

PREVENTIVE STRATEGIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF CRIMES ON RURAL FAMILY LIVELIHOODS IN OGBOMOSO AGRICULTURAL ZONE OF OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study therefore examined the preventive strategies in tackling the perceived effects of crimes in rural family livelihoods in Ogbomosho Agricultural zone of Oyo State. Multistage sampling procedure was employed to select 90 rural families for this study. Data was obtained with the aid of a questionnaire and data were analysed using frequency count, percentage, mean and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The results showed that the major effects of crime on rural family livelihoods were loss of stored products (4.82), loss of resources (4.37), and loss of yield of crops (4.91). While major preventive strategies against crime were keeping farm area clean always (3.00), setting of traps around barns/stores (2.96) and the use of vigilante group for surveillance (2.92). Pearson's Products Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis indicated that the perceived effects of crimes on rural family livelihoods were negative and significantly related to the frequency of preventive strategies against crimes ($r = -0.221^{**}$; $p = 0.037$). The result showed that preventive strategies against various crimes/criminality were found to be inversely and significantly related to the perceived effects of crime/criminality on rural family livelihoods. It was therefore concluded that the preventive strategies against crime/criminality had decisive influence on perceived effects of crime/criminality on rural family livelihoods in Ogbomosho Agricultural zone of Oyo State. The study recommends the need to tackle rural crime effectively through adequate adherence to community rules and regulations so that the rural family could live in a relatively safe and low-crime environment to enhance rural family livelihoods.

Keywords: Crime, criminality, livelihoods, rural family, preventive strategies

INTRODUCTION

Rural areas in developing countries are often characterised by high rates of poverty and food insecurity. The rural areas are characterised by a high concentration of poverty: 70% of the extremely poor people live in rural areas. Most of the rural people depend on income and farming employment. While there is a lot of research on sustainability of livelihoods and farming in rural areas, hardly has any research considered the barriers to development in rural areas. One such barrier is related to rural crime in developing countries. Thus, crime hampers development of rural areas in a serious way. These findings remain relevant today, as recent studies continue to highlight the negative impact of insecurity—particularly in rural and conflict-prone regions—on household welfare, education, and health indicators (Krause and Krieger, 2023).

Recent studies affirm that the lack of standardized reporting mechanisms and the low prioritization of farm-related crimes hinder accurate data collection and analysis, both in developed and developing countries (Salerno *et al.*, 2023).

Due to costs associated with crime in the rural area, there is need to adopt preventive strategies to address this menace to engender sustainable development in the rural area especially in ensuring food security. The concept of prevention today generally encompasses two dimensions: one that involves actions to "prevent, anticipate, and stop something from occurring," and another focused on

"raising awareness and issuing warnings" (Cecceto 2016). In preventive criminology, prevention is used in its first meaning, that is; by using different techniques to prevent delinquency, the purpose is to prevent the crime of going and overcoming delinquency. There is clear evidence that well-planned crime prevention strategies not only prevent crime and victimisation but also promote community safety and contribute to the sustainable development of countries. Effective, responsible crime prevention enhances the quality of life of all citizens. It has long-term benefits in terms of reducing the costs associated with the formal criminal justice system, as well as other social costs that result from crime. Crime prevention offers opportunities for a humane and more cost-effective approach to the problems of crime. According to Mwaura and Irungu (2023), human (human presence or physical guardianship e.g. through neighbors, friends, relatives, passersby) and/or non-human (e.g. locks, alarms, cameras) have served as an obstacle to offenders thereby preventing intended crime/criminality from occurring.

Despite the significance of rural crime, limited or no research on methods for preventing it in developing countries have been carried out. Thus, the aim of this paper is to report on the preventive strategies in tackling the perceived effects of crime on rural family livelihoods in Ogbomosho Agricultural zone of Oyo State. In more detail, the research has the following three objectives:

1. to examine the socio-economic characteristics of the rural family in the study area;
2. to determine the frequency of use of various preventive methods against crime/criminality in the study area; and
3. to investigate the perceived effects of crime/criminality on rural family livelihoods in the study area.

The hypothesis of the study was stated that there is no significant relationship between preventive strategies against crimes and perceived effects of crimes on rural family livelihoods

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Ogbomoso Agricultural Zone of Oyo State. Ogbomoso Agricultural Zone is made up of five Local Government Areas (LGAs), namely Ogbomoso North Local Government Area (LGA), Ogbomoso South LGA, Ogo-Oluwa LGA, Oriire LGA and Surulere LGA. Ogbomoso North and South LGAs are the two urban ones, while the others are rural areas. The study was therefore carried out solely in these three rural LGAs. The geographical location of Ogbomoso is on latitude 81°N and longitude 3.29°E (Map of Ogbomoso, 1998). The land area is about 3547.89 square metre which is bounded in the north by Irepodun LGA, in the west by Oyo LGA, in the south by Ejigbo LGA of Osun State and in the east by Asa LGA of Kwara State. The major arable crops cultivated include maize, melon, soybean, cassava, cowpea, yam, and various vegetables. In addition to agriculture, a significant portion of the population is engaged in trading, while a smaller percentage works in the civil service (Adenegan and Adepoju, 2022).

A Multistage sampling procedure was used to select 90 respondents. This first stage involves purposive selection of three Local Government Areas (Oriire, Surulere and Ogo-Oluwa) using purposive sampling technique. The purposive selection was due to the fact the three are in the rural areas of the zone. In the second stage, 3 wards out of 14 wards from each of the selected Local Government Areas were randomly selected using a simple random sampling technique totaling 12 wards. Lastly, from the selected 12 wards, 10 rural families each were randomly selected wards were randomly selected using a simple random sampling technique. In all, 90 rural families were randomly selected for the study.

Data collection from the respondents was mainly through structured questionnaire. Information contained in the structured questionnaire were based on the objectives of the study. Data were analysed using frequency count, percentage, mean and Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Socioeconomic characteristics

Table 1 below shows that 44.5% of the respondents were above 50years of age which means that the age range above 50years is the dominant age of rural families, and this implies that majority of these respondents are still in their active years and productive age. This finding aligns with the report of Adeoye *et al.* (2022) and Yusuf *et al.* (2023) who noted that many rural dwellers are still within their active and productive age range and derive satisfaction from engaging in agricultural activities. The distribution of the households by marital status shows that 4.4% of the respondents were single, 90.1% were married, 1.1% divorced and 4.4% were widowed. This finding is in collaboration with other findings which established the fact that most rural households are married with the sole aim of childbearing. The mean value of the household size is approximately 6. This is in line with the report of Ololade and Olagunju (2021) which affirmed that households with larger family sizes are more likely to diversify their livelihood strategies to enhance income and ensure food security. The education distribution of the respondents shows that 15.6% of the respondents had no formal educational, 42.2% of the respondents had primary school education, 31.1% had secondary education while 10% had tertiary education. This result shows that respondents are not illiterate, the high education level can increase the productivity of the respondents because it has been shown that farmers with high education level will be able to adopt new technologies in production. This agrees with the findings of Otekunrin *et al.*, (2023) that education improves one's ability to understand and assimilate information. Majority (70%) of the respondents engaged primarily in farming with mean farming experience of 23years and mean farm size of 2.1 hectares. This shows that farmers in the study area are very experienced in their production and can make many observations in their productivity level. The small farm size cultivated can result in the yield/output being small thereby affecting the level of productivity and their income.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by Socio-economic Characteristics (n = 90)

Socio-economic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Age			
≤ 30	2	2.2	50.1
31 – 40	9	10.0	
41 – 50	39	43.3	
Above 50	40	44.5	
Marital status			
Single	4	4.4	6.0
Married	81	90.1	
Separated	1	1.1	
Widowed	4	4.4	
Household size			
1 – 2	2	2.2	6.0
3 – 4	4	4.4	
5 – 6	51	56.7	
Above 6	33	36.7	
Level of education			
No formal education	14	15.6	23.2
Primary school education	38	42.2	
Secondary school education	28	31.1	
Tertiary education	9	10.0	
Non-formal education	1	1.1	2.1
Primary occupation			
Farming	63	70.0	
Herding	6	6.7	
Trading	11	12.2	2.1
Civil services	6	6.7	
Artisan activities	4	4.4	
Years of participating in farming			
≤ 10	3	3.3	23.2
11 – 20	36	40.0	
21 – 30	49	54.4	
Above 30	2	2.2	
Farm size			
1.0 – 2.0	64	71.1	2.1
2.1 – 3.0	21	23.3	
3.1 – 4.0	2	2.2	
Above 4.0	3	3.3	

Perceived effects of crime/criminality on rural family livelihoods in the study area

Table 2 shows that respondents strongly agreed that loss of soil fertility (WMS = 4.97), loss of yield of crop (WMS = 4.91), increased in migration patterns of youth (WMS = 4.87), crop destruction (WMS = 4.81), loss of work time (WMS = 4.73), financial and personal losses for farmer (WMS = 4.69) were their main perceived effects of crime in the study area. It was revealed that the major effects of crime range from loss of soil fertility, loss of yield of crop, increased in migration patterns of youth and crop destruction in the study area. Crime poses a lot of threat to rural families which could be both direct and indirect effects. Similarly, some researchers (Ceccato, 2016) claimed that the indirect costs also occur as psychic cost and loss in work time if people

affected by burglary or theft feel suspicious and unsafe at home.

Various preventive strategies against crime

Table 3 reveals that keeping farm area clean always (WMS = 3.00), setting of traps around the barns/stores (WMS = 2.96), adherence to community rules and regulations (WMS = 2.92), the use of vigilante group for surveillance (WMS = 2.92), immediate sales of farm products at maturity (WMS = 2.89), intervention of community leaders and traditional leaders with the local government (WMS = 2.87) were the main preventive measures used against crime in the study area. It was therefore revealed that several methods have been found useful in preventing crime in the study area. In line with the result from this research work, Smith and Holmes (2020) emphasised that rurality and the

absence of effective surveillance systems contribute significantly to farm-related thefts.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by perceived effects of the crime/criminality (n = 90)

Perceived effects of the crime	SA	A	U	D	SD
Loss of household resources	86.7	13.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Increased in migration patterns of youth	36.7	63.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Displacement/migration of labour	44.4	55.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Increased prices of goods/agricultural products	60.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Loss of stored products	82.2	17.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Loss of yield of crop	91.1	8.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Loss of soil fertility	96.7	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Loss of land	22.2	61.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Destruction of houses, property and farm stead	2.2	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Loss of self-esteem	45.6	53.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Job dissatisfaction/unwillingness to invest in agriculture beyond subsistence level	38.9	61.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Reduction in food quality\quantity	45.6	54.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Emotional exhaustion/ Psychological stresses e.g. fear of shock	42.2	18.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Crop destruction	81.1	31.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Financial and personal losses for farmer	68.9	26.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Loss of work time	73.3	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Loss of future breeding herbs and blood lines	44.4	55.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Increased incidence of deforestation through illegal felling of timber	44.4	63.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Losses of animals	33.3	10.0	0.0	1.1	2.2
Loss of life	12.2	45.6	1.1	5.6	74.1
Relocation/migration of affected farmers	17.8	45.6	1.1	7.8	27.8

SA = Strongly Disagree; A = Agree; U = Undecided; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by frequency of use of preventive methods against the crime/criminality (n = 90)

Preventive strategies	Always	Occasionally	Rarely	Not at all	WMS
Keeping farm area clean always	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.00
Fencing farm area or around the barns/stores	2.2	17.8	4.4	31.1	0.91
Barricade of routes leading to farm area	4.4	18.9	53.3	23.3	1.04
The use of scare scroll	82.2	7.8	4.4	5.6	2.67
Physical combat/ Personal intervention	12.2	50.0	26.7	11.1	1.63
Intervention of community leaders and traditional leaders with the local government	91.1	4.4	4.4	0.0	2.87
Changing the routes of herding	18.9	40.0	38.9	2.2	1.76
Police patrol	5.6	22.2	67.8	4.4	1.29
Adherence to community rules and regulations	92.2	7.8	0.0	0.0	2.92
The use of vigilante group for surveillance	93.3	5.6	1.1	0.0	2.92
The use of court order	5.6	58.9	28.9	6.7	1.63
The use of strong padlocks on the barn entrance	93.3	1.1	3.3	2.2	2.86
The use of traditional charms that prevent thieves from stealing properties	1.1	8.9	35.6	54.4	0.57
Location of the barns/stores around homestead	20.0	22.2	33.3	24.4	1.38
Immediate sales of farm products at maturity	94.4	1.1	3.3	1.1	2.89
Setting of traps around the barns/stores	97.8	0.0	2.2	0.0	2.96
The use of specially trained dogs to watch over the properties	65.6	3.3	24.4	6.7	2.28

Table 4 indicated that there was a significant but negative between preventive strategies against crimes and perceived effects of crimes on rural family livelihoods ($r=-0.221^{**}$; $p= 0.037$). The inverse and significant relationship implying that the

probability of rural families experiencing minimal crime with little or no effects on their livelihoods with increasing implementation of preventive measures against various crime. Similarly, Donnermeyer (2023) also stresses the importance of

both, isolation and the proximity to urban centres as two major predictors for farm crime. They point out that isolation refers to the distance from one farm to another with direct implications for guardianship,

while proximity to urban centres implies that there might be many people including potential offenders passing by from urban centres, thus providing opportunities for crime.

Table 4: Correlation between the perceived effects of crimes/criminality on rural family livelihoods and frequency of preventive strategies against crimes/criminality

Variable	r-value	p-value
Perceived effects of crimes/criminality on rural family livelihoods	0.31***	0.002

***Significant at 1% level

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was found that preventive strategies helped to minimise rural crime incidence thereby boosting sustainable development of rural area in a serious way. Based on the finding, it was concluded that the preventive strategies against crime/criminality had decisive influence on perceived effects of crime/criminality on rural family livelihoods in Ogbomoso Agricultural zone of Oyo State.

The following recommendations are pertinent:

1. There is need to keep farm area clean always and setting of traps around the barns/stores in order to prevent potential crimes in rural area so as to expedite efforts to address menace of crime/criminality in the rural area.
2. Adequate adherence to community rules and regulations so that the rural family could live in a relatively safe and low-crime environment in order to enhance rural family livelihoods.

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