

ACCESS, SHARING, PRESERVATION, AND USE OF CRIME INFORMATION BY STAKEHOLDERS IN SABON TASHA, KADUNA-NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

When measures for crime management seem inefficient, it suggests something is wrong with the performance of the security stakeholders. The current study used a rational choice model to examine how the various security agencies and stakeholders access crime information and whether or not such information is shared between and among the various stakeholders, and how the same is preserved and used in managing crime in Sabon Tasha. The aim is to explain the seeming ineffectiveness of crime management in Sabon Tasha. The study utilized an in-depth interview supplemented with a research questionnaire to obtain data from the respondents. The study findings indicate that security stakeholders in Sabon Tasha access crime information primarily through reports and non-forensic investigations and that a tradition of information sharing exists amongst stakeholders. Still, crime information in Sabon Tasha is poorly preserved. The study also reveals that stakeholders are using crime information inefficiently as the area's crime rate increases. It is the position of this study that information is vital in any attempt at managing crime. However, it brings attention to the more critical issue of the sophistication and reliability of the source(s) of crime information and how it is shared, processed, preserved, and utilized. The competency of security stakeholders is central here as this determines their ability to source reliable information, adequately share, preserve, analyze, and use the same against criminals. Considering the primacy of security in the wellbeing of every community, this study recommends the sincere tackling of the obstacles against the proper access, preservation, and the effective use of crime information in Sabon Tasha, as revealed by the study.

Key Words: *Crime, Crime Reporting, Crime Information, crime information sharing, Crime Control*

1.0 Introduction

The importance of security in every society's socio-economic and political life explains why the security and welfare of the people constitute the primary responsibility of government. Consequently, the need to keep crime under check in every society cannot be overemphasized. Crime impedes human development; hence, as countries continue to seek peaceful development, there can never be a better time to rise against crime than now. The rising rate of crime globally constitutes a reason for concern. For instance, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2011) reported 468 global cases of homicide, and more than 36% of these cases were reported to have occurred in Africa, 31% in the Americas, 27% in Asia, 5% in Europe and 1% in the tropical region. African countries continue to be the most affected by the scourge of crime globally, with Nigeria among the top countries with a higher prevalence of criminal activity on the continent. A pressing challenge among the numerous challenges facing Nigeria today is crime. In terms of crime rate, Nigeria ranks 17th globally out of 129 countries, 4th in Africa, and 1st in West Africa (Numbeo, 2020). As revealed by official Police Statistics (cited in Okey, 2009), the rise in the crime rate in Nigeria from 20,860 incidents in 1994 to 24,448 in 2008 is disturbing. More disturbing is the negative impact of crime in destabilizing the security and peace of Nigerians and residents of Sabon Tasha in

particular, upsetting economic activities, discouraging foreigners and indigenes from investing in the country, disrupting industries, economic and political development (Ani, 2010). Kaduna State is no stranger to the prevalence of crimes. In 2013 Kaduna State recorded the highest (43%) armed robbery cases in Nigeria (Sheriff ltd, 2014). According to the Inspector General of Police Mohammed Adamu, 250 persons in Kaduna State (out of 1,071 nationwide) lost their lives in crime-related cases in the first quarter of 2019 (Punch Newspaper, May 1, 2019).

As a community in Kaduna State, crime stands out as one of the pressing challenges facing Sabon Tasha today. This constitutes a source of fear and apprehension for residents of the area. The problem has further been aggravated by the seeming inadequacies in the access, preservation, sharing, and use of crime information by stakeholders for effective crime management in the area, which seem to serve as a reason for the seeming persistent high rate of crime in the area.

A lot has been written about crime information and crime control. Notable scholarly works on the subject of crime information and control include Onguko, E.A. (2007), Kawai, D.E.S., and Samson, D.H. (2011), and Awodele, A., Ernest, O. (2015). Sabon Tasha presents an interesting case for studying crime information and how it is used. While researchers have examined various aspects of crime information even in Nigeria, an in-depth examination of access, preservation, sharing and use of Crime Information by Stakeholders in Sabon Tasha Kaduna State has not yet been undertaken. There is thus a policy and research gap in knowledge on how crime information is accessed, preserved, shared, and used in controlling crime in Sabon Tasha. A study on Access, Sharing, Preservation and Use of Crime Information by Stakeholders on Crime Control in Sabon Tasha is thus timely. This study fills the gaps in knowledge by examining how crime information is accessed, Preserved, shared, and used by stakeholders in Sabon Tasha and provides insight into the traditions and dynamics of crime information in Nigeria.

Ndagi (1999) has noted that problems in question form make research more clearly focused because the researcher will then be looking for answers to specific questions. Thus, to solve the problem stated above, this study provides answers to the following research questions.

1.1 Research Questions

1. How do stakeholders access crime information in Sabon Tasha?
2. Is there an arrangement for information sharing among crime management stakeholders in Sabon Tasha?
3. How is Crime Information preserved in Sabon Tasha?
4. How effective are stakeholders in the use of crime management information in Sabon Tasha

1.2 Research Objectives

The broad objective of the study is to examine the Access, Sharing, Preservation, and Use of Crime Information by Stakeholders in Sabon Tasha. The specific objectives of the study include the following:

1. To understand how stakeholders, get crime management information in Sabon Tasha.
2. To ascertain whether there is an arrangement for information sharing among stakeholders on crime control in Sabon Tasha.
3. To know how crime management information is preserved in Sabon Tasha.
4. To know whether stakeholders are influential in their use of crime management information in Sabon Tasha.

1.3 Operational Definition of Terms

For clarity and easy comprehension of the content of this study, a simple definition of some concepts used in this work is essential.

The central concepts in this study include Access, Crime Information, and Stakeholders.

Access: Access here connotes getting or acquiring information.

Crime Information: Within the context of this study, Crime Information stands for the knowledge or intelligence in the form of records (e.g., statistics on crime incidents), complaints by the victim(s) of Crime, confession by criminals, a result of academic research on crime control, or a result of crime investigation needed for the control of Crime.

Stakeholder: Here, a stakeholder is anybody who has a role to play in a particular sphere of human endeavor or affair. The context here includes those who have a role in crime control, such as the police, traditional and community leaders and residents of Sabon Tasha.

1.4 Conceptualizing Crime

Crime has been defined in numerous ways. Onoge (1993) defined crime as an act or omission which renders the person doing the act or making the omission liable to punishment under any order in council, ordinance, or statute. Clinard (1974) sees crime as those activities that break the laws of the land and are subject to official punishment. To Adler, Mueller, and Lauifer (2001), crime is any human conduct that violates criminal laws and is subject to punishment. To Hollin (1983), crime is not only the act that causes social injury (such as imperialism, sexism, racism, poverty) but also anything that thwarts the right to a dignified human existence (right to life, movement, happiness, liberty, and so on). However, despite the differences in the definitions given by the authors above, they seem to agree that a crime is (1) an act or omission, (2) that thwarts the right to a dignified human existence, (3) prescribed by the state and (4) has a punishment for its occurrence. Therefore, in the context of this study, crime is seen as any action or omission, violent or not, that violates human rights or the smooth running of public activities as provided by laws of the land and constitutes a threat to public security and is punishable according to the law.

1.5 Crime Control

In a study on school crime control and prevention, Cook, Gottfredson, and Na (2010) view crime control as the strict management of law enforcement to bring down the rate of crime. To Schubert (2009), it is the protection of society from criminals by regulating criminal conduct and justice. Bell and Manchin (2011) see crime control as the strict and swift punishment for criminals, which benefits society by striking in criminals because they will be harshly punished. Crime control entails the partnership between law enforcement agents and the community to solve the problems that give birth to crime in society (Adamski 1991). Based on these definitions, it is safe to see crime control as a collaboration between stakeholders in providing, sharing, and using all the needed information, etc. The problems that give birth to crime with law enforcement agencies provide a sense of direction regarding arrests and criminals' punishment.

1.6 How Stakeholders Access Crime Information

In the United Kingdom, a registered company known as crime stoppers limited acts as a third party through crime reporting. One of its functionalities is to allow people to report a crime anonymously by filling an online form. No login is required throughout the process, and no personal information is required to fill the form (crime stoppers). In a study on crime recording in Nigeria, Nwankwo and James (2001) revealed that the internet had become a quicker platform for reporting crimes to stakeholders on crime management. Research has shown that increased reporting of crime leads to a reduction in crime. Crime reporting and sharing are thus crucial in themselves before policymakers depend on this information to measure crime prevalence.

Similarly, in a study that looks at crime reporting and investigation in Hong Kong, Fan (2015) stressed that stakeholders get crime information through reports by victims, witnesses, or other persons in the know. In his words, "crime reporting can be made by visiting the police station, contacting the police by telephone, letter, e-mail, or other communication. The police will then review the report and decide whether to file it. Then the case is set" (Fan, 2015:6). Flowing in the same direction, Gimode (2001) reveals that the primary source of criminal information in Kenya is the reports developed from the police investigations and occurrence books at the police stations across the country. Boone (2012) holds that the difficulties being encountered by Kenyans when trying to supply the police with crime information have made it necessary for victims of crime in Kenya to send out criminal information to a police station or police post using their mobile-based applications. National Crime Research Centre (i.e., the agency responsible for collating all crime-related data in Kenya) reveals that in Kenya, crime information exists in multiple sources that are less coordinated, lack a common platform to access and share information leading to policy incoherence in the management of crime in the country (crimeresearch.go.ke). In South Africa, access to point-level crime information has been highly restricted in the past. However, officially, the South African Police Service has announced that all stations have functional Crime Information Management and Analysis Centers tasked with combining crime incident records, crime scene investigation evidence, case dockets, and offender analysis. In practice, this is far from reality as crime information and locations are loaded manually into the

crime administration system without GPS coordinates taken at the scene. The crime administration system is rarely updated with accurate crime locations, revealing one reason for the high crime rate in South Africa (Institute for Security Studies, 2019). Kaduna State has three Police Area Commands. These are Zaria, Kaduna, and Kafanchan with sixteen, eighteen, and twelve Divisional Police Stations respectively. These Police Stations are responsible for receiving, recording, and collecting all reported crime cases within their jurisdictions (Gyong, 2010).

1.7 Crime Information Sharing Among Stakeholders

In a study that seeks to understand law enforcement information sharing for criminal intelligence purposes, Brown (2018) stated that crime information is central to modern crime control. The sophistication of crime information depends on the sharing of the same between and amongst stakeholders. In exploring methodologies to measure the value of information sharing and fusion efforts, Jackson (2008) opined that information sharing between security stakeholders had become a central focus of United States domestic security efforts. The importance of information sharing also reaches beyond counterterrorism and domestic security, with multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional data systems playing central roles in fighting crime more broadly. Conceptually, information sharing is viewed here as the exchange between two or more parties of information believed to be potentially valuable and involves both seeking and providing knowledge (Ipe, 2003). Typically, the popular view when discussing knowledge sharing in a police context is to consider the handling of crime reporting or criminal intelligence, defined as information compiled, analyzed, and disseminated in an effort to anticipate, prevent or monitor criminals actively (Onoge, 1993). The standard argument for the link of exchange to organizational performance is that if crime information is not shared appropriately, critical knowledge can be lost or incurred with detrimental effects (Boutis, Cressan, and Hlland 2002). For example, in the U.K., a failure to share information between the regional police force led to a previously investigated individual gaining the position of school caretaker and subsequently murdering two schoolgirls in 2002 (Manning, 2008).

Furthermore, through effective crime information sharing, the police department can draw up broad expertise, including the latest advancements in policing techniques and best practices. Crime information sharing has proven vital in minimizing the repetition of errors and ensuring that inefficiency is not perpetuated in different branches of security organizations (Chan 2001). However, sharing this information and clarity on how such information is handled could play the dual role of reducing susceptibility to populist rhetoric while increasing the efficacy of law enforcement. Sharing crime information improves the store of intelligence that informs decision-making in law enforcement agencies. Failure to share crime information among stakeholders may also result in what could lead to blind spots in law enforcement. It could also lead to a waste of time and resources as agencies duplicate each other's efforts which obstructs the ability of law enforcement to respond with urgency or even prevent crimes more serious crimes from occurring (Brown 2018). Most countries have found value in constantly reviewing how crime data is stored and shared to ensure that stakeholders and law enforcement officials can easily collaborate, assess success, and fight crime more efficiently. There, however, barriers remain in most countries. While some have found ways to navigate these barriers, others have found more viable solutions to bypass the roadblocks to adequate access, sharing, and preservation of crime information.

More critical debates are also apparent, with the complexities of sharing knowledge being a theme involved in many police and research developments over the last few decades. Studies of police organizational structures have highlighted how fragmented, bureaucratic and institutional frameworks can stifle the flow of information around the police service. Also, research in occupational culture has suggested how sub-groups (e.g., frontline patrol officers) can be reluctant to share information with other sub-groups (e.g., detectives) (Reiss, 1992). To manage cross-border Crime in West Africa, governments in the sub-region have strengthened security coordination and cooperation by harmonizing relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks. They also share crime information through platforms such as the West African Police Information System (Institute for Security Studies, 2019).

1.8 Crime Reporting and Information Sharing

It is important to note that measures of crime rates have long been identified as problematic for several reasons. It is not the aim of this paper to point to the measurement errors on empirical grounds. It is essential to acknowledge how this may impede efficient crime control and policy reforms (Islam 2016; Levitt 1998).

If states assess result-based practices in crime reporting and information sharing, they are also likely to analyze how the system in place serves the local community.

Several factors already skew the way crimes are reported as nonviolent crimes, such as petty theft and crimes by close family members, are less likely to be reported, and sexual crime is notoriously underreported (Bonner, 2019). There is even a lower crime reporting rate among the disenfranchised or those who may feel that they may be victimized by law enforcement. Research on undocumented immigrants in the US showed that they were less likely to report crimes for fear of deportation, and where they gained legal status; they were more likely to report crimes (Comino et al., 2020). Research has also shown that though there is a perceived level of safety in rural areas. Residents of rural parts of the developing world are less likely to report crimes to the police. This decreased likelihood that crimes in rural areas will be reported may be a product of culture and informal social controls that discourage accusing community members of crimes (Grote and Neubacher 2016, 13).

Crimes without direct victims are often less likely to be reported. Research has shown that citizens are less likely to report crimes that do not directly affect them. Information on environmental and wildlife crime tends to be less likely to be shared with government forces, so they are less likely to be prosecuted (Grote and Neubacher 2016, 5). This reluctance to report such crimes reduces the ability of the government to protect this public good effectively. When more information-sharing barriers are in place, it gradually creates a situation where the public accepts such crimes as a norm. On the other hand, more violent crimes like murder tend to be reported to the police (Louw 2007). The quality of information shared with the police depends on institutional factors, and barriers in information sharing are cardinal determinants of this.

Structural inequality has also been seen to be a significant factor in crime reporting. Disadvantaged groups tend to be less likely to report crime than their affluent or structurally advantaged counterparts, even though they are more likely to be the victims of crime (Zaykowski et al., 2019). Where there is a prevalent view that a country is lawless, its citizens are less inclined to report crimes, and as such, people who feel the police cannot protect them may also see it as a futile venture to go and report crimes (Hayden, 2020). This relates to the cultural argument that certain areas accept certain types of crimes more than others, gauging whether there are any benefits to reporting such crimes. In some instances, these may be actual or imagined beliefs that crime reporting is dangerous or futile, causing a vicious cycle. In such situations, crimes remain unreported, and people continue to report crimes because they feel they might put themselves in danger and still not find help from law enforcement, and thus crime continues to thrive.

It is thus no wonder that researchers have observed deviations between different measurements of crime (Soares 2004). These could make it possible for the crime rates to be politicized and manipulated by political groups. Unfortunately, while universal, under-reporting is more likely in countries with unconsolidated institutions for maintaining law and order (Grote and Neubacher 2016; Soares 2004). People are less likely to report crimes where they feel it will not make a difference. In other words, where citizens feel that the likelihood that a crime will be solved is low, they are less likely to report the crime. Gyong (2010) has uncovered that in Kaduna State, crime is under-reported by as much as 60%. Also, only about 36% of crimes are reported to the police, and victims perform a cost-benefit analysis before reporting a crime. The implication is that crime reporting in Kaduna State depends on the probable cost and benefits. Crime reporting is thus predicated on factors that include the victims' perception of the weight of the crime, their moral and patriotic obligation, their attitude towards law enforcement and the system of social control in general, the availability of other options open to them in terms of restitution and compensation etc.

1.9 Crime Reporting, Democratic Governance, and Development

Crime reporting has a significant impact on the political and economic structures of a state. In assessing the quality of government, critics tend to turn to the prevalence of crime as an indicator of how well the government has fared. This is of particular importance in states with democratic institutions. Unfortunately, crime has long been linked to populist rhetoric, with governments using the scourge of crime as fuel for more draconian policies or police militarization. In elections, politicians who promise draconian approaches to crime prevention and highlight the failures of the police and courts tend to score points at the poll even as they preach an erosion of democratic values for the sake of being tough on crime (Prillaman 2003).

A study of crime rates in South Africa in its post-apartheid years shows that the turn to inclusive democracy also showed a significant shift in crime. In general, there was an increase in crime rates based on reports (Louw 2007). When looking at the types of crimes and victim surveys, the study shows that crime eased with democracy. However, the factors that influence the likelihood of crime, such as weak regulatory systems, socio-economic factors, and attitudes towards crime and violence, might substantially impact crime (Louw 2007).

Access to crime reports is essential for civil society, which forms a pillar for democratic governance and the rule of law. It is also crucial for democratic development as it is a feature of transparent governance that can inform checks and balances and government performance evaluation. Where crime is not handled correctly can be detrimental to democracy. It leads to reduced legitimacy of democratic institutions, a growing acceptance of support for undemocratic solutions to combat crime, and an even longer-lasting negative impact on civil society (Prillaman 2003). Particularly the courts and police are likely to suffer a loss of faith where crime is prevalent.

At the same time, research has shown that more negative interaction with the police could lead to fewer propensities to report crimes. Seeing that democracies are defined by their abilities to protect civilians from state repression and ensure their human rights, police forces in democracies should be less likely to victimize citizens. Democracies may be more likely to indirectly encourage crime reporting, as civilians should have a more positive outlook on interaction with police.

Low quality of governance, high inequality, slow economic growth, and anonymity associated with urban areas tend to increase the likelihood of crime (Islam 2016). In such cases expanding the police force has been seen to reduce crime (Levitt 1998). Particularly crimes against businesses (Islam 2016). Crime reporting represents a significant issue in developing countries. While countries may become more developed, their relationship with crime management and law and order may change due to higher levels of wealth, etc. Unfortunately, research has shown that people in developing countries tend not to cooperate with the police (Grote and Neubacher 2016, 13).

It has long been shown that crime impacts development due to destruction of property loss of workforce, foreign investments, tourism, workforce productivity, commercial transactions, etc. are negatively related to crime (Grote and Neubacher 2016; Prillaman 2003). With more crime, these activities, which are essential for any development, come to a halt. It makes the cost of production even higher for companies as they are forced to invest in private security etc., if they are in a high crime area (Prillaman 2003). This halt in activities, in turn, slows down economic development. It is evident that crime is costly, and thus, it slows development down.

Without proper crime reporting, there can be no effective administration of justice. Regardless of the system of government, the administration of justice presents a particularly crucial function of government. Its legitimacy is heavily dependent on its ability to administer justice within its territorial borders. The rule of law becomes less attractive to citizens, and gradually, they turn to private security firms or mob justice, etc., to take the law into their own hands. This self-help regime has the unfortunate effect of further weakening the power and legitimacy of the government and its institutions as the role of the state and civil society become blurred (Prillaman 2003). The culture of violence or attitude towards crime is a significant factor that influences the probability of crime. Social capital suffers from the prevalence of crimes. Researchers have long recognized that the civic engagement and social networks essential for development are undermined by the failure to deal with crime (Louw 2007; Prillaman 2003).

1.10 Best practices

The way crime information is shared is cardinal to the prospects of successful anticrime policies (Prillaman 2003). This starts from the essential step, the likelihood that citizens are willing to share information on crime with the authorities. This does not just refer to reporting the crime but also trusting the police with information that could help them identify a suspect (Prillaman 2003, 26). Reducing barriers to reporting crime and centralizing the information on the crime is the target of adequate crime information reporting and information strategy.

Community policing has long been viewed as necessary, with law enforcement needing to first that effective policing requires community participation and assistance (US Department of Justice 2019). This presents the best way to leverage all other resources that the government can place to fight crime and its root causes. This includes creating an actionable plan that involves a broad range of stakeholders within the community and takes every opportunity to earn community trust through openness and transparency (US Department of Justice 2019). Stakeholders are not limited to law enforcement agencies but also hospitals, schools, and other community organizations. Research has shown that this increases crime reporting (Schnebly 2008; Sozer and Merlo 2013).

First-line supervisors in law enforcement must train their subordinates and be involved in the decision-making process so that their feedback of activities on the ground could guide the way the agency evolves in its mission and vision. Investment should be made in their training and welfare, creating a culture of transparency and accountability (US Department of Justice 2019, 48–60). That way, the system is dealing with crime, and access to information is built on a solid foundation that is sensitive to the needs of communities. After a critical examination of the failed crime control measures vis-à-vis the rising rate of crime in Nigeria, scholars (such as Salay, 2005; Ekhomu, 2005; and Ige, 2005;) have proposed that a lasting solution is for the government of Nigeria to seriously grab and implement community policing which was launched in the country on the 27th day of April 2004. In response, the government of Kaduna State decided to adopt a new approach to crime policing in the state by inaugurating a unique crime control outfit under the Nigeria Police Force Kaduna Command on the 25th of March, 2008; known as *Operation Yaki*, with the mandate to curb crime and criminality in the state through partnership with communities and other security agencies.

Technology has been at the forefront of developing proper means of crime information sharing across and within agencies. Most countries have gradually moved towards more information technology in the way data is stored and the way it is queried. In many cases, this involves storing information centrally, querying that information, and improving how this data is fused from varying sources. In Australia, criminal information on an entity may be held in multiple databases. A 2013 parliamentary inquiry into Australian criminal intelligence found that such information might be held on more than separate systems operated by multiple law enforcement, policing, and government agencies (Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement, 2013). Innovative technologies have grown to include social media and other nontraditional sources of crime information (Hollywood and Winkelman 2015, 5). For instance, the Regional Information Sharing System (RISS) was created in the United States over thirty years ago in response to specific regional crime challenges and the need for cooperation and secure information sharing among law enforcement agencies. RISS uses its secure internet structure known as RISSNET to facilitate law enforcement communications and crime information sharing across the United States (Information Sharing Environment, 2012). It is argued that the best results are enabled by a collaboration between the business community, policymakers, and technology (Hollywood and Winkelman 2015, 10). Though this presents challenges, it also drives innovation sensitive to the realities of the communities being policed. The technology used to store and disseminate information must be compatible across stakeholders. This could mean that at least the process of recording or saving information, no matter how technologically advanced, will present problems if it creates added difficulties for searching or understanding criminal intelligence that has already been stored or shared (Abrahamson and Goodman-Delahunty 2014; Brown 2018).

Real-time data analysis has become crucial to law enforcement. This is predicated on more access to technology and sharing and analyzing that information (US Department of Justice 2019). It is also essential that this information is protected so that crime prevention policies do not trump the right to privacy. Information sharing networks must be bound by the same standards for storing and disseminating information to avoid leakage or mishandling of such information (Brown 2018). Data collection and analysis should be predicated on a strategic plan that outlines the agency's needs, the peculiarities of the communities they serve, and the available funding.

The police's reputation also plays significant role research has shown that information and report of crimes become less likely to be readily available as the police are seen (Gingerich and Oliveros 2018). Mainly where there is violence against civilians or where law enforcement officers use excessive force against criminals are less likely to give any information to police, further denting any effective crime information

sharing prospects. Where the police are not trusted, are unavailable, this also reduces their access to information on crime (Grote and Neubacher 2016). The potential offender is a neighbor or employee. It also reduces the likelihood that information on such crimes will be shared with authorities (Grote and Neubacher 2016, 13).

Proactive data-driven strategies for information sharing and crime prevention cannot be understated. Synchronizing the way data is stored and shared across security agencies as well as federating units is essential. It is not enough that there is access to data. It is vital that the data itself is of good quality, and that it has adequate details, and is timely. This way, escalations in low-level crime could be used to monitor trends before they escalate. This could play a significant role in preventing crimes before they become more serious. Some argue that it is crucial to challenge the idea that crime reporting is futile as often this narrative may be far from the truth. Yet, in areas with low trust in government, it may gain credence among the disenfranchised (Hayden, 2020).

There may be other ways that reporting crimes through other stakeholders could present a new means of gathering information. However, this may be laden with problems that extend to how information is shared and not just whether the information is used.

1.11 How Crime Information is preserved

In a study that examined the storage of forensic evidence at the forensic science laboratory in Pretoria, South Africa, Van Der Walt and Luke (2015) stress the importance of the forensic science laboratory in the preservation and prevention of evidence contamination or degradation. They argue that this leads to securing the conviction of suspects and the acquittal of the innocent. The Forensic Science Laboratory (F.S.L.) must prevent contamination, theft or loss, and maintain and update all documentation relating to the evidence. All information related to the evidence is stored in the Exhibit Management System (E.M.S.) and can be retrieved at any time (Hennop 2009). Similarly, Hennop (2009) holds that every time anyone deals with evidence, it must be documented, and these various documentations create the chain of evidence that shows the integrity of the evidence. An interim release of evidence to the courts, the laboratory for analysis, or other sections is updated on the Exhibit Management Evidence, its current Ness, and accuracy to satisfy any court in the judicial system.

On the other hand, Malonis (2000) describes a feature of inventory cost as items that become absolute or damaged or are stolen during storage. Damaged or contaminated evidence cannot be replaced in monetary terms, and therefore its use to the judicial system becomes void.

The bibliographic evidence preservation Handbook reveals the story of evidence mishandled, lost, or destroyed. The blame is often directed towards evidence custodians housed in law enforcement agencies across the United States. The handbook further reveals that these agencies bear ultimate responsibility for maintaining the integrity of the evidence; the revealed problem lies with a systemic failure to properly account for evidence from collection through disposition. This failure reduces the public's confidence in the criminal justice system to produce just results in criminal and civil proceedings. Hence, evidence that may not have been previously analyzed at a forensic science laboratory should be retained in an appropriate storage facility until needed for court or forensic testing (the biological evidence preservation handbook 2013). In Nigeria, Nte (2012) blames the poor/lack of forensic skills, equipment, and proper preservation of crime information of the Nigerian police for the inadequate investigative capacity of the police and calls for improvement in these areas for effective crime control in the country.

Similarly, Adigun et al. (2018) reveal the disadvantages of manual preservation of crime information in Nigeria. In their words (pp.176), "the current method used in Nigeria in recording crimes and criminals is the manual method which involves the use of biro and paper. This method is ineffective as it could be misplaced, destroyed by pest, manipulated by unauthorized individuals, etc."

However, despite the variation in scope, methodology, and focus, the scholars above agree that proper preservation is essential for effective crime control.

1.12 Theoretical Underpinning

This study applies the Rational Choice Theory of criminology propounded by Cornish and Clarke (1986). Cornish and Clarke (1986) posit that nature has placed mankind under the governance of two

sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. Human beings are rational actors who engage in cost-benefit analysis (maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain) before embarking on any act. People freely choose their behavior, both conforming and deviant, based on their rational calculations. The central element of calculation involves a cost-benefit analysis: pleasure versus pain. Choice, with all other conditions equal, will be directed towards the maximization of personal pleasure. Choice can be controlled by perceiving and understanding the potential pain or punishment that will follow an act judged to violate the social good or the social contract. The thrust of their theory was vividly presented in their words; thus, "Crime is chosen for its benefits. If the benefits of Crime are high and the costs low, Crime will occur. However, if the benefits of Crime are lower than the costs, Crime will not occur. An implication of this is that if the costs of Crime are made to be high, would-be-rational-offenders will be restrained or deterred from committing it" (Cornish and Clarke, 1986:1).

Rational Choice theory suggests that people who commit crimes do so after considering the risk of detection and punishment for the crimes (risk assessment) and the rewards (personal, financial, etc.) of completing these acts successfully. On the other hand, persons who do not commit crimes decide that the successful execution of criminal acts will be too risky or not worth the benefit. Policies stemming from Rational Choice Theory dictate proper access, sharing, and use of crime information to deal harshly and quickly with offenders to deter them from making criminal choices and up the risk of intending criminals from involving themselves in crime.

Regarding relevance to this study, Rational Choice theory sees the importance of access, sharing, preservation, and use of crime information amongst stakeholders as a strategic measure to constitute a discouraging element in the cost-benefit analysis of criminals in Sabon Tasha. When crime information is appropriately accessed, shared, preserved, and used by all relevant individuals in the crime management circle in Sabon Tasha, it will produce a proper response against Crime. This serves as a discouragement to criminals in their analysis before executing the illegal act(s). Proper access, sharing, and effective use of crime intelligence among stakeholders raise the cost and down the benefits of Crime to criminals; hence, discouraging them from going into it.

The theory is subjected to several criticisms. For instance, Paternoster and Bachman (2001) argue that even though all assume that Crime is the outcome of choice, they differ in their concept of what constitutes a "rational" choice. By disregarding the role of norms, values, and moral emotions like guilt and shame and leaving aside these normative and emotional elements of decision making, the rational choice theory seems to misrepresent the nature of the action it explains in terms of rational choice (Scheff, 1992).

As penetrating as these criticisms maybe, in reality, they have not been beneficial. A critical way rational choice theorists counter these criticisms and defend their theory is by arguing that what counts as "rational" is simply beside the point. A rational action simply refers to an understandable action and requires no more questioning (Coleman, 1986:1). Rational choice theory is useful in explaining the synergy between access, sharing of crime information, and crime control in Sabon Tasha. Above all, the theory is of relevance to this research as it sheds light and provides logical clarity and direction to this study.

2 Methods and Materials

The nature of this study necessitates the use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods combining questionnaires, oral interviews, library research, police statistics on incidences of crime in Sabon Tasha, and statistical analysis. A structured questionnaire was administered to 100 respondents to achieve the study's objectives. Multi-stage cluster sampling was used to select the respondents for this study. Multi-stage cluster sampling involves successive stages of sampling, which requires using any of the well-known probability sampling methods at each stage (Palys, 1992). Systematic sampling was used to determine the selection interval at each stage of the multi-stage sampling. Ninety-three valid questionnaires were retrieved from the field out of the 100 administered. In-depth interviews were conducted with fifteen residents of Sabon Tasha, fifteen security personnel, and five community leaders. A combined presentation and analysis of the data were generated through questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and official police records. In analyzing the quantitative data for the study, the research used descriptive statistical techniques such as transferring data from its source of collection to statistical tables. Frequency distribution and percentages were used for the sake of clarity. The analysis was done by summarizing and bringing out the implication of each data as displayed on the table. Attention was given to all ethical considerations, and respondents

were assured that their identities would enjoy adequate protection before interviews and questionnaires were administered.

3 Results and Discussions

Table 1: Administration and Retrieval of Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRES ADMINISTERED	QUESTIONNAIRES RETRIEVED	VALID QUESTIONNAIRES
100	93	93

Source: **Field Survey, 2020**

As indicated in the table above, a total of 100 questionnaires were administered in Sabon Tasha. From the 100 questionnaires administered, 93 (93%) were retrieved, the 93 (93%) were well filled and suitable for data analysis.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage %
Sex		
Male	51	54.8
Female	42	45.2
TOTAL	93	100
Age		
18-25	18	19.3
26-35	33	35.4
36-50	25	27
51-Above	17	18.3
TOTAL	93	100
Marital Status		
Single	61	66
Married	26	28
Widow/Widower	5	5
Separated	1	1
TOTAL	93	100
Occupation		
Student	21	23
Civil Servant	19	20
Self-Employed	11	12
Applicant	42	45
TOTAL	93	100
Educational Qualification		
Primary School	12	13
Secondary School	17	18
Tertiary School	57	61
Non-Formal Education	7	8
TOTAL	93	100

Source: **Field Survey, 2020**

Table 2 indicates that there were 51 (54.8%) male respondents, and 42 (45.2%) were female. This reveals that there were more male respondents than females. The table also shows that respondents within the ages 18-25 years were 18 (19.3%), those within the ages 26-35 years were 33 (35.4%), those within the ages 36-50 years were 25 (27%), 51 and above were 17 (18.3%). This implies that a majority of the respondents were between the ages of 26-35 years. It further reveals that 61 (66%) of the respondents were single, 26 (28%) were married, 5 (5%) were widow/widower, and 1 (1%) was separated. This shows that majority of the respondents were single. On occupation, it shows that 21 (23%) were students, 19 (20%) were civil servants, 11 (12%) were self-employed, and 42 (45%) were applicants. This suggests that most of the respondents were applicants. For education, the table reveals that 12 (13%) attended only primary school, 17 (18%) of them pursued education to secondary school, 57 (61%) attended tertiary schools, while 7 (8%) had non-formal education. This shows that the majority of the respondents attended tertiary school.

Table3: How Stakeholders Access Crime Information in Sabon Tasha.

Responses	Frequency	percentage %
Through the internet and libraries.	12	13
Through report by victims and witnesses of Crime	52	56
No Idea	29	31
Total	93	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

On respondents' view on how stakeholders access crime information in Sabon Tasha, as displayed in Table 3 above, a total of 12 (13%) believe it is through the internet and libraries, 52 (56%) hold that it is through reports by victims and witnesses of Crime, 29 (31%) have no idea. This implies that most respondents representing 56%, believe that stakeholders access crime information through reports by crime victims and witnesses.

This agrees with the views of most of the stakeholders interviewed. For instance, the *Sarkin Samari* (Youth Leader) of the area posited thus, "I am close to the youth hence information about crime and criminals get to me mostly through report from youth" (interview, 2020). In a similar vein, the D.P.O of Sabon Tasha Police Station said, "We have our Intelligence Department that gathers information on Crime. People also come to report, write a statement, and call to provide us information. Through statements by both the accused and complainants, we get information too. Traditional leaders also update us on Crime in their localities from time to time" (Interview, 2020).

From the preceding, it is safe to say that stakeholders in Sabon Tasha get crime information through reports by victims, witnesses, other members of the society, etc., and confessions by criminals.

Table 4: Do stakeholders share crime information in Sabon Tasha?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	21	23
No	30	32
No idea	42	45
Total	93	100

Source: Field work, 2020

Table 4 above displays yes 21(23%), No 30 (32%), No idea 42 (45%). This implies that most of the respondents have no idea whether stakeholders on crime control in Sabon Tasha share crime information among them.

However, one of the stakeholders submitted thus, “at the community level, we share information amongst ourselves the community leaders. The *Daka* forward such information to the district head during the weekly security meetings, where the D.P.O. and other security stakeholders are present. In some urgent cases, I do communicate to the police and inform them about pressing crime situation in this community” (interview, 2020). In a similar vein, the D.P.O. said, “we partner and share information amongst us, *Operation yaki*, for example, reflects this partnership. Away from operation yaki, community leaders provide us with intelligence on the dominant kind of Crime in their areas, the suspects, and ways they believe we can follow to arrest the situation. When there is a need, we also share information with other security agencies” (interview, 2020).

The preceding information suggests that stakeholders tend to share crime information in Sabon Tasha.

Table 5: whether respondents have an idea of how crime information is preserved in Sabon Tasha.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	21	23
No	32	34
No Idea	40	43
Total	93	100

Source: Filed Work, 2020

The table above displays yes 21 (23%), No 32 (34%), No Idea 40 (43%) respondents. It implies that most of the respondents do not know how crime information is preserved in Sabon Tasha. This could be because they are less involved in the activities of crime control.

Table 6: If your answer above is “yes,” how is crime information preserved in Sabon Tasha?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
In soft copy format on the internet and libraries.	2	10
In hard copy format, writing using pen and paper kept with the police.	15	71
No Idea	4	19
Total	21	100

Source: Field Work, 2020

Table 6 displays respondents' views on how much they know how crime information is preserved in Sabon Tasha. We have 2 (10%) of the respondents holding that crime information in Sabon Tasha is preserved in soft copy on the internet and libraries. In comparison, 15 (71%) say it is preserved in hard copy, formally written using pen and paper, and kept with the police. 4(19%) of them stated that they had no idea. Most respondents say crime information is preserved in hard copy format using pen and paper and kept with the police. These views agree with that of the majority of the interviewees. In the words of the police D.P.O., there is a department here that keeps records of crime information or statistics. Such information is kept in the file and locked adequately in the office (interview, 2020).

Suffice it to say, crime information in Sabon Tasha is preserved in (hard copy) written format with the police.

Table7: Effectiveness of stakeholders in using crime information: Respondents' perceptions on the Trend of Crime in Sabon Tasha.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage%
On the increase	43	46
On the decrease	21	23
No idea	29	31
Total	93	100

Source: Field Work, 2020

From table 4.16 above, respondents express their views on the trend of Crime in Sabon Tasha. 43 (46%) say it is on the increase, 21 (23%) believe it is on the decrease, 29 (31%) have No Idea. It implies that the majority of them believe Crime is on the increase in Sabon Tasha. On this, stakeholders tend to be blurry in their submissions. In the words of one of the stakeholders, he said, “you know one cannot eliminate crime from the society, but I think we are trying and with adequate support from parents and government, we can do better” (Interview, October 2018). In the words of the D.P.O. Sabon Tasha Divisional Police Station, “we are doing our best to bring down the Crime rate in Sabon Tasha. We patrol blackspots such as Black Street, Kantin Aga, Ungwan Pama Cemetery more frequently than before. So, I think residents of Sabon Tasha feel more secure now” (Interview, October 2018).

The previous submission by the D.P.O. and other stakeholders is neither here nor there on the issue at hand. However, as displayed in Table 8 below, available crime statistics in Sabon Tasha confirm a rising trend in the frequency of Crime in Sabon Tasha as submitted by most (46%) of the respondents in Table 7 above.

Table 8: Official Police Record on Crime Rate in Sabon Tasha 2014-2017

Crime	2014	2015	2016	2017
Armed Robbery	10	13	11	16
Robbery	73	81	94	103
Motor Vehicle Theft	5	3		4
Petty Theft	201	288	350	388
Intimidation	33	50	49	60
Culpable Homicide	2		4	8
Molestation	28	25	36	41
Drugs Dealings	21	24	38	30
Total	373	484	582	650

Source: Divisional Police Station Sabon Tasha; obtained October 14th, 2018.

As shown in Table 8, Sabon Tasha has witnessed a rising trend in Crime from 373 incidents in 2014 to 484 in 2015, 582 in 2016, and 650 in 2017.

Table 9: Would You Say Stakeholders are Effective in the Use of Crime Information in Sabon Tasha?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	20	22
No	45	48
No Idea	28	30
Total	93	100

Source: Field Work, 2020

Table 4.18 displays responses on whether stakeholders are effective in the use of crime information in Sabon Tasha. 20 (22%) say yes, 45 (48%) of them say No, 28 (30%) have No Idea. This implies that most respondents do not believe that stakeholders effectively use crime information in Sabon Tasha.

Table 10: Do you think stakeholders are faced with challenges in the use of crime information in Sabon Tasha.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	44	47
No	21	23
No Idea	28	30
Total	93	100

Source: Field Work, September 2018

From the table above, 44 (47%) yes, 21 (23%) No, 28 (30%) No Idea. The majority (47%) believe stakeholders are faced with challenges in the use of crime information in Sabon Tasha. This could constitute an obstacle to effective crime management, hence the rising crime rate in Sabon Tasha, as revealed in Table 8.

Table 11: if your answer above is “Yes,” what do you think is/are the challenge(s)?

RESPONSES	Frequency	Percentage %
Poor educational background/training leading to poor understanding of crime information.	35	80
interference by politicians	5	11
No Idea	4	9
Total	44	100

Source: Field Work, September 2018.

Among those (44 respondents) who responded Yes on table 10 as displayed in table 11 above, 35 (80%) of them believe that the challenge being faced by stakeholders in the use of crime information is inadequate educational background/training leading to a poor understanding of crime information. 5 (11%) of them believe the challenge is political interference, 4 (9%) have no idea. This implies that most of them believe that ignorance of crime information is a considerable challenge to crime management. In the words of one of the security personnel interviewed.,

“The major challenge, I think, has to do with the clarity of some crime reporting. Some people, maybe due to communication challenges, they provide wrong information about crime incidents. Some don’t know how to report an ongoing crime incident; hence, they provide wrong descriptions of crime scenes only for us to arrive at the place and find nobody. We also lack forensic equipment and the skills to analyze crime information.” (Interview, October 2018).

The foregoing suggests that the challenge lies in the accuracy of crime reporting and inadequate knowledge of analyzing and using crime information.

3.1 Discussion of Major Findings

The following findings or deductions can be drawn from the initial presentation and analysis of relevant data on the subject under investigation.

1. Stakeholders in Sabon Tasha access crime information through reports by victims, witnesses, and other community members as well as through confession by criminals (see table 3 and excerpts from interview).
2. Stakeholders do share crime information in Sabon Tasha (see table 4 and interview excerpts).
3. Crime information in Sabon Tasha is preserved in (hard copy) written format with the police (see table 6 and excerpts from interview).
4. Stakeholders are not effectively using crime information (see tables 7, 9, and interview excerpts) as the crime rate increases (see table 8), revealing poor crime management.
5. The accuracy of crime reporting and the lack of knowledge on how to analyze and use crime information are the challenges stakeholders face in using crime information in Sabon Tasha.

4 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has examined how stakeholders on security in Sabon Tasha access crime information, how they preserve it, and whether they share the same amongst themselves or not, and how they put such information to use in their effort to control crime in Sabon Tasha. As revealed from the study, stakeholders on crime control in Sabon Tasha access crime information mainly through public reports and non-forensic investigations. However, the preservation and use of such information are poorly done due to poor investigative and forensic skills necessary for the proper search and analysis of crime information. Sometimes, it is due to the inaccuracy of crime reporting by residents of the area. These could explain the

ineffective control of Crime in the area, as reflected in the official police statistics, which reveals a rising crime rate in the area.

This study's position, therefore, is that information is vital in any attempt at managing crime. However, more critical is the sophistication and reliability of the source of such information and how the same is shared, processed, preserved, and put to use. The competency of security stakeholders is central here as this determines their ability to source reliable information, share appropriately, preserve, analyze, and use the same against criminals. Considering the primacy of security in the life of every community, the government, in partnership with the community, must educate residents on the proper way to report crime(s). The Government of Nigeria should review the training curriculum of security agencies to capture real intensive forensic training. Adequate levels of education that include the ability to interpret information must be placed as a requirement when screening anyone to be recruited into any Law Enforcement Agency in the country. Stakeholders should be trained on how to diversify their sources of crime information in this era of Information and Communication Technology to improve their impact on crime control. This will surely improve their effectiveness in crime control.

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