as Table 1(a) shows. The policy implication is that there should be a policy geared towards changing the standpoint of the police during stop-and-search, and police stop-and-search should be utilized not for a bizarre reason(s) but for a legitimate reason(s), and that individuals should be given an honest reason for stop-and-search at any time he/she is stopped and searched. This will provide a synergy for information sharing and good cordial relationship, because policing is every body's business. The aforementioned policy implication is connected to applicability of the theoretical anchorage of the study which explains that public perception of police and policing activities *vis a vis* stop and search method of crime prevention as negative or positive may be swayed by the Police action of the old, present-day and upcoming.

Summary/Conclusion

There exists a soaring level of community inquisitiveness in the height of law enforcement and police work *vis a vis* crime prevention. The comportment with which the community observes the Police Force is especially critical. Constructive understanding of policing and Police Officer's work is an indispensable precondition for effectual and useful police public relation. The views that citizens have about the police are important and should enhance interest in building a synergy for sustainable crime control. Their views can be capable of swaying the extent and kind of communication the populace contain with the Police Force in addition to the degree of assist offered to the Police Force (Cao & Dai, 2006). Excluding public support, contemporary policing is afflicted with challenges in their styles of operations. It can be stated that favourable insight of the Police Force adds to a sequence of reduced Police efficiency, intensify unlawful act and advance disbelieve of the Police by the public.

The study found that among the study population, 653 of the total examinees had a positive perception of police stop-and-search method of policing *vis a vis* crime prevention as was shown in Table 1(a), while reiterating that the manner, and attitude of the officers must change and that there should be reason given for every stop-and-search if it has to be an effective method of policing and police work. The study also reveals that police stop-and-search is not without its merits as was evidenced in table 2(a). In line with the outcomes and discoveries of the enquiry, it may well be deduced that the respondents broadly supported the principle of stop-and-search as a method of policing and police work *vis a vis* crime prevention. However, they were of the view that the manner and attitude of the police officer carrying out the stop-and-search must change and that the police officer should try as much as possible to give a valid and not a bizarre reason(s) for any stop-and-search. Additionally, police officer or officers must indicate their names, the police station they are coming from, must be in uniform or alternatively wear a valid and visible identity card while on stop and search if it has to be a veritable method of policing and police work *vis a vis* crime prevention.

Recommendations/Policy Suggestion

In view of the conclusions of the enquiry, the following proposals as policy guide are tendered:

The police service commission is supposed to put up policies and programmes that would enhance;

- Changing the attitude of the police during stop-and-search. This can be done through training and retraining Police Officers to enable them practice more often the principle of procedural justice

- Ensuring stop-and-search method of policing is carried out for legitimate reasons not for an odd reason or reasons.

- Make sure that individuals are given meaningful reason or reasons for stop-and-search at any time he/she is stopped and searched. Additionally, police officer or officers must indicate their names, the police station they are coming from, must be in uniform or alternatively wear a valid and visible identity card while on stop and search.

- Decrease the negative effects of stop and search through focusing on improving officer conduct during police citizen encounters. This can be achieved through training and retraining of policemen quarterly or yearly to meet with international best practices standard worldwide.

This study is carried out in one state of Nigeria, precisely in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. Although, the study is representative of inhabitant of the study population, there is a limitation that it could not be generalized beyond the population (Creswell, 2009). It is recommended that future research should involve citizens of other states in Nigeria.

Policing challenges are complex and varied and are likely formed by a variety of variables within every society; future research should take the following areas of research into consideration:

- Socio-economic status and people's perception of police work.

- Victimization and fear of crime problems and people's perception of policing and police work.

- People's perception of police investigative method of policing

- People's perception of police use of discretionary powers.

- Examine how police agencies should ameliorate the negative effects of stop and search.

Competing Interests

Authors hereby declare that no competing interests exist.

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Data Availability Statement

To foster transparency, the research data associated with this manuscript will be openly available. It will be linked to Digital Object Identifier to be provided by the journal in a free to use, open access repository.

Institutional Review Board Statement

Appropriate steps was taken by the authors to protect the rights and welfare of the human participants as subjects in this research study from both physical and psychological harm. The investigators obtained informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality and data protection by attaching a formal letter to the questionnaire schedule to fully informed and voluntary participants to prospective research projects capable of making choices with regard to avoiding deceptive practices, the questions raised by the researcher in both questionnaires and the unstructured interview schedule were the questionnaire that addressed duly the variables set by the researcher to address the topic under study.

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