

Police Community Relations and Police Services in Nigeria: A Case Study of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area Rivers State

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DECLARATION

I, hereby declare that this piece of work entitled “**POLICE COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND POLICE SERVICES IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF OBIO/AKPOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA RIVERS STATE**” is carried out by me under the supervision of **Prof. Wordu Stephen Afoma**. I further wish to declare that to the best of my knowledge that this work has not been previously submitted for an award in another university in a similar institution.

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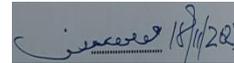


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Signature & Date

CERTIFICATION

We certify that Osazuwa Christopher Mitchell carried out this study in the Faculty of Social Sciences, National Open University of Nigeria.

Prof. Wordu Stephen Afoma
Supervisor



.....
Signature/Date

Dr. Nnenna Chukwuma
Centre-Director

.....
Signature/Date

.....
External Examiner

.....
Signature/Date

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the Almighty God for granting me strength, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding in completing this project and also for his love and favour upon my family and me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With heartfelt gratitude, I acknowledge the divine intervention of God Almighty, the source of life and wisdom, for guiding me throughout this endeavour. I am deeply indebted to my esteemed supervisor, Prof. Wordu Stephen Afoma, for his unwavering mentorship and invaluable guidance. This project would only have materialized with his astute direction, and I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to learn from him.

I sincerely appreciate my centre director, Dr Nnenna Chukwuma, for his tireless dedication to the success of this program. His leadership and commitment to academic excellence have shaped my learning journey.

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ABSTRACT

Effective police-community relations (PCR) are essential for fostering trust, cooperation, and collaboration between the police and the communities they serve. This study explores the state of PCR and police services in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area (LGA), Rivers State, Nigeria. Drawing upon Community Policing and social exchange theories, the study investigates the interplay between PCR and police services in Obio/Akpor LGA. Data gathered through questionnaires administered to a diverse range of stakeholders, including police officers, local vigilante organizations, and community members, reveals both positive examples and persistent challenges in PCR and police services. On the positive side, community policing initiatives, such as foot patrols and neighborhood watch programs, have contributed to building trust and improving relations between the police and the community in Obio/Akpor LGA. However, significant challenges remain, including a pervasive lack of trust between the police and the community, exacerbated by issues of corruption, human rights violations, and police misconduct. To address these challenges and enhance PCR and police services, the study recommends the implementation of community policing strategies, enhanced accountability and transparency mechanisms, comprehensive training in community policing, empowered community oversight, whistleblower protection measures, and a strong emphasis on promoting professionalism and ethical conduct among police officers. By addressing these critical areas, the police and the community in Obio/Akpor LGA can work together to create a safer and more secure environment for all. This study contributes to the understanding of effective approaches to improve police-community relations and police service delivery in contexts characterized by low levels of trust and collaboration. It further underscores the importance of building and maintaining strong relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve as a cornerstone of successful community policing.

Keywords:- Police Community Relations, Police Services, Community Policing, Trust, Collaboration.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE.....	2187
Declaration.....	2188
Certification.....	2189
Dedication.....	2190
Acknowledgements.....	2191
Abstract.....	2192
Table of Contents.....	2193
List of Tables.....	2195
List of Figures.....	2196
Abbreviations.....	2197
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	2198
➤ Background of the Study.....	2198
➤ Statement of the Problem.....	2198
➤ Aim and Objectives of the Study.....	2199
➤ Research Questions.....	2200
➤ Hypotheses.....	2200
➤ Significance of the Study.....	2200
➤ Scope and Limitations of the Study.....	2200
➤ Definition of Concepts.....	2201
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	2202
➤ Introduction.....	2202
➤ Conceptual Review.....	2202
• The Concept of Policing / Services.....	2203
• The Concept of Police Community Relations (PCR).....	2209
• Nigeria’s Policy of Police Services Commission (PSC).....	2216
➤ Empirical Review.....	2218
➤ Theoretical Framework.....	2219
➤ Gaps in Existing Literature.....	2220
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	2222
➤ Research Design.....	2222
➤ Population of the Study.....	2222
➤ Sampling Frame and Sampling Size.....	2222
• Sampling Size.....	2222
• Sampling Techniques.....	2222
➤ Description of Measurement.....	2222
➤ Validity of the Instrument.....	2223
➤ Methods of Data Collection.....	2223
• Primary Data.....	2223
• Secondary Data.....	2223
➤ Ethical Consideration.....	2223
➤ Method of Data Analysis.....	2223
CHAPTER FOUR : RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS.....	2225
➤ Data Presentation And Analysis.....	2225
• Description of Data.....	2225
• Data Analysis Method.....	2225
• Survey Response Rate.....	2225
➤ Presentations of Results.....	2225
• Respondents’ Demographics.....	2226
• Respondents’ Age.....	2226
• Respondents’ Employment Status.....	2227

- Educational Level.....2227
- Respondents’ Educational Level.....2228
- Perception of Police Services.....2228
- Perception of Police-Community Relations.....2229
- Overall, to what extent do you agree that the Police in your community provide effective services and maintain positive relationships with Residents.....2231
- Personal Experiences.....2231
- The Nature of Respondents Contact with the Police.....2232
- Have you ever witnessed or experienced any form of misconduct or abuse by the police in your community?.....2233
- Description and type of police misconduct.....2234
- How would you rate your overall experiences relating with the Police.....2234
- Challenges and Constraints Faced by Law Enforcement Officers.....2236
- Socioeconomic and cultural factors affecting Police-community relations and service delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA.....2237
- Suggestions for Improvement.....2238
- Test of Hypotheses.....2238
- Hypothesis 1.....2238
- Hypothesis 2.....2239
- Hypothesis 3.....2240
- Discussion of Findings.....2241
- CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.....2243**
- Summary.....2243
- Conclusion.....2243
- Recommendations.....2244
- Contribution to Knowledge.....2244
- REFERENCES.....2245
- APPENDIX.....2250

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Respondents' Demographics.....	2226
Table 2 Respondents' Age.....	2226
Table 3 Respondents' Employment Status.....	2227
Table 4 Educational Level.....	2227
Table 5 Perception of Police Services.....	2228
Table 6 Perception of Police-Community Relations.....	2229
Table 7 Overall Respondents Perception on Police-Community Relations and Police services.....	2231
Table 8 Personal Experiences.....	2231
Table 9 The Nature of Respondents Contact with the Police.....	2232
Table 10 Respondents experience of police misconduct.....	2233
Table 11 Description and type of police misconduct.....	2234
Table 12 Overall Respondents experiences relating with the Police.....	2234
Table 13 Challenges and Constraints Faced by Law Enforcement Officers.....	2236
Table 14 Socioeconomic and cultural factors affecting Police-community relations and service delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA.....	2237
Table 15 Suggestions for Improvement.....	2238
Table 16 Overall, to what Extent do you agree that the Police in your Community Provide Effective Services and Maintain Positive Relationships with Residents?.....	2239
Table 17 Overall Respondents Experiences Relating with the Police.....	2239
Table 18 Overall, the Challenges and Constraints Faced by law Enforcement Officers Impact the Effectiveness of Police-Community Relations.....	2240
Table 19 Socioeconomic Factors Like Income, Education, Housing and Welfare Impact Negatively on Police-Community Relations and Police Services Delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA.....	2241
Table 20 Cultural Factors Like Ethnicity, Religion, Language, and Cultural Values Impact Negatively on Police-Community Relations and Police Services Delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA.....	2241

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Response rate for the survey.....	2225
Figure 2 Respondents' Age.....	2226
Figure 3 Respondents' Age.....	2226
Figure 4 Respondents' Employment Status.....	2227
Figure 5 Educational Level.....	2228
Figure 6 Respondents perception of police services.....	2229
Figure 7 Respondents perception of police-public relations.....	2230
Figure 8 Overall Respondents Perception on Police-Community Relations and Police services.....	2231
Figure 9 Respondents perception of personal experiences.....	2232
Figure 10 Respondents nature of contact with the police.....	2232
Figure 11 Respondents experience of police misconduct.....	2233
Figure 12 Respondents overall experience relation with the police.....	2235
Figure 13 Challenges and Constraints Faced by Law Enforcement Officers.....	2236
Figure 14 Socioeconomic and cultural factors affecting Police-community relations and service delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA.....	2237

ABBREVIATIONS

CPFs -Community Policing Forums
CPT- Community Policing Theory
CRU- Complaint Response Unit
IGP -Inspector-General of Police
LGA -Local Government Area
N/A- Not available
NBS- National Bureau of Statistics
NPF- Nigerian Police Force
PCR -Police Community Relations
PCRC -Police Community Relations Committee
PCRR -Public Complaint Rapid Response Unit
PCSOs -Police Community Support Officers
PSC -Police Service Commission
SARS -Special Anti-Robbery Squad
SERVICOM- Service Compact
SET -Social Exchange Theory
SWAT - Special Weapons and Tactics

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

➤ *Background of the Study*

The establishment of effective Police-community relations (PCR) and the provision of efficient Police services are essential components in the protection of public safety and property, the promotion of social cohesion, and the enforcement of law and order within a given society (Smith, 2023; Umar, 2023). Within the Nigerian environment, a nation distinguished by its multitude of ethnicities, cultures, and socio-economic complexities, the significance of the Nigerian Police in cultivating favorable engagements with the community and delivering high-quality services assumes utmost importance (NBS 2023).

The interaction between law enforcement officers and the local communities in Nigeria has been characterized by collaboration and conflict. Despite ongoing attempts to improve Police professionalism and service delivery, difficulties persist in Police misconduct, excessive use of force, and a lack of public trust (NPF 2020). The Nigerian Police Force's dedication to community policing, as delineated in its strategic plans, highlights the imperative of establishing robust collaborations with communities to enhance security and law enforcement results. The significance of a cooperative relationship between law enforcement agencies and the community in terms of crime prevention, information exchange, and the preservation of societal harmony is underscored in the study done by Adediran & Agbiboa (2019). Therefore, community engagement plays a crucial role in the process of identifying local security priorities and formulating policing policies that are tailored to the specific setting. Nonetheless, the efficacy of this methodology hinges upon other elements, including the public's view of legitimacy, responsiveness, and responsibility of law enforcement (Adediran & Agbiboa, 2019).

The Obio/Akpor Local Government Area (LGA) in Rivers State exemplifies a representation of the broader Nigerian landscape, where the convergence of obstacles and prospects in Police-community relations may be observed (Smith, 2023). A high population density within Rivers State, Nigeria, characterizes the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area (LGA). The Obio/Akpor Local Government Area (LGA) exhibits a notable prevalence of criminal activities, characterized by a considerable frequency of reported incidents, including acts of violence.

Examining the Police-community dynamics in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area (LGA) located in Rivers State reveals significant ramifications for maintaining peace, security, and the general well-being of its inhabitants. The influence of demographic variety and urban dynamics in each location can impact the character of Police-community ties, thereby altering the efficacy of Police services. A thorough investigation is necessary to examine the intricacies of Police-community relations within the specific framework of a local government area in Nigeria.

Community policing is an operational approach to enhance the relationship between law enforcement agencies and their communities to diminish criminal activity. Community policing is a collaborative approach wherein law enforcement agencies actively engage with the community to identify and address crime-related issues jointly. The efficacy of this approach in crime reduction has been demonstrated in several nations; nevertheless, its adoption and implementation in Nigeria remain limited. The absence of trust between law enforcement authorities and the local community within the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area presents a significant barrier to successfully implementing crime prevention measures. According to a poll conducted in 2022 by the National Bureau of Statistics, the level of faith in the Nigerian Police was reported to be at 20% among the populace. The absence of trust can be attributed to various issues, encompassing Police corruption, brutality, and ineptitude.

➤ *Statement of the Problem*

The Nigerian law enforcement environment has been characterized by various significant difficulties and gaps in Police-community interactions and the delivery of Police services. These aspects necessitate comprehensive research. The concerns anticipate extensive ramifications about the public's safety at the community level, the establishment of confidence in law enforcement agencies, and the overall efficacy of policing endeavours. Within the specific setting of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area (LGA) in Rivers State, it is noteworthy that these concerns may be amplified, hence shedding light on the broader challenges prevalent within the Nigerian environment.

An issue of considerable importance pertains to the deterioration of public trust in the Nigerian Police Force (NPF). Throughout history, there has been a widespread presence of reports of corruption, brutality, and breaches of human rights, which have played a significant role in creating a tense dynamic between law enforcement agencies and the people they are tasked with serving (Eterihgo, 2020; Igboanus, 2022). The absence of trust can impede the collaboration required for the successful implementation of community policing initiatives, as individuals may exhibit reluctance to engage with law enforcement due to concerns about potential victimization or reprisal (Adediran & Agbiboa, 2019).

Another significant difficulty must be addressed is the insufficiency of training and resources. The Nigerian law enforcement system frequently faces challenges from resource constraints, such as using old equipment and inadequate training (Eterihgo, 2020). Adediran & Agbiboa (2019) assert that such actions can compromise the Police force's capacity to promptly address evolving security risks and deliver high-quality services to the general population. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the absence

of specialized instruction in domains such as conflict resolution, community involvement, and human rights awareness could potentially play a role in the continuation of adverse Police conduct (Igboanusi, 2022).

The lack of a comprehensive and community-centred strategy is also worthy of attention. The deployment of community policing as a strategy has encountered obstacles that have hindered its execution. These challenges encompass opposition to change and the necessity for capacity building (Adediran & Agbibo, 2019). Community policing emphasizes the significance of cooperative endeavours between law enforcement agencies and communities. However, its successful implementation necessitates a change in mindset, organizational culture, and skills acquisition by Police personnel and residents (Igboanusi, 2022).

Furthermore, the absence of efficient procedures for accountability and monitoring represents a notable deficiency. The prevalence of unaddressed cases of Police misconduct and abuse can be attributed to the absence of transparent and accountable mechanisms within law enforcement agencies (Okafor, 2021). This phenomenon creates a conducive atmosphere wherein law enforcement personnel can engage in actions without fear of facing the consequences, hence contributing to public trust erosion, and intensifying the strained relationship between the Police force and the community (Adediran & Agbibo, 2019).

The discourse has elucidated the intricate and diverse nature of the obstacles to Police-community interactions and Police services in Nigeria (Eterigho, 2020; Igboanusi, 2022). The issues discussed in the study have significant ramifications that extend to all aspects of society, including public safety, social cohesiveness, and the overall well-being of people (Adediran & Agbibo, 2019). Although previous studies offer valuable insights into the overall Nigerian law enforcement context, there is an apparent necessity for empirical research that focuses on the distinct dynamics of locations, such as the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area (LGA) in Rivers State (Adediran & Agbibo, 2019).

The dynamics of Police-community interactions and the provision of Police services are frequently shaped by many factors that exhibit variation across diverse geographical and cultural settings (Eterigho, 2020). The Obio/Akpor Local Government Area (LGA) presents an intriguing opportunity to explore broader Nigerian concerns due to its distinctive demographic mix, historical experiences, and social dynamics (Okafor, 2021).

The execution of an empirical study inside the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area (LGA) would facilitate the exploration of intricate perspectives on how the primary challenges appear within this community (Adediran & Agbibo, 2019). By analyzing the perspectives, beliefs, and encounters of community members and law enforcement personnel, scholars can better comprehend the underlying origins and influential elements that form interactions between the Police and the community (Igboanusi, 2022).

The adoption of a localized approach is necessary for various reasons. Initially, the statement recognizes the significance of context-specific elements in influencing the dynamics of Police-community interactions (Okafor, 2021). Differences in collaboration problems and opportunities can be observed across urban and rural locations and within diverse socio-demographic groups (Adediran & Agbibo, 2019). Additionally, it enables the recognition of constraints peculiar to specific regions, impeding the efficient delivery of Police services and community participation (Eterigho, 2020).

In addition, the implementation of empirical research within the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area (LGA) might yield significant data that can be used to drive policy recommendations and actions that are grounded in evidence and specifically suited to the unique characteristics of the local context (Adediran & Agbibo, 2019). The collaborative development of plans to address the unique difficulties presented by a community can be facilitated via research involving many stakeholders, such as government agencies, law enforcement, community leaders, and civil society organizations (Okafor, 2021).

The need of doing empirical research in the setting of Obio/Akpor LGA is emphasised by the imperative to enhance our comprehension of Police-community interactions and the provision of Police services at the local level (Igboanusi, 2022). Through active participation in this research endeavor, we may illuminate the complexities inherent in these interactions, derive valuable insights that can inform the implementation of effective interventions, and make a meaningful contribution to the broader scholarly conversation surrounding the enhancement of Police services and methods for community involvement in Nigeria (Eterigho, 2020).

➤ *Aim and Objectives of the Study*

The aim of this study is to explore and explain the relationship between police-community relations and effective policing in Nigeria. The study examines the state of PCR and police services in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area (LGA), Rivers State, Nigeria. While the specific objectives are to:

- Explore the perceptions and experiences of community members regarding Police services and interactions in Obio/Akpor LGA
- Identify and analyze the challenges and constraints law enforcement officers encounter in maintaining effective Police-community relations in Obio/Akpor LGA

- Investigate the factors that contribute to the formation of conflicts, mistrust, and dissatisfaction between Police and community members in Obio/Akpor LGA
- Examine the impact of socioeconomic and cultural factors on Police-community relations and service delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA
- Propose strategies that can be proposed to enhance community engagement in matters of public safety and law enforcement within Obio/Akpor LGA

➤ *Research Questions*

These research questions serve as empirical tools that will facilitate the collection of relevant data to address the objectives of the study.

- Are there statistically significant relationships between the perceptions and experiences of community members regarding Police services and interactions in Obio/Akpor LGA?
- Are there significant relationships between the challenges and constraints faced by law enforcement officers and the effectiveness of police-community relations in Obio/Akpor LGA?
- What factors contribute to the formation of conflicts, mistrust, and dissatisfaction between Police and community members in Obio/Akpor LGA?
- Are there significant relationships between socioeconomic and cultural factors and Police-community relations and service delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA?
- What strategies can be proposed to enhance community engagement in matters of public safety and law enforcement within Obio/Akpor LGA?

➤ *Hypotheses:*

• *Ho 1:*

There are no statistically significant relationships between the perceptions and experiences of community members regarding Police services and interactions in Obio/Akpor LGA

• *Ho 2:*

There are no significant relationships between the challenges and constraints faced by law enforcement officers and the effectiveness of police-community relations in Obio/Akpor LGA

• *Ho 3:*

There are no significant relationships between socioeconomic and cultural factors and Police-community relations and service delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA

➤ *Significance of the Study*

This research contributes to the expanding corpus of academic scholarship on the dynamics of Police-community relations, specifically focusing on the Nigerian setting. By concentrating on Obio/Akpor LGA, this study provides a detailed analysis of how Police-community interactions unfold within the specified local setting, offering insights tailored to the contextual factors at play. The study's findings offer valuable insights to inform decision-making and policy development for law enforcement agencies, lawmakers, and other pertinent stakeholders. Identifying difficulties, gaps, and potential solutions can provide valuable insights for formulating plans to enhance Police services and foster more robust and constructive Police-community relations within Obio/Akpor LGA. These findings can provide a basis for evidence-based policy recommendations specifically designed to address the distinct conditions of Obio/Akpor LGA. Policymakers can utilize the study findings to enact reforms, allocate resources, and undertake specific initiatives that effectively address the highlighted challenges.

Through the examination and emphasis of many perspectives, this research has the potential to facilitate a more comprehensive and all-encompassing discourse between law enforcement agencies and the local populace, thereby cultivating a sense of shared comprehension and cooperative engagement. It can also serve as a tool for public enlightenment and advocacy by raising awareness of the issues and challenges surrounding Police-community relations in Obio/Akpor LGA and promoting informed discussions and actions among the community members.

➤ *Scope and Limitations of the Study*

The study explores how Obio/Akpor LGA residents perceive the Police capability, their attitudes toward law enforcement, and their expectations from Police services. This study examines the nature of interactions and communication between the Police and the community, identifying the challenges and aiming to understand factors influencing cooperation and trust. The research considers the unique sociocultural, economic, and political factors that shape Police-community dynamics within Obio/Akpor LGA.

Due to practical constraints, the study may have a limited sample size, which may impact the generalizability of findings to a larger population. The study's time frame may restrict the data collection and analysis depth, potentially limiting the exploration of complex issues. Respondents' biases and perspectives may influence data collected through interviews, surveys, or observations. Language and cultural differences may pose challenges in communication, potentially affecting the accuracy of information gathered. Access to specific Police departments or community groups may be restricted, impacting the study's comprehensiveness. The study's findings may be specific to the local context of Obio/Akpor LGA and may not necessarily apply to other regions or local government areas in Nigeria. The availability of resources, such as funding and personnel, may impact how data can be collected and analyzed. Respondents may provide socially desirable responses, leading to potential self-reporting bias in interviews or surveys.

➤ *Definition of Concepts*

• *Policing:*

Policing refers to the practice of supervising or implementing societal norms. The responsibility of overseeing or safeguarding a public gathering or location by deploying law enforcement personnel or a comparable organization has been highlighted by O'Shea (2023). The concept of policing, which encompasses the deliberate enforcement of societal standards and protection against internal threats, predates the establishment of a dedicated professional armed force for this reason (Bayley, 2006).

• *Police-Community-Relations:*

Police-community relations encompass the various contacts, attitudes, and collaborative efforts between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. The process entails establishing confidence, cultivating collaboration, and encouraging constructive involvement among law enforcement authorities and people of the community (Bahadar et al., 2019).

• *Police Services :*

Police services refer to the comprehensive array of tasks and responsibilities law enforcement organisations undertake to uphold public safety, enforce legislation, deter criminal activity, and support the community. The actions encompass patrolling, emergency response, investigative procedures, and community engagement (Bahadar et al., 2019).

• *Public Trust Erosion:*

Public trust erosion denotes the diminishing or weakening of the Nigerian Police Force's credibility, faith, and dependence as perceived by the public. The phenomenon under examination is marked by a decline in trust regarding law enforcement agencies' ethical conduct, expertise, and responsibility, frequently stemming from accounts of illicit activities, excessive force, and infringements upon human rights (Bahadar et al., 2019).

• *Community-Policing:*

Community policing is a law enforcement method that emphasizes collaboration, problem-solving, and establishing relationships between the Police force and the community. The approach encompasses active participation of community members, identification and resolution of underlying factors contributing to crime, and customisation of policing tactics to cater to the unique requirements and apprehensions of the community (Bahadar et al., 2019).

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

➤ *Introduction*

This chapter examines the extant body of knowledge and research on police-community relations and the delivery of police services, particularly emphasizing the Nigerian context and Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. This chapter aims to comprehensively understand the relationship between the police and the local community and the quality and effectiveness of police services in the area. It provides a foundation for understanding the issues, challenges, and dynamics of Police-community interactions in the study area by providing a comprehensive review of the relevant academic literature.

The chapter begins with various scholars' definitions, the concept of policing and services, and an overview of police-community relations and their significance in promoting public safety and security. It highlights the importance of building trust, cooperation, and collaboration between the police and the community to enhance crime prevention and control efforts (Okwoyo, 2022). The chapter also emphasises the role of community policing as an approach that brings together the police and local communities to develop local solutions to safety and security concerns (Okwoyo, 2022). The chapter also explores Nigeria's policy on the police services commission.

Furthermore, the chapter discusses the specific context of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area and its unique characteristics that may influence police-community relations and police services. It explores the demographic characteristics of the area, including rural and urban populations, and their potential impact on crime rates and community dynamics (Pepple et al., 2023). The chapter also examines the existing legal framework and the interaction between the police and local self-government bodies in public safety and order (Vitvitskiy & Zakharchenko, 2021). The conclusion of the chapter emphasises the significance of police-community relations and the necessity of addressing the challenges in this area. It also emphasises the study's potential contributions to enhancing police-community relations and police services in Nigeria.

➤ *Conceptual Review*

• *Policing*

Clarity regarding the conceptualization of policing is crucial. This study goes beyond the limited definition of "the police," which refers to those in uniform who are government-employed, compensated, and supervised. Our research concentrates on the various initiatives to establish observable entities accountable for crime prevention, regardless of whether they are conducted by government or non-government organisations. The act of policing encompasses utilising authoritative power by law enforcement agents to enforce legal regulations, safeguard individuals and assets, and address occurrences and urgent situations (Scoggins, 2018). Policing in the context of counterterrorism has also gained prominence, with police forces playing a crucial role in preventing and responding to terrorist threats (Sausdal, 2019). Policing in the digital age has introduced new challenges and opportunities with the use of technology and data in crime prevention, investigation, and surveillance (Smith, 2019)

Nokleberg defined Policing as the activities, practices, and strategies employed by law enforcement agencies to maintain public order, enforce laws, prevent and investigate crimes, and ensure the safety and security of communities (Nøkleberg, 2020). It involves the exercise of authority by police officers to uphold the law, protect individuals and property, and respond to incidents and emergencies (Nøkleberg, 2020). Policing encompasses a range of functions, including patrolling, crime prevention, crime detection, traffic enforcement, community engagement, and maintaining public trust and confidence. Among the many facets of policing are patrolling, crime prevention, crime detection, traffic enforcement, community engagement, and the maintenance of public confidence.

Rudhanto, (2022) asserts that the term 'Policing' relates to the broader concept of policing, which encompasses more than just the police force. Concurrently, it is essential to acknowledge deliberate efforts to establish official policing institutions without expanding our discourse to include all informal entities that societies rely on for maintaining order, such as parents, churches, employers, spouses, friends, neighbours, professional groups, and similar entities. With the overall goal of protecting the safety and well-being of communities; Cummins (2020), a brilliant scholar, said that the idea of policing includes a public service that is responsible for maintaining law and order as well as hindering and identifying criminal activity. The scope of this domain encompasses the implementation of legal statutes, the examination of criminal activities, and the delivery of aid and backing to the general populace.

On the other hand, Selmini (2020) opines that policing can be understood as a societal mechanism for regulating behaviour that relies on the exertion of authoritative power and the employment of physical coercion by law enforcement personnel (Selmini, 2020). This encompasses the governance of conduct, the preservation of societal structure, and the safeguarding of individuals and their possessions. The concept of policing can be delineated as a societal establishment tasked with preserving social harmony and preventing and managing criminal activities (Selmini, 2020). This encompasses the process of instituting and upholding guidelines and protocols, the delivery of public safety services, and the advancement of communal welfare.

In line with the scholarly work of Pears and Shields (2022), the authors share the perspective that Policing functions as a public service or social institution with the primary objective of upholding law and order, as well as the prevention and detection of criminal activities, ultimately assuring the safety and security of communities. This encompasses the implementation of legal regulations, the examination of criminal activities, and the delivery of aid and backing to the general populace. On the contrary, Razak (2023) asserts that policing can be seen as a type of public service with the primary objective of safeguarding and serving the community. The concept encompasses the provision of aid and assistance to persons experiencing hardship, the prevention and identification of criminal activities, and the preservation of societal harmony.

- *Police Services*

Marfo et al. (2021) and others say that police services aim to keep the public safe and in order by following the law and providing services to the community. The aspects mentioned above encompass the mobilization of personnel, the distribution of resources, and the synchronization of actions to achieve efficient law enforcement. In the study by Ekaabi et al. (2020), the authors claim that police services can be conceptualized as a manifestation of public administration with the primary objective of upholding public safety and preserving societal order. The activities encompassed in this domain include the effective administration and organization of resources, the formulation and execution of policies and protocols, and providing services to the community.

The study also asserts that police services refer to the specific organizations or agencies responsible for policing duties within a jurisdiction (Cummins, 2020). These services may vary in structure, size, and scope, but their primary function is to provide policing services to the community. Cummins' perspective was also considered. The career of policing might be perceived as one that necessitates specialised knowledge, abilities, and training (Cummins, 2022). This entails the utilization of legal ideas, the implementation of investigation tactics, and the aptitude to engage proficiently with heterogeneous populations.

DiSalvo (2022) averred that police services can be conceptualized as a mode of governance primarily focused on regulating and controlling society. These activities encompass the exertion of power, the implementation of legal regulations, and the mediation of disagreements and contentions. In the view of Yesufu (2022), it can be argued that police services function as a means of social control, employing coercion and the potential for punishment. These activities encompass the exertion of power, the implementation of legal regulations, and the preservation of societal structure and control.

In the opinion of Pears and Shields (2022), the term "police services" pertains to the distinct organizations or bodies responsible for the execution of policing responsibilities within a given area. The services as mentioned earlier exhibit diversity in their organizational structure, magnitude, and extent, although their fundamental purpose remains the provision of law enforcement services to the community. The field of policing involves various essential functions, such as patrolling, crime prevention, criminal detection, traffic enforcement, community participation, and public trust and confidence (Wallace & Neptune-Figaro, 2023).

Moreover, the concept of policing has evolved in response to various societal changes and challenges. Militarization of policing refers to the blurring of distinctions between the police and military institutions and the adoption of military tactics, equipment, and organizational structures by law enforcement agencies (Mummolo, 2018). This phenomenon has raised concerns about the potential impact on police reputation and community relations. Research suggests that militarized policing, including the deployment of SWAT teams, is more often observed in communities of colour and does not provide significant benefits regarding officer safety or reducing violent crime (Mummolo, 2018).

Policing encompasses law enforcement agencies' activities, practices, and strategies to maintain public order, enforce laws, prevent, and investigate crimes, and ensure community safety. It includes traditional law enforcement functions and approaches such as community policing, problem-oriented policing, and intelligence-led policing. Accountability, militarization, counterterrorism, and the impact of technology are essential dimensions that shape the understanding and practice of policing in contemporary society.

- *The Concept of Policing / Services*

The concept of policing extends beyond traditional law enforcement activities and includes broader approaches such as community policing, problem-oriented policing, and intelligence-led policing. Community policing emphasizes collaboration and partnership between the police and the community to address crime and disorder (Dario & Crichlow, 2020). It involves building relationships, engaging with community members, and working together to identify and solve problems. Problem-oriented policing identifies and addresses the underlying causes of recurring crime and disorder issues (Goldstein, 2018). Intelligence-led policing utilizes data and intelligence to inform policing strategies and operations.

Scholars have also highlighted the importance of accountability in policing. Police accountability refers to the mechanisms and processes through which the actions and behaviour of police officers and agencies are subject to scrutiny, oversight, and control. It involves ensuring that the police act within the bounds of the law, adhere to professional standards, and are held

responsible for their actions. Accountability mechanisms include internal review processes, external oversight bodies, civilian complaint mechanisms, and legal frameworks (Feys et al., 2018).

The concept of policing and law enforcement services covers a multitude of dimensions and meanings. The idea pertains to the delivery of public service within the framework of law enforcement organizations, such as the National Police of Ukraine. The primary objectives of policing services encompass the preservation of public order, the enforcement of laws, the prevention and investigation of criminal activities, and the assurance of community safety and security. The level of satisfaction with police services can be affected by various variables, including the neighbourhood's contextual characteristics and the subjective opinions of individuals (Lai & Zhao, 2018).

Moreover, the notion of service quality holds significance within police, as evidenced by the identification of service quality aspects in hybrid services by Ganguli and Roy (2010) and in intelligent policing by Ekaabi et al. (2020). Moreover, the issue of policing legitimacy holds significant importance, as it encompasses the opinions of civilians regarding the equitable nature of policing and its consequential influence on their inclination to collaborate with law enforcement authorities and adhere to legal regulations (Noppe et al., 2017).

The concept of policing/police services is multifaceted and complex. Often, policing is defined as the activities conducted by the police to uphold law and order and provide safety and security. These include the following: The police play a crucial role in crime prevention by patrolling neighbourhoods, investigating crimes in progress, and amassing intelligence on potential threats. The police are responsible for responding to crime reports and taking appropriate action, such as arresting suspects, conducting investigations, or assisting victims. The police are responsible for enforcing the law, which includes conducting criminal investigations, apprehending suspects, and issuing citations. Police play a crucial role in ensuring public safety and security by responding to emergencies, patrolling public areas, and investigating offences.

Police services are the services provided to the community by the Police officers. The police respond to emergency communications, such as reports of crimes in progress, medical emergencies, and natural disasters. They also provide various crime prevention services and programmes, including neighbourhood watch programmes, community policing initiatives, and crime awareness campaigns. They are responsible for conducting criminal investigations and apprehending suspects. Part of their services is to provide victims of crime with assistance, such as emotional support, information about their rights, and guidance through the criminal justice system. They work to develop relationships with the community and promote public trust as part of their community relations efforts.

The concept of policing and police services is evolving in response to societal and criminal trends. For example, the police are now increasingly involved in community policing initiatives, which focus on developing relationships with the community and working together to address crime problems. Additionally, the police utilize new technologies and investigative techniques to prevent and investigate crime.

Within the domain of providing police services, the responsibility to exercise the power to end a human life and restrict an individual's liberty while upholding their fundamental rights is assigned to the most decentralized level within the organizational structure. In pursuit of this objective, the aim is to alleviate the impact of both internal and external influences on the police department that may compromise the integrity of the organization and its personnel in the ethical provision of law enforcement services.

The cultural aspects of traditional policing, characterized by a strong focus on paramilitarism, and community policing, which is based on a more democratic framework, exhibit notable distinctions. Many police departments have done an excellent job of navigating the cultural shift from focusing on action to focusing on service, which happened at the same time as the shift from the traditional model of policing to the community policing model. However, certain agencies have encountered opposition from the prevailing inclination within police culture to prioritize crime fighting over problem-solving. The relevance of this tension is heightened when considering contemporary external demands, such as the urgent need to confront terrorism and ensure national security. Certain services have chosen to maintain the conventional approach of the police but with some modifications. In the context of global law enforcement agencies' efforts to address national security concerns, it is pertinent to analyze the contrasting aspects of police culture associated with traditional policing and community policing. Despite their obstacles, the police serve a vital function in society. They are responsible for maintaining law and order, protecting the public, and ensuring public safety.

➤ *Challenges and Issues in Police Services*

Police services face various challenges and issues that can hinder their effectiveness and impact on society. These challenges can arise from internal factors within the Police organization, external factors in the social and political context, and systemic issues within the criminal justice system.

➤ *Here are some of the Critical Challenges and Issues in Police Services*

• *Police Brutality and Misconduct:*

One of the significant challenges faced by Police services is the issue of Police brutality and misconduct. Instances of excessive use of force, abuse of power, and human rights violations erode public trust and confidence in the Police. Addressing and preventing Police misconduct is crucial for maintaining legitimacy and fostering positive Police-community relations (Nsirim and Nwakanma (2022); Arisukwu et al., 2021).

• *Lack of Accountability and Transparency:*

The lack of accountability and transparency within Police services is persistent. The absence of robust mechanisms for holding Police officers accountable for their actions can contribute to a culture of impunity and undermine public trust. Enhancing accountability through effective oversight, internal affairs units, and external review mechanisms is essential (Odeyemi & Obiyan, 2018; Akinlabi, 2016).

• *Inadequate Training and Resources:*

One of the primary obstacles Police services encounter in Obio/Akpor is insufficient resources. The efficacy of law enforcement authorities in fulfilling their responsibilities is impeded by constrained budgetary allocations and insufficient resources (Ishayara & Osumah, 2019). A lack of suitable financial resources can lead to a dearth of staff, obsolete equipment, and insufficient training, all of which jointly undermine the effectiveness of law enforcement agents in their ability to address and deter criminal activities (Ishayara et al., A. (2019). Police services frequently need more training. To optimize the efficacy of Police officers in fulfilling their responsibilities, it is imperative to address many key issues. According to recent studies conducted by Oyindamola et al. (2022) and Agwanwo & Onyige (2022), the implementation of training programmes, the modernization of equipment, and the provision of essential resources play a pivotal role in augmenting the capabilities of Police forces.

• *Community Engagement and Trust:*

Building trust and fostering positive relationships with the community is a significant challenge for Police services. Historical tensions, cultural barriers, and negative perceptions can hinder community engagement. A lack of community involvement poses a significant obstacle to delivering efficient Police services. When Police departments need to establish open communication channels with the community, they run the risk of operating in isolation from the needs and concerns of locals (Brunson et al., 2019). This can lead to misaligned priorities, ineffective strategies, and an inability to address local concerns. Brunson et al. (2019) found that a lack of community engagement is a significant barrier to effective Police-community relations. The study also found that a lack of attention can result in several adverse outcomes, such as increased crime, decreased public confidence in the Police, and a greater likelihood of Police misconduct.

• *Inadequate Staffing and Work Environment:*

Police services often need help with staffing levels and unfavorable work environments. High workloads, long working hours, and stressful conditions can impact the well-being and performance of Police officers. Addressing these challenges requires appropriate staffing levels, improved working conditions, and support for officer well-being (Agwanwo & Onyige, 2022).

• *Corruption and Ethical Issues:*

Corruption and misconduct within law enforcement agencies pose a significant obstacle to delivering efficient Police services. When officers engage in unethical conduct, such as soliciting gratuities or engaging in illegal activities, it erodes public confidence and undermines the legitimacy of the Police force (Cubitt 2021). Corruption also diverts attention and resources away from core policing functions (Wei et al., 2021; Baie & Rahmani, 2015; Nawab et al., 2021; Wang & Chen, 2021; Miller et al., 2022; Duru & Cochran, 2022; Drummond & Mills, 2020; Cubitt, 2021; Katsande, 2021).

• *Gender Representation and Diversity:*

Police services often face challenges related to gender representation and diversity. Women and minority groups may be underrepresented in Police forces, limiting perspectives, and creating barriers to effective community policing. Promoting diversity, inclusivity, and equal opportunities within Police services can help address these challenges (Arisukwu et al., (2022).

• *Inadequate Information and Communication Systems:*

Outdated information and communication systems can hinder the efficiency and effectiveness of Police services. Access to technology, adequate data management systems, and communication gaps can impede information sharing and coordination. Investing in modern technology and improving information systems are crucial for enhancing Police operations (James, 2019).

• *Political Interference and Lack of Autonomy:*

Police services may face challenges related to political interference and lack of autonomy. Political pressures, interference in investigations, and lack of independence can undermine the impartiality and effectiveness of the Police. Ensuring the independence of Police services and protecting them from undue political influence is essential (Saka & Oladejo, 2023).

- *Insecurity and Organized Crime:*

Police services often face insecurity and organized crime challenges. Rapidly evolving criminal activities, sophisticated criminal networks, and limited resources can make it challenging to combat crime effectively. Enhancing intelligence capabilities, strengthening collaboration with other law enforcement agencies, and adopting proactive strategies are crucial for addressing these challenges (Oluwasolape et al., 2021).

Police services face various challenges and issues that can impact their effectiveness and relationship with the community. By addressing these challenges, Police services can enhance their capabilities and contribute to safer and more secure communities. As subsequent sections of this chapter examine potential strategies and initiatives, a clearer picture will emerge of how these challenges intersect and influence the dynamics of Police services in the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area context.

- *Efforts to Improve Police Services in Nigeria*

Recognizing the importance of effective Police services in ensuring public safety and upholding societal order, numerous initiatives have been launched in Nigeria to address the obstacles and improve the quality of policing. There have been ongoing efforts to improve Police services in Nigeria, with several strategies and initiatives implemented to resolve the challenges faced by the Police force. Efforts to enhance Police services in Nigeria include adopting digital technologies, community policing, Police reforms, capacity development, sufficient funding, gender inclusion, interagency collaboration, and public awareness campaigns. These initiatives seek to improve the Nigerian Police force's accountability, professionalism, community engagement, and overall effectiveness. These initiatives seek to improve the Police's accountability, professionalism, community involvement, and effectiveness in maintaining law and order. Here are some essential efforts to enhance Nigeria's Police services:

- *Adoption of Digital Policing Technologies:*

The Nigeria Police Force has adopted digital surveillance technologies to improve Police-citizen relations and increase accountability. The Complaint Response Unit (CRU); later renamed the Public Complaint Rapid Response Unit (PCRR), enables the public to communicate with the Police via dedicated phone numbers, social media platforms, and a mobile application (Odeyemi & Obiyan 2018). Utilizing technology and modernization have become integral to efforts to enhance Nigeria's Police services. Implementing technological solutions, such as enhanced communication systems, digital record-keeping, and data-driven criminal analysis, increases the efficiency and effectiveness of law enforcement agencies (Ishayara & Osumah, 2019). These developments contribute to proactive crime prevention, resource optimization, and evidence-based decision-making.

- *Community Policing*

One area of emphasis has been community policing, which seeks to promote collaboration and partnership between the Police and the community in crime prevention and control (Arisukwu et al., (2020). The participation of community members in the overall monitoring of rural communities has been highlighted as a means of enhancing security (Arisukwu et al., 2020). Community policing has been recognized as a crucial strategy for enhancing Nigeria's Police services. It emphasizes Police and community collaboration and partnership in crime prevention and control. Strengthening community-police relationships, enhancing intelligence collection, and involving community members in decision-making are ongoing initiatives (Arisukwu et al., (2020; Oke et al., 2021; Arisukwu et al., 2022).

In addition, efforts have been made to increase public awareness of available channels for reporting Police misconduct and to promote accountability (Ojedokun & Badmus, 2022). Nonetheless, it is essential to observe that despite these reform efforts, obstacles remain. Extrajudicial murders, corruption, and a lack of accountability undermine Nigeria's Police force and security (Akinyetun & Adedini, 2022; Aborisade & Ariyo, 2022). Likewise, Beek & Gopfert, (2015) and (Onaivi, 2020) explain that implementing reforms and attaining desired outcomes require a sustained commitment and ongoing evaluation.

- *Police Reforms:*

To address issues such as corruption, lack of accountability, inadequate training, and poor working conditions, there have been demands for comprehensive Police reforms in Nigeria. Comprehensive Police reform agendas and policy initiatives have facilitated the improvement of Police services in Nigeria (Akinyetun & Adedini, 2021). In response to pervasive concerns regarding Police corruption, misconduct, and abuses, successive Nigerian governments have proposed reforms to overhaul policing practices and increase transparency (Akinyetun & Adedini, 2022). These policy modifications involve a variety of facets, including recruitment and training, disciplinary procedures, and community engagement strategies (Onuoha et al., 2021).

- *Capacity Building and Training:*

Through training programmes, efforts are being made to enhance the capacity and capabilities of Police officers. This includes training in human rights, community policing, modern crime-fighting techniques, and the application of technology (Oyindamola et al., 2022). In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented Nigerian law enforcement with new challenges. Lockdown measures and other pandemic-related restrictions have required Police readiness, legitimacy, and community engagement (Aborisade & Ariyo, 2021; Aborisade & Adeleke, 2022). To ensure that Police officers are adequately trained and equipped to manage public health interventions while respecting human rights, efforts have been made (Aborisade, 2021).

- *Adequate Funding:*

Appropriate funding of the Police force is essential for improving infrastructure, acquiring modern apparatus, and providing essential resources. Increased funding can help the Police resolve their challenges and improve their ability to maintain public safety (Onaivi, 2020). In this era of technology for more straightforward and quicker solutions, it costs money, and without adequate resources, the Police cannot meet the dynamics of the current dispensation.

- *Gender Inclusion:*

Efforts are being made to promote gender inclusion within the Police department. Women's participation in community monitoring and decision-making processes is encouraged to ensure a more diverse and inclusive approach to law enforcement (Arisukwu et al., 2022; Owoeye et al., 2020).

- *Interagency Collaboration:*

To enhance crime prevention and control, the collaboration between the Police other security agencies and private security companies is being encouraged. Strengthening interagency collaboration can enhance the sharing of information, allocation of resources, and overall security efforts (Chinwokwu, 2018). The practice of involving civil society organizations and the public in the oversight and development of Police services has gained momentum. Advocacy groups, human rights organizations, and community members collaborate actively to express concerns, advocate for reforms, and contribute to policy discussions (Ojukwu, 2016).

- *Public Awareness and Education:*

Public awareness campaigns and education programmes are conducted to improve the public's understanding of the function of the Police, encourage cooperation, and encourage citizens to report crimes. These initiatives intend to bridge the divide between the Police and the community (SERVICOM 2020).

- *Influence of Quality Police-Community Relations on the Effectiveness of Police Services*

The dynamics between law enforcement agencies and their communities profoundly impact the overall effectiveness of Police services (Aborisade & Ariyo, 2021). Quality Police-community relations are not only a desirable goal but are also a critical factor that directly shapes law enforcement outcomes, community safety, and society's overall well-being (Ojedokun & Aderinto, 2015). This intricate relationship can be understood through various lenses:

- *Trust and Cooperation:*

Positive Police-community relations are rooted in trust and cooperation (Olowokere et al., 2020). When community members perceive law enforcement agencies as trustworthy and respectful, they are more likely to collaborate with the Police in preventing and addressing crimes (Oluwasolape et al., 2021). Trust facilitates open communication, ensuring community members are willing to report crimes, share information, and engage in partnerships that aid law enforcement efforts (Akinlabi, 2016). This cooperation increases the Police's ability to gather timely and accurate intelligence, enhancing their capacity to respond effectively to emerging threats (Ojedokun & Aderinto, 2015).

- *Crime Prevention and Detection:*

Effective crime prevention is intricately tied to the quality of Police-community relations (Flom & Post, 2016). When Police officers maintain positive community interactions, they gain valuable insights into local safety concerns, crime patterns, and potential risks (Tejumaiye & Tejumaiye, 2021). This information helps law enforcement agencies deploy resources strategically and develop targeted crime prevention strategies (Akinlabi, 2016). Moreover, community members who trust the Police are more likely to provide witness testimonies and evidence, aiding in the detection and prosecution of criminals (Aborisade & Ariyo, 2021).

- *Community Engagement:*

Community engagement is a cornerstone of effective policing, and positive Police-community relations are central to successful engagement efforts (Beek & Göpfert, 2015). Law enforcement agencies that engage with the community listen to their concerns and involve them in decision-making to build a sense of ownership and collaboration (Akinyetun & Adedini, 2022). This engagement promotes a shared responsibility for public safety and encourages community members to participate in crime prevention initiatives, such as neighbourhood actively watch programs or community policing efforts (Ojedokun & Aderinto, 2015).

- *Problem-Solving and Proactive Policing:*

Hollingworth et al. (2022) argue that establishing strong Police-community connections contributes to cultivating a problem-solving orientation within policing. According to a study titled "Service Quality and Speed of Service in the Nigeria Police Force: The Roles of SERVICOM" (2020), law enforcement officers are more proficient in identifying the fundamental factors contributing to criminal activity and can effectively address these underlying issues through joint efforts when they create a positive relationship with the community. Adopting a proactive approach empowers law enforcement agencies to effectively deter criminal activities at their origin, diminishing reliance on reactive strategies (Eke et al., 2021).

- *Reduction of Fear and Bias:*

Positive Police-community relations reduce fear within the community (Omeni, 2022). When residents trust law enforcement officers are committed to their safety, they feel more secure and less apprehensive about engaging with the Police (Beek and Göpfert, 2015). Furthermore, cultivating relationships based on respect and fairness helps reduce biases and discriminatory practices within law enforcement, leading to more equitable and just interactions (Flom and Post, 2016).

- *Enhanced Legitimacy:*

Law enforcement agencies with strong ties to the community enjoy enhanced legitimacy (Omeni, 2022). Positive interactions and ethical behaviour foster public confidence in the Police, leading to increased cooperation, compliance with the law, and willingness to support law enforcement initiatives (Bello et al., 2023).

- *Conflict Resolution:*

Positive Police-community relations can facilitate conflict resolution and de-escalation (Farinde, 2015). When law enforcement officers are skilled in communication and community engagement, they are better equipped to diffuse tense situations and resolve disputes without force (Oke et al., 2021). This reduces the likelihood of confrontations escalating into violence (Solanke et al., 2022). The quality of Police-community relations directly influences the effectiveness of Police services. Trust, cooperation, crime prevention, community engagement, problem-solving, reduced fear, legitimacy, and conflict resolution are all interconnected outcomes of positive relations (Oke et al., 2021).

- *Trust-Based Relations and Crime Prevention*

Tyler and Huo (2023) assert a positive correlation between people's perceptions of Police fairness and respect and their likelihood to comply with the law, even in cases where they have personal disagreements with the law. The reason behind this phenomenon is procedural justice, which refers to the belief that individuals are subjected to fair treatment by law enforcement authorities. This element plays a crucial role in fostering confidence and legitimacy. When individuals perceive equitable treatment from law enforcement, they tend to develop a stronger inclination towards endorsing the legitimacy of Police authority and exhibiting compliance with legal regulations.

Meanwhile, Skogan and Frydl (2022) opine that the idea of Police legitimacy, which refers to the perception that law enforcement has the authority to use force and make decisions that impact people's lives, is a crucial factor in facilitating the effectiveness of policing efforts. The rationale behind the significance of legitimacy lies in its capacity to confer power upon law enforcement agencies, enabling them to carry out their duties effectively. Moreover, legitimacy is pivotal in fostering a cooperative relationship between the Police and the public. Individuals who believe that law enforcement personnel possess the authority to carry out their duties are inclined to exhibit behaviours such as reporting criminal activities, furnishing relevant information to the Police, and adhering to legal regulations.

Although Meares' research (2021) agrees that developing trust-based relationships between law enforcement organizations and communities is essential for effectively applying proactive policing strategies, proactive policing entails utilising various techniques to prevent criminal activities before their occurrence. The reliance on community members to provide information to the Police regarding potential criminal activity is a fundamental aspect of proactive policing. Individuals are more inclined to disclose information when they possess a sense of trust in law enforcement authorities.

Furthermore, the research of Weitzer and Tuch (2020) posits that members of racial and ethnic minority groups are more likely than white individuals to perceive law enforcement agencies as harbouring biases against them. This impression can erode trust and hinder cooperation between law enforcement agencies and their communities. This phenomenon can be attributed to the higher likelihood of individuals from racial and ethnic minority groups encountering adverse encounters with law enforcement, such as unwarranted stop-and-frisk practices or unjustified arrests. These adverse incidents can engender a sense among individuals that law enforcement authorities exhibit unfairness and a lack of respect for individuals belonging to racial minority groups.

However, the seminal work of Tyler (2020) offers a thorough examination of the notion of legitimacy and its significance within law enforcement. The author posits that the foundation of legitimacy rests on two fundamental elements: procedural justice and distributive justice. Procedural justice pertains to the equitable nature of the protocols employed by law enforcement agencies, encompassing decision-making processes and the treatment of individuals. Distributive justice pertains to the equitable nature of the consequences resulting from law enforcement interventions, encompassing the extent to which individuals are subjected to impartial treatment within the legal framework.

These studies offer compelling evidence that establishing trust-based relationships between law enforcement organizations and communities is crucial for successfully preventing crime. Establishing confidence and legitimacy by law enforcement agencies can foster cooperation among community members, encouraging them to engage with the Police and report criminal activities actively. This measure can potentially mitigate criminal activities and enhance the overall safety of communities.

- *The Concept of Police Community Relations (PCR).*

The concept of police-community relations (PCR) in Nigeria has undergone significant transformations over time, with a growing recognition of community policing as a practical approach to addressing societal challenges such as crime (Egwunye, 2022; Onah, 2022). Community policing emphasizes building strong ties, fostering close collaboration with community members, and establishing partnerships between law enforcement agencies and other organizations (Igiehon, 2022; Ogbonna & Okeke, 2022). The active involvement of community members is essential for the success of community policing, and their contributions should be valued and appreciated (Udosen, 2022; Nwankpa, 2022).

However, there are challenges in effectively incorporating women into community policing operations, as they are often overlooked and their potential contributions underutilized (Adebayo, 2022; Omotola, 2022). Despite these challenges, community policing is widely recognized as a proactive crime and disorder reduction strategy. Operational agendas, inconsistencies in policy, and resistance from some officers who might be unfamiliar with or opposed to its principles and practices can all hinder its effectiveness (Adagunodo, 2022; Olayinka & Akindele, 2022). Active and inclusive community policing is crucial for curbing insecurity in Nigeria and ensuring the effectiveness of police statutory functions (Oloyede, 2022; Adegboyega, 2022).

The Nigerian law enforcement environment is characterized by the interaction of historical, socio-cultural, and institutional elements that influence the dynamics of Police-community interactions and the delivery of Police services. According to Adediran & Agbibo (2019), it is crucial to have a comprehensive understanding of the broader framework in which the examination of Police-community relations in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area (LGA), Rivers State, is situated. This understanding is necessary to fully grasp the complexities and potentialities within the Nigerian policing system.

The historical origins of law enforcement in Nigeria may be traced back to the colonial period, wherein the establishment of the Police force served to uphold social order and safeguard the interests of the colonial administration (Eterigho, 2020). The historical origins of the Nigerian Police have had a lasting impact on how Nigerian residents perceive this institution. A significant number of individuals continue to hold the belief that the Police are inclined towards abusing their authority and are deficient in terms of being held accountable for their actions (Igboanus, 2022). These perspectives have played a significant part in the necessity of rethinking the role of law enforcement within the framework of a democratic society.

The Nigerian Police Force (NPF) serves as Nigeria's principal law enforcement institution and has undergone a series of reforms to improve its professionalism and ability to address the community's demands. Implementing community policing as a strategic approach highlights the acknowledgement that successful law enforcement necessitates proactive engagement with the community (Aborisade, 2021). The method recognizes the significance of local communities' knowledge about crime trends, social dynamics, and security concerns, which may be utilized to shape law enforcement strategies (Adediran & Agbibo, 2019).

Contemporary issues about law enforcement in Nigeria encompass rapid industrialization, population growth, escalating inequality, unemployment, and large-scale migration (Onuoha, 2021). The breakdown of established social structures, the presence of vulnerable states along borders, and the emergence of novel economic sectors have contributed to a diverse array of criminal concerns, including but not limited to robbery, kidnapping, corruption, fraud, terrorism, sexual assault, domestic violence, community discord, and political wrongdoing (Adeola, 2023). While certain specialized agencies are dedicated to tackling specific difficulties, it is worth noting that the Nigeria Police Force assumes a primary role in addressing these challenges (Agbibo, 2022). The Nigeria Police Force has managed and addressed these issues (Etiki, 2022). According to Akinola (2020), a proficient Police force is crucial for the effective and optimal functioning of a state, society, and economy.

Prior to the establishment of the Nigerian Police, local communities across the nation had independently developed their community-based Police protocols as a means of safeguarding the well-being of the population (Agbibo, 2021). In general, these groups are composed of persons who originate from the immediate vicinity and derive their credibility and informal influence from the populace they cater to (Onuoha, 2019). The structures persisted even after the establishment of the official Police force, mainly aiding law enforcement in identifying and transferring criminal suspects to the relevant judicial entities (Onuoha, 2019). According to Agbibo (2021), sporadic efforts were made to address more disputes among community members.

Policing does not come out of thin air, and police officers cannot continue to be utilized to address more significant societal concerns and challenges that minority communities commonly face. Collaboration between the police, social agencies, educational institutions, and economic resources is required to help address the requirements of minority inhabitants, particularly those living in high-poverty areas (Footer et al., 2022). Universal methods are required, such as case management and coordinated crime control initiatives between law enforcement and the community. Social policies that invest in health, education, and prosperity and effective targeted interventions can foster positive relationships between minorities and law enforcement. It is about spending resources on law enforcement, employing appropriate tactics to foster trust and cooperation with residents, and increasing community knowledge and public programs to support minority-populated urban communities (Footer et al., 2022).

A comprehensive approach to police-community relations is required to integrate policing into civil society. The police-community relationship in policing is a collaboration involving the public and the police in preventing and controlling crime in the community. It is a policing technique that allows the police to go beyond simply fighting crime by collaborating with community people to determine security priorities in society and devise solutions to recognized community concerns (Nøkleberg, 2020).

Alienation arises because of the police and society. Attempts have been made to close the gap between law enforcement and civilians. The Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC) was formed to gain public support and confidence. The Police Community Relations Committee was founded to bring the police and the public together, to bridge the socio-psychological divide between the police and the people, and to enable the community to organize informal security outfits (vigilantes) that would work alongside the professional security forces. Such police-community connections would allow the police to educate the public on new crime trends and preventative strategies (Harris et al., 2023). Police-community interactions in policing imply community collaboration in ensuring a safe and secure environment for everybody and citizens taking an active role in their affairs (Saxton et al., 2020).

Police-community relations encompass the dynamic interactions, perceptions, and attitudes between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. The direct influence of good policing on public trust, cooperation, and support for law enforcement renders it a pivotal component. The comprehension and enhancement of Police-community relations are imperative for preserving legal frameworks, preventing crime, and safeguarding community welfare and security. Police-community relations encompass the intricate dynamics, perspectives, and cooperative efforts between law enforcement organizations and the communities they serve. The fundamental element of modern policing is predicated on recognizing that establishing a harmonious and trustworthy rapport between law enforcement agencies and the community is vital for successfully preventing criminal activities, enforcing laws, and preserving public order.

Procedural justice is a fundamental idea within the context of Police-community relations. Procedural justice pertains to the equitable and transparent nature of the protocols and methodologies employed by law enforcement agencies throughout their engagements with the general populace. The study conducted by Sunshine and Tyler (2003) demonstrates the influential effect of procedural justice in molding public attitudes towards policing. When individuals think the Police treat them fairly, respectfully, and dignified, they tend to develop a higher level of legitimacy towards the Police. Consequently, they become more inclined to comply with the law, collaborate with law enforcement authorities, and endorse policies that enhance the authority and capabilities of the Police.

Alongside procedural fairness, instrumental judgments also influence popular support for law enforcement. According to the study conducted by Sunshine and Tyler (2003), individuals' perceptions regarding the likelihood of being apprehended and penalized for engaging in illicit activities, the effectiveness of law enforcement in combating crime, and the equitable provision of Police services also influence the level of public endorsement towards the Police. Nonetheless, the research conducted by the authors revealed that legitimacy, namely the perceived fairness of Police operations, significantly impacted the public's responses towards law enforcement.

It is imperative to acknowledge that the dynamics of Police-community relations exhibit significant variations among diverse communities and demographic cohorts. Weitzer and Tuch (2020) emphasize the significance of race, socioeconomic status, and individual experiences in influencing individuals' perceptions of racial profiling. Various factors can influence the perceptions and interactions of individuals and communities with the Police. This underscores the imperative for Police agencies to possess awareness of and proactively address these differences in their endeavours to foster favourable Police-community relations.

In the Nigerian setting and several other nations, the interactions between the Police and the community influence societal dynamics. These relationships cover not only the operational interactions between Police officers and residents but also encompass broader societal attitudes, emotions, and opinions towards law enforcement institutions. A constructive Police-community relationship is distinguished by reciprocal esteem, open and honest communication, and a collective dedication to preserving public safety. On the other hand, strained interactions can engender a lack of trust, feelings of apprehension, and a decrease in collaborative efforts.

Police-community relations are complex and dynamic, shaped by various circumstances spanning historical legacies to present-day issues. Within the intricate context of Nigeria, where multiple races, cultures, and social backgrounds converge, the intricacies of these interconnections are further compounded. The enduring influence of historical events, such as policing practices during the colonial era and security measures implemented after independence, has significantly shaped the mentality of law enforcement officials and the public, influencing contemporary perspectives on policing.

To comprehend the dynamics of Police-community interactions, it is necessary to delve into the complex interplay of several elements that contribute to their current state. Community opinions of law enforcement are influenced by various aspects, including socio-economic conditions, crime rates, educational attainment, and access to resources (Skilling, 2016). Moreover, the

techniques utilized by law enforcement in their engagements with the community, including the application of physical coercion, strategies of communication, and systems of responsibility, have a substantial influence on the extent of trust and collaboration.

The evolution of Police-community relations, culminating in the emergence of paradigms such as community policing, merits special attention. Community policing is a change in thinking from the conventional hierarchical method of law enforcement, prioritising cooperative frameworks wherein Police officers and community constituents collaborate to recognise and tackle localised issues (Skilling, 2016). This strategy strongly emphasizes problem-solving, active community participation, and forming collaborative relationships to foster better relations between law enforcement agencies and the public. According to Skilling (2016), empirical research has demonstrated that the implementation of community policing strategies has the potential to bolster public trust, strengthen the legitimacy of law enforcement agencies, and foster more efficient crime prevention efforts.

The intricacy of Police-community relations in the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria, assumes significant dimensions within its milieu. Several factors, including demographic composition, cultural practices, historical history, and particular difficulties within the community, influence the interactions between Police officers and citizens. A comprehensive comprehension of these dynamics is crucial for formulating policies and programmes that specifically address the distinct needs and sensitivities of the community.

As we progress further into later parts, we will examine the theoretical frameworks, variables, issues, and efforts that collectively influence the complex landscape of Police-community relations in Nigeria. This study endeavours to provide a thorough investigation to develop a robust framework for comprehending the impact of Police-community relations on the provision of Police services and the maintenance of public safety within the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

Nevertheless, there are ongoing issues that continue to exist within the law enforcement landscape in Nigeria. The Police have seen a decline in public trust due to the prevalence of corruption, human rights violations, and the inappropriate use of force, as highlighted by Akinyetun & Adedini (2022). Furthermore, the insufficient allocation of resources, inadequate training programmes, and lack of proper equipment frequently impede the law enforcement agencies' capacity to promptly address evolving security challenges and deliver high-quality services (Aborisade & Adeleke, 2022).

➤ *Factors Influencing the Delivery and Effectiveness of Police Services*

- *Governance and Organizational Structure:*

The governance and organizational structure of Police agencies can impact the efficiency and effectiveness of their services. Factors such as leadership, management practices, resource allocation, and accountability mechanisms can influence the quality of Police services (Ahrend et al. 2017).

- *Research and Evidence-Based Practices:*

Incorporating research and evidence-based practices inside Police services has the potential to augment their overall efficacy. The establishment of partnerships between researchers and practitioners has the potential to facilitate the creation and execution of inventive methods and interventions aimed at tackling growing difficulties and enhancing the provision of services (Rojek et al., 2019).

- *Entrepreneurial Policing:*

The concept of entrepreneurial policing emphasises adopting entrepreneurial principles and practices within Police services. This approach encourages innovation, problem-solving, and collaboration with the community and other stakeholders to improve service delivery and address community needs (Smith, 2019).

- *Mental Health Services:*

Police services often play a role in responding to mental health crises. Providing appropriate training, resources, and collaboration with mental health professionals is crucial for ensuring effective and compassionate responses to individuals experiencing mental health issues (Cummins, 2022).

- *Private Security and Investigation:*

Private security and investigation services complement Police services in many jurisdictions. Private investigators and security firms provide additional support in corporate fraud, risk advisory, and cybercrime investigations (King, 2020).

- *Community Policing:*

Community policing is an approach that emphasises collaboration and partnership between the Police and the community. It involves proactive engagement, problem-solving, and building trust and cooperation to address community concerns and prevent crime (Ekaabi et al., 2020).

- *Technology and Innovation:*

The utilization of technology and innovation can augment law enforcement agencies' efficiency and efficacy. Tushar et al. (2023) opines that using technologies such as artificial intelligence, data analytics, and surveillance systems can potentially contribute to crime prevention, investigation, and resource allocation.

- *Social and Political Context:*

The priorities, strategies, and community relationships of Police services can be influenced by the social and political milieu in which they operate. The delivery and perception of Police services can be influenced by various factors, including public trust, community expectations, social movements, and political events (Liu et al., 2021; Kyron et al., 2020; Gelderen & Bik, 2016).

- *Role and Functions of the Police in Nigeria*

The role and functions of the Police in Nigeria are outlined in various legal documents, including the Nigerian Constitution and the Nigeria Police Act. These documents define the responsibilities and duties of the Police force in the country. Here is an overview of the role and functions of the Police in Nigeria:

- *Protection of Life and Property:*

According to Section 214 of the Nigerian Constitution, a key responsibility assigned to the Police force is safeguarding life and property. According to Ayinde & Idowu (2016), the primary responsibility of law enforcement agencies is to uphold the safety and security of individuals and their private property.

- *Preservation of Law and Order:*

The Police are tasked with maintaining law and order. They enforce laws, prevent, and detect crimes, and apprehend offenders (Ayinde & Idowu, 2016; Oke et al., 2021).

- *Prevention and Detection of Crime:*

The Police play a significant role in preventing and detecting criminal acts. They are tasked with gathering intelligence, conducting investigations, and apprehending those involved in illegal activities (Ayinde & Idowu, 2016).

- *Maintenance of Public Order:*

The Police are responsible for maintaining public order and ensuring peaceful coexistence in communities. They are expected to respond to public disturbances, manage protests, and handle situations that may disrupt public peace (Ayinde & Idowu, 2016; Oke et al., 2021).

- *Election Security:*

During elections, the Police have a specific role in ensuring the safety and security of the electoral process. They protect life and property, preserve electoral law, prevent, and detect electoral crimes, and maintain order (Ayinde & Idowu, 2016).

- *Community Policing:*

Community policing is an approach that emphasizes collaboration and partnership between the Police and the community. It involves proactive engagement, problem-solving, and building trust and cooperation to address community concerns and prevent crime (Oke et al., 2021).

- *Traffic Enforcement:*

The Police enforce traffic laws and regulations. They ensure the smooth traffic flow, respond to accidents, and take measures to prevent road accidents (Ayinde & Idowu, 2016).

- *Intelligence-Led Policing:*

Adopting intelligence-led policing strategies and technologies is crucial in combating insecurity in Nigeria. The Police must effectively gather, assess, and redistribute information to address crime and insecurity (Ezeji, 2021).

- *Criminal Investigation:*

The Police are responsible for conducting criminal investigations. They gather evidence, interview witnesses, and build cases against individuals suspected of committing crimes ("The Position of Forensic DNA Database in Criminal Investigation: Understanding the Utilization in Africa, Particularly Nigeria a Review", 2021).

- *Public Engagement and Trust Building:*

The Police are expected to engage with the public, build trust, and maintain positive relationships with the community. This includes fostering dialogue, addressing community concerns, and promoting transparency and accountability (Aborisade & Adeleke, 2022).

- *Training and Capacity Building:*

The Police must undergo regular training and capacity-building programs to enhance their skills, knowledge, and professionalism. This includes training on crime prevention, investigation techniques, human rights, and community engagement (Nwobueze et al., 2018).

It is important to note that the effectiveness of the Police in fulfilling their role and functions can be influenced by various factors, including organisational challenges, public perception, resource constraints, and the social and political context in which they operate (Odeyemi & Obiyan, 2018; Akinlabi, 2016; Famosaya, 2020).

The Nigerian Police force is entrusted with a diverse array of duties and obligations, encompassing the safeguarding of individuals and assets, the upholding of legal principles and societal harmony, the prevention and identification of criminal activities, the preservation of public tranquilly, the assurance of secure electoral processes, the implementation of community-oriented policing strategies, the enforcement of traffic regulations, the conduct of criminal inquiries, the cultivation of public involvement, and the provision of training initiatives. In the Nigerian context, the functions mentioned earlier are crucial in maintaining peace, protecting societal welfare, and assuring adherence to legal principles.

- *Challenges and Issues in Police-Community Relations*

The formation of a positive and productive relationship between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve is impeded by a multitude of obstacles and issues that confront Police-community relations. These issues emerge due to societal dynamics, historical legacies, and specific local circumstances. Comprehending and effectively tackling these difficulties is paramount in enhancing the relationship between law enforcement agencies and the community and cultivating trust, collaboration, and reciprocal esteem.

- *Trust*

An essential and notable obstacle in Police-community relations pertains to trust. Trust fosters a constructive relationship between law enforcement agencies and the community. Nevertheless, trust can be undermined due to past events, perceptions of prejudice or unfair treatment, and wrongdoing or misuse of authority within law enforcement. Muslim individuals belonging to minority groups may encounter heightened difficulties placing trust in law enforcement agencies due to stigmatization and unfavorable encounters (Murphy & McPherson, 2022). Establishing trust necessitates implementing measures to foster transparency, accountability, and equity within Police operations while attending to community-specific issues and perceptions of prejudice.

- *Legitimacy*

Another significant obstacle that arises is the matter of legitimacy. Legitimacy pertains to the perception surrounding the Police force's entitlement to enforce legal statutes and the belief that their conduct is warranted and fitting. The concept of legitimacy is intricately connected to trust. It is subject to various elements that shape it, including the perceived equity of Police procedures, the efficacy of Police services, and the Police's response to the community's demands (Griffiths & Clark, 2017). The establishment of Police legitimacy necessitates the promotion of procedural fairness, the guarantee of equitable service provision, and the resolution of community issues and grievances.

- *Community Engagement*

Community engagement and participation are critical components of establishing solid Police-community interactions. Nevertheless, including a wide range of communities might present difficulties stemming from cultural variances, obstacles in communication caused by linguistic variations, and longstanding conflicts rooted in history. In rare instances, specific populations may experience marginalization or exclusion from decision-making procedures, resulting in a dearth of collaboration and a deterioration of communication (Skilling, 2016). Addressing these difficulties necessitates proactive endeavours to engage community members in defining policing techniques, facilitating discourse, and establishing partnerships grounded in mutual respect and comprehension.

- *Resource Allocation*

Resource allocation and capacity present an additional obstacle in Police-community relations. The efficacy of law enforcement forces in meeting and addressing the community's needs might be impeded by a scarcity of resources, encompassing workforce, equipment, and training. A dearth of resources might result in the postponement of emergency response, insufficient endeavours in crime prevention, and a need for more community-oriented policing programmes (Glenn et al., 2019). To effectively tackle this situation, it is imperative to ensure sufficient financial resources and appropriate allocation of resources towards the promotion of community policing initiatives, implementation of comprehensive training programmes, and establishment of specialized units aimed at addressing specific concerns within the community.

- *Gender-Related Issues*

Gender-related problems are also present in the context of Police-community relations. Female law enforcement personnel may encounter gender stereotypes, work-life balance challenges, and social injustices that can impact their productivity and overall performance (Hussain et al., 2022; Ong'ale & Masiga, 2021). The issues have the potential to exert an influence on the representation of women within the law enforcement sector, hence impeding endeavours aimed at cultivating Police forces that are both varied and inclusive. The resolution of gender-related difficulties necessitates the advancement of gender equality, the establishment of support mechanisms for female officers, and the cultivation of a work environment that fosters diversity and inclusion.

- *Insecurity and Crime*

The presence of insecurity and crime presents substantial obstacles to establishing positive Police-community ties. The presence of elevated crime rates, instances of violence, and a general lack of security can engender feelings of dread and mistrust within communities, hence posing challenges for law enforcement agencies in their efforts to foster constructive relationships and secure community cooperation (Insecurity and Community Policing: Impact on Adolescent Educational Attainment in Nigeria, 2020). To tackle these difficulties, it is imperative to implement efficient crime prevention measures, adopt community-oriented policing approaches, and foster collaboration between law enforcement agencies and community members to address the underlying causes of crime and insecurity effectively.

- *Diffusing Innovative Practices*

The deployment and adoption of novel Police tactics may also pose some obstacles. The diffusion of novel practices, such as problem-oriented policing, may encounter challenges and obstacles in implementation and long-term viability (Bullock, 2022). To surmount these obstacles, it is imperative to have a strong dedication to leadership, provide comprehensive training and support for law enforcement personnel, and prioritize implementing evidence-based strategies that have demonstrated efficacy in enhancing Police-community interactions.

- *The Significance of Positive Police-Community Relations (PCR)*

Positive Police-community relations are essential for maintaining public safety, preventing crime, and nurturing a sense of community safety. The relationship between law enforcement agencies and their communities is characterized by mutual trust, respect, and cooperation. A growing corpus of research supports the significance of positive Police-community relations and has many significant ramifications.

- *Enhance Legitimacy*

Positive Police-community relations enhance the legitimacy of law enforcement agencies to begin with. Legitimacy is the perception that the Police have the authority to enforce the law and that their actions are justifiable and acceptable. When the community views the Police as legitimate, they are likelier to obey the law, cooperate with the Police, and support law enforcement initiatives. (Shupard & Kearns, 2019) Legitimacy in Police practices is closely tied to trust, equity, and procedural justice (Liddle, 2022). By fostering positive relationships with the community, law enforcement agencies can increase their legitimacy and garner more significant support from the public.

- *Enhance the Efficacy of Crime Prevention*

Positive Police-community relations enhance the efficacy of crime prevention and law enforcement efforts. When the Police have a positive relationship with the community, they receive valuable information, cooperation, and support from the community members. This information can be used to identify and address crime hotspots, prevent criminal activity, and solve cases (Ali et al., 2023). Trusting and respectful community members are more likely to report crimes, provide witness statements, and assist in investigations (Crow et al., 2017). By nurturing positive relationships, law enforcement agencies can access the collective resources and knowledge of the community, resulting in enhanced crime prevention and law enforcement outcomes.

- *Satisfaction of Community Members*

Thirdly, positive Police-community relations contribute to the well-being and contentment of community members. When people feel secure, respected, and supported by the Police, their sense of security and quality of life increase (Ekaabi et al., 2020). Positive interactions with the Police can increase community members' perceptions of safety, decrease their fear of crime, and increase their overall satisfaction with law enforcement (Crow et al., 2017). This increases community participation, cooperation, and support for law enforcement initiatives.

- *Positive Impact and Behavior*

Positive Police-community relations have also been found to positively impact the behaviour and attitudes of individuals involved in the criminal justice system. Individuals with positive personal or vicarious experiences with the Police are more likely to have positive legal orientations, such as perceiving the Police as legitimate and possessing lower levels of cynicism, according to research (Liddle, 2022). Positive interactions with the authorities are also associated with lower rates of recidivism and greater compliance with probation or parole conditions (Santos, 2018). By cultivating positive relationships with individuals in the criminal justice system, law enforcement agencies can aid their rehabilitation and successful reintegration into society.

- *Social Cohesion*

Moreover, positive Police-community relations have broader societal consequences. They contribute to social cohesion, resilience, and well-being (Ali et al., 2023). Together, the Police and the community can address underlying social issues, foster community development, and enhance the overall quality of life in neighbourhoods (Ali et al., 2023). Positive Police-community relations also aid in bridging disparities between various demographic groups, reducing social tensions, and promoting diversity and inclusion within communities (Ali et al., 2023).

- *Factors Influencing Police-Community Relations in Nigeria*

Many factors collectively influence the dynamics, perceptions, and interactions between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve to create the intricate tapestry of Police-community relations. These factors, which range from historical legacies to modern challenges, play a crucial role in determining the level of trust, cooperation, and collaboration at this crucial interface. Numerous factors that shape the perceptions, attitudes, and interactions between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve impact Police-community relations in Nigeria. These factors can be categorized into several key areas: socio-economic factors, cultural and historical factors, law enforcement practices, community dynamics, and legal and policy frameworks.

- *Socio-Economic Factors:*

The socioeconomic conditions of a community have a significant impact on Police-community relations. Socio-economic factors like income, education, and employment can influence Police-community relations. Studies have shown that higher education and income levels are associated with more positive perceptions of the Police (Afon & Badiora, 2016). Higher education levels may lead to increased awareness of rights and expectations from law enforcement. In comparison, higher income levels may give individuals a sense of security and confidence in their interactions with the Police (Afon & Badiora, 2016). Conversely, lower socio-economic status can contribute to negative perceptions and experiences with the Police, as individuals may feel marginalized or unfairly targeted (Afon & Badiora, 2016).

- *Cultural and Historical Factors:*

Cultural and historical factors significantly shape Police-community relations in Nigeria. Nigeria has various ethnic groups with cultural practices, beliefs, and historical experiences. These factors can influence how different communities perceive and interact with the Police. Historical experiences, such as colonial-era policing practices and post-independence security measures, have left lasting impressions on the psyche of law enforcement and the citizenry, shaping present-day perceptions of policing (Afon & Badiora, 2016). Cultural norms and values can also influence community members' expectations of the Police and willingness to cooperate with law enforcement efforts.

- *Law Enforcement Practices:*

Law enforcement practices, including using force, accountability mechanisms, and community engagement strategies, significantly impact Police-community relations. How the Police carry out their duties and interact with the community can shape perceptions of fairness, trust, and legitimacy. Studies have shown that positive interactions characterized by respect, transparency, and procedural justice enhance Police-community relations (Afon & Badiora, 2016). Conversely, Police misconduct, abuse of power, or perceived bias can erode trust and cooperation. Instances of excessive use of force and the absence of accountability for Police misconduct can devastate Police-community relations. To prevent abuses that can erode public trust, the use of force must be proportional and governed by established protocols. When officers are not held accountable for their actions, it reinforces the belief that the system lacks impartiality and justice (Brunson et al., 2019).

- *Community Dynamics:*

Community dynamics, including social cohesion, community engagement, and the presence of community organizations, can influence Police-community relations. Strong social networks and community organizations can facilitate communication, collaboration, and problem-solving between the Police and the community. Community members who feel connected and engaged are more likely to have positive perceptions of the Police and be willing to cooperate with law enforcement efforts. Conversely, communities with high levels of social disorganization, limited community engagement, and weak social networks may experience strained Police-community relations.

- *Legal and Policy Frameworks:*

Legal and policy frameworks, including enforcing laws, regulations, and human rights protections, can impact Police-community relations. The effective enforcement of laws and regulations, particularly in areas such as human rights, can contribute to positive perceptions of the Police and enhance trust and cooperation (Olaoye, 2021). Conversely, the lack of enforcement or perceived corruption within the legal and justice system can undermine trust and confidence in law enforcement agencies.

- *Media Influence:*

Media portrayal of law enforcement and crime can significantly shape public perceptions. For example, a study by Amnesty International (2020) found that negative coverage of Police actions or sensationalized incidents can contribute to mistrust and

apprehension among the public. Conversely, positive media coverage highlighting community policing efforts and successful crime prevention initiatives can bolster public confidence in law enforcement.

- *Analyzing the Effectiveness of Initiatives in Fostering Police-Community Collaboration*

Improving Police-community collaboration and cultivating positive interactions are crucial aspects of contemporary policing strategies (Famega et al. (2016). These initiatives, including implementing community policing, enhancements to training, and accountability mechanisms, are intended to bridge the divide between law enforcement agencies and the community (Rahman & Razak, 2021). Effectively assessing the impact of these initiatives requires a thorough evaluation of their tangible and intangible outcomes in the context of the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State (Braga et al., 2021).

- *Evaluating Trust and Perception*

A crucial aspect of effective Police-community collaboration is fostering community members' trust and positive perceptions (Rahman & Razak, 2021). The objective of initiatives that promote transparency, accountability, and respectful communication is to rebuild and reinforce this trust. Community members' perceptions of law enforcement agencies' responsiveness, fairness, and approachability must be evaluated to determine their effectiveness. Surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions can reveal whether these initiatives have contributed to a shift in perception and a propensity to collaborate with law enforcement (Rahman & Razak, 2021).

- *Community Engagement and Participation*

Community engagement initiatives, such as town hall meetings, neighbourhood surveillance, and problem-solving partnerships, are designed to encourage resident participation and input (Oliveira, 2021). Analysing the impact of such initiatives requires evaluating the level of community participation in shaping policing strategies, crime prevention initiatives, and policy decisions. Metrics such as attendance at community meetings, participation in crime prevention programmes, and the frequency of interactions between officers and residents can cast light on the collaboration-fostering effectiveness of these engagement initiatives (Oliveira, 2021).

- *Measuring Crime Reduction and Prevention*

Effective Police-community collaboration has the measurable effect of reducing and preventing crime (Staller et al., 2022). This objective is supported by initiatives encouraging community members to actively report crimes, share information, and collaborate with law enforcement to identify and address local safety issues (Staller et al., 2022). Analyzing crime data, comparing trends before and after implementation and determining whether crime rates have decreased or shifted towards preventive measures are required to evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives.

- *Assessing Community Feedback and Satisfaction*

The satisfaction and feedback of the community regarding the quality of Police services is our vital indicator of successful collaboration. Initiatives that prioritise community input, resolve concerns, and involve residents in evaluating policing efforts can impact overall satisfaction. Using feedback mechanisms, surveys, and public forums, researchers can assess community sentiment, identify enhancement areas, and determine if these initiatives have increased satisfaction with Police services (Oliveira, 2021).

- *Impact on Officer Behavior and Conduct*

The behaviour and conduct of Police officers are also affected by initiatives related to training enhancements and accountability mechanisms (Mazerolle et al., 2020). Analyzing their efficacy requires determining whether officers demonstrate enhanced communication skills, cultural competency, and ethical decision-making (Mazerolle et al., 2021). Assessing whether malfeasance or abuse has decreased due to improved accountability mechanisms can shed light on how these initiatives affect officer behaviour and interactions with the public (Mazerolle et al., 2021).

Analyzing the efficacy of initiatives that facilitate Police-community collaboration and positive interactions requires a multidimensional approach that considers a variety of qualitative and quantitative variables (Staller et al., 2021). By analyzing shifts in community perception, engagement levels, crime reduction, community satisfaction, and officer behaviour, researchers can assess how these initiatives have impacted Police-community relations in the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State (Lim & Kwak, 2021).

- *Nigeria's Policy of Police Services Commission (PSC)*

The Police Service Commission (PSC) is a crucial institution in Nigeria's policing landscape, tasked with ensuring the effective administration and accountability of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) (Egunjobi, 2017). Established under the 1999 Constitution and further defined by the Police Service Commission (Establishment) Act 2001, the PSC is pivotal in maintaining law and order nationwide (Akaba & Salawu, 2023). The Policy of the Police Services Commission in Nigeria plays a crucial role in the nation's endeavours to combat police brutality, uphold human rights, and implement necessary reforms within the police force (Onwunoyirimadu, 2022).

The key provisions of Nigeria's Police Services Commission emphasize the need for a suitable structure and strategies to achieve effective service delivery (Akaba & Salawu, 2023). The existence of a single, highly centralized police force in a vast and diverse country like Nigeria has sparked a debate, with arguments for both centralization and fragmentation (Egunjobi, 2017). The centralized structure of the police under the 1999 Constitution contradicts the principles of federalism, prompting calls for the establishment of state police to foster true federalism and autonomy for the states (Nwankpa & Nwankpa, 2022). Law enforcement, particularly the police, plays a critical role in maintaining peace and order, with crime prevention as a primary duty (Umoh, 2020).

➤ *Core Functions of the Police Service Commission*

The PSC's mandate encompasses a range of critical responsibilities, including:

• *Appointment, Promotion, and Discipline of Police Officers:*

The PSC holds the authority to appoint, promote, and discipline all NPF officers, excluding the Inspector-General of Police (IGP) (Nwankpa & Nwankpa, 2022). The Police Services Commission is responsible for conducting investigations and imposing disciplinary penalties on officers who have committed misconduct. This responsibility entails overseeing the recruitment process, evaluating officers for promotions, and addressing misconduct through disciplinary hearings.

• *Regulation of the NPF:*

The PSC is empowered to formulate regulations governing the NPF's structure, operations, and personnel management (Okolie & Chukwu, 2018). These regulations ensure consistency and professionalism within the police force. Additionally, it is tasked with taking appropriate steps to improve the police system and ensuring that prospective police personnel undergo comprehensive mental evaluations (Onwunyirimadu, 2022).

• *Advising the President on Policing Matters:*

The PSC serves as an advisory body to the President on matters related to policing strategies, resource allocation, and overall NPF performance (Umoh, 2020). This consultative role helps shape effective policing policies.

• *The significance of the Police Service Commission*

The PSC plays a central role in upholding the integrity and effectiveness of the NPF by:

✓ *Ensuring Professionalism and Accountability:*

The PSC's oversight of appointments, promotions, and disciplinary actions promotes a culture of professionalism and accountability within the NPF.

✓ *Protecting Public Interests:*

By regulating the NPF and advising the President, the PSC safeguards public interests and ensures that policing activities align with the needs and expectations of Nigerian citizens.

✓ *Enhancing Public Confidence in Policing:*

The PSC's commitment to transparency and accountability fosters public trust in the NPF, promoting cooperation and collaboration between the police and the communities they serve.

✓ *Challenges and Prospects of the Police Service Commission*

However, the reality in Nigeria is that the police force faces various difficulties, including insufficient funding, inadequate training, and corruption (Okolie & Chukwu, 2018).

• *Despite its Crucial Role, the PSC Faces Several Challenges, Including:*

✓ *Resource Constraints:*

Inadequate funding can limit the PSC's ability to effectively carry out its mandate, particularly in areas like training and infrastructure.

✓ *Political Interference:*

Political influence on the PSC's decision-making processes can undermine its independence and impartiality.

✓ *Public Perception of Police Misconduct:*

Negative perceptions of police misconduct can erode public trust in the PSC and its ability to hold officers accountable.

In order to effectively tackle these difficulties and improve the effectiveness of the PSC, several potential techniques might be considered:

✓ *Increased Funding and Resource Allocation:*

Adequate financial support would enable the PSC to improve its training, research, and oversight capacity.

✓ *Strengthening Institutional Autonomy:*

Safeguarding the PSC's independence from political interference would ensure its decisions are based on merit and objectivity.

✓ *Enhanced Public Engagement:*

Fostering open communication and collaboration between the PSC and the public can promote transparency and address concerns about police misconduct. By effectively addressing these challenges and implementing strategic improvements, the PSC can continue to play a vital role in ensuring a professional, accountable, and effective police force in Nigeria. Attempts to reform the Nigerian police force have been made in the past, but they were frequently ineffective or not fully implemented. For instance, previous presidents, including President Goodluck Jonathan, have established committees to address police reform, but the committees' recommendations have yet to be thoroughly implemented (Akinyetun & Adedini, 2022).

The structural reformation of the Nigeria Police Force is also an essential aspect of the country's policy. Strategic human resource management frameworks have been proposed to make the necessary changes in the police force. These frameworks involve sourcing information from national and international civil society organizations, such as the Policy and Legal Advocacy Center and the Civil Liberties Organization and adopting thematic and content analysis of secondary data (Oyindamola et al., 2022). In addition to police reform, community policing has been suggested as a way to complement the efforts of the Nigeria Police Force in maintaining internal security and protecting lives and property. Community policing involves engaging the community in crime prevention and law enforcement activities, and it can help address the surge of crimes and ineffective policing in Nigeria (Oluwasolape et al., 2021).

The role of commissions in governance and service delivery is also relevant to Nigeria's Policy of Police Services Commission. Reforms in regulatory agencies, such as the Corporate Affairs Commission, aim to promote organizational effectiveness by eliminating cumbersome procedures that cause delays in operational activities (Madu & Idris, 2015). Similarly, establishing forensic mental health services within the prison system in Nigeria is an example of how commissions can address specific needs and challenges in the criminal justice system (Majekodunmi et al., 2020). The issue of police brutality, particularly against Nigerian youth, has been a significant concern. The Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) has been implicated in cases of police brutality, leading to calls for its disbandment and reforms in the police force (Akinyetun, 2021). Civilian oversight of the police, as seen in Kenya, has been identified as a potential solution to address issues of police misconduct and improve police-community relations (Hope, 2019).

It is important to note that the challenges faced by the Nigeria Police Force are not unique to the country. Police reform efforts have also been undertaken in other countries, such as Australia and the Nordic countries. These efforts have involved the establishment of oversight agencies, the evaluation of police organizational reforms, and the examination of the relationship between civil service commissions and police diversity (Prenzler, 2011; Granér, 2017; Kringen, 2015). Nigeria's Policy of Police Services Commission is a multifaceted approach to addressing police brutality, human rights violations, and police reform. It involves the investigation and sanctioning of erring officers, the implementation of proper police reform measures, the adoption of strategic human resource management frameworks, the establishment of community policing, and the engagement of commissions in governance and service delivery. These efforts are aimed at improving the effectiveness and accountability of the Nigeria Police Force and ensuring the protection of citizens' rights and safety.

➤ *Empirical Review*

In a study conducted in London, United Kingdom, Thomas et al. (2022) examined community engagement strategies in policing across different London boroughs. The study underscores the role of social media, particularly Twitter, in enhancing community-police relations and emphasizes the need to align social media activities with community policing principles.

Williams et al. (2018) investigated trust in the Police at the neighborhood level in London. Their research utilizes a spatiotemporal Bayesian hierarchical approach to analyze confidence patterns in the Police, emphasizing the importance of tailored policing strategies for specific neighborhood contexts. Similarly, Loveday and Smith (2015) explored the impact of community-based initiatives, like Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), on visible policing and neighborhood safety in London. The study evaluates the effectiveness of these roles and their potential within the Metropolitan Police Service and London boroughs.

In Durban, South Africa, Fouché et al. (2019) emphasized the significance of addressing social ills and implementing safety measures in township communities to foster trust between law enforcement agencies and the local community. While, Dlamini (2020) examined the quality and perspectives of Community Policing Forums (CPFs) in Durban townships, highlighting their influence on Police-community relations and shedding light on their advantages and disadvantages. Also, Govender & Pillay

(2021) noted the importance of addressing corruption within the Police force and restoring public trust in Durban, South Africa. They call for a critical evaluation of the Police service to align it with democratic principles and regain public respect.

In Accra, Ghana, Doane & Cumberland (2018) assessed the impact of community policing initiatives on public perception and trust in law enforcement. Their findings underline the significance of community engagement, citizen participation, and collaboration to enhance Police-community relations. Similarly, Arisukwu (2017) explored the implementation of community policing in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study delves into challenges related to building trust and collaboration with diverse communities, highlighting the role of traditional leaders in mediating Police-community interactions.

Oke et al. (2021) analyzed the effectiveness of community policing as a security strategy in Nigeria, emphasizing the importance of partnerships between the Police and local communities. The study underscores the need for community engagement and collaboration to enhance public safety. Shoyode (2018) also investigated public trust in the Nigerian Police and its relationship with Police accessibility. The study reveals that individual of low socio-economic status face difficulties in accessing Police services, impacting their trust in law enforcement. Lim & Kwak (2022) pointed out that factor such as security perception, social cohesion, procedural justice, and Police effectiveness influence public trust in the Police. Difficulties in accessing Police services can negatively affect trust and willingness to engage with the Police. These empirical studies shed light on community engagement strategies, challenges, and the importance of collaboration between law enforcement agencies and local communities to enhance Police-community relations and public safety.

- *Implications within the Obio/Akpor Context*

Based on the literature review, it becomes apparent that establishing effective Police-community relations is contingent upon several critical factors, including transparency, active community involvement, cultural sensitivity, and adherence to procedural justice. Recognizing historical tensions, acknowledging community concerns, and promoting open communication are recurring elements that significantly facilitate constructive encounters and enhance the quality of Police services. Applying these to the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area will offer guidance for the formulation of customized programmes that effectively address the specific requirements of the local community. This study aims to provide practical recommendations for improving Police-community relations and enhancing the effectiveness of Police services in the region by integrating insights from these case studies and a comprehensive understanding of the local dynamics.

➤ *Theoretical Framework*

These theoretical perspectives provide frameworks for understanding and analyzing Police-community relations and Police services in Nigeria. By applying these perspectives to the specific context of the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, we can better understand the dynamics and challenges of policing in this community.

- *Community Policing Theory (CPT)*

The philosophy of Community Policing was initially introduced by Professor Robert Trojanowicz during the 1970s and garnered significant recognition throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The author defined the concept as "a comprehensive approach to law enforcement that emphasizes individualized service, wherein a designated officer consistently patrols and operates within a specific geographical region, operates from a decentralized location, and actively collaborates with community members to identify and address issues proactively (Mouhanna 2014).

Currently, this style of policing is widely regarded as highly significant. The efficacy of the community policing philosophy in enhancing Police-community connections and mitigating criminal activity has been well documented. The philosophy of community policing was initially introduced in the 1970s and garnered significant recognition during the 1980s and 1990s. Currently, it is widely acknowledged as a highly significant policing methodology. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that community policing has yet to offer an immediate solution. Establishing confidence and collaboration between law enforcement agencies and the community requires significant time and effort.

Community policing theory is highly relevant to studying Police-community relations and Police services in the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. The theory emphasizes the importance of collaboration, partnership, and the active involvement of community members in crime prevention and control efforts. By applying community policing theory to the study, the dynamics of interactions between the Police and the community and the factors influencing cooperation, trust, and support can be gained.

The study by Oke et al. (2021) examines policing through the community as a strategy to strengthen the security architecture in Nigeria. This aligns with the principles of community policing, which emphasizes establishing partnerships between the Police and the community. The study explores the effectiveness of community policing initiatives and the perception of the Police by the public, providing insights into the implementation and impact of community policing in the study area.

Bahadar et al. (2019) investigate the role of gender in determining women's participation in community policing in Nigeria. This aligns with the principles of community policing theory, which emphasizes the importance of inclusivity and the involvement of all community members in crime prevention efforts. This study underscores the obstacles encountered by women in their involvement in community policing endeavors and underscores the imperative of incorporating them into crime prevention and security initiatives.

Furthermore, the study by Aborisade & Adeleke (2022) explores pandemic policing and community engagement during the COVID-19 crisis in Nigeria. The study examines the preparedness of the Police, public trust in the Police, and community engagement as factors influencing the effectiveness of pandemic policing. This aligns with the principles of community policing, which emphasize the importance of trust, legitimacy, and community involvement in policing efforts.

- *Social Exchange Theory (SET)*

George C. Homans is a proponent of social exchange theory. In 1958, he first proposed the theory (Sandleben, 2016). The social exchange theory posits that social interactions involve the reciprocal exchange of tangible and intangible resources among individuals or social entities (Wang et al., 2023). Hamid et al. (2020) underscores the significance of impartiality, reciprocity, and the anticipation of advantages within social connections. Social exchange theory is a well-established framework for understanding diverse social phenomena, such as organizational behavior, interpersonal relationships, and decision-making processes.

According to Helfers et al. (2018), social exchange theory can explain self-protective Police officer behavior. This study investigates the connection between perceptions of organizational justice and self-protective behaviour within the Police force. This study investigates how organizational support and indifference indicate the social exchange process. Landor and Barr (2018) discuss the applicability of social exchange theory when examining the material and cultural realities of people of colour and their families. They contend that critical race and intersectionality scholarship challenges certain assumptions of social exchange theory while opening new research avenues and broadening the focus of family researchers. Using social exchange theory to analyze Police-community relations and Police services in the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State, Nigeria, is a feasible and effective method. The theoretical framework provides valuable insights into the dynamics of Police-community relations and the multiple factors that influence collaboration, trust, and support.

One aspect that social exchange theory can help explain is the role of gender in determining women's participation in community policing Arisukwu et al. (2022). The theory suggests that societal norms and expectations influence the exchange of resources and benefits between women and the Police, neglecting women's contributions to crime prevention efforts. By applying social exchange theory, the study can explore the challenges faced by women in participating in community policing operations and highlight the need to include them in crime prevention and security operations.

Additionally, social exchange theory can shed light on the effectiveness of policing through the community as a strategy to strengthen the security architecture in Nigeria (Oke et al., 2021). The theory emphasizes the importance of reciprocal exchanges and the perception of fairness in maintaining cooperative relationships. By examining citizen participation and the broken window theory within the framework of social exchange theory, the study can assess the effectiveness of policing through community engagement and its impact on Police services.

Furthermore, social exchange theory can help understand the impact of perceived organizational support and justice on Police corruption (Ayodele et al., 2021). The theory suggests that when Police officers perceive a breach in their psychological contract, they may engage in corrupt practices as a form of retaliation or compensation. By considering the principles of social exchange theory, the study can explore the relationship between psychological contract breach, emotion regulation strategies, and Police corruption in Nigeria.

Moreover, social exchange theory can provide insights into the challenges faced by the Nigerian Police in enforcing COVID-19 measures and their impact on Police-community relations (Aborisade & Adeleke, 2022). The theory highlights the importance of trust, reciprocity, and fairness in maintaining positive social exchanges. By examining the preparedness of the Police, public trust, and community engagement within the framework of social exchange theory, the study can assess the effectiveness of pandemic policing and identify strategies to improve Police-community relations. Social exchange theory is relevant for examining Police-community relations and Police services within the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria. The theory offers valuable insights into interactions between the Police and the community and the elements that impact cooperation, support, and the overall efficacy of enforcement activities. These insights are derived from reciprocity, fairness, and trust.

➤ *Gaps in Existing Literature*

Although valuable insights have been gained from study on Police-community interactions and Police services, there are still several gaps in the existing literature. Identifying these gaps holds significant importance in advancing knowledge and providing guidance for policy-making and practical implementation, particularly within the specific context of the Obio/Akpor Local

Government Area in Rivers State. Several significant gaps can be identified in the existing literature. Firstly, a dearth of research is dedicated to the Obio/Akpor area. This geographical region has not received adequate scholarly attention, and further investigation is needed to understand its unique characteristics and dynamics. Additionally, the exploration of community perspectives in the existing literature is limited. It is crucial to incorporate the viewpoints and experiences of the local population to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand.

Furthermore, the literature lacks sufficient attention to cultural sensitivity. It is essential to consider the cultural context in which interventions are implemented to ensure their effectiveness and appropriateness. Moreover, the impact of socioeconomic factors has not been thoroughly examined in existing research. Understanding how these factors intersect with the issues under investigation is crucial for developing effective interventions and policies. Another notable gap is the lack of focus on the long-term effects of interventions. Assessing interventions' sustainability and lasting impact is important to ensure their effectiveness and value. Furthermore, limited attention has been given to gender and vulnerable group perspectives. Considering these groups' unique challenges and experiences is crucial to develop inclusive and equitable interventions. Additionally, the reliance on quantitative methods over qualitative approaches is evident in the literature. Qualitative research methods can provide valuable insights and a deeper understanding of the issues under investigation.

Lastly, there is a lack of comprehensive comparative analyses in the existing literature. Comparative studies can offer valuable insights into the similarities and differences across different contexts, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the issues. These knowledge gaps can be addressed by conducting targeted research within the Obio/Akpor context, leading to a more comprehensive comprehension of Police-community relations. This study can also serve as a basis for developing strategies and policies to tackle this community's distinct difficulties and opportunities.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the basic techniques and methodology employed in this study under the following subheadings: research design, study population, sampling techniques and sample size, measurement description, instrument validity and reliability, data collection method, data analysis method, and finally, key informant and ethical considerations. This enables the study to be focused and provide reliable data that can be used to draw conclusions and formulate recommendations.

➤ *Research Design*

A research design is the arrangement of conditions for data collection and analysis that attempts to balance study objective relevance and procedural economy. The purpose of a descriptive survey was to collect comprehensive data on existing phenomena. This study employed a descriptive cross-sectional research design (Nwondah & Alabere, 2018). This design permits data acquisition at a specific time and provides a snapshot of the investigated variables. It is appropriate for examining the relationship between variables and determining the prevalence of phenomena. Police Community Relations and Police Services in Nigeria: A Study of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State is a qualitative study that employs a descriptive survey through questionnaire as its research design.

➤ *Population of the Study*

The study population refers to the complete collection of observations from which the sample is derived. Consequently, the population acts as the fundamental basis from which a sample is selected. To collect primary data, the target population was selected from individuals residing in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area (LGA), which serves as the geographical focus of the study.

➤ *Sampling Frame and Sampling Size*

The study's population comprised of about sixty-six (66) communities with a total population of approximately five hundred thousand (500,000) people. The sample size of two hundred and fifty (250) questionnaires was chosen using the purposive sampling technique. This amount was deemed sufficient given the statistical criteria, time schedule, and available resources. This implies that ten (10) populated communities and towns, such as Rukpokwu, Rumuola, Choba, Elelenwo, Eliozu, Rumuokoro, Oginigba, Rumuogba, Woji, and Oroazi, were chosen from the sixty-six (66) communities and towns in Obio-Akpor LGA, with twenty-five (25) responders from each.

• *Sampling Size*

The population of the study consisted of 66 communities. They encompass a total population of around 500,000 individuals. The researchers employed the purposive sampling strategy to select a sample size of 250 questionnaires. Based on the statistical criteria, schedule, and available resources, it was determined that this quantity was enough. This suggests that a selection was made from a total of sixty-six (66) villages and towns in Obio-Akpor LGA, including Rukpokwu, Rumuola, Choba, Elelenwo, Eliozu, Rumuokoro, Oginigba, Rumuogba, Woji, and Oroazi. Each of these ten (10) inhabited communities and towns will be represented by twenty-five (25) respondents.

• *Sampling Techniques*

The inclusion criteria were met by participants who were above the age of 18 and possessed the ability to provide informed consent autonomously. In addition, the individuals involved in the study comprised community group members or community Police officers. The study employed a multistage sample methodology to recruit individuals from various localities within the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area (Nwondah & Alabere, 2018). The recruitment strategy employed yielded a cumulative sample size of 250 individuals for the research study. The recruitment of participants in qualitative research is based on their possession of firsthand information about the topic matter being investigated.

The selection of target respondents involved using planned and snowballing non-probability sampling techniques. This suggests that the study involved the participation of Police personnel at various ranks, both senior and junior, as well as local vigilante organizations and community members residing and working in the ten (10) chosen communities or towns (Rukpokwu, Rumuola, Choba, Elelenwo, Eliozu, Rumuokoro, Oginigba, Rumuogba, Woji, and Oroazi,). The purpose of this sampling methodology is to ascertain individuals who possess the capacity to provide the most pertinent data for the research study.

➤ *Description of Measurement*

The collection of data from respondents for a study is commonly referred to as measurement devices, encompassing a variety of approaches employed by researchers. The study included a combination of primary and secondary data sources. The primary data source comprises data collected through structured questionnaires. The utilization of this instrument facilitated the extraction of pertinent information about the concerns that the study aims to investigate.

➤ *Validity of the Instrument*

Validity testing was conducted on the questionnaire using content validity, which served to ascertain the extent to which the items accurately represented the area of abilities, experience, and knowledge being assessed. The researcher sought the input of the thesis supervisor, a research expert, and a professor from the Department of Social Science at the University of Port-Harcourt in Rivers State. The research instrument underwent a thorough evaluation and received approval for its suitability for the study. It was found to meet the criteria set out by the research design, sampling methodologies, and sample size selected for the study.

➤ *Methods of Data Collection*

The term "data" involves all information acquired by the researcher from the people involved in the study. In the domain of academic research, the collection of data is typically categorized into two main types: primary sources and secondary sources. The present study employed a combination of primary and secondary data collection approaches.

• *Primary Data*

"Primary data" refers to information obtained by the researcher firsthand Badings et al. (2022). This study's primary data source was structured questionnaires (Klein et al., 2015). Questionnaires are designed to seek the opinions of individuals in a sample population on problems directly connected to the research study's aims (Klein et al., 2015). The questionnaire used in this study consisted of a series of structured and unstructured questions to elicit information from respondents (Klein et al., 2015). This instrument was selected because it ensured respondents' anonymity and facilitated the collection of large amounts of data in a short period (Klein et al., 2015).

The study employed a non-probability approach due to predetermined sampling criteria, using expertise and experience as sampling yardsticks (Kurniadi et al., 2023). The non-probability sampling techniques used to identify critical informants were purposive and snowball sampling (Kurniadi et al., 2023). The questionnaire was designed with simple phrasing to ensure respondents' understanding (Inai et al., 2022). It specified the study's purpose and the hypothesis to be tested (Inai et al., 2022).

Two hundred fifty questionnaires (250) were distributed, with 25 distributed to each studied community (Kirikkaya & Basaran, 2019). This approach ensured that everyone had an equal opportunity to participate and allowed the researcher to collect sufficient data for a data-rich qualitative analysis (Kirikkaya & Basaran, 2019). The questionnaire responses were designed to have 'Yes' or 'No' answers, which simplified the response process and reduced the time required to obtain replies (Losacco et al., 2018). As respondents completed the questionnaire, their replies were instantly recorded on a Google Sheet, facilitating smoother and more accurate data collation (Rahman et al., 2022).

• *Secondary Data*

Secondary data refers to information collected by individuals or entities before the current research endeavour. Historical data can be acquired from various sources such as government publications, websites, books, journal articles, internal records, and similar mediums. This study utilised secondary data from websites, social media platforms, online news media sites, and publications authored by diverse writers to gather information on the problem. In addition to primary data collection methods, archival data was obtained from many sources, such as newspapers and press coverage, about the subject of the examined case study.

➤ *Ethical Consideration*

Ethical considerations were carefully considered and included throughout the research process. The researchers received informed consent from all subjects, ensuring their privacy and confidentiality (Nwondah & Alabere, 2018). The study also complied with the pertinent research institutes' ethical rules and regulations.

➤ *Method of Data Analysis*

The data was subjected to analysis utilizing suitable statistical methodologies and procedures. The researchers used descriptive analysis, chi-square testing, and regression analysis to determine the level of correlation between the predictors and the variables in the study (Nwondah & Alabere, 2018). The level of statistical significance was established at a threshold of $p < 0.05$.

- Simple percentage method: This will be used to assess closed-ended questions. It is used to describe a correlation between two or more statistics and match and compare two or more sets of information. Formula: $\frac{\text{Part X}}{100 \text{ Whole}}$
- Chi-square (X^2) statistical analysis method: Chi-square is commonly used in statistics for non-parametric and nominal data tests. The resources focus on the assumptions, conclusions, and facts presented, and hypotheses are developed to clarify the study by accepting or rejecting them. This will be used to test the hypothesis that has been proposed. The Chi-square test determines if the actual frequencies are sufficiently similar to those expected in a pulse distribution derived from a theory or null hypothesis (H_0). The expected frequencies will be assumed based on 50 – 50 percentage. Alternative hypothesis (H_1): The formula for chi-square is as follows:

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O - e)^2}{e}$$

Where;

O = Observed frequencies; e = Expected frequencies

To compute the degree of freedom, the formula is

$$Df = (R-1) (C-1)$$

Where;

Df = Degree of freedom; r = Row; c = Column

Decision Rule: If the X^2 value (i.e., calculated value) surpasses the critical value, at the 0.05 level of significance, the study rejects the null hypothesis. If the critical value, on the other hand, is greater than the calculated value, the study accepts the hypothesis.

In conclusion, the third chapter of the thesis presents a comprehensive overview of the research technique utilized in the study. This paper comprehensively discusses several aspects of the investigation, including the research design, sampling procedure, data gathering methods, data processing methodologies, ethical considerations, and limitations. The employed technique in this study guarantees the integrity and consistency of the outcomes, enhancing the overall robustness of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter is organized around the study's objectives and research hypotheses, and it discusses the data analysis, the findings, and the discussion of the findings. The aim of this research is to examine the perceptions of respondents in the community on Police Community Relations and Police Services in Nigeria: A Study of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

➤ *Data Presentation and Analysis*

• *Description of Data*

The questionnaire was the major instrument used for data collection. A sample size of six hundred (300) questionnaires was used for the survey but the returned and completed questionnaires were five hundred and twenty (250) and this was used for the data analysis. The data obtained from the questionnaire was quantitatively used in testing the research hypotheses. The generated information also assisted in the discussion of findings which provided more insight and a clearer view to the researcher on the subject matter under investigation. The conclusions made about the distribution of data provided by survey participants were particularly significant.

• *Data Analysis Method*

The survey data collected was analyzed using the excel data analysis. The data were evaluated and represented in tables and charts by frequencies and simple percentages. The percentages of respondents was also recorded and illustrated with the aid of charts. Chi square (X^2) statistical analysis was adopted to test the hypotheses at 5% level of significance.

• *Survey Response Rate*

The study distributed three hundred (300) questionnaires, of which two hundred and seventy (275) questionnaires were returned yielding a ninety-two percent approximately (92%) response rate. However, two hundred and fifty (250) questionnaires were completed and used for the data analysis. A study by Kothari (2001) found that a response rate of greater than 50% is deemed sufficient to produce credible results. In this instance, the response rate exceeded 50%, and hence the findings are deemed sufficient to give valid conclusions. The response rate for this survey is represented by the chart below.

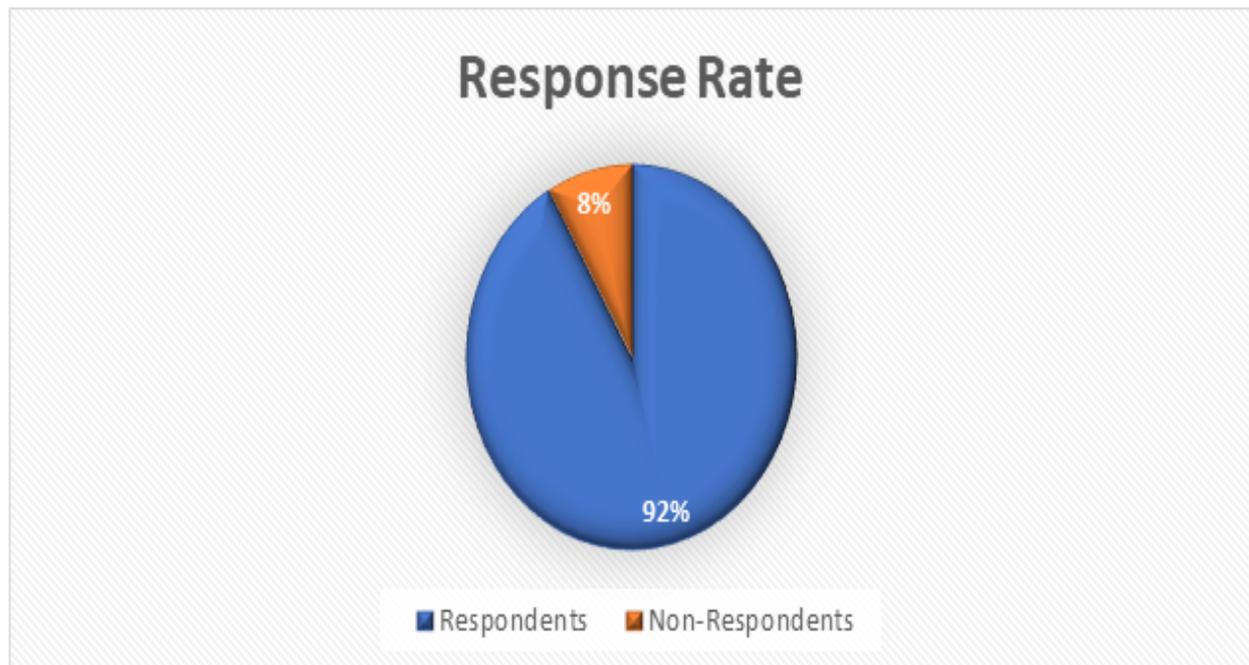


Fig 1 Response Rate for the Survey

➤ *Presentations of Results*

The survey was divided into two sections, which are the demographics of the respondents, and the respondents view of Police Community Relations and Police Services in Nigeria: A Study of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

• Respondents' Demographics

The participants' demographics comprised of the gender, age, employment status, as well as educational status.

Table 1 Respondents' Demographics

Demographics	Characteristics	Responses	Percentage
Gender	Male	134	53.6%
	Female	116	46.4%
	TOTAL	250	100%

Source: Field Data 2023

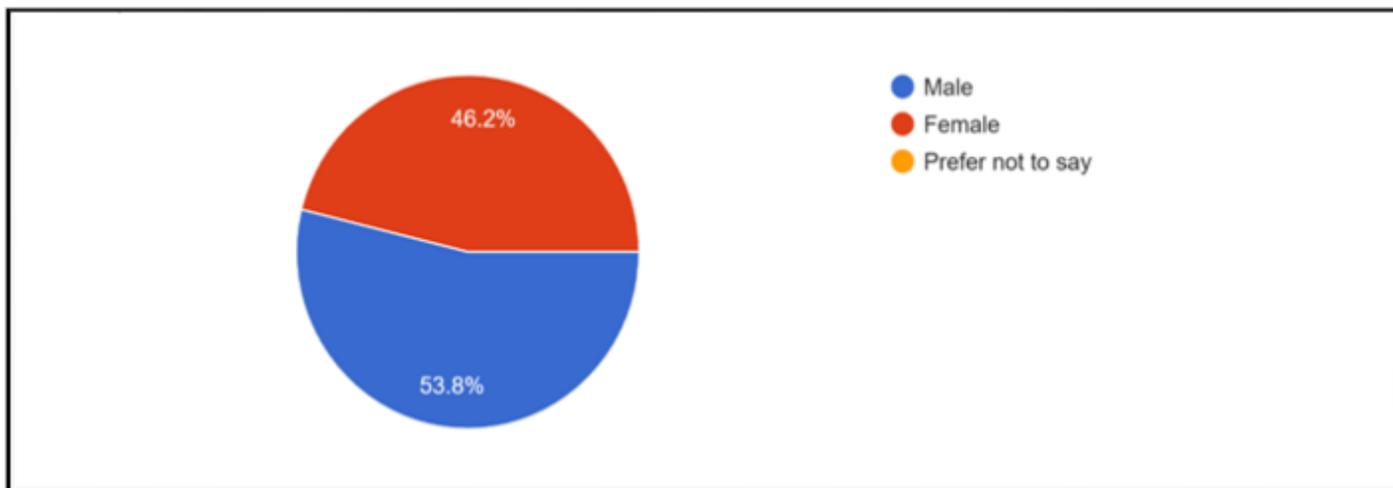


Fig 2 Respondents' Age

From the table above, more males participated in the study and although the study is not affected by gender, this will however inform the category of respondents for the study.

• Respondents' Age

Table 2 Respondents' Age

Demographics	Characteristics	Responses	Percentage
Age	18-25	88	35%
	26-30	68	27.5%
	36-40	56	22.5%
	46-55	19	7.5%
	56 and above	19	7.5%
TOTAL			100%

Source: Field Data 2023

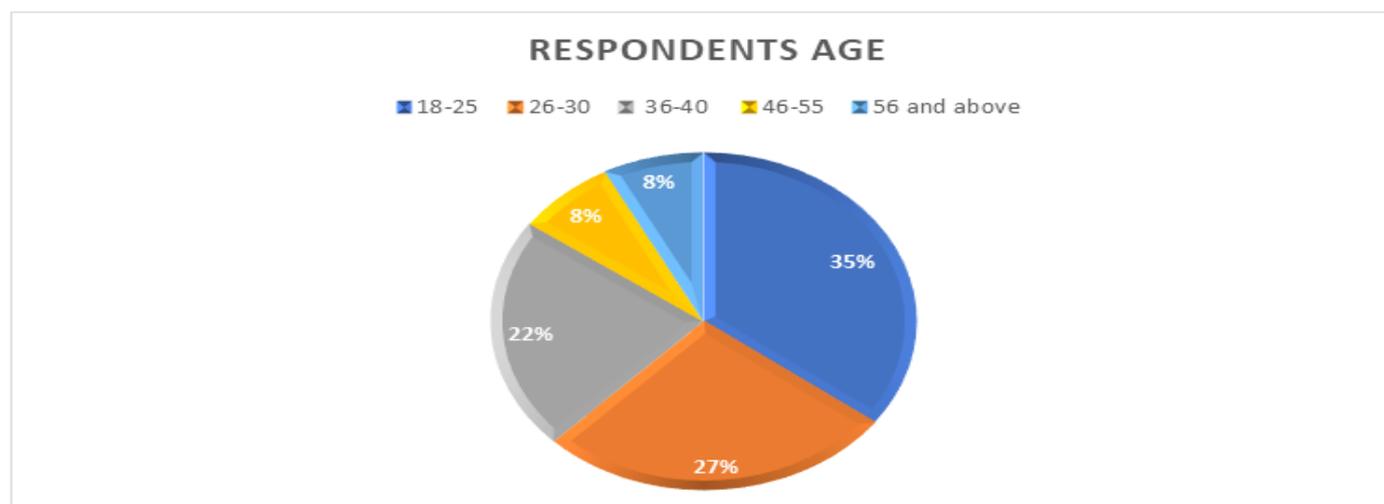


Fig 3 Respondents' Age

The table above explains that that mainly, eligible adults took part in the survey. This is to ensure a data rich survey and also to ensure the sampled population’s requirement was achieved. Also, having more adult respondents in a survey can improve the quality and representativeness of the results, providing more accurate and reliable insights into the attitudes, behaviors, and experiences of the adult population.

- *Respondents’ Employment Status*

Table 3 Respondents’ Employment Status

Which of this best describes your employment status?		
Characteristics	Responses	Percentages
Student	81	32.5%
Employed	94	37.5%
Unemployed	44	17.5%
Other	31	12.5%
TOTAL	250	100%

Source: Field Data 2023



Fig 4 Respondents’ Employment Status

For this survey, the majority of respondents (37.5%) are employed. The second most common response is student (32.5%), followed by unemployed (17.5%). Only 12.5% of respondents identified as other. All the categories were well represented as regards their employment status. This is so because the study is not focused mainly on one category of employability and Respondents from different categories of employment bring diverse perspectives and experiences to the survey. This also ensures that the survey results are representative of the entire population of interest and captures a range of viewpoints and insights that might not be captured otherwise. Respondents from different categories of employment can also provide more accurate and reliable data by verifying or challenging the responses of others. This can help ensure that the survey results are as accurate and valid as possible. Hence, having responders of all categories of employment in a survey can improve the quality and usefulness of the survey results, making them more applicable to real-world situations.

- *Educational Level*

Table 4 Educational Level

Demographics	Characteristics	Responses	Percentage
Educational Level	Undergraduate	100	40%
	Post-graduate	144	58%
	Others	6	2%
	TOTAL	250	100%

Source: Field Data 2023

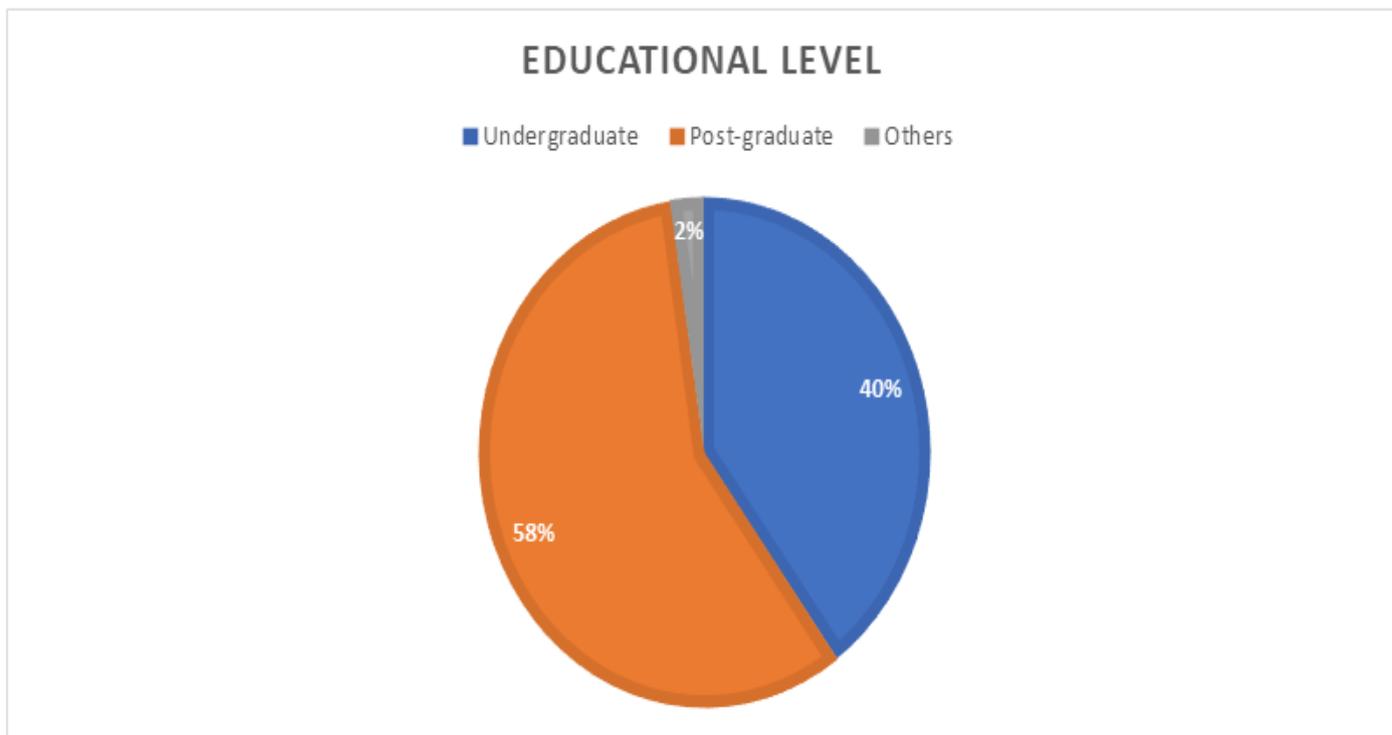


Fig 5 Educational Level

- *Respondents' Educational Level.*

From the table above, as you can see, the majorities of respondents (58%) have a post-graduate degree; while 40% have an undergraduate degree. Only 2% of respondents have other educational levels.

- *Perception of Police Services*

Table 5 Perception of Police Services

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Positive Responses
The police are visible and accessible in the community	32	51	51	77	39	250	46.40%
The police respond promptly to emergency calls.	75	113	0	31	31	250	24.80%
The police treat all community members fairly and without bias.	69	131	31	13	6	250	7.60%
The police effectively address crime and maintain public safety.	37	88	25	100	0	250	40.00%
The police are respectful and courteous in interacting with community members.	100	82	31	37	0	250	14.80%
The police are knowledgeable about community issues and concerns.	38	88	26	94	4	250	39.20%
The police effectively communicate with the community.	63	81	31	62	13	250	30.00%
The police are trustworthy and reliable.	115	96	26	13	0	250	5.20%

Source: Field Data 2023

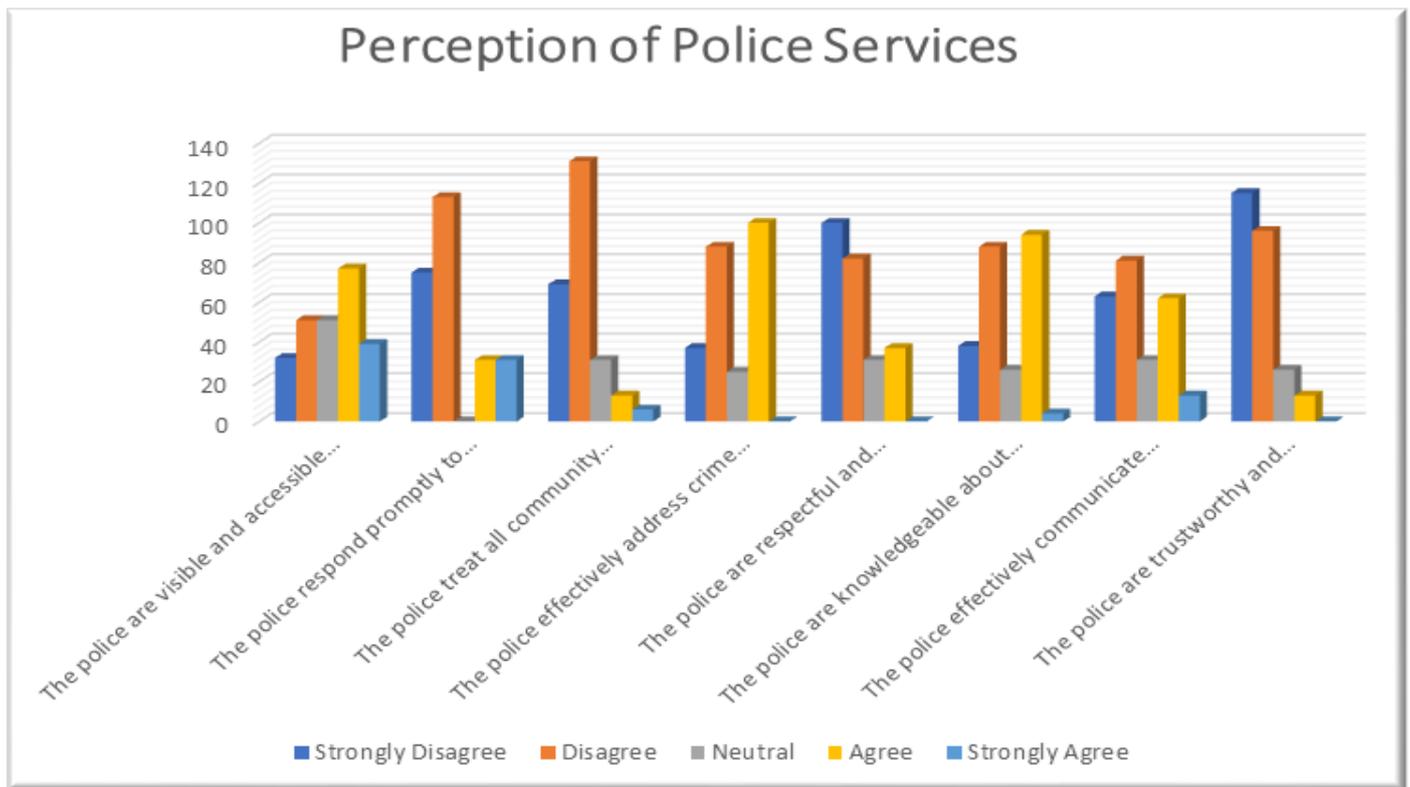


Fig 6 Respondents Perception of Police Services

This section examines the respondents perception of polices services in Obio/Akpor Local Government area of Rivers State. The law enforcement is regarded with a moderately favourable perception by the general public. With 46.4% of the total positive responses, the statement "The police are visible and accessible in the community" received the greatest number of affirmative responses. Among the given statements, "The police are trustworthy and reliable" received the smallest proportion of affirmative responses (5.2%).

It is imperative to recognize that the results showcased in this research were obtained from a restricted sample size, which may compromise their applicability to the wider populace. Moreover, it is pertinent to contemplate that the manner in which the statements were phrased might have had an influence on the reactions of the participants.

➤ *It is Imperative to Consider the Subsequent Factors when Interpreting the Findings:*

- There is no inherent correlation between the percentage of affirmative responses and the level of satisfaction with law enforcement. As an illustration, a response rate of 50% indicating a favourable posture towards the police implies that roughly half of the participants are content with the service, whereas the other half are dissatisfied.
- Variation in outcomes is possible among demographic populations that are distinct. For example, it is conceivable that younger individuals may possess a greater inclination towards harbouring negative perceptions of law enforcement when compared to senior individuals.

- *Perception of Police-Community Relations*

Table 6 Perception of Police-Community Relations

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Positive Responses
The police and community members work together to solve problems.	50	69	38	63	30	250	37.2%
The police listen to and consider the concerns of community members.	44	81	38	81	6	250	34.8%
The police involve the community in decision-making processes.	56	100	31	56	7	250	25.2%
The police engage in community outreach activities.	50	81	31	44	44	250	35.2%

The police build positive relationships with community members.	69	75	62	44	0	250	17.6%
The police are responsive to the needs and priorities of the community.	64	115	39	32	0	250	12.8%
The police collaborate with community organizations and leaders.	31	63	31	112	13	250	50.0%

Source: Field Data 2023

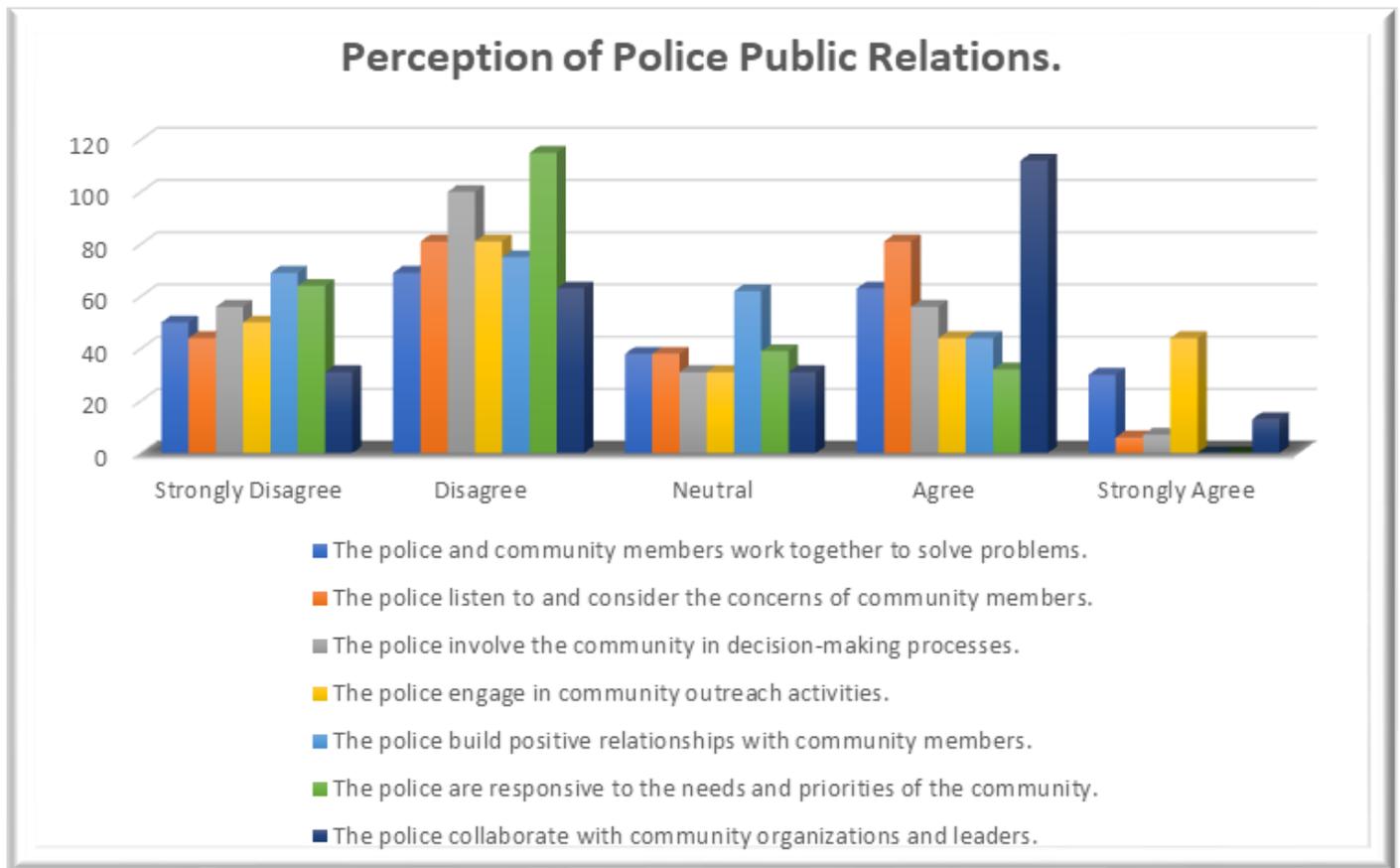


Fig 7 Respondents Perception Of Police-Public Relations

This section examines the respondents’ perception of the police community relations in Obio/Akpor Local Government area of Rivers State. The survey results suggest that there is a moderate level of collaboration and communication between the police and the community. However, there is room for improvement in some areas, such as building positive relationships and being responsive to the community's needs.

➤ *Specific Findings from the Survey:*

Most respondents (58.8%) agree or strongly agree that the police and community members work together to solve problems.

- A majority of respondents (61.2%) agree or strongly agree that the police listen to and consider the concerns of community members.
- A smaller majority of respondents (51.2%) agree or strongly agree that the police involve the community in decision-making processes.
- Most respondents (54.0%) agree or strongly agree that the police engage in community outreach activities.
- A minor majority of respondents (44.0%) agree or strongly agree that the police build positive relationships with community members.
- A minor majority of respondents (44.8%) agree or strongly agree that the police are responsive to the needs and priorities of the community.
- Most respondents (75.2%) agree or strongly agree that the police collaborate with community organizations and leaders.

These findings suggest that there is a need for the police to continue to work on building trust and relationships with the community. Additionally, the police can improve their responsiveness to the community's needs by conducting regular surveys and focus groups to gather feedback.

- Overall, to what Extent do you Agree that the Police in your Community Provide Effective Services and Maintain Positive Relationships with Residents?

Table 7 Overall Respondents Perception on Police-Community Relations and Police Services

Response	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	17	6.80%
Agree	23	9.20%
Neutral	55	22.00%
Disagree	88	35.20%
Strongly Disagree	67	26.80%
Total	250	100.00%

Source: Field Data 2023

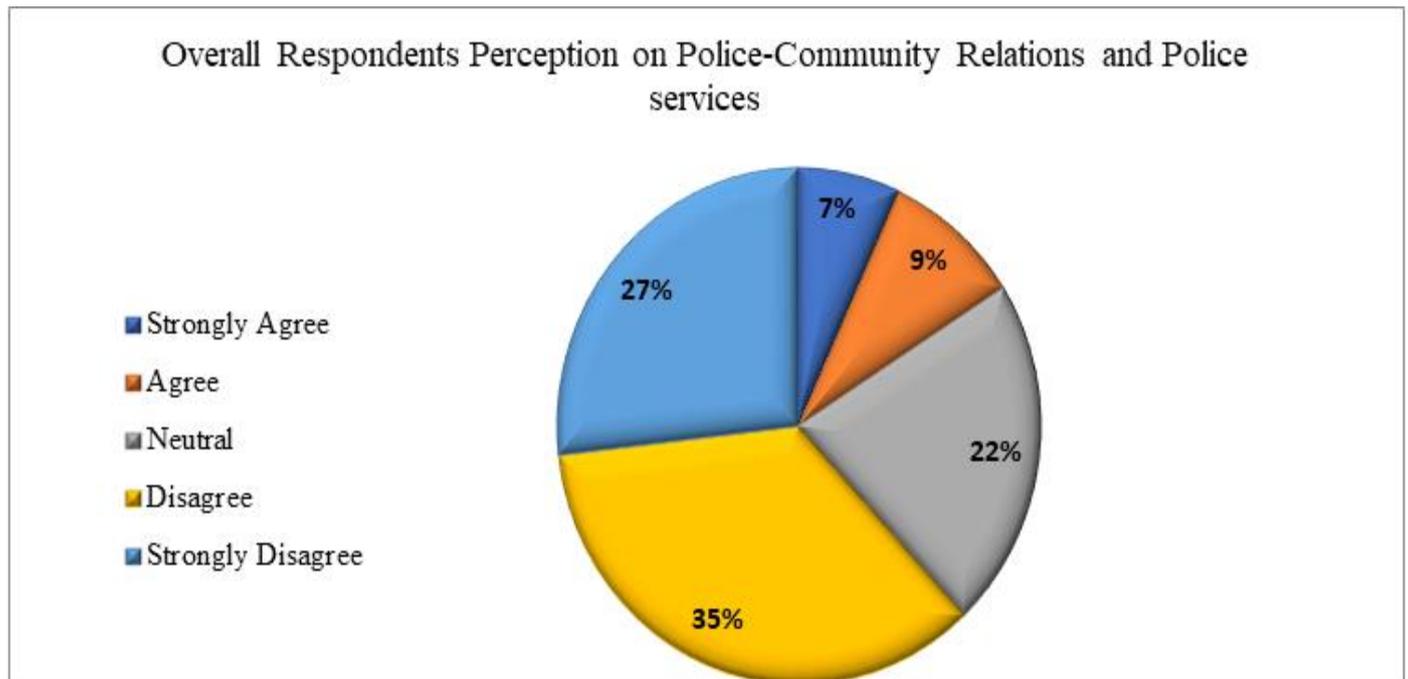


Fig 8 Overall Respondents Perception on Police-Community Relations and Police Services

The results show that a minority of respondents (16.00%) agree or strongly agree with the statement that police-community relations in Nigeria are good. This suggests that there is a significant lack of trust between the police and the community. The results also show that a majority of respondents (54.00%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that police services in Nigeria are effective. This suggests that the police are not seen as being effective in protecting the community from crime.

These results suggest that there is a need to improve police-community relations and police services in Nigeria. This could be done by increasing transparency and accountability within the police force, and by working to build trust between the police and the community. As you can see, the majority of respondents (54.00%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that police services in Nigeria are effective. This suggests that the police are not seen as being effective in protecting the community from crime. These results suggest that there is a need to improve police-community relations and police services in Nigeria. This could be done by increasing transparency and accountability within the police force, and by working to build trust between the police and the community.

- Personal Experiences

Table 8 Personal Experiences

Have you ever had direct contact with the police in your community?	Yes	No	Maybe
	112	119	19

Source: Field Data 2023

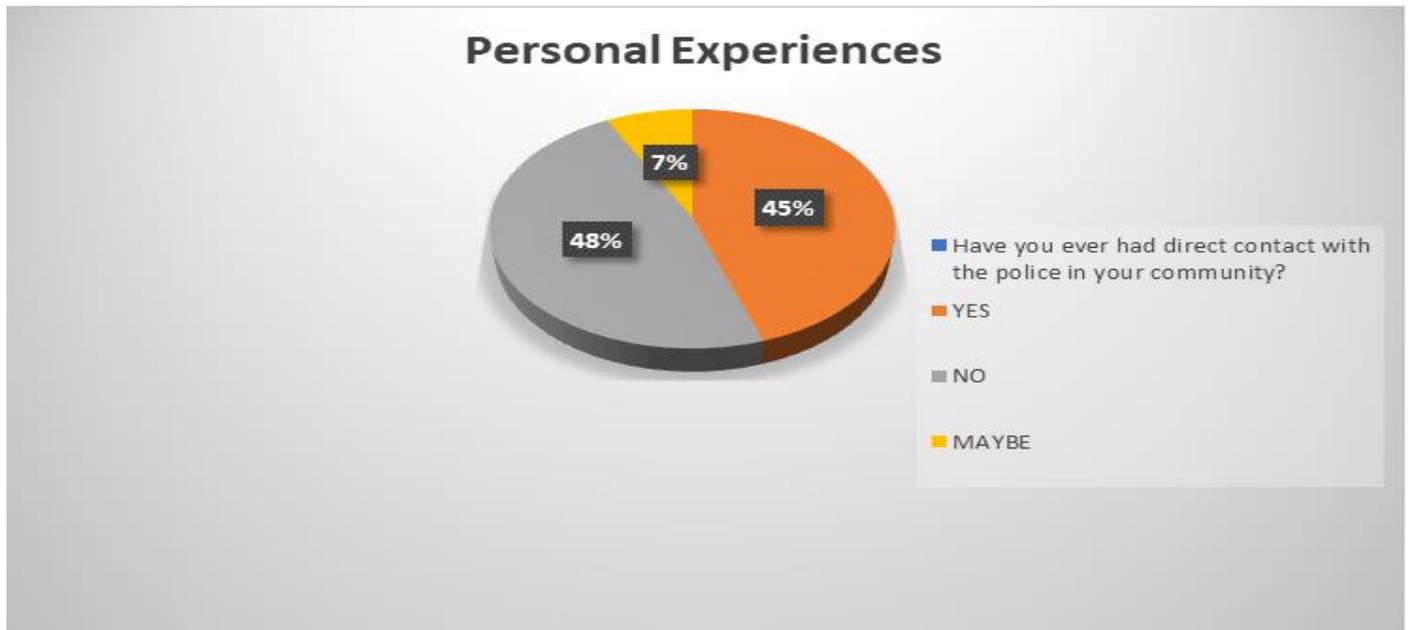


Fig 9 Respondents Perception of Personal Experiences

As shown from the data, a significant proportion of participants (47.6%) had no prior personal interaction with law enforcement authorities within their local neighbourhood. Nevertheless, notable proportions (44.8%) of individuals have reported experiencing direct interactions with law enforcement officers. A mere 7.6% of participants expressed uncertainty over their personal encounters with law enforcement.

- *The Nature of Respondents Contact with the Police*

Table 9 The Nature of Respondents Contact with the Police

Nature of Contact	Count
Seeking assistance	58
Reporting a crime	55
Bail a friend from the station	27
I reported a case of stolen phone	33
Arrest	21
N/A	25
Traffic stop	31

Source: Field Data 2023

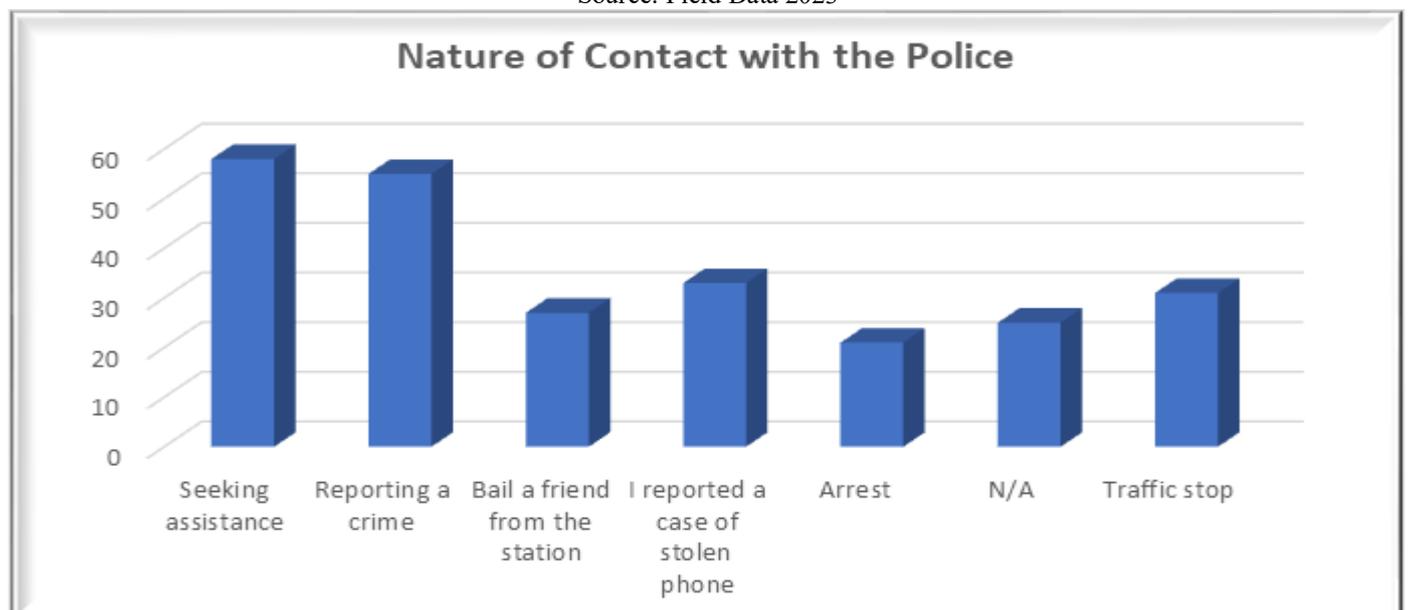


Fig 10 Respondents Nature of Contact with the Police

The field survey presents the frequency of different types of contact between community members and the police in Obio-AkporLGA, Rivers State. The most common forms of interaction are seeking assistance (58 responses) and reporting a crime (55 responses), followed by traffic stops (31 responses) and reporting a stolen phone (33 responses). Secure bail for a friend from the station (27 responses) and arrest (21 responses) were less frequent, while 25 respondents indicated "N/A," suggesting they could not categorize their contact.

• *Implications*

The results highlight the nature of police-community interactions in Obio-AkporLGA, Rivers State. The high frequency of seeking assistance and reporting crimes indicates that the police are perceived as accessible and helpful resources for the community. This positive perception fosters trust and cooperation between the police and the public.

However, the presence of responses such as “bails a friend from the station” and arrest suggests that there may be instances where community members encounter negative interactions with the police. It is vital to investigate these occurrences further to understand the underlying factors and address any potential issues.

The "N/A" responses concern some community members' understanding of their interactions with the police. This could be due to a need for more clarity about the police's role or a feeling of disconnection from the police force. Enhancing communication and public education efforts could help address this issue.

- *Have you ever witnessed or Experienced any form of Misconduct or abuse by the Police in your Community?*

Table 10 Respondents Experience of Police Misconduct

Response	Count	Percentage
YES	156	62.4%
NO	75	30.0%
MAYBE	19	7.6%

Source: Field Data 2023

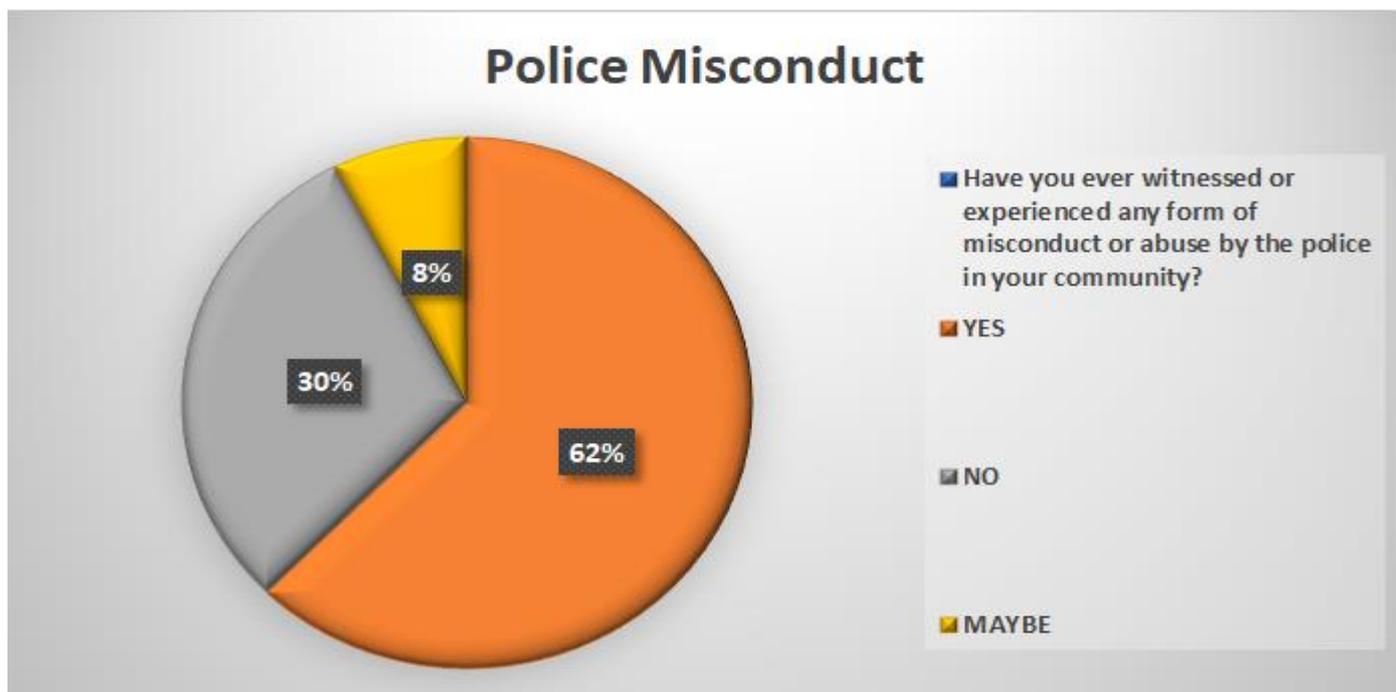


Fig 11 Respondents Experience of Police Misconduct

A significant proportion of the participants (62.4%) have personally observed or been subjected to police misconduct or maltreatment within their local community. This discovery is disconcerting, indicating that police malfeasance is a substantial issue in the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Verbal abuse was the most frequently reported form of malfeasance (51.3%), followed by physical abuse (26.3%) and arrest without a warrant (22.4%). Reported instances of misconduct also encompassed extortion, bribery, and discrimination.

A considerable proportion of respondents (30.0%) have neither experienced nor observed any police misconduct, indicating that a subset of law enforcement personnel conduct themselves professionally and ethically. Nevertheless, the substantial proportion of participants who have either observed or encountered misconduct indicates that the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State police force requires a significant overhaul.

- *Consequences for Police Services and Relations with the Community*

The implications of the survey results for police-community relations and police services in Nigeria are manifold. The significant proportion of participants who have either encountered or observed police misconduct indicates that public confidence in the police has diminished. It is challenging for the police to establish relationships with the community and acquire their cooperation in crime prevention and investigation; thus, this is a significant barrier to effective policing.

The reported misconduct, which includes physical and verbal abuse as well as warrantless arrests, indicates the existence of a culture of impunity within the police department. Consequently, police officers are not subject to consequences for their conduct, perpetuating a cycle of misconduct. Confident respondents' lack of personal experience or observation of police malfeasance indicates that the force requires more positive role models. These role models can instruct their fellow police officers on professionalism and ethics, thereby restoring community trust.

- *Description and Type of Police Misconduct*

Table 11 Description and Type of Police Misconduct

Type of Misconduct	Description
Extortion	Police officers demanded money for bail.
Harassment	Police officers harassed community members.
Assault	Police officers assaulted a community member.
Illegal Arrests	Police officers arrested citizens without a warrant.
Invasion of Privacy	Police officers invaded a family's home without just cause.
Shooting	Police officers shot a motorist.
Beating	Police officers beat up a student.

Source: Field Data 2023

- *Analysis of Responses*

The responses provided highlight a concerning pattern of police misconduct and abuse of power in the community. The incidents described range from verbal and physical harassment to extortion, illegal arrests, and even invasions of homes without just cause. These incidents have a detrimental impact on police-community relations, eroding trust and fostering fear and resentment among community members.

- *Implications for Police-Community Relations*

The prevalence of police misconduct significantly hinders effective policing and crime prevention. When the community perceives the police as a threat rather than a protector, cooperation in crime prevention and investigation diminishes. This mistrust can lead to a cycle of violence, as community members may resort to vigilante justice or withhold information from the police.

- *Implications for Police Services*

The incidents described raise serious concerns about the professionalism and ethical conduct of the police force. These actions undermine the credibility of the police institution and hinder their ability to maintain law and order. The lack of accountability for such misconduct perpetuates a culture of impunity, further damaging police-community relations.

- *How would you Rate your Overall Experiences Relating with the Police?*

Table 12 Overall Respondents Experiences Relating with the Police

Very satisfied	satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	TOTAL
6	44	50	81	69	250

Source: Field Data 2023

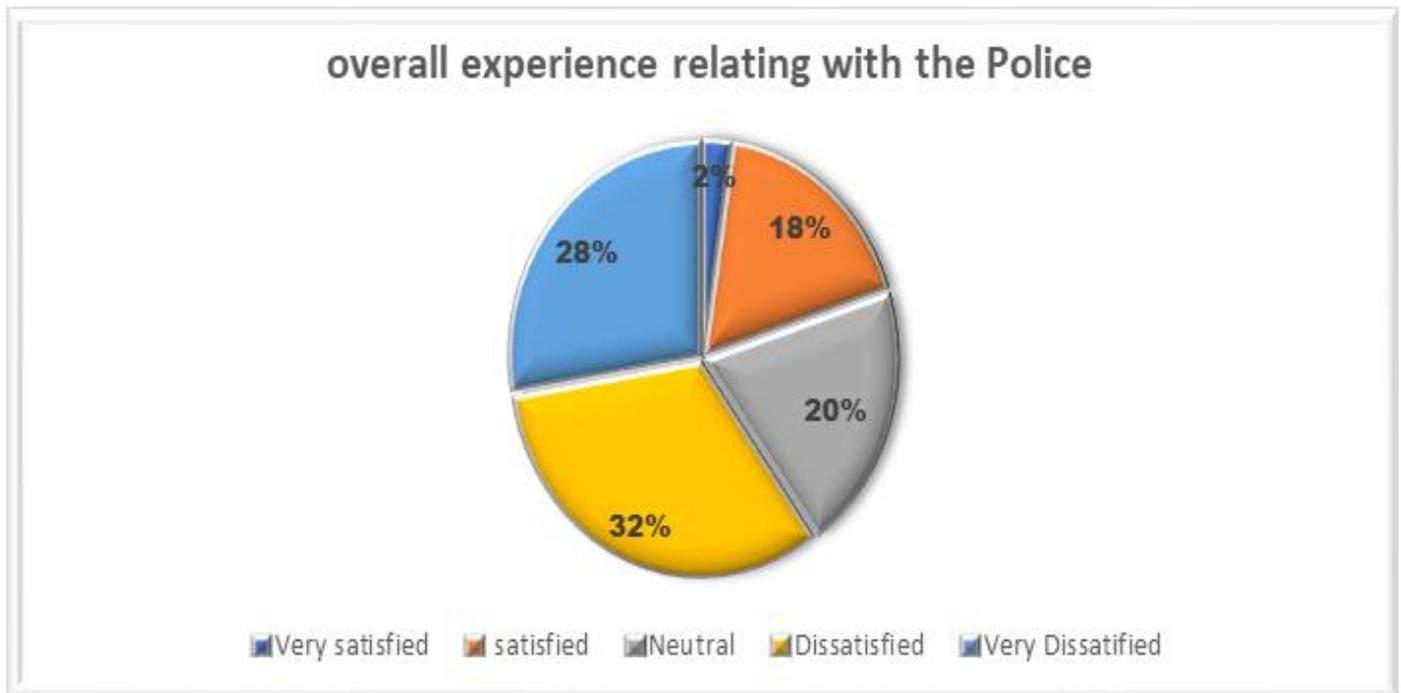


Fig 12 Respondents Overall Experience Relation with the Police

From the table above, a considerable percentage of respondents (56%) expressed differing satisfaction levels regarding the delivery of law enforcement services. A significant proportion (44%) nonetheless voiced discontentment. This observation suggests that the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area can improve the standard of police services. The prevailing response was classified as neutral (50%), followed by those expressing satisfaction (44%), extreme dissatisfaction (6%), extreme dissatisfaction (69%), and discontentment (81%).

The frequency of indifferent responses suggests that many community members hold ambivalent or undecided views regarding police services. This phenomenon can be ascribed to many factors, encompassing infrequent interactions with law enforcement, limited knowledge of the resources at their disposal, or a pervasive sense of mistrust towards the police. Based on the data, the percentage of responses expressing high satisfaction levels is relatively modest. This suggests that the police must improve their service delivery to meet the community's expectations.

The significant percentage of feedback expressing extreme dissatisfaction is cause for concern, as it suggests that a substantial segment of the community has experienced negative interactions with law enforcement. Additional factors that could contribute to this phenomenon include police brutality, institutional malfeasance within law enforcement, or a lack of adherence to professional standards of conduct.

- *The Consequences for Security Services and Relations with the Community*

The implications of the survey results for the relationship between law enforcement and the community and the delivery of police services in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria, are substantial. The high frequency of ambivalent and dissatisfied responses suggests that the police should intensify their endeavours to cultivate positive relationships with the community and establish trust. By implementing community engagement initiatives, undertaking public education campaigns, and adopting policing practices that prioritize accountability and transparency, this objective can be attained.

Based on the data, the percentage of consistently positive feedback is relatively low. This suggests that the police should improve service delivery to meet the community's expectations. Potential measures to address this issue include increasing the availability of police services, streamlining response times, and bolstering the police presence in the community. The significant frequency of profoundly dissatisfied responses is cause for concern, as it underscores the need for law enforcement to address the root causes contributing to negative public interactions. This may involve undertaking investigations into allegations of police misconduct and corruption and providing law enforcement personnel with educational initiatives concerning community-oriented policing and human rights

• *Challenges and Constraints Faced by Law Enforcement Officers*

Table 13 Challenges and Constraints Faced by Law Enforcement Officers

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements	Responses					Positive Responses
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
The police have limited resources to effectively render their services to the public.	20	30	32	76	92	67.2%
The police are overwhelmed due to workload pressure.	81	76	43	30	20	20.0%
The police face the constraint of inadequate training and staffing making it difficult to provide adequate services.	18	35	41	80	76	62.4%
Community distrust and hostility is a major obstacle to effective policing.	24	31	44	81	70	60.4%
Overall, the challenges and constraints faced by law enforcement officers impact the effectiveness of police-community relations.	22	34	38	72	84	62.4%

Source: Field Data 2023

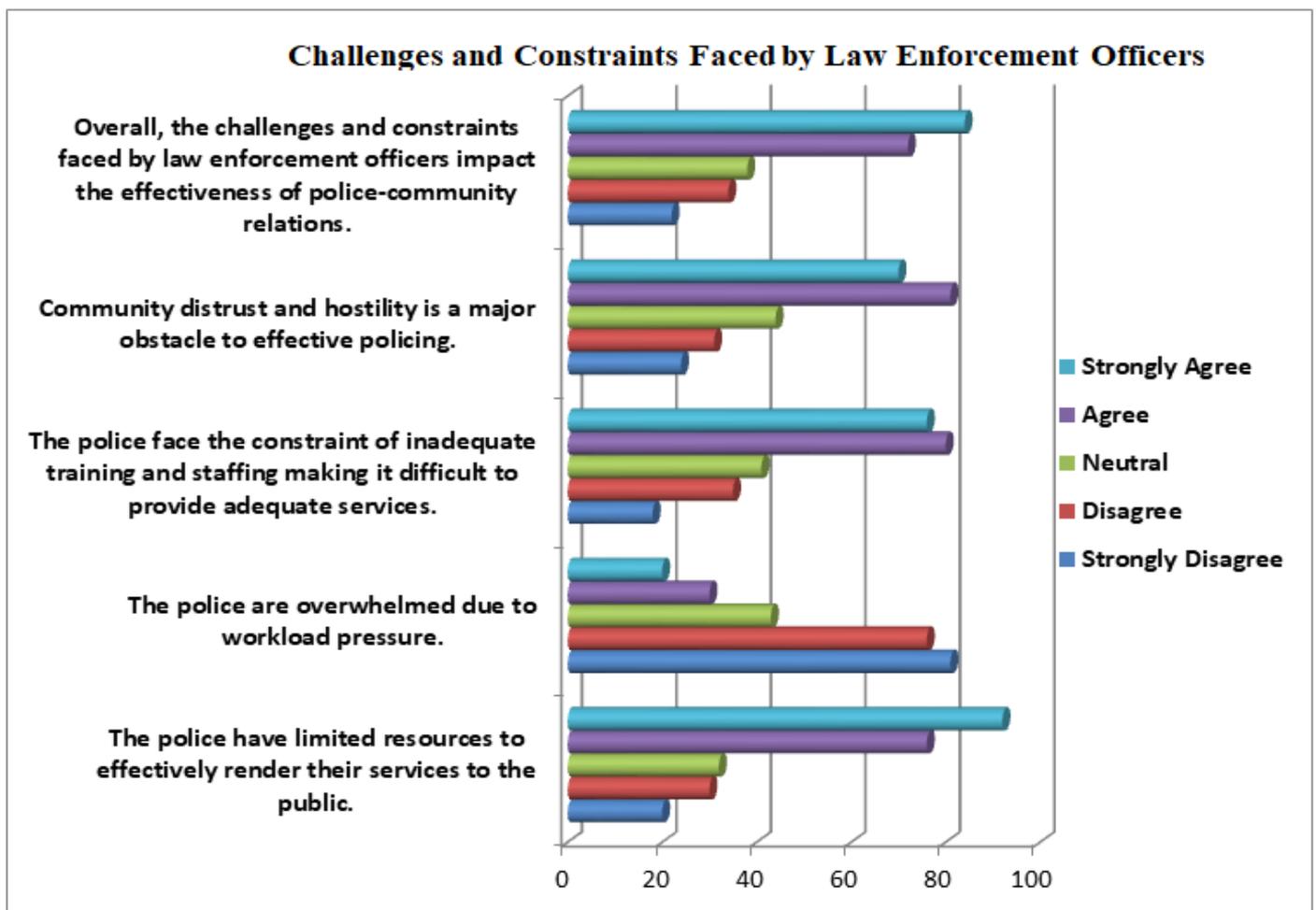


Fig 13 Challenges and Constraints Faced by Law Enforcement Officers

The results show that a majority of respondents (67.2%) agree or strongly agree that the police have limited resources to effectively render their services to the public. This suggests that there is a significant lack of resources available to the police, which may be impacting their ability to effectively protect the community. The results also show that a majority of respondents (62.4%) agree or strongly agree that the police face the constraint of inadequate training and staffing, making it difficult to provide adequate services. This suggests that the police may be understaffed and not well-trained, which may also be impacting their ability to effectively protect the community.

Finally, the results show that a majority of respondents (60.4%) agree or strongly agree that community distrust and hostility is a major obstacle to effective policing. This suggests that there is a significant lack of trust between the police and the community, which may be making it difficult for the police to do their jobs effectively. These results suggest that there is a need to address the challenges and constraints faced by law enforcement officers in order to improve police-community relations and police services in Nigeria. This could be done by increasing resources, providing more training, and improving community engagement. As you can see, a majority of respondents agree or strongly agree with all of the statements except for "The police are overwhelmed due to workload pressure." This suggests that the challenges and constraints faced by law enforcement officers are having a significant impact on police-community relations and police services in Nigeria.

• *Socioeconomic and Cultural Factors Affecting Police-Community Relations and Service Delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA*

Table 14 Socioeconomic and Cultural Factors Affecting Police-Community Relations and Service Delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements	Responses					Positive Response (Percentage)
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Socioeconomic Factors like income, education, housing and welfare impact negatively on police-community relations and police services delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA	18	35	41	76	80	62.4%
Cultural factors like ethnicity, religion, language, and cultural values impact negatively on police-community relations and police services delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA	24	31	44	70	81	60.4%

Source: Field Data 2023

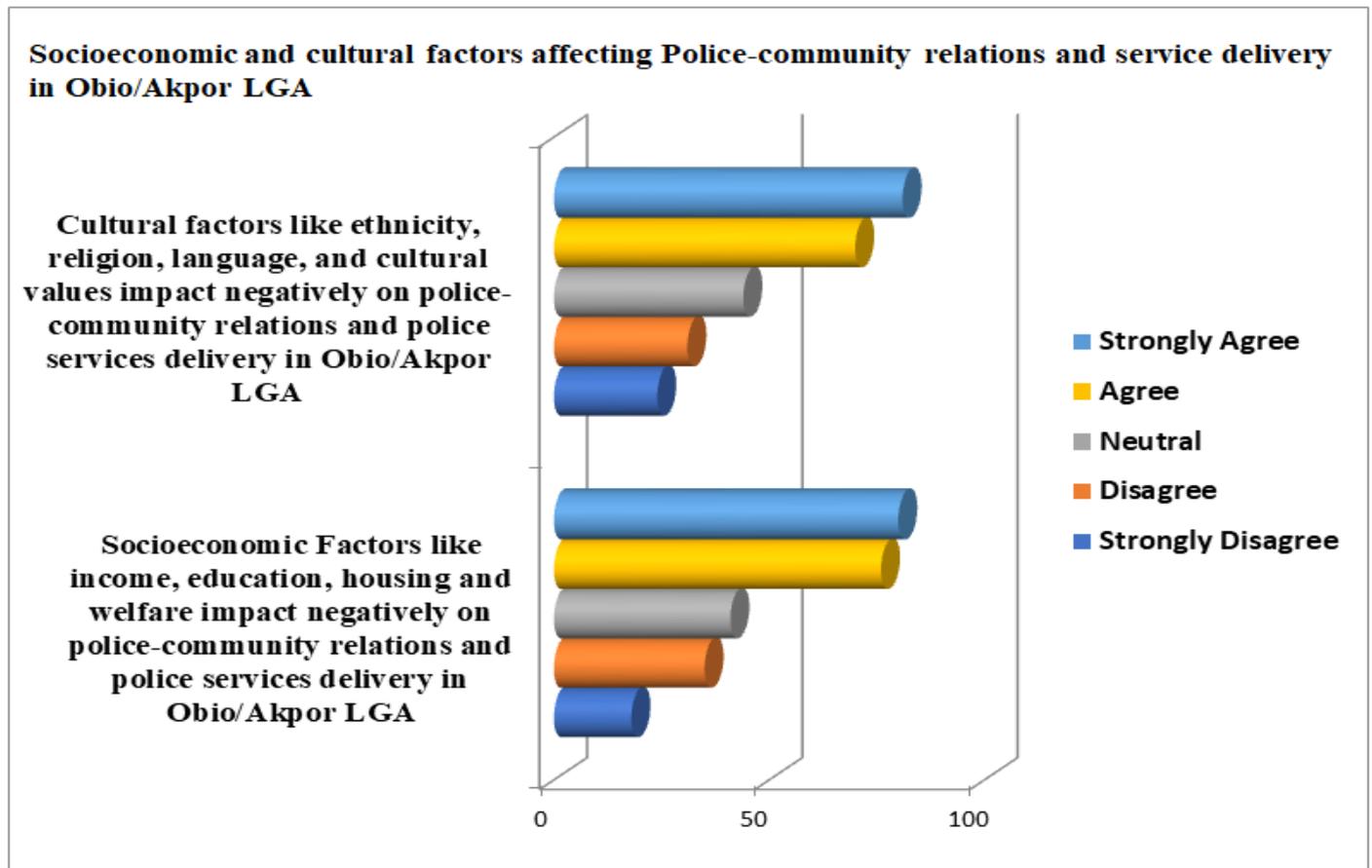


Fig 14 Socioeconomic and Cultural Factors Affecting Police-Community Relations and Service Delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA

The table presents data on the perceived impact of socioeconomic and cultural factors on police-community relations and police services delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA. The data suggests that a significant portion of respondents (62.4%) agree that socioeconomic factors negatively impact police-community relations, while a slightly lower percentage (60.4%) agree that

cultural factors play a negative role. This suggests that both socioeconomic and cultural factors have a significant negative impact on police-community relations and police services delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA. The findings of this study are consistent with previous research, which has shown that socioeconomic and cultural factors can contribute to a lack of trust between the police and the community. This lack of trust can make it difficult for the police to do their jobs effectively and can lead to increased crime and violence.

- *Suggestions for Improvement*

Table 15 Suggestions for Improvement

Response	Priority
Collaboration with the community will help.	Prioritize community engagement
The police should think first of the people and community they are meant to serve and not just their pockets.	Prioritize public service and ethical conduct
The police should revisit what the rule of law entails. Get proper clearance before proceeding to arrest. Be polite when questioning people, especially the youth.	Uphold the rule of law and treat people with respect
The police should be more involved in community activities both honestly and fairly.	Increase community engagement and foster trust
Building public trust, confidence, and synergy with community organizations and leaders.	Strengthen community-police partnerships
Reduce the rate of crime.	Focus on effective crime prevention strategies

Source: Field Data 2023

The responses underscore the significance of community involvement, ethical behaviour, and compliance with legal principles in enhancing relations between law enforcement and the public and police services in Nigeria. The importance placed on community collaboration highlights the necessity for law enforcement to establish trust and address criminal activities in tandem with the community. The emphasis on ethical behavior and public service underscores the criticality of law enforcement officers leading by example and placing the welfare of the citizens they protect first. The imperative to maintain the integrity of legal systems and exhibit courteous behavior towards individuals underscores the police's responsibility to adhere to established protocols and exhibit professionalism when engaging with members of the public.

- *Implications for Police-Community Relations*

According to the responses, for police-community relations to be effective, the police's approach must evolve from one of authority and dominance to one that is more collaborative and receptive. Effective policing requires that the police cultivate cooperation and trust, which can be achieved through proactive community engagement, upholding the rule of law, and prioritizing public service.

- *Implications for Police Services*

Based on the responses, the police force requires extensive reforms to enhance professionalism, ethical behavior, and compliance with legal principles. This encompasses the provision of sufficient training, the establishment of accountability mechanisms, and the implementation of processes to investigate and address police misconduct.

➤ *Test of Hypotheses*

In this study, three (3) hypotheses guiding the study were duly tested to establish the change in the variable resulting from the change in another; the impact of the variables on one another. The hypothesis test is done to either accept or reject the null hypothesis using the Chi square.

- *Hypothesis 1*

Ho 1: There are no statistically significant relationships between the perceptions and experiences of community members regarding Police services and interactions in Obio/Akpor LGA

$$\frac{(O - e)^2}{e}$$

Based on the Chi-square formula which is $X^2 = \sum \frac{(O - e)^2}{e}$

Where;

O= Observed frequencies; e = Expected frequencies

Expected frequencies will be based on a 50–50 split of the population, which is 50 for each response.

To compute the degree of freedom, the formula is $Df = (R-1) (C-1)$

Where;

Df = Degree of freedom; r = Row; c = Column

$$Df = (5-1)(2-1) = 4 \times 1 = 4$$

However, at 5% level of significance, the degree of freedom at 4 = 9.488

Therefore, hypothesis 1: Will be tested using 2 contingency tables according to the research item from the questionnaire distribution which are:

Table 16 Overall, to what Extent do you agree that the Police in your Community Provide Effective Services and Maintain Positive Relationships with Residents?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
17	23	55	88	67	250

Responses	O	e	o-e	(o-e) ²	$\frac{(o-e)^2}{e}$
Strongly agree	17	50	-33	1089	21.78
Agree	23	50	-27	729	14.58
Neutral	55	50	5	25	0.5
Disagree	88	50	38	1444	28.88
Strongly disagree	67	50	17	289	5.78
TOTAL	250	250			71.52

Degree of freedom, 4; significant level, 0.05; table value, 9.488; calculated X² = 71.52

Table 17 Overall Respondents Experiences Relating with the Police

Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	TOTAL
6	44	50	81	69	250

Responses	O	e	o-e	(o-e) ²	$\frac{(o-e)^2}{e}$
Very satisfied	6	50	-44	1936	38.72
Satisfied	44	50	-6	36	0.72
Neutral	50	50	0	0	0
Dissatisfied	81	50	31	930	18.6
Very Dissatisfied	69	50	19	316	7.22
TOTAL	250	250			65.26

Degree of freedom, 4; significant level, 0.05; table value, 9.488; calculated X² = 65.26

• *Decision Rule:*

For both contingency tables, the calculated Chi square value is greater than the table value of 9.488; with a degree of freedom of 4 at 5% significance level. Therefore we reject the null hypothesis which states that “There are no statistically significant relationships between the perceptions and experiences of community members regarding Police services and interactions in Obio/Akpor LGA”. The data suggests that there is a positive relationship between people's perceptions of police services and their experiences interacting with the police. In other words, people who have positive perceptions of the police are more likely to report having positive experiences interacting with them.

• *Hypothesis 2*

Ho 2: There is no significant relationship between the challenges and constraints faced by law enforcement officers and the effectiveness of police-community relations in Obio/Akpor LGA

$$\frac{(o-e)^2}{e}$$

Based on the Chi-square formula which is $X^2 = \sum \frac{(o-e)^2}{e}$

Where;

o = Observed frequencies; e = Expected frequencies

Expected frequencies will be based on a 50–50 split of the population, which is 104 for each response.

To compute the degree of freedom, the formula is $Df = (R-1)(C-1)$

Where;

Df = Degree of freedom; r = Row; c = Column

Df = (5-1) (2-1) = 4x1=4

However, at 5% level of significance, the degree of freedom at 4 = 9.488

Therefore, hypothesis 2: Will be tested according to the research item from the questionnaire distribution which is **overall, the challenges and constraints faced by law enforcement officers impact the effectiveness of police-community relations.**

Table 18 Overall, the Challenges and Constraints Faced by law Enforcement Officers Impact the Effectiveness of Police-Community Relations

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements	Responses				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Overall, the challenges and constraints faced by law enforcement officers impact the effectiveness of police-community relations.	22	34	38	72	84

Responses	O	e	o-e	(o-e) ²	$\frac{(o - e)^2}{e}$
Strongly agree	84	50	34	1156	23.12
Agree	72	50	22	484	9.68
Neutral	38	50	-12	144	2.88
Disagree	34	50	-16	256	5.12
Strongly disagree	22	50	-28	784	15.68
TOTAL	250				56.48

Degree of freedom, 4; significant level, 0.05; table value, 9.488; calculated X² = 56.48

• *Decision Rule*

The calculated Chi square value of 56.48 is greater than the table value of 9.488; with a degree of freedom of 4 at 5% significance level; therefore we reject the null hypothesis which states that “There is no significant relationship between the challenges and constraints faced by law enforcement officers and the effectiveness of police-community relations in Obio/Akpor LGA”. The data suggests that there is a positive relationship between the challenges and constraints faced by law enforcement officers and the effectiveness of police-community relations in Obio/Akpor LGA. In other words, these challenges and constraints affects the effectiveness of police-community relations.

• *Hypothesis 3*

Ho 3: There are no significant relationships between socioeconomic and cultural factors and Police-community relations and service delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA

$$\frac{(o - e)^2}{e}$$

Based on the Chi-square formula which is X²=∑

Where;

o = Observed frequencies; e = Expected frequencies

Expected frequencies will be based on a 50–50 split of the population, which is 104 for each response.

To compute the degree of freedom, the formula is Df = (R-1) (C-1)

Where; Df = Degree of freedom; r = Row; c = Column

Df = (5-1) (2-1) = 4x1=4

However, at 5% level of significance, the degree of freedom at 4 = 9.488

Therefore, hypothesis 3: Will be tested according to the research item from the questionnaire distribution which is **Socioeconomic and cultural factors affecting Police-community relations and service delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA**

Table 19 Socioeconomic Factors Like Income, Education, Housing and Welfare Impact Negatively on Police-Community Relations and Police Services Delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements	Responses				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Socioeconomic Factors like income, education, housing and welfare impact negatively on police-community relations and police services delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA	18	35	41	76	80

Responses	O	e	o-e	(o-e) ²	$\frac{(o - e)^2}{e}$
Strongly agree	80	50	30	900	18
Agree	76	50	26	676	13.52
Neutral	41	50	-9	81	1.62
Disagree	35	50	-15	225	4.5
Strongly disagree	18	50	-32	1024	20.48
TOTAL	250				58.12

Degree of freedom, 4; significant level, 0.05; table value, 9.488; calculated X² = 58.12

Table 20 Cultural Factors Like Ethnicity, Religion, Language, and Cultural Values Impact Negatively on Police-Community Relations and Police Services Delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements	Responses				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Cultural factors like ethnicity, religion, language, and cultural values impact negatively on police-community relations and police services delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA	24	31	44	70	81

Responses	O	e	o-e	(o-e) ²	$\frac{(o - e)^2}{e}$
Strongly agree	81	50	31	961	19.22
Agree	70	50	20	400	8
Neutral	44	50	-6	36	0.72
Disagree	31	50	19	361	7.22
Strongly disagree	24	50	26	676	13.52
TOTAL	250				48.68

Degree of freedom, 4; significant level, 0.05; table value, 9.488; calculated X² = 48.68

➤ *Decision Rule*

For both contingency tables, the calculated Chi square value is greater than the table value of 9.488; with a degree of freedom of 4 at 5% significance level. Therefore we reject the null hypothesis which states that “There are no significant relationships between socioeconomic and cultural factors and Police-community relations and service delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA”. The data suggests that there is a positive relationship between socioeconomic factors and Police- community relations and service delivery. Rejecting the null hypothesis further explains that there is a positive relationship between cultural factors and Police- community relations and service delivery. In other words, both socioeconomic and cultural factors affect Police-community relationship and service delivery.

➤ *Discussion of Findings*

The study investigated the factors influencing police-community relations and police service delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA, Rivers State, Nigeria. The study employed a quantitative approach, using a structured questionnaire to collect data from 250 respondents. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, specifically the Chi-square test. The study's findings revealed a positive relationship between the perceptions and experiences of community members regarding police services and interactions in Obio/Akpor LGA. This suggests that people who have positive perceptions of the police are more likely to report having positive experiences interacting with them. This finding is consistent with previous research, which has shown that the public's perception of the police is essential in shaping police-community relations.

The study also found a positive relationship between the challenges and constraints faced by law enforcement officers and the effectiveness of police-community relations in Obio/Akpor LGA. This suggests that the challenges and constraints law enforcement officers face, such as limited resources, inadequate training, and workload pressure, can negatively impact police-community relations. This finding is also consistent with previous research, which has shown that these challenges can make it difficult for the police to build trust and rapport with the community.

Finally, the study found a positive relationship between socioeconomic and cultural factors, police-community relations, and service delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA. This suggests that socioeconomic factors, such as income, education, and housing, and cultural factors, such as ethnicity, religion, and language, can affect the quality of police-community relations and service delivery. This finding is consistent with previous research, which has shown that these factors can influence the way that the police interact with the community and the way that the community perceives the police and their service delivery.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

➤ *Summary*

This study unravels the intricate connection between police-community relations and the delivery of effective police services in the context of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area (LGA), Rivers State, Nigeria. It delves into how fostering positive police-community interactions can enhance police service delivery in the region. The study draws upon the community policing theory (CPT) and the social exchange theory (SET) to illuminate this dynamic interplay. Additionally, it meticulously reviews relevant literature and expands upon existing knowledge by examining how police-community relations facilitate effective police service delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA.

For primary data collection, the study utilised a survey. A comprehensive analysis was performed on the gathered data, and the research hypothesis was subjected to rigorous testing via the chi-square test. By employing this all-encompassing methodology, the research definitively ascertained the substantial impact of police-community relations on the efficient provision of police services in Obio/Akpor LGA. Moreover, the research emphasizes the adverse consequences that deficiencies in communication between law enforcement and the public have on the provision of police services.

The sample population consisted of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area residents. A purposive sampling technique was utilized to select 250 questionnaires from the sixty-six (66) communities comprising the LGA, which collectively have an estimated population of 500,000. The study unequivocally demonstrates the critical role of police-community relations in shaping effective police service delivery strategies. It underscores the necessity of concerted efforts to establish and maintain robust relationships between the police and the communities they serve. By fostering trust, collaboration, and open communication, police-community partnerships can be pivotal in enhancing police service delivery and promoting a safer and more secure Obio/Akpor LGA.

➤ *Conclusion*

A positive relationship between police-community relations and the police services in the community can result in increased cooperation, trust, and efficient police service delivery, according to the study. This can help the police identify and respond to crime more effectively and prevent crime by addressing underlying issues in the community. Hostile police-community relations can lead to distrust, resentment, and resistance from the community, which can make it difficult for the police to conduct their services effectively. This can result in reduced public safety, increased crime, and a breakdown in social order. Therefore, improving police-community relations is essential for effective police services and policing. Police officers should engage with the community, listen to their concerns, and work with them to address crime and safety issues. This can build trust and respect between the police and the community, leading to safer and more secure communities.

The study, however, identified challenges affecting police-community relations in Nigeria: a study of the Obio/Akpor local government area, Rivers State. These challenges include corruption, human rights violations, and police misconduct. The effect of these challenges on police services in Nigeria is significant. When citizens perceive the police as corrupt, brutal, and biased, they are less likely to cooperate with law enforcement efforts, report crimes, or provide information to the police. This lack of cooperation makes it more difficult for the police to solve crimes, maintain public safety, and deliver services effectively.

Moreover, the lack of trust between the police and the community has led to a rise in vigilante groups and other forms of extrajudicial violence. Citizens who do not trust the police often take matters into their own hands, leading to a breakdown of law and order and further exacerbating the challenges law enforcement agencies face. Addressing these challenges is critical for rebuilding public trust in law enforcement and improving the police services (safety and security) in Nigerian communities.

Police-community relations and police services emphasize collaboration and communication between law enforcement and the communities to prevent crime, promote public safety, and enhance the quality of life in neighborhoods. This is based on trust, respect, and mutual understanding and can be established through regular communication, community engagement, and joint problem-solving efforts. By working together, law enforcement and community members can identify and address local crime and safety issues, develop effective prevention strategies, and promote public trust and confidence in law enforcement. Police-community relations can also help improve police accountability, reduce fear, and mistrust among community members, and foster a sense of shared responsibility for effective police services (public safety).

The study concludes that building police-community relations is a critical aspect of community policing, and it requires ongoing efforts to establish and maintain strong relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve. However, improving police-community relations and police services requires sustained effort and commitment from both the police and the community. It may involve changes to police training, policies, practices, community engagement, and outreach programs. It will require a shared commitment to building trust and fostering a partnership between the police and the community they serve.

➤ *Recommendations*

The study therefore makes the following recommendations for improving police-community relations to promote better policing in Nigeria:

• *Addressing Corruption*

To improve police-community relations, anti-corruption measures must be put in place. This can include improving accountability mechanisms for police officers, such as internal affairs units and disciplinary procedures, and providing more resources to investigative bodies to effectively investigate and prosecute cases of police corruption. Additionally, promoting transparency and integrity in police operations and providing adequate training to police officers can help to rebuild public trust in the police force.

• *Addressing Police Misconducts*

This can be achieved through comprehensive police reforms, including training programs that promote professional conduct and ethical behavior, increased accountability mechanisms, and improved recruitment and selection procedures to ensure that only individuals of high moral character are recruited into the police force. The Nigerian government should also invest in community policing, which involves building partnerships between the police and the community to prevent crime and maintain public safety.

• *Addressing Human Rights Violations by the Police*

This can include increasing accountability mechanisms for police officers who engage in human rights violations, providing training to police officers on human rights and the rule of law, and working with civil society organizations to promote human rights education and awareness. Additionally, the government can establish independent oversight bodies to monitor police conduct and ensure that officers who engage in human rights violations are held accountable for their actions.

➤ *Recommendations for Improvement*

To address these issues and improve police-community relations and police services, the following recommendations are proposed:

• *Implement Community Policing Strategies:*

Foster collaboration and trust between the police and the community through regular engagement initiatives. Encourage community participation in policing strategies and decision-making processes.

• *Enhance Accountability and Transparency:*

Establish effective mechanisms for investigating and addressing allegations of police misconduct. Ensure transparency in disciplinary proceedings and hold officers accountable for their actions.

• *Provide Effective Training in Community Policing:*

Equip police officers with the necessary skills and knowledge to engage with the community positively and constructively.

• *Empower Community Oversight:*

Establish independent community oversight bodies to monitor police conduct and receive complaints from the public.

• *Protect Whistleblowers:*

Ensure that those who report police misconduct are protected from retaliation and that their complaints are taken seriously and investigated promptly.

• *Promote Professionalism and Ethical Conduct:*

Implement rigorous training programs to instill ethical conduct and respect for human rights among police officers. Establish clear policies and procedures that prohibit police misconduct and abuse of power.

By implementing these recommendations, the police in Obi/Akpor LGA, Rivers State, and throughout Nigeria can regain the trust and respect of the community, improve public safety, and foster a more harmonious society.

➤ *Contribution to Knowledge*

This study contributes to knowledge on approaches to enhance police-community and police service delivery in circumstances where trust and collaboration are poor from the outset. One of these approaches is Community Policing, which can help foster trust and collaboration between the Police and the community. Restorative justice can also enhance Police-Community relations as it creates a more positive relationship between the police and community by providing an opportunity for dialogue, understanding, and resolution. Treating individuals with dignity and respect can improve community perceptions of the Police and increase trust and collaboration. By employing these strategies, the Police can build stronger relationships with the communities they serve and improve effective police public safety outcomes.

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APPENDIX

➤ *Questionnaire*

Police Community Relations And Police Services In Nigeria: A Study Of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State

➤ *Introduction*

My name is Christopher Mitchell Osazuwa, and I am carrying out a survey on the topic above for my ongoing research as a requirement for my Bachelor’s degree program. Kindly spare a few minutes of your time and fill out this questionnaire. There is no risk in participating in this survey and your participation is voluntary. Your identity and the information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. This questionnaire aims to gather information about your perceptions and experiences regarding the relationship between the Police and the community. Your responses will contribute to a better understanding of the current state of Police-community relations and help identify areas for improvement. Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge and experience. Thank you.

➤ *Section 1: Demographic Information*

• *Gender:*

- ✓ Male
- ✓ Female
- ✓ Other (please specify)

• *Age:*

- ✓ 18-25
- ✓ 26-35
- ✓ 36-45
- ✓ 46-55
- ✓ 56 and above

• *Occupation:*

- ✓ Student
- ✓ Employed (please specify occupation)
- ✓ Unemployed
- ✓ Other (please specify)

• *Educational Level: (Please Tick)*

- ✓ Undergraduate ()
- ✓ Postgraduate ()

➤ *Section 2: Perception of Police Services*

Please rate your perception of the following statements regarding police services in your community Statements	Responses				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The police respond promptly to emergency calls.					
The police treat all community members fairly and without bias.					
The police are visible and accessible in the community.					
The police effectively address crime and maintain public safety.					
The police are respectful and courteous in interacting with community members.					
The police are knowledgeable about community issues and concerns.					
The police effectively communicate with the community.					
The police are trustworthy and reliable.					

➤ *Section 3: Police-Community Relations*

Please rate your agreement with the following statements regarding police-community relations

Statements	Responses				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The police and community members work together to solve problems.	50	69	38	63	30
The police listen to and consider the concerns of community members.	44	81	38	81	6
The police involve the community in decision-making processes.	56	100	31	56	7
The police engage in community outreach activities.	50	81	31	44	44
The police build positive relationships with community members.	69	75	62	44	0
The police are responsive to the needs and priorities of the community.	64	115	39	32	0
The police collaborate with community organizations and leaders.	31	63	31	112	13

Overall, to what extent do you agree that the Police in your community provide effective services and maintain positive relationships with Residents?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
17	23	55	88	67	250

➤ *Section 4: Personal Experiences*

Please answer the following questions based on your personal experiences with the police in your community.

- *Have you ever had Direct Contact with the Police in your Community?*

- ✓ Yes
- ✓ No

- *If yes, please describe the nature of your contact (e.g., reporting a crime, traffic stop, seeking assistance).*
- *Have you ever witnessed or experienced any form of misconduct or abuse by the police in your community?*

- ✓ Yes
- ✓ No

- *If yes, please describe the incident(s) briefly.*
- *How would you rate your overall experiences relating with the Police?*

- ✓ Very satisfied
- ✓ Satisfied
- ✓ Neutral
- ✓ Dissatisfied
- ✓ Very dissatisfied

➤ *Section 5: Challenges and Factors Affecting Police -Community Relations and Police Services*

Challenges and Constraints Faced by Law Enforcement Officers

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements	Responses				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The police have limited resources to effectively render their services to the public.	20	30	32	76	92
The police are overwhelmed due to workload pressure.	81	76	43	30	20
The police face the constraint of inadequate training and staffing making it difficult to provide adequate services.	18	35	41	80	76
Community distrust and hostility is a major obstacle to effective policing.	24	31	44	81	70

Overall, the challenges and constraints faced by law enforcement officers impact the effectiveness of police-community relations.	22	34	38	72	84
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• *Socioeconomic and Cultural Factors Affecting Police-Community Relations and Service Delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA*

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements	Responses				
Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Socioeconomic Factors like income, education, housing and welfare impact negatively on police-community relations and police services delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA	18	35	41	76	80
Cultural factors like ethnicity, religion, language, and cultural values impact negatively on police-community relations and police services delivery in Obio/Akpor LGA	24	31	44	70	81

➤ *Section 6: Suggestions for Improvement*

Please suggest how Police-community relations and Police services can be improved in your community.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your input is valuable and will contribute to advancing police-community relations in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.