



**CHALLENGES OF COMMUNITY POLICING AND
COMMUNITY SAFETY IN THE SLUM COMMUNITY
OF WESTPOINT,
DISTRICT NUMBER 7, MONTSERRADO COUNTY, LIBERIA**

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Abstract

Background: Police are most at risk, and so are the residents due to the vulnerability in the slum community of WestPoint. Despite the efforts of the government to improve community living standards by encouraging the role of Community policing in crime prevention, there is instead an increase in the crime rate and insecurity in the neighborhoods.

Aim: To assess the development and practice of Community policing to understand the challenges and the reasons for the ineffectiveness of policing in WestPoint, Greater Monrovia, Liberia.

Methods: A qualitative method was employed using open-ended survey questions. Malmö University library and google scholar search engines were utilized with several inclusion criteria to arrive at 48 articles and books for this review.

Results: To be able to implement Community policing, there should be competency among police officers and more trained officers in the force, Police also need to have a good view of their power or authority and administer their duties in the appropriate form and manner, increasing good communication between the Police and the residents.

Conclusion: In the light of the restraints, implementation of Community policing in WestPoint has failed due to its inadequacy to collaborate with partners between security agencies and communities; failure to protect volunteers of information among the community resident; failure to provide awareness to WestPoint residents on the importance to uphold the existing laws and procedures of the public safety and security.

Keywords: Community policing; Efficacy; Disorganization Neighborhood; Crime prevention.

Words: 338

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GRACE AKOSE BADU

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1. Introduction

Globally and regionally, the security environment is still plagued by problems and future possibilities that necessitate innovative policing techniques. According to Goldsmith and Sheptycki (2007), community policing is a strategy for educating the public about the value of crime prevention rather than waiting for incidents to occur and be reported to the police. Because of this, the particular Community can legitimately determine its own security needs, which might not coincide with the public perspective. Although many tactics have been employed, none of them acknowledge community involvement, including conducting meetings with shareholders and administrators, using information and communication technology, street illumination, and police patrols. By doing so, they might work with security organizations to monitor, document, and lessen criminal activity in the neighborhood.

It is impossible to overstate the importance of the police in societies. They are in charge of preserving social law and order and assisting with the execution of legislative initiatives. In Liberia, many administrations have tried numerous times to restructure the Policing to match current police ideals. In most nations where community policing is practiced, the situation where police behave inhospitably with other members of society and are like uninvited outsiders is no longer acceptable. Liberia cannot afford to ignore the global paradigm change in policing because it is a member of the global village.

Such crimes include "snatch-and-grabs" involving electronics, handbags, backpacks, and purses as well as vehicle break-ins that are classified as theft. Throughout the nation, these crimes of opportunity frequently take place in heavily populated locations (Overseas Security Advisory Council, 2020). These crimes are typically committed by young male attackers between the ages of 13 and 25. These criminals occasionally operate in small groups to target unwitting victims while carrying knives and other dangerous weapons.

Liberia has a long history of sociocultural, political, and economic divisions based on class, ideology, ethnicity, and state of origin. It goes without saying that these divisions have repercussions related to social tensions and conflicts with significant security risks within the nation and abroad. Such socio-cultural structures have influenced how policing is organized and other useful social control strategies. These patterns were widespread up until the time of colonialism, when American colonial policing techniques predominated. The Liberian policing and security system faced many difficulties as a result of these multi-cultural compositions. It is important to recognize and raise awareness of Community and Community policing, which are considered relevant to this research project, in light of this study.

2. Definition of Terms

2.1 What is Community?

Without delay, it is essential to understand the concept of Community, given its central position in Community policing discourse. Ekong (2003:67-8) defined Community as an assembly of families habitually living together within a definite geographical location, living in a state of collaborative interdependence, supporting some primary social institutions, and having some measure of political freedom concerning other communities. Ekong (2003) joined that Community embraces people within a common locality having shared interests and different behavioral patterns, manifest mainly in the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services, socialization, and mutual support.

2.2 Community policing means an initiative where security agencies and local NGOs work in a proactive collaboration with the Community towards mobilizing resources to promote longterm safety in the Community.

3. Aim, Purpose, and Research Questions

Through a case study of WestPoint, Greater Monrovia, Liberia, this study seeks to evaluate the Challenge of Community Policing in Crime Prevention. Community policing is acknowledged as an effective strategy for improving security, serenity, and peace in various nations on a global scale (Mastrofski, Willis & Kochel, 2007). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify the challenges of community policing and community safety. The following research inquiries will assist direct the study as a result:

1. What opinions do locals and police in West Point have about the use of community policing?
2. How effective has community policing been since it was founded?
3. What are the challenges facing the implementation of community policing and community safety in West Point?
4. What are the effects of community policing on community safety?

4. Theoretical Framework

The research was hinged on two main concepts: The Broken Window Theory and the Social Disorganization Theory. These concepts link between variables to explain natural phenomena.

The theories are discussed below:

4.1 The Broken Window Theory

The paradigm was published by James Q. Wilson and George Kelling, American criminologists, in 1982; the theory looks at the relationship between crime and disorder. Wilson and Kelling argue that local citizens are particularly concerned about public order and that disorder and crime are linked. This theory is grounded on the assumption that lawlessness and crime are closely related in the developmental sequence. For example, if a window in a house is broken and is not repaired in time, all the remaining windows will also be broken soon. Because the unrepaired window is an indication that nobody cares about what is happening in the house, breaking more windows will not lead to any permission. Vandalism may occur anywhere after the sense of collective regard and civility obligations are reduced by behaviors that indicate the absence of collective regard.

According to Wilson & Kelling (1982) criminological theory that states the visible signs of crime, anti-social behavior, and civil disorder create an urban environment that encourages further disorder and crime, including serious crimes. The theory recommends that policing approach that targets lesser crimes, such as lingering, public drinking, jaywalker and fare evasion, vandalism, create a sphere of order and lawfulness, preventing more serious crimes. Police officers and social psychologists agree that if a window on the house is broken and not repaired, the rest of the windows will be broken soon. Window breaking does not happen wide because determined window breakers inhabit some places, whereas window lovers densely populate some; instead, one unrepaired broken window signals that nobody cares, so breaking the other charges nothing.

Wilson and Kelling contend that environments with abandoned property, windows are broken, weeds grow, adults stop rebuking badly behaved children lead to families moving out and adults who are unattached moving in. Therefore, individuals start to

utilize the streets less, making the Community susceptible to invasion by criminals. Such Community withdrawal results in a surge in sales of drugs, nagging, and prostitution. This has been the chief motive of Community Policing programs. The notion that unattended behavior brings about the breakdown of the Community to pay attention and focus on lawlessness and policing that maintains order.

Incivilities are explained as a result of a community that suffers disadvantages economically instead of an indication of a lawless and disorderly community, and combating crime is more significant than ill-tempered in fighting for long-term crime reduction. To validate the theory entirely, it is shown that disorder causes fear that causes crimes, a breakdown of social controls, and disorganization. This breakdown of social controls, in turn, causes crimes. Finally, crime is to be seen to increase levels of disorder.

4.2 Social Disorganization Theory

Traditionally, social disorganization was viewed as a characteristic of the social structure of a neighborhood as opposed to the characteristic of the people who lived in the area (Brisman, 2018). Newburn (2018) found (in support of Shaw & McKay 1942) that a high level of juvenile delinquency prevailed in a socially disorganized area which is often characterized by poverty, residential mobility, and racial heterogeneity. Hipp et al. (2009) also draw attention to another construct of social disorganization that contributed to neighborhood crime as community inequality and ethnic heterogeneity. Although park et al. (1925) suggested that a growing city can overlap and compete, thereby generating both social organization and the emergence of social disorganization, they argue that the forms of social disorganization this growth process causes are factors that generate crime. Therefore, that crime would be higher in disorganized communities as opposed to organized communities.

The notion that social disorganization contributed to crime was further developed by Shaw & McKay (1942), who argue that crime was an expected outcome of abnormal conditions. They posited that social disorganization is a breeding ground for criminal activities and delinquency amidst ethnic heterogeneity, high rate of poverty, and visible evidence of urban decay or physical deterioration (Newburn, 2008; Brisman et al., 2018), which are very synonymous with rundown areas that formed the major parts of areas like WestPoint neighborhoods. Shaw and McKay argued that it is not

the people in the community but that such type of characteristics of particular problem areas, which they denoted as 'zones of transition' is the nature of social order in such Community, either organized or disorganized, that generates crime which by transition causes an area to be even more socially disorganized than other areas in the neighborhood. In an argument somewhat resonance with learning theory, Shaw and McKay further postulated that delinquent values and habits are transmitted from generation to generation in such communities. By citing 'cultural transmission' (see Newburn, 2008), they posited that young ones learned various mannerisms (conducts, speech, gestures, attitudes) of deviants and criminal activities (such as stealing, shoplifting, car theft, etc.) from the older ones in the area.

Although several criminological theories have argued that individual characteristics have something to do with the causes of crime, to specify a theory that explains how the structural characteristics of areas caused people's behavior to change, Bursik, 1988; Sampson, 1985; Sampson and Groves, 1989, all suggested that social disorganization impacted people's behavior by weakening social institutions and processes of informal social control in communities. They re-conceptualized that the emergence of weak social bonds was produced by social disorganization, which contributed to higher crime rates (See Brisman et al., 2018).

5. Previous Research

The origins of Community policing are often traced back to Kelling and Wilson's broken windows theory from the early 1980s, which argues that crime thrives in communities where disorderly behavior is ignored (Cosstleon, 2019). The theory suggested that crime and the fear of crime could be stopped, by managing street life, to achieve public order. What such administration and arrangement would look like was defined by each Community. The broken windows theory and connected practices grew in popularity in the United States during heightened incarceration for drug-related offenses sparked by the War on Drugs. This helps to disclose why scholars have argued that the device of Community policing and increased police presence has not been deeper community involvement but rather a stop and frisk policy (Cosstleon, 2019).

Weisheit et al. (1994) believe that Community policing surfaced due to several social trends and movements (i.e., victims' rights and civil rights), which developed in demands on Police

to be more liable to the public by being more responsive and connected to the Community. Bucqueroux (2006) argues that Community policing is revealed in response to two unintended outgrowths of a contemporizing policing endured. First, ultramodern technology, police radio, and command vehicles changed the Community and the Police. Formerly, officers developed a particular relationship with the Community and demanded the community resides to be willing to partake information. Police applied scientific operation to policing, which created the perception police were liable for keeping the Community safe. Long ago, the Community understood that eventually the Community was responsible for reaffirming the social morals that promoted public safety.

Police- community cooperation has come a practice in utmost corridor of the world that's sought to reduce crime situations and ameliorate police- community engagement, which plays an important part and serves as the backbone of crime forestallment in numerous countries. Also, in proposition, it offers harmony, safety, and security, a sound political system, and promotes profitable growth (Weisburd & Braga, 2007).

Community policing is comprised of both a gospel (way of thinking) and an organizational strategy (way of carrying out that gospel) that allows and enables the Police and the Community to work together in working problems of crime, complaint, and safety issues in other to ameliorate the quality of life for everyone in the Community. The views of Wilson & Kelling (1982) and Nagare (2007) both present Community policing as a strategy for restoring order.

Fitzgerald (1989) states that Community policing maintains problem- working at the grassroots position, challenging that the elderly officers in the police force use their authority to empower their inferiors. This ideal is to help patrol officers assigned to Community policing laboriously and creatively resolve issues as they arise without the usual regulatory reference to their elders. Fitzgerald also states that the responsibility of the elderly officer shifts from functional control to guiding their inferiors so that they're guided by reason grounded on agreement with the communities they serve, rather than by the book rules.

Generally, it's agreed that Community policing requires problem- working and community obligation, emphasizing police- community hookups to break the underpinning problems of crime, the fear of crime, physical and social complaint, and neighborhood decay (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux, 1990; Palmiotto, 2000). Also, the savant Dictionary of Criminology defines Community policing as

The philosophy of policing involves community- predicated problem- working strategies to handle the fundamental causes of crime and complaint and fear of crime and sustain consolation. It's a practice through which crime control is shared orco- produced with the public and a means of developing communication with the public, thus enhancing the quality of life of communities and erecting police legitimacy (Virta, 2006 p52).

The literature substantially relates the primary ideal of Community policing as positive police- community connections, which are achieved through community engagement, and by emphasizing collaboration and forestallment (Cordner and Biebel Perkins, 2005). Bucqueroux (2007) uses a medical analogy to explain Community policing command officers are society's exigency room croakers returning fleetly to a circumstance, whereas community police are the family croakers who have the time and chance to treat an illness to help complaint and advance good health.

Fielding (2005) proposes Community policing isn't a single notion but could mean a discrepancy to rapid-fire response and enforcement- acquainted policing. Hence, bobbies are near to the Community, a process in which crime control is participated with the public or a means of developing communication with the public and concern groups (Fielding, 1995 25). Encyclopedically, it's agreed that Community policing requirements to be a long- term strategy with long- term issues to develop decision- making processes and a police culture that fosters the conception (Skogan and Hartnett, 1998). Still, Skogan and Hartnett disagreement practices will vary from place to place to respond to the unique circumstances faced by Communities. In Africa, although the frequency of the felony of crimes and petty offenses within the machine confines in Nigeria has significantly increased in recent times, there has been a tremendous conspicuous drop over the once 30 times. Crimes within the machine confines which are violent and thefts and thievery in Nigeria, have significantly dropped to about 75 from around 96 in themid-2000s (Riedel & Rinehart, 2012). The rate of ongoing crimes considered violent in Nigeria may be associated with characteristics incidents, with violent crimes entailing gangs, firearms, or drug- trade having a lower ratio of being reported than other types of criminal activities that are violent (Dauvergne & Li, 2006).

The crime situation in Liberia is more intense within the urban areas due to the high level of cost of living, high rates of unemployment, urban poverty, social bond, anti- social behavior, disorganization, and moral decadence confronting the urban area, as opined by Ndikaru (2011).

The urban crimes preponderance within Liberia shows marginalization, deprivation and amenities, and infrastructural breakdown that are supposed to control or manage criminal activities within the urban cities. Therefore, Reynald (2012) observed the emerging gap between the poor and the rich affects the Community through increased violence in WestPoint Community.

In Liberia, around 2019, the Community policing concept grew in popularity as the idea of its implementation was founded. The units developed significant understanding and proficiencies in establishing and running Community Policing Forums. The concept is enshrined in the Liberia National Police Act, 2015, section (2). The Liberian constitution, the Liberia National Police Service Act in 2015, and the strategies plan for law enforcement agencies and the public. Although all the laws have passed, the concept seems to be experiencing challenges in its implementation, as evidenced by the police officers and media reports on crime in the slum area, mainly those densely populated areas.

Several accounts had been given pertaining to criminal activities involving violence, snatch-and-grabs of electronics, purses, bags, backpacks, and vehicle break-ins categorized as theft undertaken by criminals in the WestPoint Community.

6.The Concept of Community safety

Community safety can imply the involvement of a wide range of groups within the community dealing with a wide range of harms, which might include transportation, health, or the environment (Hughes, 2002a; Pease, 2002). These harms could include terrorism, pandemic, or environmental hazards. On the other side, it may be more closely linked to governmental initiatives that, despite using the term "community safety," actually have a more limited focus on "crime prevention" or "crime reduction" (Byrne and Pease, 2003). Since there is no universally recognized definition of community safety, Stenson (2005: 266) contends that the following are generally understood to be its components: "public order,"

In reality, wealthy communities or places with low crime rates typically don't have a lot of formally organized activities going on. Instead, community safety in this area rests on people's willingness to support private security, whether it be through technology, patrols, or both, as well as their active participation in programs like neighborhood watch.

7. Background of the Study



Picture of WestPoint Liberia, Montserrado County, Greater Monrovia (Credit: Mark Fischer)

The Liberia Civil War lasted from 1989 to 1997 and was an internal conflict in Liberia. About 250,000 people were killed during the war, which ultimately led to the Economic Community of West African States and the United Nations forming an alliance. However, there was no durable peace, and the second Civil War started out in 1999. The impact of the First War is one of the worst in Africa, displacing many Liberians and forcing others into refugee camps in neighboring nations. Throughout the battle, juvenile soldiers were utilized. Gerdes, F. (2013) The civil war claimed the lives of one out of every seventeen persons in the nation, displaced the majority of the remaining population, and destroyed a once-viable economic infrastructure. Additionally, the fighting spread to Liberia's neighbors. Sesay et al (2009).

The second Liberian civil war began in 1999 and ended in 2003. During this period, ECOWAS intervened to end the siege of Monrovia by rebels and banished Former President Taylor to Nigeria, where he remained until his capture in 2006 and transfer to The Hague for trial. More than 260,000 people were slain and almost 1 million were displaced at the end of the final war. In 2005, the majority of this number remained internally displaced. In January 2006, former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who was previously a Charles Taylor supporter, was inaugurated and the National Transitional Government of Liberia ceased to exist. Charles Taylor was convicted of rape and acts of sexual violence, advancing child soldiers, and illegal possession of weapons in 2003. Taylor contested these countercharges but was ultimately convicted of 50 years in prison after his victims testified against him.

Fisher, et al (1992) Access to justice, safety, and the ability to live without fear has been a significant issue in Liberia as a result of the civil war, and WestPoint is no exception, especially given the level of abject poverty in that town, where the poor and disadvantaged are concentrated (i.e., the Elderly, Children, Disable). If crime can be minimized, social and economic development will improve, which will benefit the Liberian economy and the quality of life for a huge portion of the population. The Police play a crucial role in enhancing WestPoint's safety and security, but so do the community's people. Since the introduction of Community policing in Liberia in 2019, cooperation between the police and the public has taken a new direction (Nagare 2007.22).

Brantingham et al. (1995) argue that urban planning and layout play a significant role in the spread of criminal activity in all settings (1995). WestPoint is a dilapidated community that lacks adequate design and layout; the Community is the source of crime, and the spatial structure of the Community creates the risk of being a victim. According to Brantingham et al. (1995), human constructs are the urban surroundings that foster criminal activity and instill terror. The victim of a crime is the source of support for the Police as they work to control crime. Therefore, successful crime prevention and detection rely primarily on a more productive connection between the citizens of WestPoint and the police.

8.Methodology

Research design is the procedure, structure, and strategy of investigating what is discovered or obtaining answers to research questions and direct variance. A research design guides the researcher in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting observed facts. It also focuses on study design, study population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis. The researcher will consider the use of the case study design.

Yin (2009) notes that the case study design deal with a real-life, contemporary context or setting. However, Stake (2005) also notes that case study research chooses what is to be studied and not a methodology. Yin (2009) noted that the case study may be a tangible institution, individual, or a small group. A case may also be a community or a specific project (Yin, 2009). With this, the slum community of WestPoint was considered the case study area in District No. 7, Monrovia, Liberia.

9.Social Structure

The case study suitably described in-depth experiences or situations of Community Policing and Community and challenges of WestPoint Nine Social Structures

The Township of WestPoint is in Greater Monrovia and located at the promontory which juts into the Atlantic Ocean between the Mesurado and Saint Paul Rivers. West Point is one of Monrovia's most densely peopled slums, with six (6) slum communities Central WestPoint, Fish Town, Grandcess Yard, Police Station, Power Plant, and WestPoint.

West Point is in Electoral District 7. The police station is located in the central part of West Point; it's called Zone 2(depot 1)



Toilets are built over the water near a sewer line emptied into the Mesurado River in West Point. (credit: Jim Tuttle-NYTimes).

The researcher will collect data for the study from the 13,000 residents within the six sub-communities of WestPoint, as to their experiences and recollection for the period of 2019-2020, which will include youth and adults, especially from high School Students.

The Depot has four (4) subdivisions: **Community Service Department** – this department deals with awareness in Community with community leaders and dwellers on problem-solving at the community level if it is not resolved before going to the

police station. The community service also encourages citizens not to keep quiet about rape and other forms of domestic violence or criminal act. **Traffic Session-** regulate free overflows of business traffic in the Community. **Women and Children Protection Session-** this session is responsible for intervention in domestic violence cases, Force Cases, Child Abuse, and No persistent Child support. **Crime Service department-** deals with felonious cases, burglary, identify theft, murder, assault, and sexual assault.



Man (above) spends his days pushing loads of water through West Point. (credit: Jim Tuttle-NYTimes).

10. Demographic Characteristics of the sample

10.1 Units of Observation The observation units were the residents and the police officers involved in implementing the Community policing. The key informants were the police from the depot, community leader, the youth chairperson, and other prominent residents.

10.2 Target Population The researcher will collect data for the study from the 13,000 residents within the six sub communities of WestPoint, as to their experiences and recollection for the period of 2019-2020, which will include youth, High School Students. The study targeted a

sample of 10 residents from WestPoint and 5 police officers. All of the 15 participants to which were males.

10.3 Ethical Considerations

The researcher considered all ethical issues related to treating the participant's views confidential. The participants' identities will also be kept confidential due to the sensitive nature of the study. Before collecting the data from the participants, the researcher explains to the participants the purpose of the survey through email. The researcher provided a consent form to individual participants to solicit their consent to the study before the data collection process. The consent form assured that the participants' information will not be used for any financial gain by the researcher but rather for academic purposes and to assure them that all ethical norms governing research of such nature are adhered to.

10.4 Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique

In research, population is the sum of all the respondents or members in a particular group or entity that might be studied in the study (Kumar, 2007). However, those who are accessible are likely to participate in the research (Gall & Borg, 2007). The population from which the researcher is going to use to formulate data is very essential to this study because it is believed by the researcher that proceeding statements above implies that the research requires a population in order to succeed. That is, the population of the study should be stated here very plainly as to who and what is to be part of the population. The population is made up of conceivable traits, events, elements, people, subjects or observation that relates the situation of interest to the study to be conducted.¹ The sample of the study is a smaller representation of the population.² The sampling and purposive techniques determined the number of respondents for the study. Massaquoi (2016) asserted, “The sampling techniques are procedures used to collect data. The purposive sampling technique determines who is qualified for the interview.

10.5 Data Collection Instrument

The instrument employed for data collection was an interview, composed of open-ended and closed questions. According to Massaquoi (2016, p.72), "Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on targeted variables in an established system, enabling one to answer relevant questions and evaluate outcomes". Based the use of this instrument, the researcher can rest assured to collect quality and truth data from respective respondents.

More besides, the structured interview is most relevant for this survey. Additionally, Since the study population is large, the researcher will use the purposive sampling technique to select the sample size.

10.6. Presentations of Data Results

The researcher collected, entered and analyzed the data through SPSS. Additionally, the results were graphed through Excel and results are preferably recorded in percentage. Therefore, the following graphs shows the results from the data collected from the respondents in West Point. Basically, fifteen (15) respondents participated in the survey, ten (10) community residents and five (5) police officers.

11. Summary of Key findings

The study identified the key constraints to implementation of Community policing and community safely in the slum community of WestPoint are as follows: Poor policing, insecurity, poor customer service in the police force, lack of civic society collaboration in solving collective problem, increased trust and improved community relations.

Gender

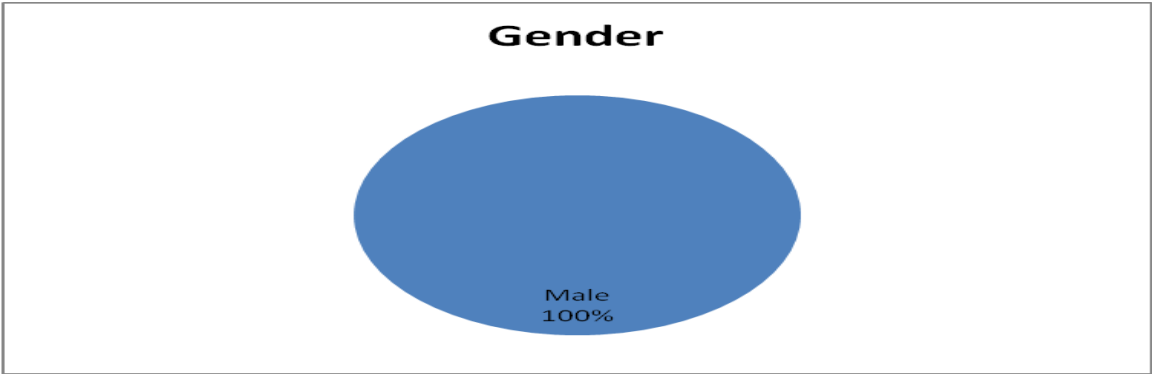


Table 11.1 shows the gender of the respondents who participated in the survey. The graph indicates that all the fifteen (15) respondents were male, from both the community and the nearby police station in WestPoint.

Age

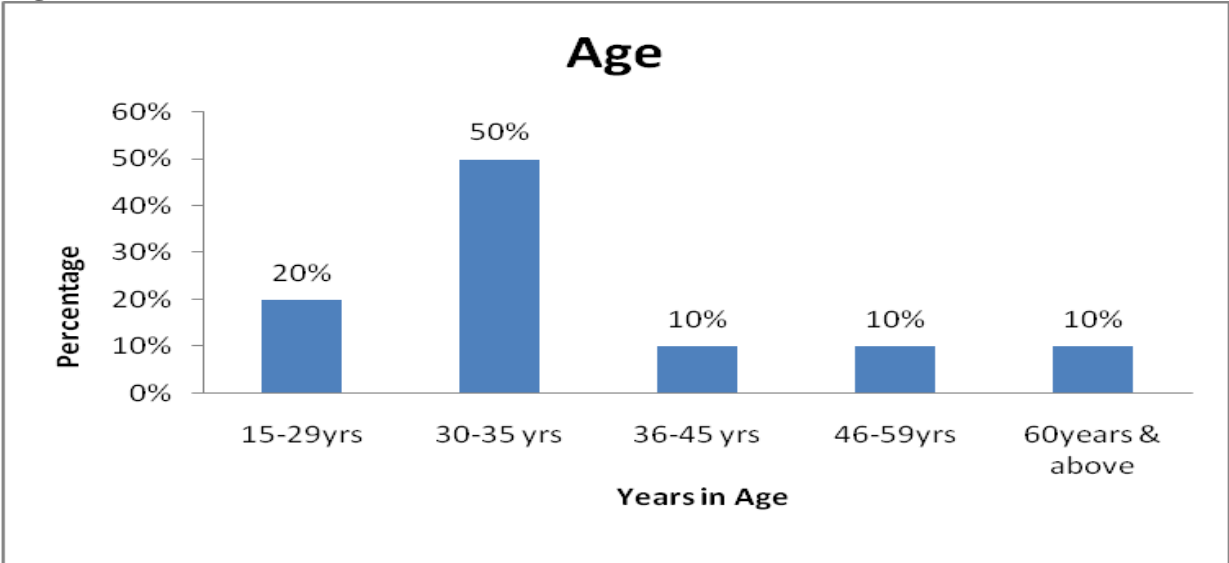


Table 11.2 shows the age range of respondents. From the graphical report of the data, the result shows that majority of the respondents were between the age range 30-35 years, and next were those who fall between the age range 15-29 years. Based on this report, the result indicates most respondents were youth and youth adults.

Marital Status

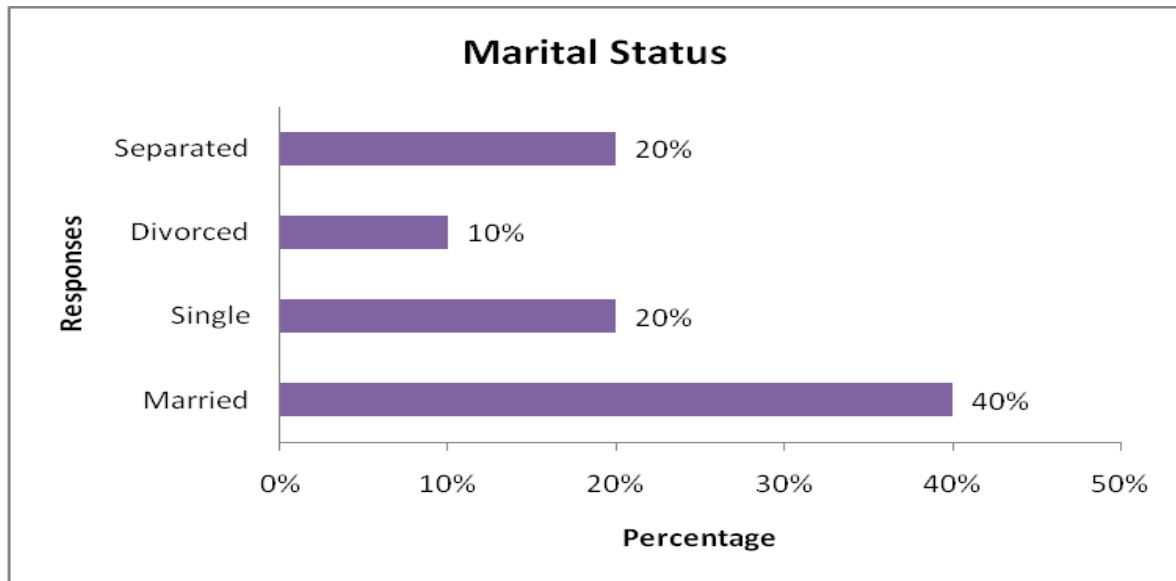


Table 11.3 shows the marital status of the respondents. 40% of the respondents were married; 30% were single; 20% were separated and only 10% were divorced. From these results, it can be deduced that majority of the respondents were married couples.

Reasons for High Crime Rate

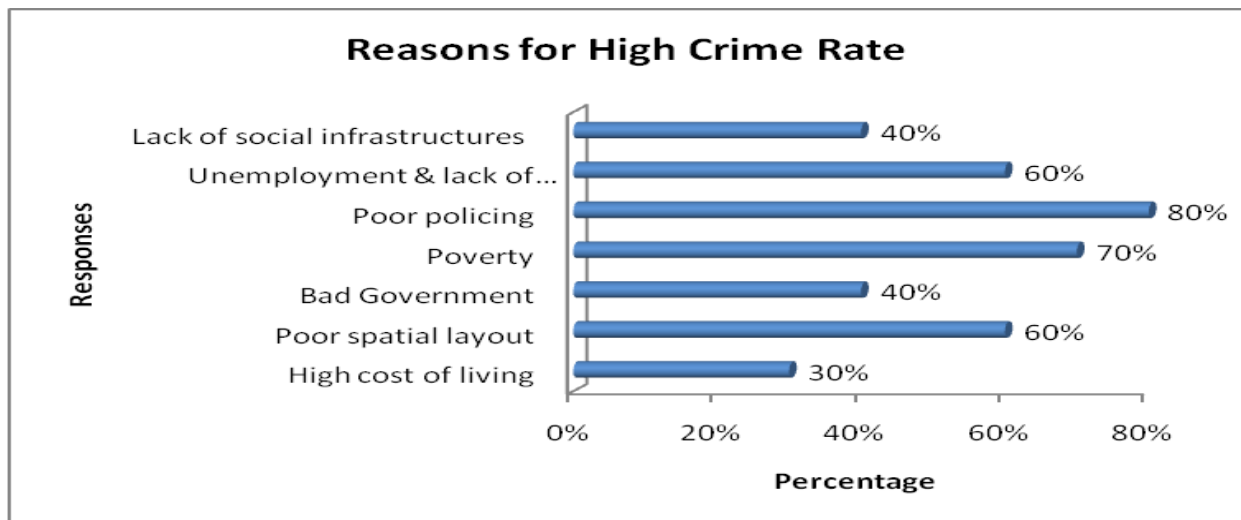


Table 11.4 depicts the reasons for high crime rate in the WestPoint Community. The reasons were lack of social infrastructures (40%), unemployment & lack of opportunities (60%), poor policing (80%), poverty (70%), bad government (40%), poor spatial layout (60%), and high cost of living (30%). Therefore, from these reasons, it can be noted that poor policing (80%) is the highest reasons for high crime rate in the WestPoint Community, followed by poverty (70%), unemployment & lack of opportunities (60%) and poor spatial layout (60%).

Educational Level

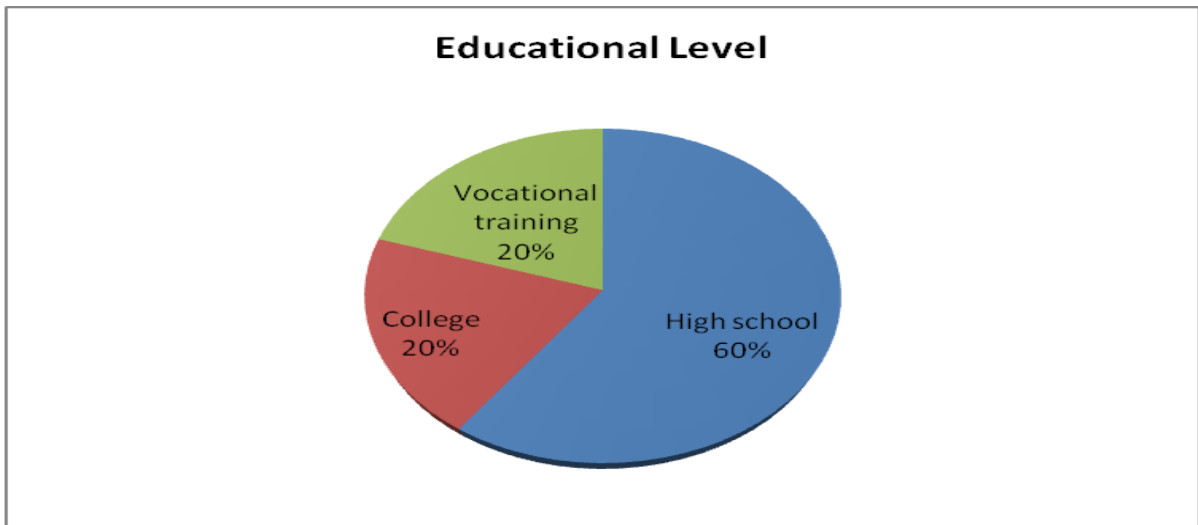


Table 11.5 shows the educational level of the respondents. It was revealed that 20% of the respondents were in college; vocational training enrollment or completion of respondents were 20% and 60% of the respondents were high school graduates. Based on these results, the graph proposes that majority of the respondents were completed secondary education.

Years Staying in WestPoint

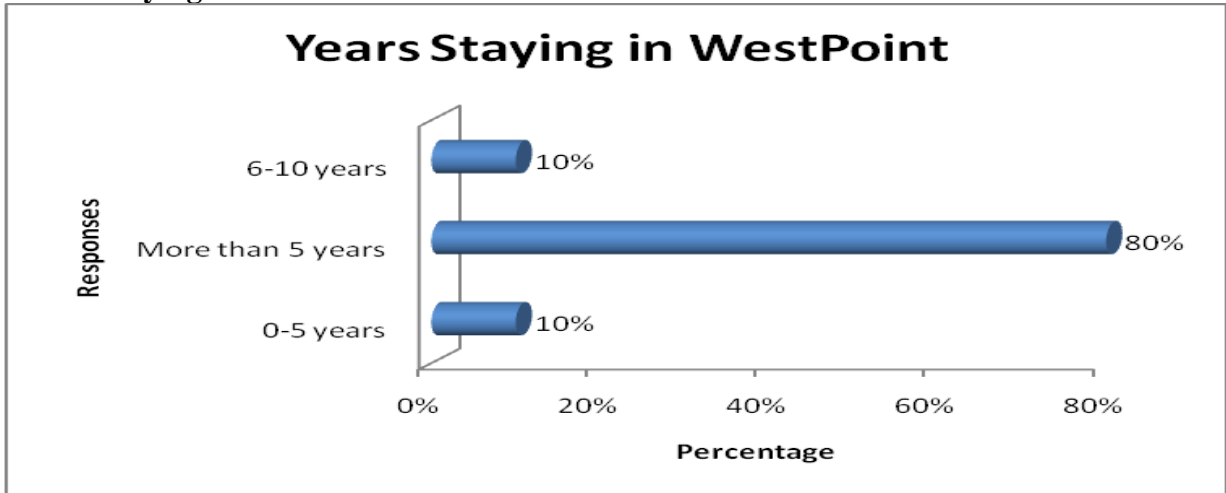


Table 11.6 shows the number of years' respondent had been residing in the WestPoint Community. From this graph, 10% of the respondents had been living in the community for 6-10 years; 80% had spent more than 5 years residing in WestPoint and another 10% of the respondents had resident there for less than 5 years. It can however be indicated that most respondents had resided in the WestPoint Community for more than 5 years.

Reasons for Poor Policing

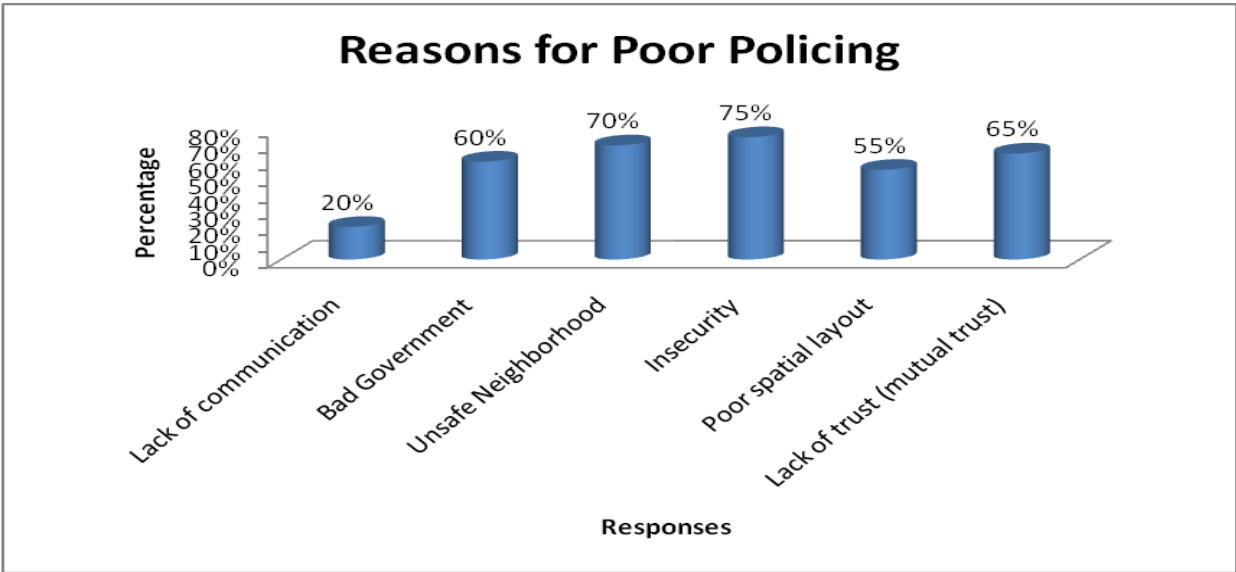


Table 11.7 shows that the reasons for poor policing are lack of communication (20%); bad government (60%); unsafe neighborhood (70%), insecurity (75%), poor spatial layout (55%); and lack of trust (mutual trust) (65%). From the graph, there are four (4) major factors responsible for poor policing but unsafe neighborhood (70%) and insecurity (75%) are significant factors of influence.

Does Community Policing impact community safety?

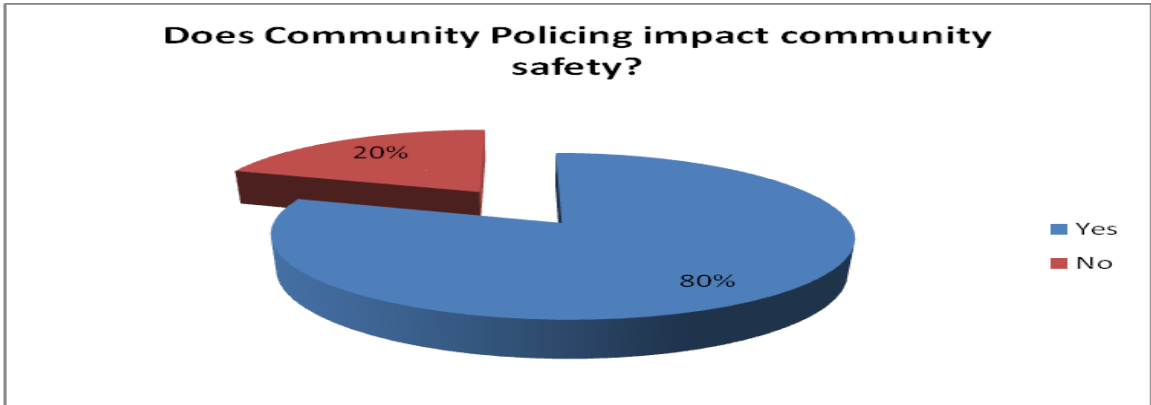


Table 11.8 shows whether community policing impact community safety. It was revealed from the responses of the respondents that 80% affirmed that community policing does affect community safety.

Challenges facing the implementation of community policing and community safety

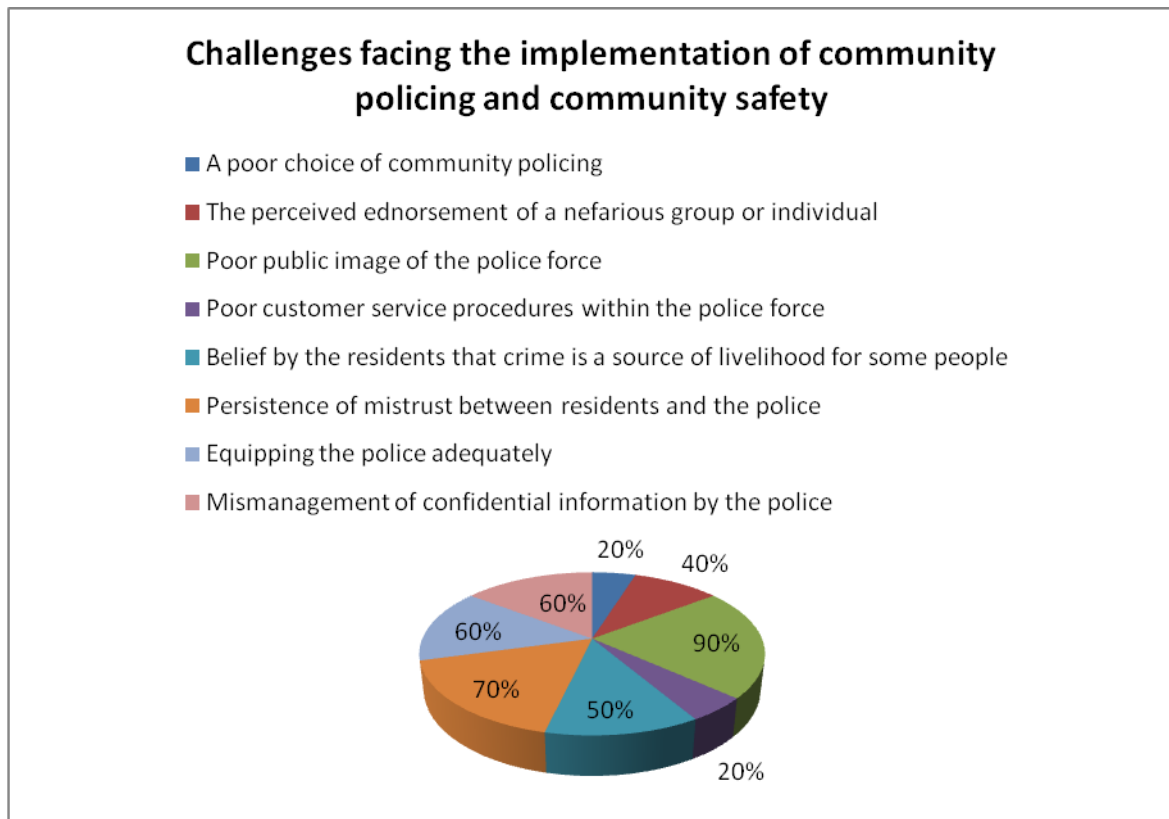


Table 11.9 shows the challenges facing the implementation of community policing and community safety. The graph reports the following: A poor choice of community policing (10%); the perceived endorsement of a nefarious group or individual (40%); poor public image of the police force (90%); poor customer service procedures within the police force (20%); belief by the residents that crime is a source of livelihood for some people (50%); persistence of mistrust between residents and the police (70%); equipping the police adequately (60%); and mismanagement of confidential information by the police (60%).

Requirements for effective community policing and community safety

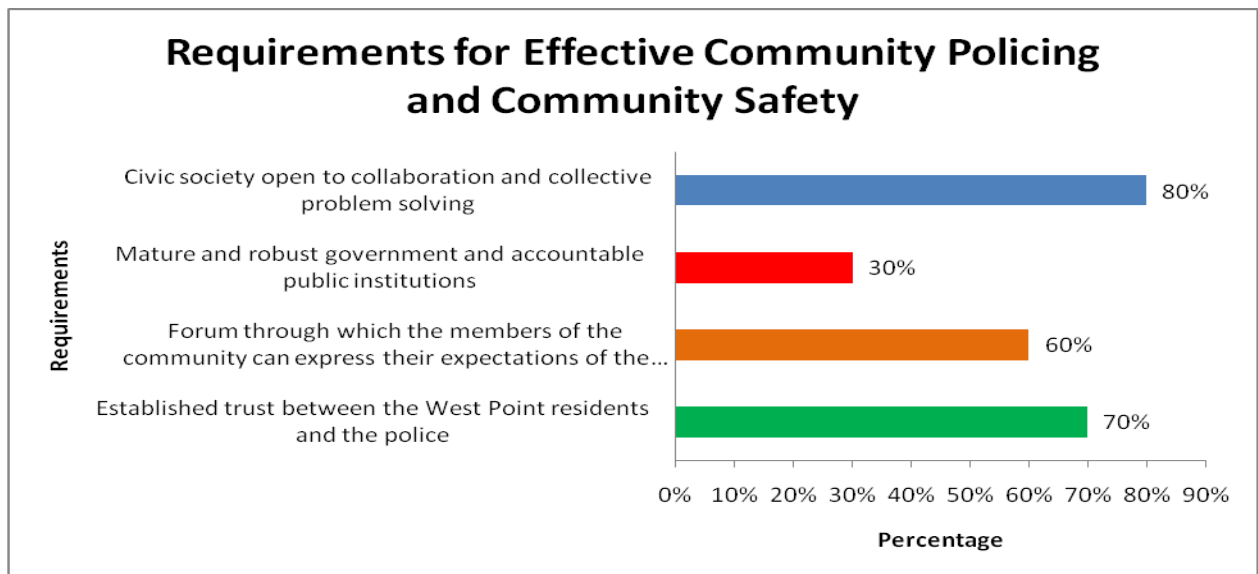


Table 11.10 presents the requirements for effective community policing and community safety. From the graph, it was revealed that, “Civic society open to collaboration and collective problem solving (80%)”; “mature and robust government and accountable public institutions (30%)”; “forum through which the members of the community can express their expectations of the police (60%)”; and “established trust between the West Point residents and the police.”

Effects of Community Policing on Community Safety

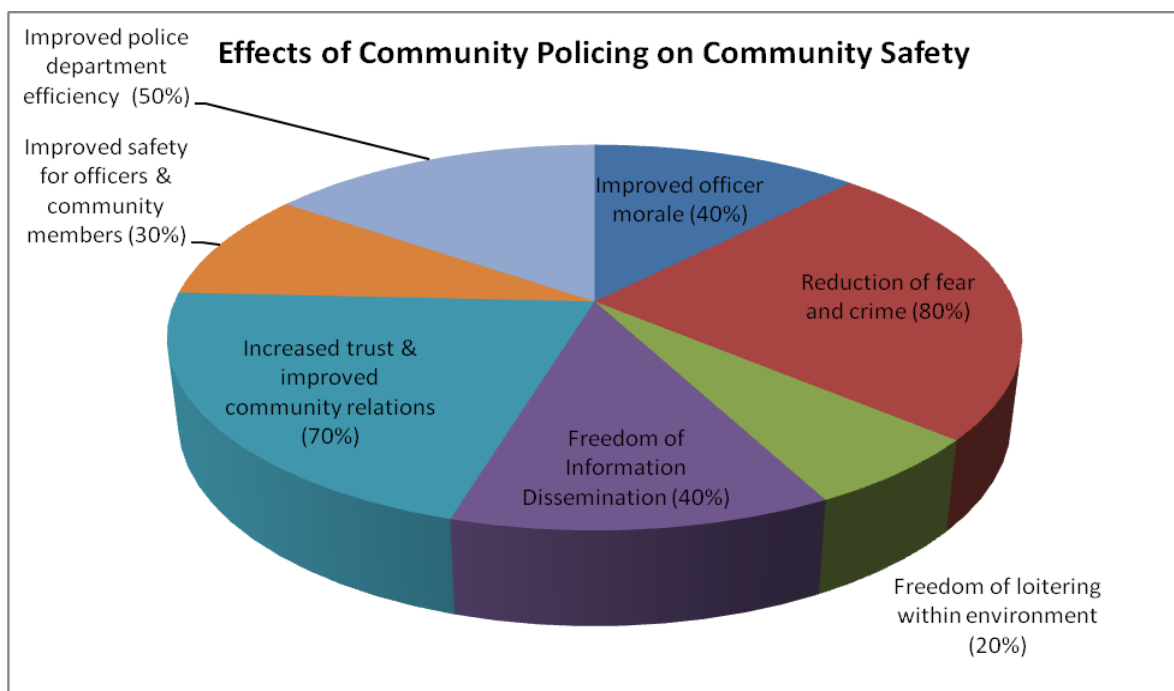


Table 11.11 shows the effects of community policing on community safety. They were listed as follows: improved police department efficiency (50%); improved safety for officers & community members (30%); improved officer morale (40%); increased trust & improved community relations (70%); freedom of information dissemination (40%); reduction of fear and crime (80%); and freedom of loitering within environment (20%).

14. Discussions

The findings in this study are a testimony to what Sherman et al. (1989) described as a sociological concept of place, where certain dominant characteristics and behavior of people in a geographic location bred a community that is largely dependent on informal social control due to the mistrust of the Police and the absence of supportive social structures. This paper started by attempting to investigate the reason for the troubling and ineffective or inexistence of Community policing in the WestPoint area of Montserrado County in Liberia. A staggering finding revealed a lack of confidence and distrust in the police department regardless of the state's amount of effort in eradicating the high rate of juvenile delinquency and crime. Citizens depend on the Police to protect them and maintain order in the neighborhood (Weisburd & Bragga, 2006). On the other hand, the Police who are faced with the problem of funding and limited resources are forced to make a difficult choice of sending patrols out only when serious crimes are committed. In doing so, the Police relinquish their traditional duty of order maintenance by limiting their presence on the streets and thereby enabling disorderliness and petty criminal activities to spread in the WestPoint streets and neighborhoods Clair MacDoughall (2016).

This is an unsavory community situation which is the resonance of the argument of Wilson and Kelling' Broken Window,' where they posited that unruly people (e.g., drunks, addicts, rowdy people (teenagers), panhandlers, prostitutes, the mentally disturbed) who roams about in the neighborhood, are usually disorderly and creates fear in people. Sampson & Raudenbush (2004). If they are left uncontrolled, they multiply and cause violence and criminal activities. Such a situation is what Wilson & Kelling (1982) referred to as a 'Broken Window,' which will result in violence and serious crimes if left unrepaired.

Family, workplace, school, peer group, culture, and ethnicity form part of a larger social network that shapes the social environment Bronfenbrenner (1994), Kirst-Ashman (2010). Without intervention, the interaction between these factors in the microsystem often escalates to the mesosystem of ecological development, creating an atmosphere of sustained and progressively engaged activities in the immediate environment and ultimately progressing to an unsustainable microsystem level of interaction (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). This type of interaction and level of activities between individuals and their environment is what Hirschi (2017) posited as causing deviant, delinquent behaviors and disorderliness in the neighborhood. Due to homogeneity of residence value, lifestyles, and characters Kirst-Ashman, (2010). Characteristics and lifestyles such as weak bonding with the society and absence of strong family ties increase the risk of association with delinquent peers, which increases the risk of participating in criminal activities Elliot et al. (1979). When things become unbearable for the people in the Community, they resort to two choices; either to depart and vacate completely from the neighborhood for the fear or anticipation of crime or to come together and form a collective effort to protect themselves.

The willingness of the community people to come together in solidarity to support one another with mutual trust to exercise informal social control is what Sampson et al (1997) called 'collective efficacy' an integral part of social disorganization theory (Brisman, 2018; Newburn, 2008). Such collaborative effort is aimed at the common good of the neighborhood (Sutherland et al., 2013). Kirst-Ashman (2010) argued that integral neighborhood characteristics high in interpersonal interaction, identification with the neighborhood, and high in social connectedness are the recipe for effective collective efficacy.

However, WestPoint is a slum and an impoverished community with low social capital. Even though this study found a high level of informal social control in the neighborhood, much of it is termed 'Jungle justice' where people take the law into their own hands and unleash punishment on criminals before the arrival of the Police. This is evidence of a concept called 'community disadvantage' developed from social disorganization theory (Brisman, 2018). The absence of social capital and cultural capital, such as effective community social networks and quality education, contributes to the lower level of collective efficacy in WestPoint.

15. Limitations

With the prevailing COVID pandemic hindering in-person interviews, the researcher had to use email to conduct the survey. Moreover, the time limit for respondents to answer the questionnaire and return then was a bit challenging, not allowing the researcher to meet the deadline to start compiling the questionnaire.

16. Conclusions

In the light of the restraints, implementation of Community policing in WestPoint has failed due to its inadequacy to collaborate with partners between security agencies and communities; failure to protect volunteers of information among the community resident; failure to provide awareness to WestPoint residents on the importance to uphold the existing laws and procedures of the public safety and security; failure to adequately empower the Community to public safety and security issues; persistence of mistrust between the Police and the Community; fear of the residents to share important information between them and the Police for fear of victimization: performance of the Community policing initiatives and community expectations. Implementation of the Community policing program in WestPoint has therefore not been in line with the core principles of Community policing.

17. Recommendations

Various recommendations were derived from the implementation-related challenges discovered from the yielding findings. To counterbalance the poor public image of the Police, the Police should develop strategies that are aimed at establishing forums through which the residents of the community can express their expectations of the police officers in terms of service, integrity, trust, and accountability. Officers should use friendly approaches while conducting investigations and not be biased, besides responding promptly to community concerns without delay. The local government should engage agencies services as the department of culture and social services; civil society in civil education to the residents to empower them in public safety and security, and NGOs. Finally, the government should equip police officers with personnel and equipment to enhance their capacity to fight crime. This enhancement will make police more efficient in the implementation of Community policing.

18. Suggestions for Future Research

Future research is recommended in the sequent areas: policing needs for the residents of WestPoint in arrangement to establish the reasons beyond the poor and unfriendly relationship between the residents and the Police; the center issues to be addressed while conducting investigations, civic education on issues of public safety and security; and also trained more officers to guide in the design of implementation to be applied.

RESEARCH SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is **Grace Akose Badu**, a student in the Faculty of Health and Society at Malmö University, Sweden. In partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Masters of Arts (MA) Degree in Criminology, I am conducting a study on the topic, CHALLENGES OF COMMUNITY POLICING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IN THE SLUM COMMUNITY OF WESTPOINT, District Number 7, Montserrado County. I would like to ask you some questions and I assure you that the responses you will give me will be treated with strict confidentiality.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please tick the appropriate boxes in the first section of the questionnaire.

1. **Gender:** Male []₁, Female []₂
2. **Age:** 15-29 years []₁, 30-35 years []₂, 36-45 years []₃, 46-59 years []₄, 60+ []₅
3. **Marital status:** Single []₁, Married []₂, Separated []₃, Divorced []₄
4. **Educational Level:** High school []₁, College []₂ Vocational training []₃
5. **Years Stay in West Point:** 0-5 years []₁, More than 5 years []₂ 6-10 years []₃

SECTION B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Give any reasons you think contribute to the high rate of crime in Liberia
2. What are the reasons for poor community policing in Liberia?
3. Does community policing impact community safety? Yes []₁, No []₂
4. Collectively, what are the challenges facing the implementation of community policing and community safety?
5. What do you think are the requirements for effective community policy and community safety?
6. What are the effects of community policing on community safety?

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