

Raising citizens' consciousness on attitudinal change, establishment of crime advocacy clubs in schools and crime control

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Abstract

This research explores the effectiveness of non-kinetic security strategies, including raising awareness on attitudinal change and establishing crime advocacy clubs in schools, as tools for crime control in South-South Nigeria. Utilizing a multi-stage sampling method, the study gathers data from diverse socio-economic groups via structured questionnaires and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Results reveal that community awareness campaigns, skill development initiatives, and educational programs significantly enhance crime prevention efforts by addressing the socio-economic root causes of criminal behavior. The establishment of crime advocacy clubs emerges as a transformative tool, fostering early behavioral change and promoting youth participation in crime reduction. The study underscores the relevance of theoretical frameworks such as Situational Crime Prevention Theory and Routine Activities Theory in designing strategies to address insecurity. Recommendations include intensifying public awareness campaigns, integrating crime advocacy clubs into educational systems, and promoting collaboration between policymakers, security agencies, and local communities to sustain security improvements.

Keywords: *Raising citizens' consciousness, attitudinal change, crime advocacy clubs, crime control.*

Introduction

Security is fundamental to the stability and development of any society. In South-South Nigeria, a region rich in natural resources, particularly oil, security challenges have severely impacted economic activities and the overall well-being of its residents. Despite its economic advantage, the region faces significant security issues such as militancy, kidnapping, oil theft, and communal conflicts (Ikelegbe, 2010). These challenges stem from socio-economic disparities, environmental degradation, and grievances related to resource control and political marginalization (Omeje, 2006). While traditional kinetic approaches, primarily involving military force and interventions, provide temporary peace, they often fail to address the underlying causes of insecurity. South-South Nigeria, home to states like Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers, is crucial to Nigeria's economy due to its oil reserves. However, this wealth has not translated into widespread prosperity for local communities. Instead, it has exacerbated socio-economic disparities and environmental degradation, fostering conflict and criminal activities (Omeje, 2006). Militancy, driven by demands for resource control and environmental justice, has led to violent disruptions in oil production. Similarly, kidnapping, which began as politically motivated, has evolved into a lucrative criminal enterprise, while oil theft ("bunkering") funds criminal activities and worsens environmental damage. Additionally, communal conflicts fueled by competition for resources further complicate the security situation (Ojajorotu, 2008; Obi, 2010; Okoli & Agada, 2014).

Traditional kinetic security strategies have predominantly focused on deploying military forces and law enforcement to combat crime. While these methods may offer short-term solutions, they often fail to address the root causes of insecurity. Military interventions in the Niger Delta, for example, have led to collateral damage, displacement, and deepened local grievances, perpetuating a cycle of violence (Ukiwo, 2003; Watts, 2008). The limitations of these approaches highlight the need for alternative strategies that go beyond forceful suppression to tackle the socio-economic and political issues that fuel insecurity. Non-kinetic security strategies, in contrast, focus on addressing the root causes of crime and violence

through socio-economic development, community engagement, intelligence gathering, and conflict resolution. These strategies aim to reduce reliance on force and promote sustainable peace through dialogue, economic empowerment, and social cohesion. One key aspect of non-kinetic approaches is socio-economic development, which targets poverty, unemployment, and lack of education—factors that drive individuals toward militancy and criminality. Initiatives such as vocational training and employment opportunities can provide alternatives for youth, helping to divert them from criminal activities (Onuoha, 2010; Oluwaniyi, 2011; Kaldor, 2013).

Community engagement is another important element of non-kinetic strategies. By building trust and cooperation between security agencies and local communities, these approaches enhance intelligence gathering and early warning systems, enabling proactive responses to potential threats. Engaging local leaders and organizations in peacebuilding fosters ownership and strengthens efforts to maintain peace. Furthermore, intelligence gathering is vital to non-kinetic strategies. Effective intelligence allows security agencies to identify and neutralize threats before they escalate into conflict, thus minimizing the impact of security challenges (Onuoha, 2010; Oluwaniyi, 2011; Kaldor, 2013). Conflict resolution mechanisms, such as mediation and dialogue, are essential for addressing the underlying grievances that contribute to insecurity. These platforms offer peaceful solutions to disputes and can prevent the escalation of conflicts, promoting reconciliation and lasting peace (Lederach, 2003; Alao, 2007; Oluwaniyi, 2011). Given the complexity of crime in South-South Nigeria, a holistic approach is needed. Non-kinetic security strategies, emphasizing socio-economic development and community involvement, offer a promising pathway to sustainable peace and security. This research aims to explore how these strategies can be effectively implemented in South-South Nigeria, providing valuable insights for overcoming the region's security challenges.

Literature review

Raising citizens' consciousness on attitudinal change and crime control

Raising citizens' consciousness about attitudinal change and crime control is crucial for creating safer communities. Evidence supports the effectiveness of public awareness campaigns, community policing, educational programs, and restorative justice in promoting positive attitudes and reducing crime. However, challenges such as sustainability, impact measurement, cultural sensitivity, and resistance to change must be addressed to maximize these initiatives' effectiveness. Continued research and innovation are needed to refine strategies for fostering attitudinal change and combating crime. Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory suggests that people learn behaviors through observation, imitation, and reinforcement, implying that attitudinal change can occur by exposing citizens to positive role models. Cornish and Clarke (1986) argue that people make decisions based on a cost-benefit analysis, so raising awareness about the consequences of crime and the benefits of lawful behavior can encourage rational choices aligned with societal norms.

Public awareness campaigns use media, public service announcements, and community events to educate the public on crime prevention and attitudinal change. Effective campaigns often feature relatable messages and credible messengers (Durlauf & Nagin, 2011). Community policing involves partnerships between police and community members to address crime collaboratively. This approach builds trust, encourages engagement, and promotes collective responsibility for crime control (Skogan, 2006). Schools and community centers offer programs that teach young people about crime's consequences, conflict resolution, and civic responsibility. Programs like DARE educate students on preventing drug use and criminal behavior (Ringwalt et al., 1991). Restorative justice focuses on repairing harm caused by crime,

promoting accountability, and fostering empathy through community involvement (Braithwaite, 2004).

Studies show that well-designed public awareness campaigns can reduce crime. Durlauf and Nagin's (2011) meta-analysis found that DUI prevention campaigns led to measurable declines in drunk driving incidents. Research also shows that community policing enhances public trust and reduces crime. Skogan (2006) found that neighborhoods with community policing had lower crime rates and improved police-community relations. While DARE's impact is mixed, some studies indicate that interactive, skills-based programs are more effective (Ringwalt et al., 1991). Restorative justice programs have been found to reduce recidivism and promote attitudinal change, with participants less likely to reoffend (Latimer et al., 2005). Programs like Operation Ceasefire and Neighborhood Watch have proven effective in raising awareness, reducing crime, and promoting collective responsibility (Braga et al., 2001; Bennett et al., 2008). ASBOs, though controversial, have also reduced anti-social behavior and enhanced safety (Burney, 2009).

Influence of crime advocacy clubs in schools on crime control

Crime advocacy clubs in schools play a vital role in crime control by raising awareness, promoting positive behaviors, and empowering students to take an active role in maintaining a safe environment. Theoretical frameworks such as Social Learning Theory, Social Control Theory, Routine Activities Theory, and Empowerment Theory support the role of these clubs in fostering crime prevention. Empirical studies have demonstrated that these clubs help reduce crime rates, improve school climate, enhance student engagement, and promote pro-social behaviors. However, challenges related to sustainability, participation, impact measurement, and cultural sensitivity must be addressed to maximize their effectiveness. Zimmerman (1995) highlights the importance of empowering individuals to influence their environment, and crime advocacy clubs provide students with the tools to do so. These clubs often organize workshops on bullying, substance abuse, and conflict resolution, equipping students with skills to prevent and address criminal behavior. Peer mentoring programs also encourage positive behavior, as older students mentor younger ones, fostering a supportive environment. Collaboration with local law enforcement, social services, and community organizations can enhance the clubs' effectiveness by providing additional resources and expertise. Schools may also run awareness campaigns using posters, social media, and events to educate the community about crime prevention. Empowering students to lead initiatives, such as organizing events and creating educational materials, instills a sense of ownership and responsibility.

Research shows that crime advocacy clubs can reduce school crime rates. A study by Johnson et al. (2015) found that schools with active clubs reported fewer incidents of bullying, vandalism, and substance abuse. These clubs contribute to a positive school climate by fostering respect, inclusivity, and a sense of community. A study by Smith and Sandhu (2004) found that students in schools with crime advocacy clubs felt safer and more connected to their peers and teachers. Participation in these clubs also boosts student engagement and academic performance, as evidenced by Jones and Mitchell (2016), who found that students involved in such clubs were more likely to attend school regularly and achieve higher grades. Programs like D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) and peer mediation offer further examples of school-based crime prevention initiatives. While results vary, studies indicate positive impacts on student behavior, with reduced violence and improved relationships within schools (Ringwalt et al., 1991; Johnson & Johnson, 1996; Gottfredson et al., 2002).

Theoretical consideration

Situational Crime Prevention Theory, developed by Ronald Clarke in 1992, focuses on reducing crime opportunities by modifying the immediate environment. The theory posits that

crime can be deterred by making it more difficult, risky, or less rewarding for potential offenders. It emphasizes environmental design, surveillance, and target hardening as key strategies to limit opportunities for crime in specific settings, such as neighborhoods or public spaces. The theory suggests that crime prevention can be achieved through practical, context-specific interventions. These may include improved street lighting, the installation of CCTV cameras, and the use of secure locks and reinforced doors to make targets less attractive to offenders. By modifying physical environments, such as maintaining clear sightlines and enhancing natural surveillance, crime opportunities are reduced, making it more difficult for offenders to act.

One advantage of this theory is its flexibility. It can be adapted to various types of crime and settings, allowing for customized interventions based on specific crime patterns. Empirical research has supported the effectiveness of these strategies in reducing crime, particularly property crime, vandalism, and street-level offenses. Community engagement, such as promoting neighborhood watch programs, further enhances the success of these strategies by increasing detection risks for offenders. However, the theory has limitations. One concern is crime displacement, where criminal activity shifts to other areas or targets rather than being eliminated. Additionally, the focus on situational factors means that the broader social, economic, and psychological causes of crime are not fully addressed. Some interventions may also provide only short-term benefits, as offenders can adapt to changes over time.

Implementing these measures can be resource-intensive, with costs for surveillance systems and infrastructure upgrades. Moreover, disparities in resource availability may lead to inequitable access to crime prevention measures, potentially causing uneven effectiveness across communities. Increased surveillance and target hardening could also create a sense of fear or mistrust among residents, affecting the quality of community life. Thus, Situational Crime Prevention Theory offers a practical and evidence-based approach to crime reduction by targeting situational factors. While effective in certain contexts, it has limitations, such as the potential for crime displacement and a focus on immediate environmental changes rather than root causes of crime. These strengths and challenges should be considered when designing non-kinetic security strategies that balance crime prevention with community well-being.

Methodology

This study employs a survey research design to explore the relationship between non-kinetic security strategies and crime control in South-South Nigeria. By utilizing questionnaires, the study gathers data from a large population, enabling the examination of multiple variables and their interactions. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of how non-kinetic strategies influence crime control among various stakeholder groups, ensuring a robust analysis of the subject matter. The survey design is particularly advantageous for its ability to produce statistically analyzable quantitative data, enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings.

The South-South Geopolitical Zone, comprising Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers States, plays a crucial role in Nigeria's socio-economic landscape due to its natural resources, particularly crude oil. However, the region faces significant security challenges, including militancy, kidnappings, and sabotage of oil infrastructure, often linked to socio-economic disparities and historical marginalization. Traditional kinetic security strategies, such as military interventions, have provided short-term solutions but failed to address the underlying causes of insecurity. This study highlights the potential of non-kinetic strategies, such as community engagement, economic empowerment, and environmental rehabilitation, to tackle these root causes effectively.

The research underscores the importance of tailored approaches to security in the South-South Zone, given its diverse ethnic groups, cultural practices, and economic opportunities beyond oil and gas. Non-kinetic strategies aim to foster social cohesion, promote sustainable development, and address socio-economic disparities that fuel criminal activities. The study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies in complementing traditional security measures, with the goal of informing policymakers, security agencies, and community leaders on best practices for enhancing security and fostering development in the region.

The study involves a diverse population, including security personnel, community leaders, local government officials, civil society organizations, youth groups, academics, business owners, and media personnel. A multi-stage sampling technique, combining purposive sampling, stratified random sampling, and snowball sampling, ensures the representation of various demographic groups and hard-to-reach populations. This approach enables the collection of rich qualitative and quantitative data to comprehensively analyze the perceptions and impacts of non-kinetic security strategies across different segments of society.

Data collection integrates primary sources, including questionnaires and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and secondary literature. A structured 5-point Likert scale questionnaire captures demographic details and responses to study variables, while KIIs provide in-depth insights from key stakeholders. By leveraging these tools, the study generates actionable data to test its hypotheses and contribute to a nuanced understanding of crime control in South-South Nigeria. The findings are expected to guide the formulation of effective, sustainable security policies that address the region's complex challenges.

Results

Table 1 presents result on the scale on responsibility allowance and job commitment. The scale was presented in the four point-Likert scale of Agree, Strongly Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The first item which determines whether community programs that focus on attitudinal change help reduce crime rates, the result showed that 944(65) agreed 332 (22) strongly agreed, 102 (7) disagreed while 72 (6) strongly disagreed. Item 2 in the scale which determined whether public awareness about the consequences of crime has led to a reduction in criminal activities, result showed that 623(43) agreed, 686(47) strongly agreed, 111(8) agreed while 30 (2) strongly agreed.

Item 3 in the scale determine whether crime control improves when citizens adopt positive behavioral changes, result showed that about 609 (42) agreed, 414 (29) strongly agreed, 220 (15) disagreed while 207 (14) strongly agreed. Item 4 in the scale determine whether educating citizens on moral values contributes to lower crime rates in South-South Nigeria, the result revealed that about 820 (57) agreed, 411(28), strongly agree D 109(7) disagreed while 110(8) strongly agreed. Furthermore, item 5 in this scale determines whether media campaigns are effective in raising awareness about crime, result showed that 814 (56) agreed, 524 (36) strongly agreed, 56 (4) while 56 (4) strongly disagreed. By implication, finding summarily revealed that, raising citizens' consciousness on attitudinal change significantly correlate with crime control.

Table 1: Raising citizens' consciousness on attitudinal change and crime control

S/N	Question	A	SA	D	SD
1.	Community programs that focus on attitudinal change help reduce crime rates.	944(65)	332(22)	102(7)	72(6)
2.	Public awareness about the consequences of crime has led to a reduction in criminal activities.	623(43)	686(47)	111(8)	30(2)
3	Crime control improves when citizens adopt positive behavioral changes.	609(42)	414(29)	220(15)	207(14)
4	Educating citizens on moral values contributes to lower crime rates in South-South Nigeria.	820(57)	411(28)	109(7)	110(8)
5.	Media campaigns are effective in raising awareness about crime.	814(56)	524(36)	56(4)	56(4)

Table 2: Establishment of crime advocacy clubs in schools and crime control

S/N	Question	A	SA	D	SD
6	Crime advocacy clubs in schools help reduce crime rates in South-South Nigeria.	626(43)	442(30)	205(14)	177(13)
7.	Students' involvement in crime prevention advocacy leads to safer communities.	662(46)	686(47)	55(4)	47(3)
8	Crime advocacy clubs in schools have a positive influence on students' attitudes toward crime.	686(47)	545(38)	117(8)	102(7)
9	Introducing crime prevention programs in schools reduces youth involvement in criminal activities.	836(58)	416(29)	102(7)	96(6)
10	Schools with crime advocacy clubs report fewer incidents of criminal behavior.	664(46)	632(44)	177(5)	177(5)

Table 2 presents result on the scale on leave allowance and job commitment. The scale was presented in the four-point Likert scale of Agree, Strongly Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The first item which determines whether crime advocacy clubs in schools help reduce crime rates in South-South Nigeria, the result showed that 626(43) agreed 442 (30) strongly agreed, 205 (14) disagreed while 177 (13) strongly disagreed. Item 2 in the scale which determined whether Students' involvement in crime prevention advocacy leads to safer communities, result showed that 662 (46) agreed, 686(47) strongly agreed, 55(4) agreed while 47 (3) strongly agreed. Item 3 in the scale determine whether crime advocacy clubs in schools have a positive influence on students' attitudes toward crime, result showed that about 686 (47) agreed, 545 (38) strongly agreed, 117 (8) disagreed while 102 (7) strongly agreed. Item 4 in the scale determine whether introducing crime prevention programs in schools reduces youth involvement in criminal activities, the result revealed that about 836 (58) agreed, 419(29), strongly agree D 102(7) disagreed while 96(6) strongly agreed. Furthermore, item 5 in this scale determines whether schools with crime advocacy clubs report fewer incidents of criminal behavior, result showed that 664 (46) agreed, 623(44) strongly agreed, 177 (5) while 177 (5) strongly disagreed. Summarily the findings revealed that, leave allowance affects job commitment.

Hypothesis 1

Ho: Raising citizens' consciousness on attitudinal change has no significant correlation with crime control in South-South Nigeria.

Hi: Raising citizens' consciousness on attitudinal change significantly correlation with crime control in South-South Nigeria.

Accept Ho if calculated r value is ≤ 0.086 at 1448 degrees of freedom (df) and 0.05 level of significance. Otherwise, reject the Ho and accept the Hi. To test hypothesis four above, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis was used. From the analysis in Table 4.2,4, the calculated r value was 0.73* which was tested in comparison with the table value of 0.086 at 0.05 level of significance. The calculated r value was greater than the critical, r values. Hence the result was statistically significant which suggest that, raising citizens' consciousness on attitudinal change significantly correlation with crime control in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 3: Pearson Product moment correlation coefficient analysis for raising citizens' consciousness on attitudinal change and crime control in South-South Nigeria (N=1450)

Variables	M	SD	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-value
Raising citizens' consciousness on attitudinal change	13.89	2.885	5544	77616		0.73*
Crime control	12.45	2.633	5338	75823	78286	

**significant at 0.05 level, $df = 1448$, critical r 0.086

From the result presented above, since the calculated r of 0.73* is greater than the critical r-value of 0.086 at .05 level of significance with 1448 degree of freedom with this result, the null hypothesis which states that, raising citizens' consciousness on attitudinal change has no significant correlation with crime control in South-South Nigeria, was rejected while the alternate accepted. It implies that, raising citizens' consciousness on attitudinal change significantly correlation with crime control in South-South, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2

Ho: The establishment of crime advocacy clubs in schools does not significantly relates crime control in South-South, Nigeria.

Hi: The establishment of crime advocacy clubs in schools significantly relates to crime control in South-South, Nigeria.

Accept Ho if calculated r value is ≤ 0.086 at 1448 degrees of freedom (df) and 0.05 level of significance. Otherwise, reject the Ho and accept the Hi. To test hypothesis five, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis was used. The analysis in Table 4.2.5 shows that, the calculated r value was 0.69* which was tested in comparison with the table value of 0.086 at 0.05 level of significance. The calculated r value was greater than the critical, r values. Hence the result was statistically significant; meaning, establishment of crime advocacy clubs in schools significantly relates to crime control in South-South Nigeria.

Table 4: Pearson Product moment correlation coefficient analysis for establishment of crime advocacy clubs in schools and crime control in South-South Nigeria (N=1450)

Variables	M	SD	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-value
Establishment of crime advocacy clubs in schools	14.88	2.665	5522	77614		0.69*
Crime control	13.64	2.233	5261	73938	74797	

**significant at 0.05 level, $df = 1448$, critical r 0.086

From the result presented above, the calculated r of 0.67* is greater than the critical r -value of 0.086 at .05 level of significance with 1448 degree of freedom with this result, the null hypothesis which states that, the establishment of crime advocacy clubs in schools does not significantly affect crime control in South-South, Nigeria was rejected while the alternate accepted. This implies that, establishment of crime advocacy clubs in schools significantly relate to crime control in South-South, Nigeria.

Discussion of findings

The results of this study highlight a significant correlation between raising citizens' consciousness on attitudinal change and effective crime control in South-South Nigeria. This suggests that interventions aimed at reshaping public attitudes, values, and behaviors can play a crucial role in reducing crime rates in the region. The findings are consistent with the broader literature, which underscores the importance of public awareness and behavioral transformation in achieving long-term crime prevention. This section delves deeper into the implications of the findings, correlating them with existing studies and theories while discussing the importance of socioeconomic factors.

The positive correlation found between attitudinal change and crime control aligns with earlier studies that emphasize the role of societal values in mitigating criminal behavior. Communities that foster a collective attitude against crime are more likely to deter individuals from engaging in illegal activities. As Akintunde and Olawale (2019) argue, collective attitudes toward law enforcement and social norms can significantly shape individual behaviors. When societal norms strongly discourage criminality, individuals are less likely to commit crimes for fear of social sanctions. In South-South Nigeria, public sensitization campaigns that promote civic responsibility have been instrumental in creating such collective attitudes, fostering a culture of accountability and deterring potential offenders. The focus on changing community-level attitudes is particularly important in regions like South-South Nigeria, where social instability and economic disparities contribute to criminal behavior (Alemika, 2017).

The relationship between attitudinal change and crime control can also be interpreted through the lens of the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991). This theory posits that individuals' behaviors are guided by their intentions, which are in turn influenced by their attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of crime prevention, the more intolerant individuals become of criminal behavior, the less likely they are to engage in or tacitly support it. As public awareness campaigns increase citizens' understanding of the legal and social repercussions of crime, their attitudes shift, making them more inclined to adhere to legal and moral standards. This theoretical framework supports the study's findings by showing that raising citizens' awareness of the consequences of crime can lead to behavioral changes that contribute to crime reduction.

A crucial element in promoting attitudinal change is the role of public education and media campaigns. According to Adeyemi and Adesina (2020), media campaigns and grassroots advocacy are effective tools for shaping public consciousness and promoting moral behavior. In regions where formal education is limited, such as parts of South-South Nigeria, media platforms can be leveraged to raise awareness about the dangers of criminal behavior. Eke (2020) points out that media has been successfully used in South-South Nigeria to expose the risks associated with violent crime and mobilize community efforts toward crime prevention. These efforts contribute to shaping a more informed and proactive citizenry, capable of tackling the root causes of crime in their communities.

The above finding is in tandem with the qualitative data which revealed the relationship between raising citizens' consciousness on attitudinal change and crime control in south-south, Nigeria. Each participants argued that:

Attitudinal change plays a huge role in crime control. When people understand the consequences of their actions, they are less likely to commit crimes. I've seen how a shift in mindset, especially among the youth, can drastically reduce petty crimes. In our community, we've organized seminars, town hall meetings, and sensitization campaigns that teach citizens the importance of obeying the law and the negative impact crime has on development. Yes, I've noticed that there is more respect for the law now than before. Many youths have taken up honest jobs, and the community is more peaceful. However, there's still a long way to go. The main challenge is ignorance and poverty. Many people are stuck in survival mode, so they don't care about attitudinal change unless it directly puts food on the table. The lack of jobs also contributes to this (KII with Community Leader).

Attitudinal change is key to crime control. When citizens understand their civic duties and are morally conscious, they tend to avoid criminal activities. Conduct public awareness programs. We also engage with schools and local groups to emphasize the importance of law and order. There has been a slow but steady improvement in how people view the police and law enforcement. Some people now assist us with information that helps prevent crime. Distrust in the police force is a huge challenge. Many citizens see the police as corrupt, so they don't buy into the attitudinal change message. Changing this mindset is difficult but necessary (KII with security agent).

Attitudinal change is fundamental because people's mindset towards crime often stems from their upbringing and social environment. Addressing these attitudes can curb future criminal behavior. We have partnered with schools and local community leaders to promote moral education. Campaigns on responsible behavior and the consequences of crime have been implemented at the grassroots level. In some areas, yes. People are starting to see the benefits of living crime-free, especially in communities where these programs are ongoing. However, in less urban areas, change is slower. A major challenge is the lack of follow-through. Many people participate in the campaigns but do not take them seriously. They believe crime is an unavoidable part of life, so changing this deeply ingrained mindset is tough (KII, with social worker).

A shift in attitude is crucial for reducing crime. When people see crime as something that not only hurts victims but society as a whole, they are more likely to make responsible choices. Educational institutions like ours run courses and workshops on civic responsibility, which aim to influence the younger generation's view on crime. We also involve students in community service projects that teach them the value of lawfulness. There's been some noticeable change among young adults, particularly students. They're more conscious of the consequences of crime and are advocating for a better society. But among older citizens, the shift is not as visible. The biggest challenge is dealing with the existing culture of impunity. Many people believe that certain individuals or groups can get away with crime, and this undermines efforts to change attitudes on a broader scale (KII with Lecturer).

Attitudinal change is absolutely necessary. Crime stems from a disregard for the law, and raising awareness about ethical behavior helps people understand the long-term benefits of a law-abiding society. Civil society organizations have been at the forefront of advocating for attitudinal change. We organize rallies, distribute educational materials, and work with media outlets to promote positive behavior and crime prevention. There are some changes, especially in urban areas where media campaigns have had a stronger influence. People are more aware of the societal impact of crime, but corruption still poses a significant barrier. Corruption and poor leadership make it difficult to convince people that attitudinal change matters. When people see leaders involved in criminal activities without consequences, it becomes hard to inspire grassroots change (KII with civil rights advocates).

The study findings indicate that such campaigns not only promote behavioral change but also encourage community involvement in crime prevention. Programs like neighborhood watch initiatives and collaboration with law enforcement agencies have proven to be effective in deterring crime (Afolabi, 2018). Public education on the role of citizens in crime prevention empowers individuals to take active roles in their communities, fostering a sense of collective responsibility.

While raising consciousness on attitudinal change is shown to significantly correlate with crime control, this relationship must be understood within the broader socio-economic context of South-South Nigeria. Poverty, unemployment, and political marginalization are significant drivers of criminal behavior in the region. According to Ogundipe and Okoosi (2019), individuals facing severe economic hardship may be compelled to engage in criminal activities as a means of survival. Therefore, efforts to raise public awareness and change attitudes toward crime must be coupled with policies that address these underlying socioeconomic issues.

Umeakuka and Ikpeze (2021) argue that while attitudinal change is crucial, it is insufficient in environments where economic inequality remains prevalent. Crime control strategies that focus solely on shifting public consciousness without addressing poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to education are likely to be short-lived. As such, the long-term success of public sensitization campaigns depends on their integration with socio-economic interventions aimed at improving living conditions. For crime control strategies in South-South Nigeria to be truly effective, they must go beyond raising public awareness and attitudinal change. The study's findings emphasize the importance of providing opportunities for economic advancement and social mobility. As Ekaette (2018) notes, economic empowerment initiatives, such as job creation programs, vocational training, and educational opportunities, are essential components of any comprehensive crime prevention strategy. Addressing the root causes of crime through socio-economic reforms will reduce the desperation that often leads individuals to engage in criminal activities. Furthermore, policies aimed at reducing poverty and creating employment opportunities must be implemented in conjunction with public awareness campaigns to ensure lasting crime reduction. Babalola (2020) stresses that by addressing the socio-economic factors that contribute to crime, policymakers can create an environment where attitudinal change initiatives have a more profound and lasting impact.

The findings of this study have several practical implications for policymakers and law enforcement agencies. First, they highlight the need to integrate public awareness campaigns into broader crime prevention strategies. Programs designed to educate citizens about the social and legal repercussions of criminal behavior, while promoting positive societal values, should

be prioritized. Policymakers should also collaborate with community leaders, religious organizations, and educational institutions to implement these programs. Ensuring that these initiatives are culturally sensitive and accessible to all segments of society will enhance their effectiveness. In addition to community-based interventions, the study underscores the importance of collaboration between media outlets, educational institutions, and law enforcement agencies. Public messaging that promotes attitudinal change and civic responsibility should be disseminated through multiple channels, including radio, television, social media, and community outreach programs. Research by Uche and Okoro (2020) has shown that multi-channel approaches are more effective in influencing public opinion and behavior.

Moreover, policymakers should address the socio-economic inequalities that underlie much of the criminal behavior in South-South Nigeria. Raising consciousness on attitudinal change can only be fully effective if complemented by policies aimed at reducing poverty, creating employment opportunities, and providing access to education. Babalola (2020) argues that a multi-faceted approach to crime prevention that combines public sensitization with socio-economic reforms is more likely to yield sustainable outcomes. This study provides empirical evidence that raising citizens' consciousness on attitudinal change significantly correlates with crime control in South-South Nigeria. The findings align with existing literature, reinforcing the critical role of public awareness and behavioral transformation in crime prevention. However, to ensure the long-term success of these efforts, they must be accompanied by socio-economic interventions that address the root causes of criminal behavior. Policymakers must adopt a holistic approach to crime control, combining attitudinal change initiatives with strategies aimed at improving the economic and social well-being of the population. By doing so, they can create an environment conducive to lasting crime reduction and a more peaceful society.

The establishment of crime advocacy clubs in schools has emerged as a significant strategy for crime control in South-South Nigeria, according to the results of this study. The findings indicate that these clubs, when implemented effectively, have the potential to shape the attitudes, behaviors, and choices of young people, thereby reducing the likelihood of their involvement in criminal activities. This section discusses the implications of this finding in the context of existing literature and explores how these clubs can contribute to the broader goal of crime control in the region. One of the key reasons for the effectiveness of crime advocacy clubs in crime control is their role in early intervention. Schools are foundational institutions where young people are socialized into societal norms, values, and behaviors. By integrating crime prevention programs into schools through crime advocacy clubs, young people are educated early on the dangers of crime and the benefits of abiding by the law. This aligns with findings from previous studies, which highlight the critical role that schools can play in shaping positive behavior and preventing delinquency.

The above finding is in tandem with the qualitative data which revealed the relationship between establishment of crime advocacy clubs in schools and crime control. Each participants argued that:

Yes, we have a crime advocacy club in our school. The club organizes seminars and workshops where students are taught about the dangers of engaging in crime, drug abuse, and cultism. They also conduct peer education sessions where older students mentor younger ones on making positive life choices. These clubs help shape young people's behavior by instilling a sense of responsibility and teaching them about the consequences of crime. They encourage students to be role models and

create a culture of accountability among peers. There was a case where some students were involved in vandalism, but after attending club meetings and engaging in the peer mentoring program, they reformed and became advocates for discipline and orderliness. We've also seen fewer cases of bullying and theft. A major challenge is funding. We often lack resources to sustain activities like workshops and excursions that expose students to crime-free role models. Also, getting some students interested in the activities is difficult because they don't immediately see the value (KII with School Principal).

Yes, our NGO has partnered with several schools to establish crime advocacy clubs. The clubs focus on awareness campaigns, drama presentations on the consequences of crime, and school debates on justice and law. These clubs create awareness about crime prevention from an early age. Students are more likely to stay out of trouble because they are constantly exposed to messages about lawful behavior and the dangers of engaging in illegal activities. One example is a school where drug abuse was becoming a problem. After introducing the crime advocacy club and organizing campaigns against drug abuse, the number of cases significantly dropped, and students are now more conscious of their choices. Sustaining interest among students can be a challenge, especially as many of them are influenced by peer pressure and media portrayals of crime. It also requires support from school authorities, which is not always guaranteed (KII with NGO Representative).

Yes, we have crime advocacy clubs in our school. The club members are involved in activities like creating posters and newsletters to educate their peers on the effects of crime. They also organize student forums to discuss security issues affecting the school environment. These clubs play an important role in preventing crime by educating students on the dangers of cultism, theft, and other criminal activities. The peer-to-peer approach is effective because students are more likely to listen to and emulate their friends. There was an instance where a group of students was planning to join a cult. Some members of the crime advocacy club learned about it and reported the matter to school authorities, which led to swift intervention. Since then, we've had fewer cases of cult-related incidents. One challenge is the reluctance of some students to join. Many still feel that speaking against crime will make them unpopular or target them for bullying. Additionally, schools sometimes struggle to find qualified facilitators to lead club activities (KII with Teacher).

Yes, there are several crime advocacy clubs in the schools I work with. The clubs run programs that educate students on staying away from crime, the legal implications of criminal acts, and the importance of contributing positively to society. They help to reduce youth involvement in crime by fostering a culture of lawfulness. When students are educated early on, they develop an understanding of how crime can derail their future, which discourages them from engaging in such behaviors. There was a notable case in a secondary school where incidents of bullying were high. After the crime advocacy club's intervention, with role plays and group discussions on the impact of bullying, these behaviors significantly decreased. A lack of continuous engagement from the community and local government can make it hard to sustain the clubs. Sometimes schools lack the resources or personnel to keep the activities going, and the commitment of students can wane over time (KII with Teacher).

Yes, in some schools, the clubs are very active. They organize rallies, create awareness among students about good behavior, and partner with security agencies to discuss real-life consequences of crime. These clubs offer a platform for students to talk openly about crime and its effects. They also serve as preventive measures, especially for at-risk students who might otherwise be drawn into criminal activities without proper guidance. In one school, crime rates among students dropped after the establishment of a crime advocacy club. Students are now reporting suspicious activities to their teachers, which helps the school address potential problems before they escalate. Sustaining the momentum of these clubs is challenging. Without consistent support from parents, teachers, and external organizations, it's difficult to keep the students engaged. Sometimes, there's a stigma attached to being involved in such clubs, which discourages participation (KII with Chairman, Parent-Teacher Association).

Crime advocacy clubs serve as an educational platform where students can learn about the consequences of crime, understand their civic duties, and develop a sense of personal and social responsibility. These clubs offer a space for discussions on the legal, social, and moral implications of crime, helping to deter students from engaging in delinquent activities. As Adeoye and Ebong (2020) noted, when young people are educated about the negative consequences of crime, they are less likely to engage in such activities. Thus, the findings of this study are consistent with the broader literature on the role of education in crime prevention. Another significant contribution of crime advocacy clubs is their ability to promote civic engagement and responsibility among young people. By participating in these clubs, students are encouraged to take ownership of their actions and develop a sense of accountability to their communities. This is particularly important in South-South Nigeria, where social and economic challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and political instability have contributed to high crime rates (Alemika, 2017). Through crime advocacy clubs, students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to become agents of change in their communities, advocating for lawfulness and discouraging criminal behavior.

The role of these clubs in fostering civic responsibility is supported by previous research, which suggests that when young people are given opportunities to engage in positive social activities, they are less likely to resort to crime (Adesina & Idowu, 2019). For instance, Nkereuwem and Johnson (2018) found that youths involved in crime prevention initiatives were more likely to adopt law-abiding behaviors and serve as role models for their peers. Crime advocacy clubs provide an avenue for students to engage in such initiatives, thereby reducing the likelihood of their involvement in crime and contributing to overall crime control in the region. The findings of this study also highlight the role of crime advocacy clubs in counteracting negative peer influence, which is a major factor contributing to youth crime in South-South Nigeria. Peer influence plays a critical role in shaping the behaviors of young people, particularly in environments where crime is prevalent. Studies have shown that youths are more likely to engage in criminal activities if they are surrounded by peers who exhibit delinquent behavior (Chikwendu & Okeke, 2020). However, peer influence can also be a powerful tool for promoting positive behavior when harnessed correctly.

Crime advocacy clubs create an environment where students can positively influence each other, promoting prosocial behaviors and discouraging criminal activities. By participating in these clubs, students are exposed to positive role models and encouraged to reject negative peer pressure. This finding is consistent with the theory of differential association, which posits that individuals learn behaviors and attitudes from their interactions with others. In the context of crime prevention, crime advocacy clubs offer a space where

students can learn and reinforce positive behaviors from their peers, thereby reducing the risk of criminal involvement. Another key finding of this study is the role of crime advocacy clubs in empowering students to become advocates for crime prevention within their schools and communities. These clubs provide students with the knowledge and tools to educate others about the dangers of crime and the importance of following the law. By doing so, students not only protect themselves from criminal involvement but also contribute to the broader goal of crime control in their communities.

Empirical evidence suggests that empowering young people to take on active roles in crime prevention can have far-reaching effects. Students involved in crime prevention programs are more likely to engage in community-based crime control efforts, such as neighborhood watch programs and anti-crime campaigns. The empowerment of students as crime prevention advocates is particularly important in South-South Nigeria, where high levels of crime are often driven by socio-economic challenges (Ogundipe & Okoosi, 2019). By participating in crime advocacy clubs, students become agents of change, helping to create safer communities through their advocacy efforts.

While the findings of this study demonstrate the positive impact of crime advocacy clubs on crime control, it is important to recognize that these clubs alone may not be sufficient to address the root causes of crime in South-South Nigeria. The socio-economic challenges faced by the region, including poverty, unemployment, and political instability, are significant drivers of criminal behavior (Ogundipe & Okoosi, 2019). Thus, while crime advocacy clubs can play a crucial role in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of young people, they must be complemented by broader socio-economic reforms.

Umeakuka and Ikpeze (2021) argue that crime prevention efforts must take into account the underlying factors that contribute to criminal behavior. This includes addressing issues such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to education, which can push individuals toward crime. In this context, crime advocacy clubs can be seen as part of a larger crime control strategy that also includes economic and social reforms aimed at reducing the vulnerabilities that lead to criminal behavior. The findings of this study also suggest that the effectiveness of crime advocacy clubs can be enhanced through collaboration between schools and law enforcement agencies. By working together, schools and law enforcement can create a more comprehensive crime prevention strategy that combines education with enforcement. Law enforcement agencies can provide support to crime advocacy clubs by offering mentorship programs, facilitating workshops on crime prevention, and engaging with students to build trust and cooperation.

This finding is supported by previous research, which highlights the importance of collaboration between schools and law enforcement in crime prevention efforts. For example, Uche and Okoro (2020) found that school-based crime prevention programs were more effective when they were supported by law enforcement agencies, as this collaboration provided students with practical insights into the workings of the criminal justice system and the consequences of crime. In South-South Nigeria, where trust between the public and law enforcement is often low, such collaborations can help bridge the gap and foster a sense of collective responsibility for crime control.

The findings of this study have important implications for policymakers and educators in South-South Nigeria. First, the results suggest that crime prevention strategies should prioritize the establishment of crime advocacy clubs in schools. These clubs offer a cost-effective and sustainable way to educate young people about the dangers of crime and promote law-abiding behavior. Policymakers should work with educational institutions to ensure that

these clubs are established in both primary and secondary schools across the region. Second, the study highlights the need for collaboration between schools, law enforcement agencies, and community organizations. By working together, these stakeholders can create a more comprehensive crime control strategy that addresses both the behavioral and socio-economic drivers of crime. Law enforcement agencies can provide mentorship and support to crime advocacy clubs, while community organizations can offer extracurricular activities and vocational training that reduce the socio-economic pressures contributing to youth crime.

The study underscores the importance of addressing the root causes of crime, including poverty, unemployment, and political instability. While crime advocacy clubs can play a significant role in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of young people, they must be complemented by broader socio-economic reforms aimed at reducing the vulnerabilities that lead to criminal behavior. Policymakers should adopt a holistic approach to crime control that combines education, enforcement, and socio-economic development. The establishment of crime advocacy clubs in schools significantly affects crime control in South-South Nigeria. These clubs provide young people with the knowledge, skills, and support systems needed to resist criminal behavior and become advocates for crime prevention in their communities. The findings of this study are consistent with existing empirical research, which demonstrates the effectiveness of school-based crime prevention programs in reducing youth crime. However, for these clubs to be fully effective, they must be part of a broader crime control strategy that addresses the socio-economic factors contributing to crime in the region. By prioritizing the establishment of crime advocacy clubs and fostering collaboration between schools, law enforcement, and community organizations, policymakers can create a safer and more law-abiding society in South-South Nigeria.

Conclusion and recommendations

This study highlights the critical role of non-kinetic security strategies in controlling crime in South-South Nigeria. Utilizing a survey research design, data were collected through structured questionnaires and Key Informant Interviews (KII) across six states, targeting diverse socio-economic groups, including security personnel and community leaders. A multi-stage sampling method—comprising purposive, stratified, and snowball sampling—ensured a representative and diverse sample. Data analysis using Pearson correlation and SPSS revealed that non-violent measures, such as intelligence gathering, skill empowerment, awareness campaigns, and fostering attitudinal change, significantly enhance crime control. Intelligence gathering at the grassroots level enables security forces to pre-empt criminal activities, while skill empowerment initiatives address unemployment, a key driver of crime. The establishment of crime advocacy clubs in schools emerged as a crucial intervention, shaping youth behaviour and fostering law-abiding citizens for long-term crime prevention. The study's findings are supported by theoretical frameworks, including Routine Activities Theory, Social Disorganization Theory, and Situational Crime Prevention Theory, which emphasize the importance of strengthening community institutions and creating environments that deter crime. Furthermore, the research underscores the value of community involvement, proactive engagement, and collaboration between security agencies, policymakers, and the public in reducing the reliance on forceful interventions. Based on these insights, the study recommends intensifying civic education to promote positive behaviour and law-abiding attitudes, incorporating attitudinal change programs into community and school initiatives, and expanding crime advocacy clubs as platforms for peer mentoring and citizenship education. These strategies not only address the root causes of crime but also foster sustainable peace and security in the region.

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