Traditional Administration and Crime Prevention in Akwa Ibom State

Ifiok John Umanah[1]; Prof. Enefiok Ibok[2]; Imoh Imoh-Ita[3] & Unwana-Abasi S. Udoh[4]

[1,2,3&4]Department of Public Administration, Akwa Ibom State University

[1]ifiok.umanah@yahoo.com, 08033200999

[2]ibokenefiok2@gmail.com, 08028285852

[3]imohita@yahoo.com, iimohita@gmail.com, 08023140869

[4]unwanabasi06@gmail.com, 08023139391

Abstract

The diversity that characterises human nature in social and political life provides a distinct setting for manipulating attitudes and behaviours toward crime. As such, rural communities worldwide adopt various strategies to prevent and control crime, including community policing, neighbourhood watch programmes, and local conflict resolution mechanisms. The participation of rural communities in crime prevention and control is assumed to be effective in various contexts, as it enhances the capacity for early detection and intervention, thus reducing the incidence of crime. This study, therefore, focused on traditional administration and its role in crime prevention. The literature review for the study was divided into three sections: conceptual review, theoretical framework, and empirical review. The study relied on the Integrated Theory of Peace. A mixed research design was adopted, with 400 respondents selected using Taro Yamane's sample size determination technique. Data were analysed using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient at a 0.05 significance level. The study concluded that traditional administration significantly influences crime prevention in

Ifiok John Umanah; Prof. Enefiok Ibok; Imoh Imoh-Ita & Unwana-Abasi S. Udoh

Akwa Ibom State. Based on the findings, it is recommended that the Government of Akwa Ibom State enact more appropriate laws to empower traditional rulers in crime prevention.

Keywords: Traditional administration, crime prevention, rural communities, community policing, Akwa Ibom State

Introduction

In recent times, Nigeria and, by extension, Akwa Ibom have been plagued with frightening crimes, and more often than not, the consequences are devastating and appalling. This unsavoury development has generated a lot of concern amongst scholars, religious clerics, non-governmental organisations and the government (Iheajemuzu, 2019). This concern also has been expressed in the media (print and electronics), seminars, conferences, and symposia, all in attempts to find common ground on its control. However, what constitutes crime varies not only from society to society but also from time to time as well as from strict enforcement to none. Traditional African communities used mechanisms of crime control, reformation, and moral purification that functioned as instruments to rectify and serve justice before the arrival of Western civilisation and the criminal system to Africa, including Nigeria. As a result, society's traditional political system has constructed its security mechanisms and crime control since time immemorial to serve their common goal of socio-economic development as a whole. This is because issues of peace and security affect the entire community.

It is a well-known fact that before the advent of colonialism, Africa had a system of justice and adjudication hinged on fear of deities, which attracted instant sanctions and punishments. Hence, making the people conform to the ethos of the community, but the coming of the Europeans has altered/changed the peoples' cognitive mapping of what constitutes social order and control through the introduction of new methods leading to the abandonment of the traditional social control patterns, systems and mechanisms that were instant, efficient and effective (Igbashangev, 2024).

Relegating traditional crime prevention mechanisms in favour of modern ones has done more harm than good in Nigeria. For instance, Transparency International ranked Nigeria as "one of the most corrupt nations in the world" (Ajayi, 2022). According to the researcher, armed robbery, banditry, kidnapping, rape, occupational crimes, drug peddling, and other crimes of varying magnitudes are on the rise in Nigeria,

Ifiok John Umanah; Prof. Enefiok Ibok; Imoh Imoh-Ita & Unwana-Abasi S. Udoh

particularly in Akwa Ibom State. Residents have been more concerned as a result of these crimes, which frequently result in jungle justice, mostly with occupational crimes. The issues of crime and deviance have become a topic of conversation among today's citizens. The western criminal system, which is currently the primary method of crime control, has done little to solve this cultural divide. Worse, modern technical advancements in communication have assisted crime because it is often impossible to express what is unlawful. The modern methods of crime control are typically lengthy and costly, with judgements and verdicts always being delayed and with the tendency for justice to be denied and criminals to be released.

Traditional rulers, as heads of their communities, are responsible for maintaining social order, enforcing norms, resolving disputes and defending the vulnerable against the victimisation of the privileged class in the community, often through traditional methods and councils. Traditional institutions, particularly traditional rulers, are seen as guardians of cultural heritage, customs and beliefs, which are crucial for maintaining community identity and social cohesion and facilitate inter-group cooperation and collaboration, especially during times of crisis, through the use of symbols and communication systems to alert communities and mobilise resources (Ezenwoko and Osagie, 2021).

In Akwa Ibom State, traditional administration plays a vital role in promoting community engagement by serving as custodians of cultural values, facilitating community development initiatives, and acting as mediators in resolving disputes. This role helps create an atmosphere of cooperation and participation, with the traditional administration acting as a medium for crime prevention and control within the community.

Statement of the Problem

Crime in Nigeria, as well as Akwa Ibom State, has become increasingly complex due to urbanisation, technology, and globalisation. Modern security agencies alone have proven inadequate in addressing these challenges. Communities often resort to self-help through vigilante groups, yet these efforts remain uncoordinated with state agencies and sometimes result in human rights violations. Security while safeguarding human rights and social justice. Despite the continuous occurrences of this phenomenon, there is no clear-headed long-term perspective that can effectively contain conflicts. From the colonial government to the present, both local and national levels have primarily relied on a fire-brigade approach, which focusses on short-term solutions to achieve peace, often resulting in violence.

A PUBLICATION OF WORD ASTRA
wordastrajournals@gmail.com
www.wordastrajournals.com

International Journal of Public Relations
and Social Sciences (IJPRSS)
Vol. 1, Issue 3, November 2025 // ISSN: 1595-0778

Ifiok John Umanah; Prof. Enefiok Ibok; Imoh Imoh-Ita & Unwana-Abasi S. Udoh

Peace and harmony maintenance is not an exclusive preserve of government and intergovernmental organisations. The 1976 Guidelines for Local Government Reform state that traditional rulers should be responsible, as hitherto, for assisting government in the maintenance of peace, as most of the conflicts that occur start from crimes in which the traditional rulers have a firm base. In many cases, the traditional rulers put a lot of effort through various channels to help in crime prevention and control. Sadly, despite the above-acknowledged roles played by the traditional administration in crime prevention. It is presumably argued that crimes are still in full force in Nigeria. Hence, this leads to mixed perceptions regarding the role of traditional administration in crime prevention. In the light of the foregoing, this study seeks to investigate the roles of traditional administration in crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State.

Aims and Objectives of the Study
The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between traditional administration and crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Hypotheses
H_{01} There is no significant relationship between traditional administration and crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State.

Literature Review
Conceptual Review
Traditional Administration
This study uses the terms "traditional administration" and "traditional institution" interchangeably. Traditional institutions are defined differently by many authors depending on time and circumstances. According to Akpeekon et al. (2024), in the pre-colonial era, traditional institutions are defined as people who, by virtue of ancestral position, occupy the throne or stool of an area · and whose throne has been in existence before the advent of the British in Nigeria. The traditional institutions as defined above have absolute executive and legislative as well as judicial power. Ihejirika (2011) posited that the system of administration before the advent of the colonial institutions was based on small communities being headed by a purely democratic process and not necessarily by heredity. Traditional institution, according to Kanu (2015), refers to the indigenous instruments by which various communities organised themselves and managed their affairs long before the advent of British colonial rule. This is to say that traditional institutions represent the system of politics and leadership operated by

various ethnic groups before and even after the British authorities came to implement the indirect rule policy that gradually composed the various units into one entity and into modern democratic society.

Traditional administration, in the words of Oriji & Olali (2010), are political leaders with proven track records that are appointed and installed in line with the provisions of their native laws and customs. The concept of traditional institutions has to do with the reign of the monarch or titled institutions vested with the authority to lead a people in their affairs of life. It is very vital in bringing development closer to the rural people. It had been in existence before the era of the colonial masters in Nigeria. Emeodu (2019) posited that traditional institutions have been very important in terms of resistance against injustice and deprivation. This is largely due to the submissiveness of the people to their rulers in some parts of Nigeria. The indigenous government was considered a platform to orchestrate the imperialist agenda in view of the smooth command structure and powers of the rulers (Umar, 2022). The British colonial authority beckoned on the traditional office holders to assist in colonial administration because they believed that the best avenue for reaching the various colonial subjects was through the traditional rulers who enjoy unalloyed respect from their subjects.

Crime Prevention

In criminal law, a crime is an act of omission that attracts sanctions, such as fines, imprisonment, or even death (Scott & Marshall, 2019). A normative definition views crime as a deviant behaviour that violates prevailing norms, cultural standards prescribing how human beings ought to behave normally. The conflict orientation sees crime from the perspective of the ruling class. Society consists of competing interest groups which are in conflict with each other due to unequal distribution of wealth, which results in inequality in economic and social powers. According to Matsiliza (2024), crimes are the outcome of social changes, which are brought about by social developments and exposure to Western culture and their lifestyle. Crime is, in an important sense, a socially constructed phenomenon; its meaning is profoundly influenced by considerations of time and space.

The legalistic view defines crime purely in a legal sense as an act or conduct which violates the provisions embodied in the criminal law of society. In other words, criminal law is the reference point and the dividing line between what should be seen as crime and non-crime. The Nigerian Criminal Code, which uses "offence" to refer to crime, defines it in section 2 of the Criminal Code Act (1990) simply as "an act or omission which renders the person doing the act or making the omission liable to punishment" (Okonkwo, 2020). The concept of crime often involves violation of moral

A PUBLICATION OF WORD ASTRA
wordastrajournals@gmail.com
www.wordastrajournals.com

International Journal of Public Relations
and Social Sciences (IJPRSS)
Vol. 1, Issue 3, November 2025 // ISSN: 1595-0778

Ifiok John Umanah; Prof. Enefiok Ibok; Imoh Imoh-Ita & Unwana-Abasi S. Udoh

codes followed by some level of social disapproval, but it is important to recognise that not all crimes are disapproved of by all people. In addition, crime is often seen to be of a random nature and committed by those with no connections to the victim. Therefore, media plays a large part in shaping the public's definition of crime, ignorant to the differences between this view and the real nature of crime. It is possible to determine three main frameworks in which it is possible to make sense of the ways crime can be defined, although each demonstrates noticeable difficulties associated with defining the concept of crime (Mohammed et al., 2023).

Crime prevention refers to the range of strategies that are implemented by individuals, communities, businesses, non-government organisations and all levels of government to target the various social and environmental factors that increase the risk of crime, disorder and victimisation (Kjik and Jaap, 2021). Crime prevention is defined by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2024) as 'strategies and measures that seek to reduce the risk of crimes occurring and their potential harmful effects on individuals and society, including fear of crime, by intervening to influence their multiple causes.' There are a number of varieties of different strategies for crime prevention that differ in terms of the focus of the intervention, the types of activities that are delivered, the theory behind how those activities are designed to bring desired results and the mechanisms that are applied.

Crime prevention refers to the anticipation, recognition, and evaluation of crime risks, followed by the initiation of actions aimed at eliminating or reducing those risks. While crime prevention and crime control are closely related, their elements often overlap. Crime prevention involves the entire criminal justice system, including the police, courts, and prisons (Abraham, 2010). According to Robert (2023), criminologists have classified crime prevention into three distinct approaches: primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention.

Primary prevention focuses on altering environmental conditions that create opportunities for criminal behaviour. In this approach, the police play a central role, with three main strategies: increasing the effort required to commit crimes, raising the risks for potential offenders, and reducing the rewards that might motivate criminal acts.

Secondary prevention involves the early identification of individuals at risk of committing crimes, with a focus on intervening to prevent the development of criminal behaviour. Various organisations, such as Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), are actively involved in this effort.

Tertiary prevention, on the other hand, targets actual offenders and aims to prevent further criminal activities through interventions. This approach is typically carried out by the prison and probation services (Roberts, 2023).

Traditional Administration and Crime Prevention

In pre-colonial African societies, specifically the Igbo society of southeastern Nigeria, social and crime control patterns were not based on written laws but on oral traditions that significantly influenced people's lives and attitudes toward society (Onyeozili & Ebbe, 2022). Traditional methods of crime control and maintaining security are not universally accepted, as they are culturally relative. These methods are deeply intertwined with the organisational patterns and belief systems of the people (Box, 2022). When communities are bound together by strong, cohesive ties and a sense of communal consciousness, crime can be reduced to a minimum (Dambazau, 2023). Traditional crime control, specifically the prevention and control of criminal behaviour in Nigerian communities, has its roots in kinship and the extended family system. This is crucial to understanding crime prevention and control in the traditional Nigerian context.

Inyang et al. (2020) noted several traditional mechanisms of crime control and prevention, including fines and compensation, ritual cleansing, trial by ordeals, ridicule and gossip, masquerade institutions, confinement, ostracism, banishment, and capital punishment. Igbokwe-Ibeto and Ogbuagu (2019) highlighted that to function effectively, security agencies in Nigeria often need to collaborate with traditional rulers, who play key roles at the grassroots level. Traditional rulers are well positioned to assist security agents in neutralising threats originating from their domains or neighbouring communities. Ajayi and Buhari (2014) explained that traditional rulers have long been called upon to neutralise crises as they arise. Additionally, Okonkwo et al. (2019) observed that traditional rulers have consistently served as strong pillars of stability, making it possible to govern large and diverse populations. They embody the dynamic connection between our historic past and future, and their presence fosters pride in the uniqueness and ethics of society. However, it is ironic that despite being recognised and graded by state governments in all states of the Federation, traditional rulers are not officially acknowledged and entrusted with security roles by the 1999 Constitution. Despite this, they remain the cornerstone of national security, from the grassroots to the centre of governance.

Uyang & Ayuk (2013) argued that the rise in crime over the last four decades in the state is partly due to the proactiveness of traditional methods, particularly in instilling fear and administering punishment without logic. Lot (2022) also asserted that shame, both for the culprit and their family, as well as irrevocable death penalties, were part of traditional crime prevention measures. These traditional methods are used to control, discipline, and regulate behaviour, and they ensure the establishment of rules

Ifiok John Umanah; Prof. Enefiok Ibok; Imoh Imoh-Ita & Unwana-Abasi S. Udoh

and regulations governing people's conduct. They also involve the process of establishing truth through tangible, sensory experiences. Whether these traditional methods still have the potential to prevent crime in the twenty-first century (an era where conventional policing and technological innovations are commonly used for societal security) remains an area of investigation, particularly in rural communities (Inyang et al., 2020).

Ideologically, Lott (2022) explained mbiam as a traditionally concocted oath with magical potency used to address social ills, such as stealing, killing, and any associated lies designed to avoid the repercussions and penalties of crime in traditional society. The author exaggerated that, due to the spiritual potency of mbiam, it could detect the innocent and the guilty, as well as punish the offender. Several studies point to the constituents of mbiam, which may include liquids, sacred drums, certain leaves, human blood, or even religious symbols like the Bible and cross (Offiong, 2021). Other ingredients may include concoctions specially prepared by a traditional medicine person, invoking the names of dangerous deities (Udoh, 2008). Ingredients might also include blood from an in-law (ukot), a grandchild (eyeyen), a grandfather (Ete-bom), or a grandmother (Ekaeka). Other substances or articles that could be used for administering mbiam include a piece of finger or toenail, hair, or cloth belonging to any of the aforementioned individuals. Any part of the body, particularly private areas, could also be used in the administration of mbiam (Lott, 2022). The administration of mbiam, performed at an agreed location and accompanied by sacrifice, is argued to have effectiveness in preventing crime due to its ability to enforce absolute loyalty through fear. Additionally, the penalty inflicted by mbiam extends not only to the offender but also to their extended family (Inyang et al., 2020).

Theoretical Framework

This study is predicated on the Integrated Theory of Peace (ITP) proposed by H.B. Danesh in the early 2000s. It emphasises that peace is not just the absence of violence but also the presence of positive conditions that promote well-being and justice. The integrated theory of peace also highlights the role of worldviews in shaping our understanding and experience of peace. The theory posits a world view of inclusive peace through peace education; individuals strive for inner peace and peaceful coexistence between groups, varying religions, races and cultures, governments, and nations worldwide.

In essence, the Integrative Theory of Peace provides a framework for understanding peace as a complex phenomenon that requires a holistic and

A PUBLICATION OF WORD ASTRA
wordastrajournals@gmail.com
www.wordastrajournals.com

International Journal of Public Relations
and Social Sciences (IJPRSS)
Vol. 1, Issue 3, November 2025 // ISSN: 1595-0778

Ifiok John Umanah; Prof. Enefiok Ibok; Imoh Imoh-Ita & Unwana-Abasi S. Udoh

transformative approach in the traditional administration. The integrated theory of peace recognises that peace is not a singular concept but a state that manifests in various aspects of human life, including intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, international, and global levels (Mnookin, 1998). The theory suggests that our worldview, which is shaped by cultural, familial, historical, and religious influences, significantly impacts our perception of peace and our interactions with others.

Relevance of the Theory to the Study

The most relevant theory for this study is the integrated theory of peace. The Integrated Theory of Peace shows means of achieving positive peace, which connotes peace education, development, employment, gender equality and religious tolerance; disputes and conflict can be prevented and mitigated. Curtailing the root causes of crime and conflict is a far more effective way of promoting harmony and peaceful coexistence in a society than a negative peace concept that is geared towards zero crime. The theory stated the roles of the traditional administration, which include mediation, reconciliation, peacebuilding and the healing process. This theory also shows the pathway through which traditional rulers can adopt the best strategy during the mediation process to promote the healing process and reconciliation in a conflicting society. According to the theory, in initiating peace, all group interests must be protected. The rural dwellers, through their traditional rulers, were made to participate in various stages of decision-making regarding the development of their rural communities. Thus every group was carried along in the process. This would give the people a sense of belonging in matters affecting them. The implementation of the policies and decisions taken will not be hindered by their attitude and behaviours.

Empirical Review

Aina, et al. (2025) examined Traditional and Modern Methods of Crime Prevention and Control in Nigeria: The Need for Integration. The paper argues for the integration of traditional and modern methods of crime prevention and control in Nigeria. Drawing from secondary data sourced from journals and relevant publications, the study employed content analysis to examine the role of both approaches. Findings reveal that traditional institutions such as vigilante groups, age-grade associations, and cultural sanctions remain effective at community levels. The study concludes that integrating traditional and modern methods will strengthen Nigeria's crime-fighting capacity. Policy recommendations are provided for harmonising these systems.

A PUBLICATION OF WORD ASTRA
wordastrajournals@gmail.com
www.wordastrajournals.com

International Journal of Public Relations
and Social Sciences (IJPRSS)
Vol. 1, Issue 3, November 2025 // ISSN: 1595-0778

Ifiok John Umanah; Prof. Enefiok Ibok; Imoh Imoh-Ita & Unwana-Abasi S. Udoh

Nnanna (2024) investigated the perception of traditional institutions in crime prevention among the rural communities of the Etung Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study was designed to investigate the perception of traditional institutions in crime management and prevention among the rural communities of Etung in Cross River State, Nigeria. The social control and general systems theories provided the framework. The study employed a descriptive survey design. Purposive sampling was used to select five electoral wards in Etung Local Government Areas (LGA) from the existing 10, due to their marked similarities and the presence of crime problems. A sample size of 500 was selected, from which 100 respondents were sampled from each of the electoral wards, using simple random sampling, with a return rate of 371. Ten in-depth interviews were conducted with five key opinion leaders (chiefs, elders, and key cultural consultants), and five focus group discussions were conducted among men, women, community leaders, and community members. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, simple percentages, and frequency distributions, while the qualitative data were content-analysed. Traditional institutions were found to be more effective in combating crime in the rural communities of Etung in Cross River State. The study recommends, among others, the handing down of traditional values and useful cultural practices to up-and-coming generations to preserve Africa's rich cultural heritage of truth, hard work, honesty, and brotherhood.

Umoh and Offong (2024) conducted a study on Traditional Methods in Crime Prevention and Moral Development: A Case Study of Ibiono Ibom Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study examined the effect of traditional methods in crime prevention: continuity and change in Ibiono Ibom Local Government Area (II LGA), Akwa Ibom State. Two research questions were raised to guide the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of 787,233 indigenes of II LGA, from which two sets of samples consisting of 20 and 380 were selected using the snowball sampling technique and the systematic sampling technique, respectively. Meanwhile, to arrive at a 400 sample size, the Taro Yamane formula was adopted. The primary data were collected using a mixed approach consisting of qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitatively, data collection was done using semi-structured interview guides, whereas a questionnaire entitled "Traditional Methods of Crime Prevention Scale (TMCPS)" was utilised for quantitative data collection. These instruments were validated by experts. Data analysis was done both quantitatively and qualitatively using simple percentage and thematic discussion of the respondents' views and perceptions about preventing crime. The findings revealed that a modified form of traditional methods such as Mbiam and Ukang were capable of deterring potential anti-social behaviour with uncontrollable speed and

Ifiok John Umanah; Prof. Enefiok Ibok; Imoh Imoh-Ita & Unwana-Abasi S. Udoh

keeping society morally sound and justified. Also, the extent to which these traditional methods (ukang and mbiam) still influence behaviours and prevent crimes is high. This was similar to the results to the extent to which they still retain their originality. It is recommended, among others, that the traditional institutions bring up a blueprint/template containing the modified methods of preventing crime as complementary or alternative strategies to the conventional criminal justice system (CCJS).

Igbashangev (2024) studied the Role of Traditional Institutions and Crime Control in Africa: A Comprehensive Study. The study explores the role of traditional institutions in crime control within the Konshisha Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria, in Africa, focusing on order enforcement, crime prevention, conflict resolution, and challenges faced by traditional rulers. Drawing on structural functionalism and social control theory, a survey with 372 respondents was conducted. The findings reveal that traditional rulers are crucial in maintaining order through fines, with varying perspectives on public ridicule's impact and consensus on effective crime control for life, property protection, social harmony, productivity, and governance. The research also highlights traditional institutions' support for conflict resolution mechanisms like reconciliation, adjudication, and mediation, alongside revealing challenges such as limited authority scope, collaboration issues with law enforcement, and lack of expertise in modern crime. The study recommended, amongst others, providing resources, enhancing authority, developing cultural strategies, promoting community involvement, and training traditional leaders to address contemporary crime effectively. This study emphasises traditional institutions' potential in enhancing crime control efforts while addressing constraints for safer, cohesive communities in Konshisha LGA.

Igbokwe-Ibeto & Ogbuagu (2021) examined Traditional Institution and Its Role in Curbing Insecurity in Nigeria: Issues and Prospects. The article examines the role of traditional institutions in curbing insecurity in Nigeria. Insecurity is one of the greatest challenges confronting the country today. Before the advent of colonialism, there were traditional institutions that took care of security issues within their domain. Even after independence, the traditional institutions were also recognised in the governance of local levels. However, the role and powers of traditional rulers were virtually expunged in the 1999 Constitution as amended, an indication of the declining status of the traditional institutions in the governance of the country. Within the framework of the historical orientation approach and secondary sources of data using content analysis, this paper seeks to examine the roles of traditional rulers in tackling insecurity in Nigeria. It was discovered that though the powers of the traditional rulers have changed

A PUBLICATION OF WORD ASTRA
wordastrajournals@gmail.com
www.wordastrajournals.com

International Journal of Public Relations
and Social Sciences (IJPRSS)
Vol. 1, Issue 3, November 2025 // ISSN: 1595-0778

Ifiok John Umanah; Prof. Enefiok Ibok; Imoh Imoh-Ita & Unwana-Abasi S. Udoh

constitutionally, in practice they still have a high level of influence on the people. However, the powers to enforce sanctions have been eroded. This paper concludes that, despite the fact that the traditional rulers do not have formal political power, they are still highly respected in their communities across the states with considerable economic and political influence in the country. It, therefore, recommends, among others, that, to effectively tackle the rising insecurity in Nigeria, the government shouldn't rely solely on security agencies, since the traditional rulers still wield a positive influence on the people. Some level of constitutional power should be accorded to the traditional institution to enable it to handle security issues in their localities.

Methods

A mixed research design was adopted for this study. The descriptive research design was employed to explain the key variables of the subject under study and their relationships. The survey research design was utilised for data collection and analysis. The total population for the study was 18,806, which included traditional leaders and selected respondents in Akwa Ibom State. This population comprises 2,664 certified village heads, 13,992 family head leaders, 119 clan heads, and 31 paramount rulers (Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, 2024). The sample size for the study was 392, determined using the Taro Yamane (n) formula.

The data used for the study included both primary and secondary sources. A well-structured questionnaire was administered to collect primary data. Once the questionnaires were returned by the respondents, the data were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results were interpreted using frequency tables and percentages. To test the hypotheses, the Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was applied.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Completed and returned copies of Questionnaire

Senatorial District	No. of questionnaires distributed	No. of questionnaires completed and returned	Percentage (%) of Questionnaires completed and returned
Uyo Senatorial District	131	129	32.9%
Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District	131	129	32.9%
Eket Senatorial District	130	128	32.6%
Total	392	386	98.4%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Ifiok John Umanah; Prof. Enefiok Ibok; Imoh Imoh-Ita & Unwana-Abasi S. Udoh

392 copies of questionnaire were distributed to the participants in the Senatorial Districts using the purposive sampling technique. Out of the 392 copies of questionnaire distributed, 386 representing 98.4% were adequately completed and properly returned. The table above shows the distribution of the completed and returned questionnaire, which were used for the data analysis.

Test Hypotheses

Hypothesis One:

H_{01} There is no significant relationship between Traditional administration and crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 2: Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis table for hypothesis one

Correlations		Traditional_ administration	Crime_ prevention
Traditional administration	Pearson Correlation	1	.412**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	386	386
Crime prevention	Pearson Correlation	.412**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	386	386
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

In this analysis, traditional administration is the independent variable (X) while crime prevention is the dependent variable (Y). The result of the analysis presented in Table 2 shows a Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.412 while the p-value was 0.000 while the sample size (N) remains 386. The result ($P<0.05$) implies that the null hypothesis is rejected and can be concluded that traditional administration has a significant effect on crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State.

Discussion of Findings

The aim of this research was to assess the relationship between traditional administration and crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State. It was hypothesised that there is no significant relationship between traditional administration and crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State. The result of the analysis presented in Table 2 shows a Pearson

A PUBLICATION OF WORD ASTRA
wordastrajournals@gmail.com
www.wordastrajournals.com

International Journal of Public Relations
and Social Sciences (IJPRSS)
Vol. 1, Issue 3, November 2025 // ISSN: 1595-0778

Ifiok John Umanah; Prof. Enefiok Ibok; Imoh Imoh-Ita & Unwana-Abasi S. Udoh

Correlation Coefficient of 0.412, while the p-value was 0.000, while the sample size (N) remains 386. The result (P<0.05) implies that the null hypothesis is rejected, and it can be concluded that traditional administration has a significant effect on crime prevention in Akwa Ibom State.

Empirically, the finding above is supported by Omale, Shuibu & Bayo (2025) in their study, The Role of Traditional Rulers in the Maintenance of Peace and Security in Kogi East Senatorial District. Findings reveal that traditional rulers play a significant role in conflict mediation, intelligence gathering, and fostering communal harmony. This results in crime prevention. Similarly, Umoh and Offong (2024) studied Traditional Methods in Crime Prevention and Moral Development: A Case Study of Ibiono Ibom Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The results from the study showed that traditional administration had been the most effective way of preventing crime in the precolonial period. Also, Andi et al. (2024). The Role of Traditional Institutions in Resolving Crime through a Restorative Justice Approach in Gowa District. The results indicate that the restorative justice approach is effective in resolving conflicts in several areas of the indigenous community in Gowa Regency. The correlation between customary justice and positive law can be cooperative and adaptable to the changing times to ensure justice for the indigenous community.

From the result of our field survey, it was revealed that a modified form of traditional methods such as Mbiam and Ukang could use uncontrollable speed to deter potential anti-social behaviour and keep society morally sound and justified. Also, the extent to which these traditional methods (ukang and mbiam) still influence behaviours and prevent crimes is high. Other methods traditional rulers used in preventing crime in Akwa Ibom State are as follows:

i. **Community Watch/Local Vigilante:** The stealing of palm fruit, coconut and cassava in some parts of Onna at night was put in check through the use of local vigilantes who patrolled the various palm estates and farms at night.

ii. **Ajei/Traditional Injunction:** The paramount ruler of Onna, HRM Raymond Inyang, in conjunction with the clan heads and village heads of the affected areas in Onna, elevated the traditional injunction known as Ajei Ikpaisong with a curse on whosoever will go at night to commit the crime.

iii. **Zoning of Villages Youth President:** Election to the office of village youth president has always resulted in violence which breeds crime, as these youths in the process invite their friends from other communities for support.

iv. **Ancestral/ Spiritual Appeal for Traditional Reprimand:** In the case of killings in Inen in OrukAnam, ancestral/spiritual appeal was employed by the paramount ruler and chiefs of the area at night under police protection. The perpetrators have since abandoned the act and/or left the area.

v. **Town Crier and Ajei were also used by the** The paramount ruler of Oruk Anam, HRM Engr J. J. Obosi, in conjunction with some village heads and the youth committee, checked the purchase of vandalised assets in Oruk Anam.

vi. **The traditional oath was also used to establish truth in disputes.** Like in the case of Uruk Otong in Oruk Anam, where a native who had sold land turned around to claim that the land was never sold. The traditional arbitration panel fixed a date for oath taking; before the date, the native volunteered the truth, and the land was given to the pastor whose father bought the land.

Conclusion

Traditional administration and crime prevention practices are not new to Africa, and specifically to Akwa Ibom State. Indigenous approaches to crime prevention have existed long before colonialism and are deeply rooted in Africa's history, traditions, and culture. However, these practices have evolved over time as they have interacted with the outside world. Leveraging the potential of these indigenous practices today could enhance the effectiveness and legitimacy of conflict transformation efforts.

Our findings indicate that Akwa Ibom State heavily relies on chiefs, other traditional leaders, the council of chiefs, and established precedents to prevent and control crime and resolve disputes. This system, which is largely unwritten, people-driven, and custom-based, remains easily accessible to the community. The research highlights the significant role played by traditional leadership, cultural processes, institutions, and values in peace-building among the people of Akwa Ibom State. It is evident that most individuals, families, and communities prefer indigenous crime prevention methods because they are familiar, efficient, and can resolve conflicts quickly before they escalate. Moreover, these crime prevention practices are based on cultural concepts, values, and procedures that are understood, practised, and accepted by all the citizens.

A PUBLICATION OF WORD ASTRA
wordastrajournals@gmail.com
www.wordastrajournals.com

International Journal of Public Relations
and Social Sciences (IJPRSS)
Vol. 1, Issue 3, November 2025 // ISSN: 1595-0778

Ifiok John Umanah; Prof. Enefiok Ibok; Imoh Imoh-Ita & Unwana-Abasi S. Udoh

Recommendations

Based on the findings above, it is recommended that the government of Akwa Ibom State ensure that more appropriate laws are enacted to empower traditional rulers in crime prevention.

References

Abraham, U. E. (2010). *The social problem of kidnapping and its implication on socio-economic development: A case study of Uyo Metropolis* (Master's thesis). University of Uyo, Nigeria.

Aina, M. J., Owoyemi, J. O., & Gomment, T. I. (2025). Traditional and modern methods of crime prevention and control in Nigeria: The need for integration. *Scholarly Journal of Advanced Legal Research, 5*(1), 41–49.

Ajayi, A. C. (2022). Sustainable development among indigenous communities. *World Bank Specialist Office, African Region, 62*(1), 34–57.

Ajayi, A. T., & Buhari, L. O. (2014). Methods of conflict resolution in African traditional society. *African Research Review: An International Multidisciplinary Journal, 8*(2), 138–157.

Akpeekon, S. K., Ogala, P. N., & Agi, P. (2024). The role of traditional institutions in conflict management in Khana Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovative Social Sciences & Humanities Research, 12*(3), 6–14.

Box, D. (2022). The development of British colonial administration among the Tiv, 1900–1949. *African Affairs, 68*(273), 316–333.

Dambazau, R. (2023). On the limits of liberal peace: Chiefs and democratic decentralization in post-war Sierra Leone. *African Affairs, 105*(418), 27–49.

Emeodu, E. N. (2019). *Insecurity and development challenges in selected local government areas in Rivers State, Nigeria* (Unpublished master's dissertation). Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State.

Ezenwoko, F. A., & Osagie, J. I. (2021). Conflict and conflict resolution in pre-colonial Igbo society of Nigeria. *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences, 9*(1), 135–158.

Igbashangev, S. (2024). The role of traditional institutions and crime control in Africa: A comprehensive study. *American Anthropologist, 57*(2), 290–305.

Igbokwe-Ibeto, C. J., & Ogbuagu, N. E. (2021). Traditional institutions and their role in curbing insecurity in Nigeria: Issues and prospects. *Nasara Journal of Philosophy, 7*(1), 1–12.

Iheajemuzu, B. A. (2019). The colonial origins of comparative development: An empirical investigation. *American Economic Review, 91*, 1369–1401.

Ihejirika, S. (2011). *Conflict management training manual*. Conflict Resolution Stakeholders' Network (CRESNET), with support from USAID/OTI.

Isurmona, V. A. (2005). Problems of peacemaking and peacekeeping. *African Security, 8*(2), 12–25.

Inyang, I., Ankak, U., & Udoekong, A. (2020). *Ibiono Ibom compendium*. Trajectors Educational Services Ltd.

Kanu, I. A. (2015). African traditional democracy. *African Journal of Art and Humanities, 1*(1), 23–35.

Kijk, J. M., & Jaap, W. (2021). A two-dimensional typology of crime prevention projects, with a bibliography. *Criminal Justice Abstracts, 23*, 483–503.

Lot, E. (2022). The effectiveness of *Mbiam* (traditional oath) in conflict management in Ibibio traditional society. *International Journal of Management, Social Sciences, Peace and Conflict Studies, 5*(2), 219–234.

Matsiliza, N. S. (2024). The strategic role of traditional leadership in promoting good governance. *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review, 12*(1), 1–10.

Mohammed, M., Liman, A. I. N., & Zamani, A. (2023). Impact of community policing on crime prevention in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration, Finance and Law*, 29(2), 372–387.

Nnanna, E. P. (2024). Perception of traditional institutions in crime prevention among rural communities of Etung Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. *Journal of Social Theory and Research, 4*(1), 258–269.

A PUBLICATION OF WORD ASTRA
wordastrajournals@gmail.com
www.wordastrajournals.com

International Journal of Public Relations
and Social Sciences (IJPRSS)
Vol. 1, Issue 3, November 2025 // ISSN: 1595-0778

Offiong, D. A. (1991). Conflict resolution among the Ibibio of Nigeria. *Journal of Anthropological Research, 53*(4), 31–42.

Okonkwo, C. O. (2020). *Okonkwo and Naish: Criminal law in Nigeria* (2nd ed.). Spectrum Books.

Onyeozili, M., & Ebbe, Y. (2022). *Traditional political values and changing political order among the Bura people of Borno State, Nigeria*. African Centre for Democratic Governance.

Orji, K. E., & Olali, S. T. (2010). Traditional institutions and their dwindling roles in contemporary Nigeria: The Rivers State example. In T. Babawale, A. Aloa, & B. Adesoji (Eds.), *The chieftaincy institutions in Nigeria*. Concept Publications Limited.

Robert, W. (2023). Situating crime prevention: Models, methods, and political perspectives. *Crime Prevention Studies, 15*, 23–45.

Scott, J., & Marshall, G. (Eds.). (2019). *Oxford dictionary of sociology*. Oxford University Press.

Udoh, B. E. O. (2008). *Religion and society: Socio-ethical, religious and cultural life of the Ibibio people*. Okman Prints Ltd.

Umar, H. S. (2022). Traditional administration and its impact on democratic governance in Africa: The Nigerian experience. *Journal of Social and Political Sciences, 5*(1), 90–105.

Umoh, A. U., & Offong, S. (2024). Traditional methods in crime prevention and moral development: A case study of Ibiono Ibom Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *African Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research, 7*(4), 17–33.

UNESCO. (2017). *Human trafficking in South Africa: Root causes and recommendations* (Policy Paper No. 14.5).

Uyang, F., & Ayuk, E. (2013). Traditional methods of crime control and community security in Odukpani Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. *African Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*.