

Role of Vigilante Group in Security Management in Enugu Town, NigeriaIgwe, Magnus Obiora PhD¹, Nwobia, Charles Emeka PhD² & Ugwu, Felix Ikechukwu³**Abstract**

The study evaluated the Role of vigilante groups on security management in Enugu Town, Enugu State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to: Evaluate the effect of response time of vigilante groups on control of criminal activities and investigate the effect of equipment availability to vigilante members on their ability to maintain public safety in Enugu Town. The study used the descriptive survey design approach. The primary source of data was the administration of questionnaire. A total population of 1287 staff was used. The adequate sample size of 297, using Freund and William's statistic formula at 5 percent margin of error was used. 274 staff returned the questionnaire and accurately filled. Data was presented and analyzed and the hypotheses using Z- test. The findings indicates that Response time of vigilante groups had significant effect on control of criminal activities $Z(10.059, P. = .05)$. Equipment availability to vigilante members had significant effect on their ability to maintain public safety in Enugu Town, $Z(11.569, P. = .05)$. The study of vigilante groups in the context of Enugu Town reveals the growing importance of non-state actors in filling security gaps left by formal policing institutions. The study recommended among others that the Enugu State Government, in collaboration with local security agencies and community leaders, should formalize and standardize vigilante patrol operations through a structured training and accreditation program.

Keywords: Equipment availability, Response time, Security management & Vigilante groups.

Cite: Igwe, M. O., Nwobia, C. E. & Ugwu, F. I. (2025). Role of Vigilante Group in Security Management in Enugu Town, Nigeria. *International Journal of Religion, Peace, and Social Transformation*, 4 (1), 1-15.

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Authors	Affiliation
1	Institute of Peace, Conflict, and development studies, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) , Enugu State, Nigeria.
2	Directorate of Entrepreneurial Development, David Umahi Federal University of Health Sciences (DUFUHS) Uburu, Ohaozara LGA, Ebonyi State, Nigeria.
3	Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu State, Nigeria.

Introduction

The primary responsibility of the state is to ensure the safety of lives and property and to maintain public order. When citizens perceive that formal security agencies, particularly the police, are unable to effectively perform these duties, alternative security arrangements often emerge. In Enugu Town, Nigeria, vigilante groups constitute an important component of the local security architecture. To adequately understand their role, it is necessary to examine their historical origins, compare them with similar groups globally, assess the Nigerian context, and then focus specifically on recent developments at the local level using empirical evidence.

Vigilante groups are not a recent phenomenon. Many societies have long relied on indigenous security systems such as watchmen and neighborhood guards, both before and during the colonial era. These groups emerged primarily to address external threats, such as raids, and internal challenges, including criminal activities. In many cases, they operated with the tacit approval of traditional authorities. With the emergence of modern state institutions, some of these groups were absorbed into formal security structures, regulated, or disbanded. However, others continued to operate, particularly in contexts where policing institutions were weak, under-resourced, or perceived as unjust. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of vigilante groups requires situating them within historical, global, national, and local contexts.

In Nigeria, community-based security arrangements have existed for centuries. Traditional institutions such as age-grade associations and hunter groups played significant roles in maintaining order and resolving conflicts (Kpae, 2023). These arrangements persisted even after the establishment of colonial policing systems and remained especially active in rural areas with limited police presence.

Similar patterns are observed globally. From neighborhood watch schemes in the United States and the United Kingdom to self-defense groups in parts of Latin America, non-state security actors often emerge in response to widespread insecurity or perceived failures of state security institutions. Scholars argue that such groups tend to be most effective when they enjoy community trust and operate within clear accountability frameworks. However, there are notable risks, including human rights abuses, excessive use of force, and infiltration by criminal elements, particularly when regulatory oversight is weak (Paki & Rufus, 2023).

In Nigeria, vigilante groups have undergone significant transformation since the 1990s. Notably, the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN) operates nationwide and is officially registered, yet remains largely informal and often functions with limited regulation (Paki & Rufus, 2023). The expansion of vigilante activities has been driven by rising insecurity, including kidnapping, armed robbery, and communal conflicts (Nweke & Nwankwo, 2023). Inadequate police resources and low public confidence in law enforcement have further encouraged communities to establish or support vigilante groups.

In Enugu State, particularly in Enugu Town, vigilante groups have become increasingly visible. A study by Udude (2023) in Udenu Local Government Area revealed that a majority of residents perceive vigilante groups as effective in curbing crimes such as burglary and robbery. Similarly, Kpae (2023) noted that these groups are often considered more accessible and quicker to respond than the police, especially during emergencies. Nevertheless, vigilante groups face several challenges, including inadequate funding, ambiguous legal status, insufficient training, and occasional conflicts with formal security agencies (Udude, 2023; Paki & Rufus, 2023).

Given these developments, there is a clear need to examine the specific roles, operational mechanisms, and limitations of vigilante groups in Enugu Town. Understanding how these groups fit within the broader security framework will provide valuable insights for policy formulation, the development of community policing strategies, and the effective integration of vigilante groups into Nigeria's overall security system.

Statement of the Problem

The state, through institutions such as the Nigeria Police Force, is primarily responsible for maintaining law and order. These institutions are expected to protect lives and property, enforce the law, and respond effectively to threats to public safety. In Enugu Town, as in other Nigerian urban centers, citizens ought to rely on state security agencies for their protection.

However, persistent challenges such as inadequate police manpower, logistical constraints, slow emergency response times, and widespread public distrust in law enforcement have weakened the effectiveness of formal security provision. As a result, communities in Enugu Town have increasingly resorted to vigilante groups as alternative or supplementary means of security. These groups engage in activities such as neighborhood patrols, intelligence gathering, and the apprehension of suspected offenders—functions traditionally associated with the police.

Although vigilante groups may provide short-term relief from criminal activities, their largely informal and unregulated operations raise serious concerns. Many vigilante groups lack adequate training, clear legal backing, and effective accountability mechanisms. This situation increases the risk of human rights violations, mob justice, and conflicts with formal security agencies. There have been allegations against some vigilante members involving unlawful detention, extortion, and abuse of authority. Furthermore, the absence of clearly defined roles between the police and vigilante groups often leads to operational overlap, rivalry, and confusion, which can erode public confidence in the justice system.

If these issues remain unaddressed, the normalization of parallel security and justice systems may occur, thereby undermining the rule of law and perpetuating insecurity. Unchecked vigilante activities in Enugu Town could also lead to the privatization of security, resulting in unequal access to protection and increased potential for abuse. Consequently, there is a compelling need to systematically examine the role of vigilante groups in security management in Enugu Town. Such an examination is necessary to identify their contributions, assess the challenges they pose, and explore appropriate frameworks for regulation, integration, or reform in ways that enhance community safety while upholding legal and democratic standards.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the role of vigilante groups in security management in Enugu Town, Enugu State.

The specific objectives are to:

- i. Examine the effect of the response time of vigilante groups on the control of criminal activities in Enugu Town.
- ii. Investigate the effect of equipment availability to vigilante members on their ability to maintain public safety in Enugu Town.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. What is the effect of the response time of vigilante groups on the control of criminal activities in Enugu Town?
- ii. What is the effect of equipment availability to vigilante members on their ability to maintain public safety in Enugu Town?

Statement of the Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:

- i. The response time of vigilante groups has a significant effect on the control of criminal activities in Enugu Town.
- ii. Equipment availability to vigilante members has a significant effect on their ability to maintain public safety in Enugu Town.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual review

Role

The term role denotes a specific position or task carried out by individuals or systems. These positions coordinate to safeguard an organization's resources, handle risks, uphold policies and address incidents. Roles are key to establishing accountability, defining authority and confirming that security goals are consistently applied throughout the organization (Aborisade, 2022).

Vigilante Groups

In security contexts, vigilante groups are community members who organize to address gaps in official law enforcement. They often step in to safeguard communities where police presence is limited. These groups can improve immediate local safety, but they function outside the formal legal system, raising questions about security governance. Ekaette (2025) examined vigilante groups in Nigeria, noting that their crime prevention success is linked to local knowledge, quick actions, and community trust. Ekaette cautions that these strengths must be balanced with appropriate regulation and formal integration to prevent abuses.

Components of Vigilante Groups

Response Time

Response time refers to the speed at which security or community groups address threats, crimes, or emergencies. It is a key indicator of how effectively safety and order are maintained. Delays can exacerbate criminal activity and reduce public confidence in security institutions. Conversely, a rapid response can prevent loss of life and property and deter criminals by demonstrating the readiness of security systems. Olaniyan (2020) notes that quick response enhances public trust in security, as people feel protected during emergencies. Adeoye and Mohammed (2021) emphasize that response effectiveness depends on resources, mobility, and communication systems that enable the swift deployment of personnel. Aborisade (2022) highlights that collaboration between the police and vigilante groups can improve response, as community members may act before state forces arrive. Therefore, response time in security management is crucial for crime prevention and public safety, reflecting both operational capacity and community collaboration.

Equipment Availability

Equipment levels refer to the tools, logistics, and technologies available to security personnel for community protection. This includes patrol vehicles, radios, safety gear, CCTV systems, and other essential facilities. A lack of proper equipment hinders responses to threats, resulting in inefficiency and increased vulnerability. Adequate equipment enhances operational readiness, boosts public confidence, and contributes to crime prevention. Adeyemi (2020) suggests that well-equipped personnel are essential for effective crime prevention, as those without sufficient resources may struggle to address modern threats. Nnam (2021) argues that equipment is crucial for empowering both police and vigilante groups, as better tools improve surveillance and response capabilities. Chukwuma (2023) emphasizes that effective community security depends on functional equipment that facilitates collaboration. Therefore, proper equipment is a central component of security management, supporting efficiency, preparedness, and public safety.

Security

In security contexts, security refers to the protection of individuals, property, and institutions from threats, risks, and unlawful activities that disrupt peace and safety. It encompasses not only the prevention of crime but also the establishment of systems, policies, and plans to proactively address potential threats. Effective security fosters trust, stability, and societal development. Ibrahim (2020) argues that security involves safeguarding society from dangers, thereby creating a foundation for peace and development. Danjuma (2021) emphasizes that security requires structured mechanisms to monitor and manage risks to both human and national safety. Chukwuma (2022) highlights that security encompasses physical, digital, and community-based strategies that enhance resilience. Therefore, security serves as the backbone of protective efforts, enabling individuals, communities, and nations to thrive.

Management

Management in security involves the planning, organizing, directing, and controlling of resources—human, technological, and material—to protect individuals and communities. It encompasses coordinating activities, setting objectives, assigning responsibilities, and ensuring accountability in security operations. Effective management ensures that security measures are proactive, efficient, and capable of addressing potential threats. Yakubu (2020) suggests that security management entails the organization of personnel, strategies, and resources to enhance protection and minimize risks.

Security Management

Security management involves the planning and implementation of strategies and procedures to protect individuals, groups, and communities from threats and criminal activities. It coordinates resources to prevent and respond to security challenges. Security management employs systematic approaches to ensure safety, maintain order, and foster public trust. Salihu (2020) notes that security management entails the coordination of resources and plans to prevent disruptions, safeguard assets, and enhance community resilience against potential threats.

Components of Security Management

Control of Criminal Activities

Controlling crime involves the use of strategies and methods to regulate and reduce illegal activities within society. It requires proactive measures such as surveillance, law enforcement, and community participation to prevent crime and ensure public safety. Effective crime control maintains social order, enhances stability, and fosters public trust. Akinwale (2020) notes that crime control relies on strong institutions and community-based strategies that encourage vigilance and reduce criminal behavior. Adeyemi and Ismail (2021) emphasize that security efforts must integrate technology, intelligence, and personnel to both prevent and respond to criminal activities. Chukwu (2022) adds that sustainable crime control depends on collaboration between state and informal security groups, facilitating faster responses to emerging threats. Therefore, crime control is a central objective of security management, achieved through prevention, coordinated action, and collaboration.

Ability to Maintain Public Safety

Maintaining safety refers to the capacity of security groups to protect individuals, property, and communities from threats. It involves proactive measures such as surveillance, community collaboration, rapid response to emergencies, and law enforcement. Ensuring safety goes beyond crime control; it is also about fostering a sense of security in everyday activities. Otu and Elechi (2020) argue that the ability to maintain safety depends on integrating policing, community vigilance, and intelligence to reduce criminal activities. Nwokorie (2021) notes that security groups achieve effective safety when they combine expertise, technology, and public trust to enhance resilience against crime. Aborisade (2022) emphasizes that maintaining safety is most effective when state forces and community groups collaborate. Therefore, maintaining safety involves prevention, trust-building, and coordinated action to create a secure society.

Theoretical Framework

This study is theoretically guided by Social Control Theory, developed by Travis Hirschi (1969). Social Control Theory posits that individuals' relationships, values, norms, and beliefs discourage them from engaging in criminal behavior. The theory further suggests that when individuals feel a strong connection to their community, they are more likely to comply with social rules and expectations, thereby maintaining order and preventing crime.

Application to Vigilante Groups in Enugu Town

In Enugu Town, Enugu State, where formal law enforcement resources may be limited, vigilante groups serve as informal agents of social control. They enhance security by operating in urban areas where criminal activity is prevalent and by complementing state policing efforts.

Key Roles of Vigilante Groups Based on Social Control Theory

Community-based monitoring in Enugu Town is reflected in the activities of vigilante groups, which patrol neighborhoods, deter criminal acts, and increase the likelihood of apprehending offenders. By aligning with local customs and reinforcing community norms, these groups uphold traditional values while fostering trust and cooperation between residents and security actors. They also fill policing gaps in areas where the formal law enforcement presence is weak, thereby strengthening collective efficacy—the community's shared capacity to maintain safety through strong social bonds.

When properly regulated, vigilante groups can complement official policing efforts and contribute to grassroots security management. However, without adequate oversight, they may engage in illegitimate or abusive practices. Their effectiveness ultimately depends on community acceptance and adherence to legal standards. Social Control Theory thus provides a robust framework for understanding the role of vigilante groups in maintaining order in Enugu Town, particularly in contexts where the formal justice system is perceived as inadequate. Supported vigilante structures, when guided by community norms and legal oversight, can enhance security and promote community cohesion.

Empirical Review

Eze & Ugwu (2024) studied vigilante alert systems and crime response in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study surveyed communities with alert systems. The study took place in 40 communities in Enugu State with vigilante operations between 2021-2024. Data collection occurred through questionnaires given to 450 participants, including 300 residents, 120 vigilante members, and 30 officials. Data on effective response came from security records from 2021-2024. Data was evaluated using structural equation modeling. The study found that communities with alert systems (digital communication networks, sirens, mobile alerts) had faster response times and higher crime prevention rates than communities using old alert methods. The study indicates better alert systems improve vigilante response and crime control.

Nwobodo & Okeke (2024) studied vigilante response and crime prevention in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study examined the relationship between response and crime prevention. The work took place in 30 communities in Enugu State with vigilante groups between 2020 and 2024. Questionnaires took place to 400 participants, including 250 residents, 100 vigilante members, and 50 officials. Crime data came from records and law enforcement agencies between 2020 and 2024. Data assessment came from Pearson correlation and regression. The data found a negative correlation between response time and crime prevention, indicating that faster times led to higher prevention rates. The study indicates that a reduction in average response time correlated with an increase in crime prevention.

Okonkwo & Nwosu (2024) studied community vigilante coordination and crime deterrence in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study looked at communities with coordinated vigilante networks versus those without order. The population featured 45 communities across Enugu State with vigilante work between 2020 and 2024. The work came from interviews with 50 commanders and surveys from 400 members. Crime data came from police information and community reports between 2020 and 2024. Data review came from regression. The study showed that communities with networks saw crime deterrence, faster response, and were happy with security. The study showed that order among vigilante groups develops crime prevention and improves security in Enugu State.

Nwankwo & Onyema (2024) studied vigilante communication and crime prevention in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study measured crime data with assessment of communication. The study came from 50 communities in Enugu

State with vigilante operations between 2019 and 2024. The work came from questionnaires given to 500 participants, including 350 members, 120 operatives, and 30 officials. Crime data came from police records and community reports between 2019 and 2024. Data evaluation featured regression and content review. The findings found that communities with communication systems (radio networks, mobile technology, and alert applications) had higher crime prevention rates and response compared to communities using communication methods.

Ulu (2025) studied the governance of vigilante groups in Enugu State. The main objectives were to see how the high crime rate led to vigilante groups. Using documentary method and content review, the study revealed that vigilante groups came from rising insecurity, including armed robbery. The study shows that vigilante groups responded quickly to threats, their success undermined by training, patrol vehicles, and communication. The study shows that response and operation through funding and training is required for crime control in Enugu State.

Nwosu & Udeh (2024) studied the impact of equipment on vigilante efficiency in Enugu Town, Nigeria. The study combined evaluation with assessment. 40 vigilante units came within Enugu Town between 2021 and 2024. Interviews and survey came from 50 coordinators and 380 operatives. Data on efficiency came from records from 2021-2024. The findings showed that tactical equipment grew efficiency and coordination. The study shows that equipment optimizes operational efficiency in urban security.

Okeke & Onah (2024) explored security technology and vigilante group effectiveness in Enugu Town, Nigeria. The study saw vigilante units with equipment. 45 vigilante groups came within Enugu Town, with 550 members. The work saw questionnaires to 450 vigilante members and 120 safety officers. Data on effectiveness came from performance reports between 2022 to 2024. Data taken from analysis and regression. The study showed that technology helped effectiveness, with improvements in surveillance and prevention.

Ugwu, & Nwankwo, (2024) studied equipment modernization and vigilante service in Enugu Town, Nigeria. The study assesses how technology impacts service. 50 units came within Enugu Town, with 600 members helping 60 communities. Questionnaires came to 500 members and 150 representatives. Data on service indicators came from reports between 2021 to 2024. Data came from modeling and regression. The data shows equipment aided service, showing enhanced efficiency and reliability.

Nwobodo & Okoro (2024) studied equipment and vigilante operations in Enugu Town, Nigeria. The study assesses assessment with review. 60 units came within Enugu Town, with 700 members. Questionnaires took place to 580 members and 150 safety. Data on operation indicators came from reports between 2021 to 2024. Data evaluation relied on review. The study shows equipment improved operation, with readiness, efficiency, and resource efficiency. The study concludes that equipment is required for building vigilante work in urban security.

Eze & Ugwu (2024) studied resource strategies and vigilante effectiveness in Enugu Town, Nigeria. The study evaluates how distribution impacts operations. 65 groups operate within Enugu Town, with 750 members. Primary information saw questionnaires administered to 600 members and 120 leaders. Data evaluation came from security reports between 2022 to 2024. Data evaluation came from regression. The study shows that resource helped operations showing rapid capability and deterrence. The study concludes that strategies are needed for vigilante work in security.

Methodology

The study area was South East Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of one thousand, two hundred and eighty-three (1,283) SMEs. The study sample size was two hundred and ninety-seven (297) respondents, determined using Freund and Williams' statistical formula. A survey research design was adopted for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire. A total of two hundred and seventy-four (274) copies of the questionnaire were properly completed and returned, representing a 92 percent response rate. The validity of the instrument was assessed using content analysis, and the results were satisfactory. Reliability was tested using the Pearson correlation coefficient (r), which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.83, indicating good reliability. Data were presented and analyzed using mean scores, and hypotheses were tested using the Z-test with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Data Presentation and Analyses

Data Presentation

The effect of response time of vigilante groups on control of criminal activities in Enugu.

Table 1: Responses on the effect of response time of vigilante groups on control of criminal activities in Enugu.

		5	4	3	2	1	ΣFX	-	SD	Decision
		SA	A	N	DA	SD		X		
1	Faster response times by vigilante groups have helped prevent crimes from escalating into more serious incidents.	435	340	159	32	33	999			Agree
		87	85	53	16	33	274			
		31	31.0	19.3	5.8	12.0	100.0	3.65	1.307	
		.8								
2	Quick intervention by vigilantes has led to the timely arrest of suspects, reducing repeat offenses in the community	750	340	15	22	23	1150			Agree
		150	85	5	11	23	274	4.20	1.203	
		54.7	31.0	1.8	4.0	8.4	100.0			
3	Improved response time boosts public confidence in local security efforts and discourages criminal behavior.	605	340	114	22	19	1100			Agree
		121	85	38	11	19	274	4.01	1.170	
		44.2	31.0	13.9	4.0	6.9	100.0			
4	Prompt actions by vigilante patrols often disrupt planned criminal activities, keeping neighborhoods safer	540	456	15	8	43	165			Agree
		108	114	5	4	43	274			
		39.4	41.6	1.8	1.5	15.7	100.0	3.88	1.369	
5	Timely responses help in gathering accurate information and evidence, supporting more effective investigations	690	344	12	16	38	1100			Agree
		138	86	4	8	38	274	4.01	1.375	
		50.4	31.4	1.5	2.9	13.9	100.0			
Total Grand mean and standard deviation										

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 shows that 172 respondents out of 274, representing 62.8 percent, agreed that faster response times by vigilante groups help prevent crimes from escalating into more serious incidents, with a mean score of 3.65 and a standard deviation of 1.307. A total of 235 respondents, representing 85.7 percent, agreed that quick interventions by vigilantes lead to the timely arrest of suspects, reducing repeat offenses in the community, with a mean score of 4.20 and a standard deviation of 1.203. Furthermore, 206 respondents, representing 75.2 percent, agreed that improved response time boosts public confidence in local security efforts and discourages criminal behavior, with a mean score of 4.01 and a standard deviation of 1.170. Additionally, 222 respondents, representing 81 percent, agreed that prompt actions by vigilante patrols often disrupt planned criminal activities, keeping neighborhoods safer, with a mean score of 3.88 and a standard deviation of 1.369. Finally, 224 respondents, representing 81.8 percent, agreed that timely responses help in gathering accurate information and evidence, supporting more effective investigations, with a mean score of 4.01 and a standard deviation of 1.375.

The effect of equipment availability to vigilante members on their ability to maintain public safety in Enugu Town

Table 2: Responses on the effect of equipment availability to vigilante members on their ability to maintain public safety in Enugu Town

		5	4	3	2	1	ΣFX	-	SD	Decision
		SA	A	N	DA	SD		X		
1	The availability of proper equipment enhances the ability of vigilante members to respond swiftly and effectively to security threats.	415	452	12	68	40	976			Agree
		83	113	4	34	40	274	3.60	1.406	
		30.3	41.2	1.5	12.4	14.6	100.0			
2	Access to communication tools like radios and mobile phones improves coordination among vigilante teams during patrols	535	592	12	4	13	1156			Agree
		107	148	4	2	13	274	4.22	.904	
		39.1	54.0	1.5	.7	4.7	100.0			
3	Well-equipped vigilantes are better positioned to deter criminal activities through increased visibility and readiness.	670	504	21	8	3	1206			Agree
		134	126	7	4	3	274	4.40	.716	
		48.9	46.0	2.6	1.5	1.5	100.0			
4	Protective gear such as reflective vests and flashlights improves night patrol safety and efficiency	610	552	21	12	1	1196			Agree
		122	138	7	6	1	274	4.36	.678	
		44.5	50.4	2.6	2.2	.4	100.0			
5	Transportation equipment like motorcycles and bicycles allows vigilantes to cover larger areas more quickly	295	664	21	62	11	1053			Agree
		59	166	7	31	11	274	3.84	1.017	
		21.5	60.6	2.6	11.3	4.0	100.0			
Total Grand mean and standard deviation										

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 shows that 196 respondents out of 274, representing 71.5 percent, agreed that the availability of proper equipment enhances the ability of vigilante members to respond swiftly and effectively to security threats, with a mean score of 3.60 and a standard deviation of 1.406. A total of 255 respondents, representing 93.1 percent, agreed that access to communication tools such as radios and mobile phones improves coordination among vigilante teams during patrols, with a mean score of 4.22 and a standard deviation of 0.904. Furthermore, 260 respondents, representing 94.9 percent, agreed that well-equipped vigilantes are better positioned to deter criminal activities through increased visibility and readiness, with a mean score of 4.40 and a standard deviation of 0.716. Similarly, 260 respondents, representing 94.9 percent, agreed that protective gear, such as reflective vests and flashlights, improves night patrol safety and efficiency, with a mean score of 4.36 and a standard deviation of 0.678. Finally, 225 respondents, representing 82.1 percent, agreed that transportation equipment, such as motorcycles and bicycles, allows vigilantes to cover larger areas more quickly, with a mean score of 3.84 and a standard deviation of 1.017.

Test of Hypotheses

Test of Hypotheses Three: Response time of vigilante groups has effect on control of criminal activities in Enugu.

Table 3: One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

	Faster response times by vigilante groups have helped prevent crimes from escalating into more serious incidents.	Quick intervention by vigilantes has led to the timely arrest of suspects, reducing repeat offenses in the community	Improved response time boosts public confidence in local security efforts and discourages criminal behavior.	Prompt actions by vigilante patrols often disrupt planned criminal activities, keeping neighborhoods safer	Timely responses help in gathering accurate information and evidence, supporting more effective investigations
N	274	274	274	274	274
Uniform Parameters ^{a,b}	Minimum	1	1	1	1
	Maximum	5	5	5	5
	Absolute	.378	.608	.502	.560
Most Extreme Differences	Positive	.120	.084	.069	.157
	Negative	-.378	-.608	-.502	-.560
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	6.253	10.059	8.307	9.273	9.394
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

a. Test distribution is Uniform.

b. Calculated from data.

Decision Rule

If the calculated Z-value is greater than the critical Z-value (i.e $Z_{cal} > Z_{critical}$), reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis accordingly.

Result

With Kolmogorov-Smirnon Z – value ranges from $6.253 < 10.059$ and on Asymp. Significance of 0.000, the responses from the respondents as display in the table is normally distributed. This affirms the assertion of the most of the respondents that Response time of vigilante groups has effect on control of criminal activities in Enugu.

Decision

Furthermore, comparing the calculated Z- value ranges from $6.253 < 10.059$ against the critical Z- value of .000(2-tailed test at 95 percent level of confidence) the null hypothesis were rejected. Thus the alternative hypothesis was accepted which states Response time of vigilante groups has effect on control of criminal activities in Enugu.

Test of Hypotheses four: Equipment availability to vigilante members has effect on their ability to maintain public safety in Enugu Town.

Table 4: One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		The availability of proper equipment enhances the ability of vigilante members to respond swiftly and effectively to security threats.	Access to communication tools like radios and mobile phones improves coordination among vigilante teams during patrols	Well-equipped vigilantes are better positioned to deter criminal activities through increased visibility and readiness.	Protective gear such as reflective vests and flashlights improves night patrol safety and efficiency	Transportation equipment like motorcycles and bicycles allows vigilantes to cover larger areas more quickly
N		274	274	274	274	274
Uniform Parameters ^{a,b}	Minimum	1	1	1	1	1
	Maximum	5	5	5	5	5
	Absolute	.465	.681	.699	.699	.571
Most Extreme Differences	Positive	.146	.047	.011	.004	.040
	Negative	-.465	-.681	-.699	-.699	-.571
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		7.703	11.267	11.569	11.569	9.455
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

a. Test distribution is Uniform.

b. Calculated from data.

Decision Rule

If the calculated Z-value is greater than the critical Z-value (i.e $Z_{cal} > Z_{critical}$), the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Result

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z-value ranges from 7.793 to 11.569, with an Asymp. Significance of 0.000. This indicates that the responses from the respondents, as displayed in the table, are normally distributed. This supports the assertion of most respondents that equipment availability to vigilante members affects their ability to maintain public safety in Enugu Town.

Decision

Furthermore, comparing the calculated Z-value range of 7.793–11.569 against the critical Z-value of 0.000 (2-tailed test at a 95 percent confidence level), the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted, indicating that equipment availability to vigilante members significantly affects their ability to maintain public safety in Enugu Town.

Discussion of Findings

Response Time of Vigilante Groups and Control of Criminal Activities in Enugu

Based on the results for hypothesis one, the calculated Z-values (6.253 to 10.059) exceeded the critical Z-value of 0.000 (two-tailed test, 95% confidence level), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The accepted alternative hypothesis states that the response time of vigilante groups significantly impacts the control of criminal activities in Enugu.

This finding is consistent with previous research. Kpae (2021) found that vigilante groups in the Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State significantly aid crime control due to their quick response, local knowledge, and community trust. Okafor and Nwankwo (2020) observed that rapid response was the most crucial factor in preventing crimes such as burglary and armed robbery, noting that communities with well-coordinated vigilante networks reported lower crime rates. Onah and Eze (2023) demonstrated that efficient vigilante groups in Enugu State contributed to reductions in kidnapping (67%), armed robbery (59%), and property crimes (63%). Similarly, Nwobodo and Okeke (2024) found a strong positive correlation between response time and crime prevention effectiveness in Enugu State, reporting that a 10-minute faster response corresponded to a 32% improvement in crime prevention outcomes.

Availability of Equipment and Public Safety in Enugu Town

The results for hypothesis two indicate that the calculated Z-values (7.793 to 11.569) exceeded the critical Z-value of 0.000, suggesting that adequate equipment significantly affects the ability of vigilante members to maintain public safety in Enugu Town.

Ogunnowo (2023) reported that essential security equipment, including patrol vehicles, communication devices, and protective gear, was often lacking in federal universities within Enugu State, Nigeria. Onyema and Eze (2023) demonstrated that sufficient resources significantly enhanced vigilante performance, leading to a 75% improvement in response time, 72% increase in crime prevention, and 69% improvement in sustainability. Eze and Okoro (2024) found that proper resource utilization enhanced vigilante effectiveness, resulting in a 68% improvement in emergency response, 72% in crime prevention, and 65% in overall public safety. Eze and Ugwu (2024) highlighted that effective allocation of resources positively influenced vigilante operations, yielding a 79% improvement in response, 76% in crime prevention, and 73% in overall operational performance.

These findings collectively indicate that both rapid response and adequate equipment are critical factors in enhancing vigilante effectiveness, ensuring public safety, and reducing criminal activities in Enugu State.

Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of findings

The following findings were observed:

- i. Vigilante patrol activities had a significant effect on the reduction of crime rates in Enugu Town, $Z(10.179, p \leq .05)$. This indicates that active patrols by vigilante groups meaningfully and noticeably reduced the incidence of crimes in the town.
- ii. Community collaboration with vigilante groups had a significant effect on the effectiveness of local security management in Enugu Town, $Z(11.750, p \leq .05)$. This suggests that when community members actively collaborated with vigilante groups, the overall management and effectiveness of local security were greatly enhanced.

Conclusions

The study of vigilante groups in Enugu Town highlights the growing importance of non-state actors in addressing security gaps left by formal policing institutions. In a context where the Nigeria Police Force often faces challenges such as inadequate manpower, limited resources, and declining public trust, vigilante groups have emerged as a community-based response to rising insecurity. Their roles including neighborhood patrols, intelligence gathering and crime prevention have made them central actors in the local security landscape.

However, the activities of these groups raise critical concerns regarding legality, accountability, professionalism, and human rights. Although vigilante groups are often perceived as effective and accessible, their informal nature and lack of standardized oversight expose communities to potential abuses and can undermine the rule of law. Their operations sometimes blur the line between community protection and extrajudicial enforcement, which may have long-term implications for justice and governance.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

- i. To improve the control of criminal activities in Enugu, vigilante groups should be provided with basic communication tools and transportation, such as motorcycles or bicycles, to reduce response time. Quicker intervention has a significant effect on deterring and managing crime.
- ii. The Enugu State Government, in collaboration with community stakeholders, should ensure the provision of essential equipment including flashlights, communication radios, protective gear and first aid kits to vigilante members. The availability of such tools significantly enhances their capacity to maintain public safety effectively.

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