

Prevalence of Crime and Socio-Economic Wellbeing of Residents in Minna, Niger State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Crime is a major challenge affecting the socio-economic wellbeing of residents in Minna, Niger State, Nigeria. The study examined the prevalence of crime in Minna and its impact on the socioeconomic wellbeing of residents. The Routine Activity Theory (RAT) was explored in understanding how daily patterns and systemic socioeconomic issues contribute to crime in Minna. A total of 382 administered questionnaire retrieved from respondents were used for analysis using SPSS 23 and Stata 15 statistical packages. The hypotheses were tested by some inferential statistics (Chi-square and Correlation analysis). The findings of this study revealed that there was no significant correlation between prevalent crimes and security in Minna, showing a positive weak correlation between prevalence crimes and the security measures in the study area (Pearson Correlation value = 0.080 was less than 0.5. the result of Sig.(P-value) = 0.490). The study identified key crime types such as armed robbery/theft, kidnapping, and drug related offenses which typically occur both day and night. Findings also revealed that crime had significant effect on the socio-economic wellbeing of residents in Minna. It was recommended that the government should strengthen the law enforcements, while creating the enabling environment for all residents to have access to the basic needs of life including avenues for meaningful employment.

Keywords: Crime prevalence, Minna, socio-economic wellbeing, residents & Niger-State.

Introduction

Crime has a profound impact on individuals and communities, influencing various aspects of life, including socioeconomic well-being (Whiteside *et al.*, 2021). In Minna, the capital of Niger State, Nigeria, the interplay between crime and socioeconomic factors is of particular concern. As urbanization increases and economic challenges persist, understanding the dynamics of crime in relation to the socioeconomic status of residents is critical for developing effective policies and interventions (Ogunyemi & Akinwunmi, 2020; Okoli & Hakeem, 2020). Minna, like many other Nigerian cities, is experiencing the dual pressures of rising crime rates and socioeconomic struggles, which pose significant challenges to the safety and overall quality of life of its inhabitants. The socio-economic wellbeing of individuals not only affects their personal lives but also has broader implications for community development and social cohesion. Crime is a pervasive issue in urban centers across Nigeria, and Minna, is no exception (Adebayo, 2021: Abubakar *et al.*, 2021). Rising crime rates have negatively impacted residents' safety, economic activities, and overall wellbeing. The socio-economic conditions in Minna, including high unemployment and poverty levels, create an environment conducive to criminal activities (Abdullahi, 2022; Agbu, 2020: Omonijo & Adebayo, 2019).

Minna, the capital of Niger State, Nigeria, has experienced a notable increase in petty and violent crimes in recent years, ranging from burglary and street robbery, kidnapping,

communal violence and thuggery, threatening public safety and the social fabric of the community (Oloyede, 2019; Omonijo & Adebayo, 2019). These issues are compounded by socio-economic factors such as alarming rates of unemployment, high poverty levels, and limited access to quality education, which create an environment conducive to criminal behavior and unrest (Adebayo, 2021; Suleiman, 2020). Additionally, criminal activities such as armed robbery, burglary, and illegal mining across Nigeria have become prevalent, posing threats to residents and businesses, these incidents have not only created fear and anxiety but have also disrupted social and economic life in affected communities. Residents, especially those in low-income areas, are the most vulnerable, facing threats to their personal safety, income, property, and access to basic services (Oloyede, 2019; Alemika & Chukwuma, 2011; Akpan & Ering, 2010).

While numerous studies have explored the relationship between crime and socioeconomic conditions globally and in Nigeria, there is a scarcity of localized research focusing specifically on Minna, in Niger State. This lack of data impedes the formulation of targeted policies that could address both crime and socioeconomic challenges in the area. Understanding the prevalence of crime and its effects on the socioeconomic conditions of residents is essential for informing law enforcement strategies, community programs, and economic development initiatives (Olaiya & Adekoya, 2020). Thus, this study examines the prevalence of crime in Minna, Niger State and its impact on the socioeconomic well-being of its residents.

Crime in Niger State, Nigeria

Crime remains a significant challenge in many urban centers in Nigeria, impacting not only safety and security but also the socioeconomic well-being of residents. In Minna, the capital of Niger State, reports have shown an increase in crimes such as burglary, theft, and assault, which correlate with broader national trends (Niger State Bureau of Statistics, 2017; Odekunle, 2005). The prevalence of crime in urban areas is often linked to rapid urbanization, unemployment, poverty, and weak law enforcement structures (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2011). Crime in Niger State, Nigeria, is shaped by socio-economic challenges, geographic factors, and security situation which are peculiar to the region. As one of Nigeria's largest states, Niger State have been reported to face diverse criminal activities ranging from banditry and kidnapping to farmer-herder conflicts and cybercrime (Niger State Government, 2021b; Niger State Police Command, 2021).

Forms of Crime in Niger State

Niger State experiences various criminal activities, including:

- i. **Banditry & Kidnapping:** Armed bandits have frequently attacked rural communities in Niger State, displacing residents and kidnapping for ransom (Okoli & Abubakar, 2021).
- ii. **Farmer-Herder Conflicts:** Competition over land and water resources has led to violent clashes (Higazi, 2016).
- iii. **Cattle Rustling:** Criminal networks steal livestock, exacerbating insecurity in rural areas of Niger State (Bello, 2020).
- iv. **Cybercrime & Fraud:** Urban centers like Minna witness rising internet fraud among youths (Adeniran, 2018; Ekpo & Ibanga, 2014; Adebayo, 2013).
- v. **Gender-Based Violence:** Domestic abuse and sexual violence remain underreported due to cultural stigma (Oluwafemi & Adesina, 2022).

Causes of Crime in Niger State

Several factors contribute to crime in Niger State:

- i. Poverty & Unemployment: Over 70% of Niger State's population lives below the poverty line, pushing youths into crime (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2020).
- ii. Weak Security Presence: Vast, forested terrains in Niger State make policing difficult, allowing bandits to operate freely (International Crisis Group [ICG], 2021).
- iii. Political Neglect: Marginalization of rural communities in Niger State fuels resentment and criminality (Bello, 2020).
- iv. Proliferation of Arms: Illicit firearms from neighboring countries escalate violence (Okoli & Abubakar, 2021).

Impact of Crime in Niger State

- i. Humanitarian Crisis: Banditry has displaced over 100,000 people, creating internally displaced persons (IDP) camps (ICG, 2021).
- ii. Economic Decline: Farmers abandon lands, reducing agricultural output (Higazi, 2016).
- iii. Education Disruption: Schools in high-risk crime zones shut down due to kidnappings (UNICEF, 2022; Oluwagbemiga, 2007).
- iv. Erosion of Trust in Government: Citizens resort to vigilante groups for protection (Bello, 2020).

Crime Control and Prevention Strategies in Niger State

Several efforts have been reported in studies and literatures to curb crime in Niger State and they include:

- i. Military Operations: Joint security task forces in communities target bandits and their hideouts in order to curb crime (ICG, 2021).
- ii. Community Engagement: Local intelligence networks in the community can assist security agencies in crime control and prevention (Okoli & Abubakar, 2021).
- iii. Youth Empowerment Programs: Skill acquisition schemes for youths serves to reduce unemployment and crime on the long run (Niger State Government, 2021a).

Challenges in Addressing Crime in Niger State

- i. Corruption in Security Agencies: Corruption has been reported to exist in some security agencies where some officers collude with criminals (Adeniran, 2018).
- ii. Inadequate Funding: Poor resources from the government to security agencies hinder effective policing (NBS, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Routine Activity Theory (RAT) developed by Cohen and Felson (1979) which posits that for a crime to occur, three elements must converge in time and space:

- i. Motivated Offenders: Individuals with the desire to commit crimes.
- ii. Suitable Targets: Persons or property that are viewed as easy targets.
- iii. Lack of Capable Guardians: The absence of individuals or mechanisms (such as police presence) that can prevent the crime from happening (Cohen & Felson, 1979).

These components interact in specific contexts and times, forming a framework for analyzing the root causes of crime in Minna.

RAT emphasizes the situational opportunities for crime rather than the motivations behind criminal behavior, suggesting that changes in everyday routines influence crime patterns. Applying this theory to the context of Minna, we can better understand how socioeconomic conditions and daily activities affect the prevalence of crime and the well-being of residents.

i. Motivated Offenders

In Minna, high unemployment, poverty, and lack of access to quality education and social services contribute to the presence of motivated offenders. Youths, in particular, may turn to crime due to limited economic opportunities. As Adebayo (2013) notes, socioeconomic deprivation can serve as a breeding ground for criminal behavior. The presence of such motivated individuals increases the likelihood of criminal incidents in low-income and densely populated neighborhoods.

ii. Suitable Targets

Routine activities, such as going to work, school, markets, or social gatherings, expose individuals and properties to potential victimization. Poor urban planning and infrastructure in parts of Minna, such as inadequate lighting, lack of secure housing, and insufficient surveillance make residents easy targets for criminals. Business owners, students, and working-class individuals may be particularly vulnerable due to predictable schedules and limited protection.

iii. Absence of Capable Guardians

A key factor in the rising crime rates in Minna is the inadequate presence of formal (police) and informal (community) guardianship. Under-resourced security agencies, slow emergency responses, and distrust in law enforcement reduce the deterrent effect against crime. The absence of effective guardians allows motivated offenders to act without fear of immediate consequences.

Impact on Socioeconomic Well-being

The persistent convergence of these three elements affects the socioeconomic well-being of Minna residents by:

- i. Creating fear and anxiety, which reduces mobility and productivity.
- ii. Discouraging business investment and local entrepreneurship.
- iii. Lowering property values and increasing costs of private security.
- iv. Disrupting education through school dropouts or absenteeism due to insecurity.
- v. Contributing to out-migration from high-crime areas.

Over time, these effects can trap communities in cycles of poverty and crime, reinforcing the very conditions that produce motivated offenders.

In conclusion, Routine Activity Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how daily patterns and systemic socioeconomic issues contribute to crime in Minna. By addressing each element through youth empowerment, urban renewal, and improved policing, crime prevalence can be reduced, thereby enhancing residents' socioeconomic well-being.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design and involved the use of questionnaire as an instrument for collecting data (Lohr, 2022). The population of this study comprised officers of the Nigeria Police Force and residents in Minna metropolis of Niger State. The study's sample size was calculated using Taro Yamane (1964) formula for sample size determination to arrive at approximately 400 sample size based on a projected population of 6758154 by Niger State Bureau of Statistics using (3.41%) NPC Growth Rate for Niger State, between 2017 and 2022, Minna

population size was 6758154 from the 2006 population size of 4082558 by the National Population Commission (NPC).

A total of four hundred (400) copies of the questionnaire were administered on both Police officers and residents in Minna, Niger State using intentional skewed allocation of sample size (Lohr, 2022). Out of 400 copies of the questionnaire, 112 were administered on police officers while 288 were administered on residents of Minna randomly. All in all, a total of 382 copies of the administered questionnaire representing 96% were retrieved for data analysis. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23 and Stata 15) was used to analyze the data with results being analysed using descriptive statistics (Frequency and percentages) and inferential statistics (Chi-square and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Statistical significance was set at alpha level of 0.05.

Result of the Findings

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (Police officers and residents) in Minna. Variables examined are age, educational qualification, years of service and rank for the police officers. Age, gender, religion, educational qualification, ethnicity, occupation and duration of stay in Minna were examined for the residents as show in table 1 and 2 respectively.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the Sampled Resident in Minna, Niger State

Variables		Frequency	Percent
Age	18-25	113	40.4
	26-35	96	34.3
	36-45	47	16.8
	46 years and above	24	8.6
Gender	Male	158	56.4
	Female	122	43.6
Religion	Islam	172	61.4
	Christianity	87	31.1
	African traditional religion	21	7.5
Educational Qualification	None formal education	22	7.9
	Primary	10	3.6
	Secondary	105	37.5
	Tertiary	143	51.1
Ethnic	Hausa	79	28.2
	Igbo	35	12.5
	Yoruba	51	18.2
	Others	115	41.1
Occupation	Student	86	30.7
	Civil servant	47	16.8
	Private sector employee	43	15.4
	Self-employed	85	30.4
	Others	19	6.8
How long have you lived in Minna	Less than 1 year	24	8.6
	1-5 years	54	19.3
	6-10 years	68	24.3
	11 years and above	134	47.9

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

From Table 1, the result shows that 56.4% of the respondents were males, while 43.6% of the respondents were females. The result shows that most respondents were aged 18-25 years representing 40.4%, followed by age 26-35 years representing 34.3%. The result based on religion in the Table shows that 57.9% of the respondents practiced Islamic religion. It is shown in the table that 41.1% of the respondents belonged to other languages not mentioned, followed by 28.2% of the respondents who were Hausas, speaking the language. 30.7% of the respondents were students and 30.4% of them were self-employed. The result based on the number of years lived in Minna, shows that 47.9% of the respondents have lived in Minna for 11 years and above.

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of the Sampled Police Officers in Minna, Niger State

Variables		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	63	61.8
	Female	39	38.2
Age	31-40 years	50	49.0
	41-50 years	51	50.0
	51-60 years	1	1.0
Educational Qualification	Secondary	59	57.8
	Tertiary	43	42.2
Year of service	1-10 years	8	7.8
	11-20 years	3	2.9
	21-30 years	36	35.3
	31 and above	55	53.9
Rank	Inspector	30	29.4
	ASP	40	39.2
	DSP	18	17.6
	Sergeant	4	3.9
	Corporal	6	5.9
	Constable	4	3.9

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

From Table 2 the result shows that 61.8% of the police respondents were male, and were mostly within the age of 41-50 years, representing 50.0%. It is shown in the table that 57.6% of the police officers had secondary school certificate. Larger percentage (53.9%) of the respondents from the police officers had 31 years of experience followed by 35.3% representing 21-30 years of experience. Finally, it is shown in the table that police officers sampled belonged to the rank of ASP and Inspectors representing 39.2% and 29.4% respectively

Prevalence of crime in Minna, Niger State

Table 3: Response from Respondents on prevalence of crime in Minna

Response	Residents		Police Officers	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	244	87.1	100	98.0
No	36	12.9	2	2.0
Total	280	100	102	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 3 shows the response rate on the prevalence of crime in Minna. From the Table, the result shows that 87.1% of residents' respondents agreed that crimes are committed in Minna, Niger State. And 98.0% of the Police officers also agreed that crimes are committed in Minna, Niger State. This infers that the sampled respondents uniformly agreed that crimes are committed in Minna Niger State.

Table 4: Related responses on the prevalence of crime in Minna

	Residents		Police Officers	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Frequency of crime incidents committed in Minna				
Very frequent	79	28.2	20	19.6
Frequent	157	56.1	74	72.5
Rare	29	10.4	8	7.8
I don't know	15	5.4	0	0.0
Types of crime witnessed or heard about in Minna				
Robbery/theft	97	34.6	45	44.1
Kidnapping	60	21.4	0	0.0
Drug related offense	57	20.4	7	6.9
Rape/Assault	30	10.7	31	30.4
Domestic violence	25	8.9	14	13.7
Fraud (cybercrime)	9	3.2	0	0.0
Others (Thugs)	2	0.7	5	4.9
Time of the day crimes typically occur in Minna?				
Daytime	40	14.3	5	4.9
Night-time	42	15	19	18.6
Both day and night	198	70.8	78	76.5

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 4 shows some interrogatory questions on the prevalence of crime in Minna. From the Table, the result shows that a larger percentage of the respondents, both Police and the residents accepted that crime incidents are committed in Minna most frequently and very frequent with 56.1% and 72.5% respectively. The result based on the types of crime witnessed or heard about in Minna, shows that 34.6% of the resident and 44.1% of the police officers, uniformly agreed that robbery/theft and kidnapping is the predominant crime in Minna, Niger State. Result based on time of the day crimes typically occur in Minna, shows that 70.8% of resident said it occurs at day and night.

Table 5: Responses on the security situation in Minna

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
All things considered, security in my neighborhood isn't up to snuff	Strongly Agree	168	43.98
	Agree	92	24.08
	Undecided	88	23.04
	Disagree	34	8.90
	Strongly Disagree	0	0
If security personnel are visible and active within your community.in Minna	Strongly Agree	9	2.36
	Agree	57	14.92
	Undecided	49	12.83
	Disagree	74	19.37
	Strongly disagree	193	50.52
If the police are doing enough to combat criminal activities in Minna	Strongly Agree	77	20.16
	Agree	29	7.59
	Undecided	84	21.99
	Disagree	182	47.64
	Strongly disagree	10	2.62
The local populace contributes to maintaining the safety of our area in Minna	Strongly Agree	33	8.64
	Agree	304	79.58
	Undecided	34	8.90
	Disagree	11	2.88
	Strongly Disagree	0	0
The current level of crime poses a threat to the safety and lives of residents.	Strongly Agree	48	12.57
	Agree	137	35.86
	Undecided	149	39.01
	Disagree	44	11.52
	Strongly Disagree	4	1.05

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The survey results reveal significant concerns about security in Minna, with 68.06% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that neighborhood security is inadequate, while only 8.9% disagree. A striking 69.89% believe security personnel are not visible or active, with 50.52% strongly disagreeing on their presence. Additionally, 50.26% feel the police are not doing enough to combat crime, though 20.16% strongly agree, possibly indicating polarized perceptions. On a positive note, 88.22% acknowledge that the local populace contributes to safety, suggesting strong community involvement despite institutional shortcomings. Regarding crime's impact, 48.43% agree it threatens residents' safety, but a notable 39.01% remain undecided, possibly reflecting varying experiences or uncertainty. Overall, the findings highlight widespread dissatisfaction with formal security measures, reliance on community efforts, and a perceived need for improved policing and visible security presence in Minna.

Impact of crime on the socio-economic well-being of residents in Minna, Niger state.
Table 6: Impact of crime on Resident's well-being in Minna

	Frequency	Percent
Effect of crime on personal safety and well-being		
Greatly Affected	100	35.7
Moderately affected	122	43.6
Slightly affected	44	15.7
Not affected	14	5
Impact of crime on business or job		
Yes	78	27.9
No	157	56.1
Area crime has impacted business or job		
Security challenges	14	5.0
Cost	15	5.4
Loss of sales and costumer	16	5.7
Effect of crime on the local economy in Minna		
Increased cost of living	80	28.6
Loss of jobs	96	34.3
Business closure	60	21.4
Investment decline	44	15.7
If crime has resulted in displacement or migration		
Yes	109	38.9
No	171	61
Opinion on social impact of crime in the community		
Reduced social cohesion	84	30
Increased fear and anxiety	119	42.5
Distrust in law enforcement	32	11.4
Increased substance abuse	34	12.1
Others (please specify)	11	3.9

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 6, shows the respondents view on how crime has impacted on the lives of the residents of Minna. The respondents view on how crime has affected personal safety and well-being, shows that 43.6% of the respondents have the view that crime has affected their personal safety and well-being Moderately. And 35.7% of them said it has greatly affected them. Result based on how crime has impacted business or job, shows that 56.1% of the respondents responded *yes* majorly on loss of sales and costumer and Cost with 5.7% and 5.4% respectively. Responses based on how crime has affected the local economy in Minna shows larger percentage 34.3%, 28.6% and 21.4% of the respondents have the view that crime affect the local economy in Minna based on loss of jobs, increased cost of living and business closure respectively.

Hypothesis Testing

This section deals with the analysis of the hypothesis statements. The null hypothesis was tested by some inferential statistic (Chi-square and Correlation analysis).

Hypothesis One

- i. H₀: There is no significant relationship between prevalent crimes and security in Minna, Niger State.

The test of Hypothesis One, which states that there is no significant relationship between prevalent crimes and security in Minna, Niger State, is presented in Table 7. The result of the Pearson correlation shows $r = -0.080$, $p = 0.0490$, indicating a weak significant relationship. The table of analysis is derived from table 4

Table 7: Product Moment Correlation Showing relationship between prevalent crimes and security in Minna, Niger State

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig.(P-value)
Prevalence Crime	376	5.5806	14.35709	0.080	0.490
Security	377	9.3605	18.46114		

Note: r = Pearson correlation coefficient; $p < 0.05$ indicates statistical significance.

Table 7 summarizes the outcomes of the hypothesis test. This test investigated the potential link between the prevalence of common crimes and the established security measures within Minna, Niger State. The Pearson correlation analysis yielded an r -value of 0.080 and a p -value of 0.490, implying a weak relationship between the crime rates and the level of security.

The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.080 suggests a very weak positive relationship between the two variables, indicating that as crime prevalence increases, security levels show a negligible tendency to increase as well, though this association is practically insignificant. The p -value of 0.490, which is much greater than the conventional significance level of 0.05, confirms that this correlation is not statistically significant. This means there is no meaningful linear relationship between crime prevalence and security in the studied context. Additionally, the high standard deviations for both variables (14.36 for crime prevalence and 18.46 for security) suggest considerable variability in responses, further weakening any potential association. Overall, the findings imply that other factors beyond those measured may influence security levels in Minna. As a result, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, suggesting that there is no significant relationship between the prevalence of crime and the sense of security among residents in Minna. This means that fluctuations in crime rates do not have a statistically meaningful impact on perceptions of safety in the community.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂. Prevalent crimes in Minna have no significant impact on the socio-economic wellbeing of residents.

For clarity and objectivity, the test of the hypothesis which states that prevalent crimes in Minna have no significant impact on the socioeconomic well-being of residents is presented in Table 8. The Chi-square test of independence was employed to examine the association between the level of prevalent crimes and residents' socioeconomic well-being.

Table 8: Chi-Square Tests showing relationship between Prevalent crimes and socio-economic wellbeing of residents in Minna

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	30250.138 ^a	386	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	2382.746	386	1.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.619	1	0.043
N of Valid Cases	271		

The chi-square test results presented in Table 8 examines the relationship between prevalent crimes and the socio-economic wellbeing of residents in Minna. The Pearson Chi-Square value of 30250.138 with 386 degrees of freedom and an asymptotic significance of 0.000 indicates a statistically significant association between the two variables, as the p-value is less than 0.05. This infers, there is a significant relationship between the prevalent crimes and socio-economic wellbeing of residents in Minna. Thus, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis (H₀). However, the Likelihood Ratio result of 2382.746 with the same degrees of freedom and a p-value of 1.000 suggests no significant relationship, which contradicts the Pearson Chi-Square result. This discrepancy may arise from differences in how the tests handle small expected frequencies or sparse data. The Linear-by-Linear Association test, with a value of 0.619 and a p-value of 0.043, suggests a marginally significant linear relationship between the ordinal aspects of the variables. This indicates that crime prevalence has a profound impact on socio-economic conditions, affecting aspects such as employment, income stability, and overall quality of life. Given the large sample size (N = 271), the significant Pearson Chi-Square may reflect sensitivity to sample size rather than a strong practical association.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of this study have important implications for understanding the dynamics of crime and security within Minna, Niger State. The weak correlation between prevalent crimes and security measures in the study area might indicate that residents in Minna perceive security as an issue that is not solely based on statistical crime rates. This may suggest that factors such as individual experiences, community relationships, the effectiveness of law enforcement, and broader socio-economic conditions may play a crucial role in shaping perceptions of security independently of actual crime rates which is in agreement with a study by Tyler (2004). The findings show that a predominant majority of both residents (87.1%) and police officers (98.0%) acknowledge the prevalence of crime in Minna. This alignment in perceived crime levels indicates a shared recognition of security challenges facing the city.

The high percentage of residents admitting to the occurrence of crime suggests a heightened awareness of safety issues among the populace. Research by Aning (2020) emphasizes that public perception of crime can significantly influence community engagement with law enforcement which is consistent with findings of this study. The acknowledgment of criminal activities may lead to increased vigilance and a demand for more effective policing strategies. Findings which indicated that there is no significant relationship between prevalent crimes and security perceptions in Minna, Niger State, suggests that despite the prevalence of crime, perceptions of security may be influenced by other social and contextual factors.

The results from the Chi-Square tests shed light on the substantial influence of prevalent crimes on the socio-economic well-being of residents in Minna. This relationship aligns with findings from various studies that highlight how crime can erode the economic stability of communities. High crime rates often discourage investment, increase costs related to security, and depress local business performance, which collectively undermine the socioeconomic fabric of neighborhoods (Hennigan & Spanovic, 2019). Also, the Linear-by-Linear Association value of 0.619 with a significance of 0.043 further supports the idea that there is a linear relationship between prevalent crimes and socio-economic well-being. Since the P-value here is also less than 0.05, it indicates a statistically significant trend in the data; as prevalent crimes increase, socio-economic well-being decreases in a predictable manner.

Furthermore, the feeling of insecurity as observed among residents in this study can lead to a cycle of poverty, where individuals are deprived of opportunities for education and economic advancement due to the pervasive nature of crime in their surroundings which corroborates the findings of Whiteside *et al.* (2021). This situation brings fear and disenfranchisement among the community members, further implying that addressing crime is critical for enhancing the socio-economic conditions in Minna.

The majority of residents reported being affected by crime concerning their personal safety and well-being. Specifically, 35.7% stated they were "greatly affected," while 43.6% indicated they were "moderately affected." This suggests a significant perception of vulnerability among residents. The results underline the psychological toll crime can take on individuals, as noted by Ferraro (2020), who discussed how fear of crime can result to anxiety and reduced quality of life. The remaining respondents claimed only slight (15.7%) or no (5%) impact, indicating a minority feel insulated from the effects of crime, either due to location or personal circumstances.

When residents were asked if crime impacted their businesses or jobs, 27.9% affirmed it did, while 56.1% responded negatively. Although the majority do not perceive crime as directly impacting their jobs, a significant portion does report adverse effects. The specific areas of economic impact included security challenges (5%), costs (5.4%), and losses in sales and customers (5.7%). The economic ramifications are further evidenced when exploring how crime has affected the local economy. A substantial 34.3% of residents noted job losses, while 28.6% mentioned increased living costs. This finding corroborates a broader understanding that crime can undermine economic stability within a community (Hipp, 2019). The closure of businesses (21.4%) and decline in investments (15.7%) indicate a deteriorating economic environment that may hinder local development and prosperity.

The analysis of the Chi-Square tests indicates a significant relationship between prevalent crimes and the socio-economic well-being of residents in Minna, Niger State. The rejection of the null hypothesis highlights the need for concerted efforts focused on crime reduction as a means to improve the overall quality of life in Minna. Cohen and Felson (1979), posited that the convergence in time and space of motivated offender (criminals seeking opportunities) suitable targets (vulnerable victims or properties) and the absence of capable guardians (weak security measures) make crime occurrence possible. Engaging with community members, law enforcement, and policymakers in Minna, Niger State is important because each group brings a different perspective and strength.

Conclusion

This study which examined the relationship between prevalent crimes and socioeconomic wellbeing of residents of Minna, Niger State, Nigeria has revealed that socioeconomic conditions, well-being and daily activities of residents are affected by the prevalence of crime. Findings reveal that crime is a major problem in Minna with robbery/theft being the most common, followed by kidnapping and drug related offenses occurring both day and night indicating persistent insecurity. The contributory factors to prevalence of crime in the study include, high unemployment, poverty and inequality and weak law enforcement. Crime in Minna significantly disrupts the socioeconomic wellbeing of residents, contributing to economic losses, increased fear and anxiety, and reduced social cohesion.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Strengthened Law Enforcement: The government should enhance police and security agencies' capacity to effectively combat crimes like robbery/theft, kidnapping, and drug offenses through better training, equipment, and intelligence-gathering.
- ii. Economic and Social Empowerment: The government and private establishments should implement job creation programs, skills training, and welfare support to reduce unemployment, poverty, and inequality, in order to address the root causes of crime.

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