

Crime Prevention within the Nigerian Tertiary Institutions Using the Stakeholders' Theory

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Publication Date: 2026/06/30

Abstract: Literature over the years have delved into the problem of criminality in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria with a view to providing sustainable solutions. However, not much has been done on the roles of stakeholders in curbing crime within the Nigerian tertiary institutions. This paper therefore seeks to examine the implication of Stakeholder's Theory in curbing crime within the Nigerian tertiary institutions. Data for the analysis were derived from review of relevant literature for data mining and determination of gap analysis, and the use of Relative Importance Index (RII) to determine the relevance of various stakeholders in curbing crime. The first three (3) most relevant are the Academic Staff and Lecturers (0.89), School Management (0.882) and the Security Unit and Law enforcement Agency (0.88). The research was able to establish the fact that if the various stakeholders within the academic environment can synergize their efforts in curbing crime (0.887) and every appearance of criminality within and around the academic environment; peace and orderliness would reign supreme on our campuses. The research also recognized the need to examine the various challenges that may bedevil the performance of each stakeholder which serves as limitation and opportunity for future research.

Keywords: Crime; Management; Prevention; Security; Stakeholder; Students; Tertiary.

How to Cite: Sunday Emmanuel Olajide; Oluwole Titilayo Alabi (2026) Crime Prevention within the Nigerian Tertiary Institutions Using the Stakeholders' Theory. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 11(6), 1680-1689. <https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/26jun503>

I. INTRODUCTION

Crime within tertiary institutions has emerged as a significant social and security concern, particularly in developing countries where the rapid expansion of higher education systems has not been matched with adequate institutional control mechanisms. Universities are traditionally perceived as safe environments for intellectual development and social interaction; however, growing evidence indicates an increase in criminal activities such as theft, cultism, drug abuse, cybercrime, sexual harassment, and violence within campus environments. Empirical studies attribute this trend to the increasing complexity of university systems, weak regulatory frameworks, and broader socio-economic pressures that shape student behaviour and institutional responses (Ojedokun, 2014; Adebayo, 2015).

Early empirical research on campus crime further demonstrates that its dynamics are multifaceted and often counterintuitive. For instance, McPheters (1978), using econometric analysis of crime data, found that institutions with higher security expenditures sometimes reported higher crime rates, a pattern often attributed to improved reporting systems rather than actual increases in crime incidence. Similarly, Fox and Hellman (1985) identified significant

relationships between campus crime and factors such as student population density, the proportion of male students, and institutional characteristics, while finding that proximity to urban areas did not necessarily determine crime levels. Subsequent studies have also emphasized that campus crime varies across institutional types, with residential universities often experiencing different crime patterns compared to non-residential institutions due to variations in student lifestyles and interactions (Volkwein, Szelest, & Lizotte, 1995). These findings highlight that campus crime is shaped by a complex interplay of demographic, institutional, and environmental factors rather than a single determinant.

Globally, crime prevention has evolved from a reactive, law enforcement-driven model to a more proactive and collaborative approach. Contemporary frameworks emphasize the importance of integrating social, environmental, and situational strategies, alongside active stakeholder participation. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime underscores that effective crime prevention requires coordinated efforts among institutions, communities, and individuals to address both immediate risks and underlying causes of criminal behaviour. In the same vein, Clarke (2012) argues that situational and community-based

approaches are more sustainable in managing crime within complex environments such as educational institutions.

In Nigeria, tertiary institutions have increasingly become hotspots for diverse forms of criminal activities, reflecting broader socio-economic and governance challenges. Studies have linked the prevalence of cultism, bullying, sexual violence, examination malpractice, and cyber-related offenses to factors such as poverty, peer influence, youth unemployment, and institutional weaknesses (Ajayi *et al.*, 2020; Akinyemi, 2018). Furthermore, inadequate security infrastructure and poor coordination among stakeholders have been identified as key contributors to the persistence of crime within Nigerian universities (Olawale & Olufemi, 2019). These findings suggest that campus crime is not merely an internal institutional issue but is deeply embedded within the wider societal context.

Ekiti State, known for its strong educational tradition, hosts several tertiary institutions, including Federal University of Oye Ekiti and Ekiti State University, among others. Despite this reputation, these institutions face similar security challenges observed across the country, including theft, student unrest, and other forms of insecurity. The persistence of such issues suggests that traditional security measures often limited to surveillance, patrol, and enforcement may be insufficient when implemented in isolation. Evidence from prior studies indicates that increased security presence alone does not necessarily reduce crime but may instead reflect improved detection and reporting mechanisms, thereby reinforcing the need for more holistic approaches (Akinyoade & Ogunmola, 2018; Arney, 2020; Awotayo & Omitola, 2024).

Recent scholarly contributions emphasize the effectiveness of integrative and participatory approaches to crime prevention. Ekpenyong (2021) notes that collaborative frameworks involving students, staff, and host communities significantly enhance crime control outcomes by improving information flow and collective vigilance. Similarly, Adeyemi (2022) finds that stakeholder participation strengthens accountability, promotes early detection of criminal activities, and fosters trust within institutional environments. These findings align with broader empirical evidence suggesting that crime prevention is most effective when it combines formal enforcement with informal social controls and stakeholder engagement.

One theoretical framework that provides a strong foundation for this approach is Stakeholder Theory, developed by R. Edward Freeman, 1984. The theory posits that organizational effectiveness depends on recognizing and integrating the roles of all stakeholders in decision-making and implementation processes. In the context of tertiary institutions, stakeholders include students, academic and non-academic staff, institutional management, security personnel, host communities, and law enforcement agencies. Each of these actors plays a critical role in shaping the institutional security environment. Despite the growing recognition of stakeholder involvement in crime prevention, there remains a gap in empirical studies that systematically examine how these roles can be effectively integrated within Nigerian tertiary institutions. Much of the existing literature focuses on the nature and causes of campus crime, with limited attention to collaborative and stakeholder-driven prevention strategies. This gap underscores the need for studies that move beyond descriptive analyses to examine how stakeholder interactions influence crime prevention outcomes.

Against this backdrop, this study examines crime prevention within tertiary institutions in Ekiti State using Stakeholder Theory as an analytical framework. It conceptualizes crime prevention as a multi-actor, socially embedded process, where effectiveness depends on the level of participation, coordination, and shared responsibility among stakeholders. By adopting this perspective, the study seeks to identify key factors influencing crime prevention and propose sustainable, stakeholder-driven strategies for enhancing security within Nigerian tertiary institutions.

➤ Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Stakeholder Theory, which provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing how multiple actors can collaboratively contribute to crime prevention within tertiary institutions. The theory was developed by R. Edward Freeman in 1984 and posits that the effectiveness and sustainability of any organization depend on its ability to recognize, engage, and balance the interests of all stakeholders. Stakeholders are defined as individuals or groups who can affect or be affected by the achievement of an organization's objectives.



Fig 1 Conceptual Framework Showing

Stakeholder Theory as demonstrated in Figure 1, emphasizes that organizational outcomes are shaped not only by internal administrative structures but also by the quality of relationships, interactions, and shared responsibilities among diverse actors. This perspective challenges the traditional centralized approach to institutional management and instead promotes inclusivity, collaboration, and mutual accountability. In complex social environments such as tertiary institutions, where multiple groups co-exist and interact, this assumption becomes particularly relevant in addressing multifaceted issues such as crime.

Empirical studies increasingly support the relevance of stakeholder-oriented approaches in enhancing institutional security. Gill *et al.* (2014) found that community-based and participatory policing strategies significantly improve crime control outcomes by fostering trust and cooperation among stakeholders. Similarly, Braga, Papachristos, and Hureau (2019) demonstrate that crime prevention strategies that incorporate environmental and social interventions often requiring stakeholder collaboration are more effective than purely enforcement-based approaches. These findings suggest that crime prevention is most effective when it integrates both formal and informal mechanisms involving multiple actors.

Applying Stakeholder Theory to crime prevention within tertiary institutions reveals that crime is often sustained by weak coordination, poor communication, and limited stakeholder engagement. Akinyemi (2018) observes that ineffective collaboration between university authorities and students contributes to the persistence of cultism and related crimes. Likewise, Olawale and Olufemi (2019) report that inadequate stakeholder participation in campus security

management leads to gaps in intelligence gathering and delayed responses to criminal activities. These findings highlight the limitations of relying solely on institutional security units without broader stakeholder involvement.

Within tertiary institutions, different stakeholders perform complementary roles in crime prevention. Students, who form the largest population group, are central to both the occurrence and prevention of crime. Research shows that peer influence and student involvement in reporting mechanisms significantly affect crime rates on campus (Ajayi *et al.*, 2020). Academic and non-academic staff contribute by enforcing institutional norms, mentoring students, and supporting disciplinary systems. Security personnel provide formal enforcement; however, studies indicate that their effectiveness is largely dependent on cooperation and information sharing from other stakeholders (Ekpenyong, 2021).

Institutional management plays a critical coordinating role by developing policies, allocating resources, and creating platforms for stakeholder engagement. Adeyemi (2022) finds that universities that adopt inclusive governance structures—such as security committees involving students and staff—experience improved surveillance, quicker response to threats, and reduced crime incidence. Furthermore, host communities and external security agencies also play vital roles. Research suggests that strong town-gown relationships enhance informal social control and reduce external criminal infiltration into campuses (Ojedokun, 2014).

Stakeholder Theory also highlights the importance of aligning stakeholder interests toward a common goal. In the context of crime prevention, this involves fostering shared

values of safety, accountability, and institutional integrity. Empirical evidence indicates that when stakeholders perceive themselves as part of the security process, they are more likely to comply with regulations and actively participate in crime prevention initiatives (Clarke, 2012). This collective ownership reduces opportunities for crime and strengthens institutional resilience.

Tertiary institutions in Nigeria are faced with challenges of limited funding, inadequate security infrastructure, and broader socio-economic pressures. Studies show that centralized security approaches alone are often insufficient in addressing complex and evolving crime patterns (Ajayi *et al.*, 2020; Akinyemi, 2018). A stakeholder-driven approach, by contrast, leverages the collective capacity of all actors within and around the institution, thereby enhancing both preventive and responsive mechanisms.

Thus, Stakeholder Theory provides a robust analytical lens for this study by demonstrating that effective crime prevention in tertiary institutions is inherently a collaborative process. It underscores that sustainable security outcomes depend on active stakeholder engagement, coordinated efforts, and shared responsibility. This theoretical orientation aligns with the study's objective of assessing stakeholder roles and prioritizing their contributions using the Relative Importance Index (RII), thereby offering empirical insights into integrated and effective crime prevention strategies within Nigerian tertiary institutions.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quantitative research design to examine crime prevention within tertiary institutions in Ekiti State, Nigeria, using a stakeholder-oriented approach. The design enabled the collection and analysis of primary data from relevant institutional stakeholders, with the aim of assessing factors influencing crime and evaluating the roles of different actors in its prevention. The study was conducted across selected tertiary institutions in Ekiti State, including Federal University of Oye Ekiti, Ekiti State University, Bamidele Olumilua University of Education and Technology, Federal University of Technology and Environmental Science, and Federal Polytechnic Ado-Ekiti. These institutions were selected to provide a comprehensive representation of federal and state-owned tertiary institutions within the study area. Data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire designed on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The instrument was structured to capture respondents' perceptions on crime prevalence, contributing factors, and the roles of stakeholders in crime prevention within the

institutions. The questionnaire was administered to key stakeholders, including students, academic staff, non-academic staff, and security personnel. A combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques was employed in selecting respondents. The purposive sampling technique ensured that only individuals with relevant knowledge and experience regarding campus security issues were included in the study. The snowball sampling technique was further used to identify additional respondents through referrals, thereby enhancing the coverage of relevant stakeholders. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed across the selected institutions, with 100 copies administered in each institution. Out of these, 365 questionnaires were successfully retrieved and found suitable for analysis, representing a response rate of 73% (Table 1). This response rate is considered adequate for empirical analysis and supports the reliability of the findings (Nulty, 2008; Kongsved, *et al.*, 2007). Content validity of the questionnaire was established through expert review. A panel of seven subject-matter experts rated each item for relevance and clarity, yielding a content validity index (CVI) of 0.89 which exceeds the acceptable threshold of 0.80. For the reliability internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The overall scale showed good reliability with $\alpha = 0.88$ which exceeds the acceptable threshold of 0.70 cutoff recommended.

Data collected were analyzed using the Relative Importance Index (RII), which was used to rank the significance of factors influencing crime and the effectiveness of stakeholder roles in crime prevention. The RII method provides a systematic approach for prioritizing variables based on respondents' perceptions and is widely used in social science research (Meisaroh, Husin, & Susetyo, 2021); Opele, 2021). The index is computed using the formula:

$$RII = \Sigma W / (A \times N)$$

Where W = weight, A = highest weight, N = number of respondents. The resulting values range from 0 to 1, with values indicating level of importance as follows:

High: $0.8 \leq RII \leq 1.0$

High-Medium: $0.6 \leq RII < 0.8$

Medium: $0.4 \leq RII < 0.6$

Medium-Low: $0.2 \leq RII < 0.4$

Low: $0.0 \leq RII < 0.2$

Table 1 Distribution and Retrieval of Questionnaires

S/N	Institution	Administered	Retrieved	Response Rate (%)
1	Federal University of Oye Ekiti	100	62	62
2	Ekiti State University	100	71	71
3	BOUESTI	100	69	69
4	FUTESI	100	74	74
5	Federal Polytechnic Ado-Ekiti	100	89	89

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

➤ Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

The socio-economic characteristics of respondents revealed the representativeness of the respondents drawn from institutions, stakeholder groups, and demographic categories. The gender distribution (Figure 2) indicates a higher proportion of male respondents (203) compared to female respondents (162). This suggests a moderate gender imbalance in stakeholder representation. This pattern is consistent with findings from Akinyemi (2018), who reported

that male participation tends to dominate in studies related to campus security and governance, largely due to their higher involvement in student union activities, security roles, and law enforcement structures. This study therefore reflects gendered participation in institutional decision-making and security processes in the tertiary institutions. Female perspectives regarding crimes is underrepresented. The UN Women (2021) however emphasize that inclusive gender representation improves the effectiveness of safety policies, indicating a need for more balanced stakeholder engagement.

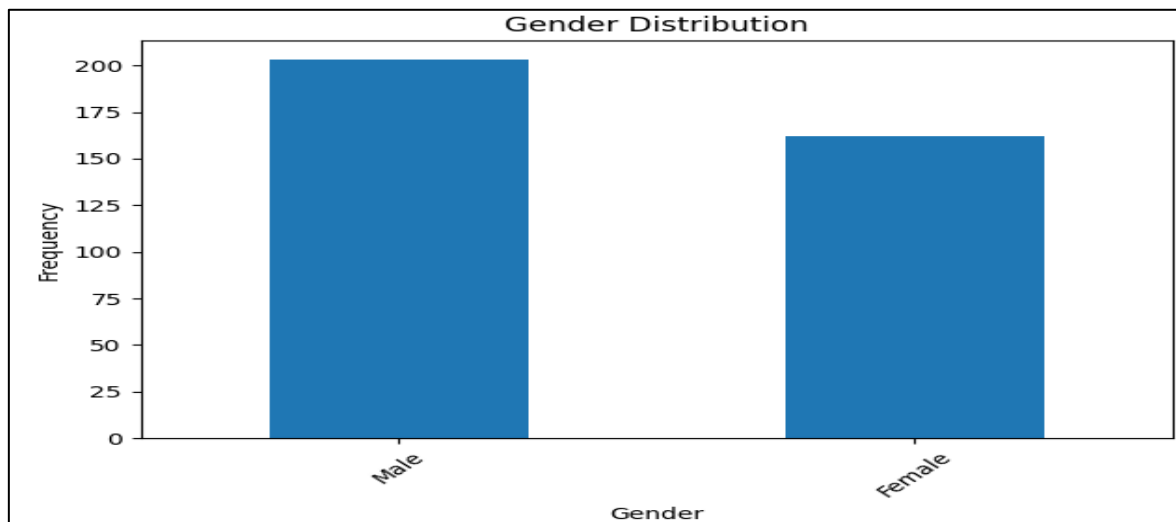


Fig 2 Gender Distribution of Respondents

The age distribution (Figure 3) reveals that the majority of respondents fall within the 21–25 age bracket (47.95%), followed by 26–30 (21.64%), below 20 (18.08%), and above 30 (12.33%). This represents youth-dominated respondents, which is expected given the inclusion of students as key stakeholders.

This finding aligns with Ojedokun (2014), who observed that university populations in Nigeria are largely composed of young adults, making them both primary actors and potential victims of campus crime. Similarly, Farrington

and Welsh (2020) noted that individuals within this age group are statistically more likely to be involved in both perpetration and prevention of crime due to their high level of social interaction. The dominance of younger respondents has important implications. Younger individuals are more exposed to peer influence, social networks, and emerging crime trends such as cybercrime. At the same time, they are also more adaptable and receptive to awareness campaigns and participatory prevention strategies, reinforcing the relevance of stakeholder-driven approaches.

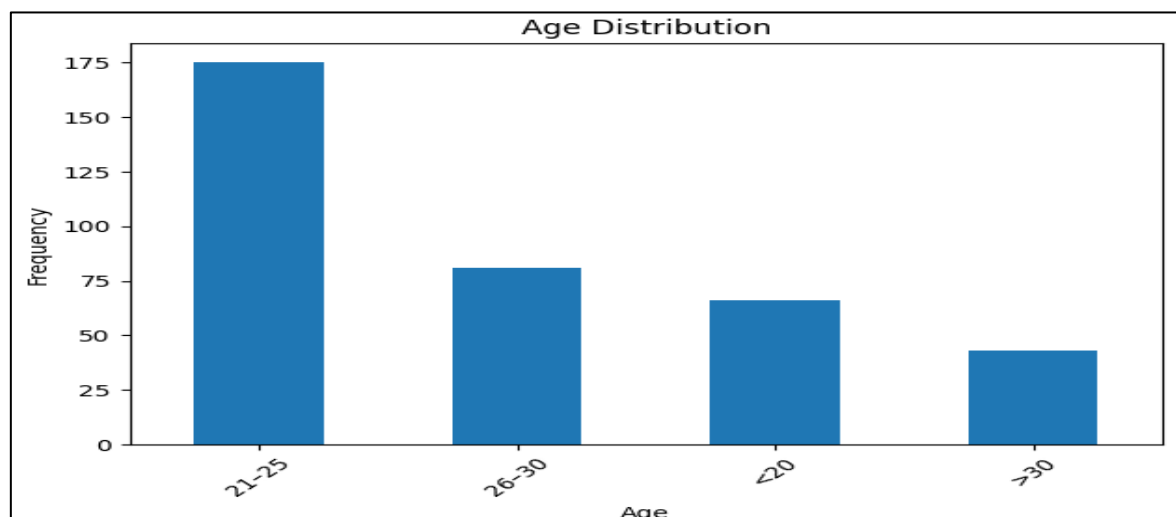


Fig 3 Age Distribution of Respondents

The distribution of stakeholders shows that students constitute the majority (65.75%), followed by security personnel (10.96%), student union officials (9.59%), school management (8.22), and law enforcement agents (5.48%). This distribution reflects the centrality of students in the study and is consistent with the structure of tertiary institutions, where students form the largest population. However, the relatively smaller representation of management and law enforcement stakeholders suggests a potential limitation in

institutional perspectives. Olawale and Olufemi (2019) argue that insufficient inclusion of formal authorities in security studies can affect the comprehensiveness of findings, as these actors are critical in policy formulation and enforcement. Nevertheless, the inclusion of multiple stakeholder categories supports the assumptions of Stakeholder Theory, emphasizing the need to capture diverse perspectives in addressing complex issues like crime prevention.

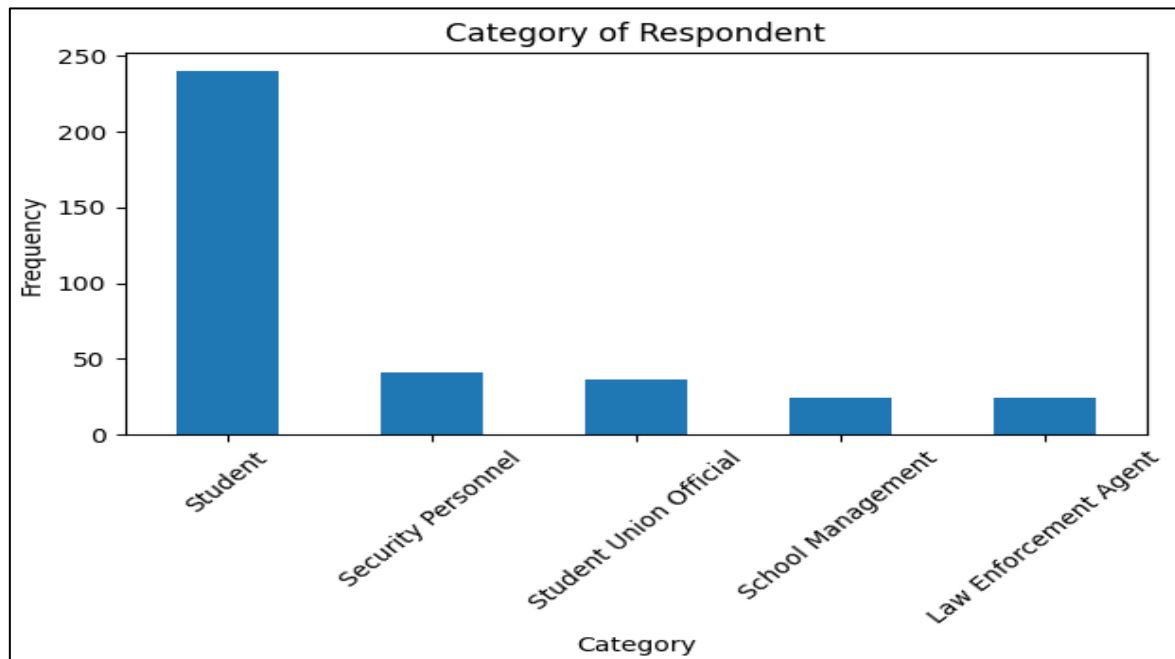


Fig 4 Stakeholders' Distribution of Respondents

The distribution of years of experience shows that respondents with less than Five (5) years constitute the majority (72.5%), followed by 17.4% for those with experience between 5 – 10 years and 10.1% for respondents with Ten (10) years and above experience. This distribution reflects the centrality of students in the study and is consistent

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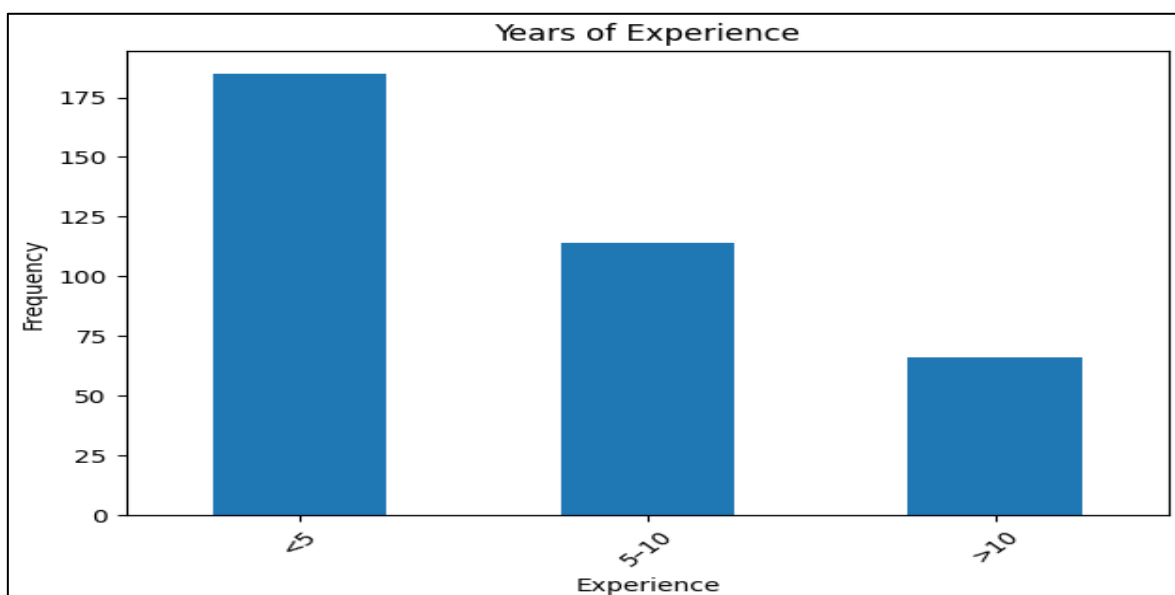


Fig 5 Years of Experience

Table 2 Results of Data Analysis

S/N	Questionnaire Statement	RII	Rank	Interpretation
1	Students and Students' Union Government have roles to play in curbing crime in the Nigerian Tertiary Institutions	0.873	5	Very High Importance
2	Lecturers and Academic staff can play various roles in crime prevention in the Nigerian Tertiary Institutions	0.89	1	Very High Importance
3	Non-Academic staff like hostel porters, security guards and admin staff can be relevant in crime prevention in the Nigerian Tertiary Institutions	0.787	9	High Importance
4	University/Polytechnic/Colleges Management authorities are key actors in curbing crime in tertiary institutions	0.882	3	Very High Importance
5	Campus security unit plays a vital role in crime control within our campuses	0.871	6	Very High Importance
6	Parents and guardians are stakeholders in curbing crime within the tertiary institutions	0.838	7	Very High Importance
7	Law Enforcement Agencies like NPF and NSCDC have active roles to play in curbing crimes on our campuses	0.88	4	Very High Importance
8	Federal government through its agencies like NUC, NBTE, and NCCE can play relevant roles in curbing crime in our campuses	0.773	10	High Importance
9	Host communities and traditional rulers have roles to play in curbing crime within the Nigerian Tertiary Institutions	0.622	14	High Importance
10	Religious bodies like churches, mosques and fellowships on campus can run counseling and moral instructions against crime tendencies among the students	0.707	13	High Importance
11	NGOs and civil societies have roles to play in curbing crime within the Nigerian Tertiary Institutions	0.758	11	High Importance
12	Private security firms can be of help in curbing crime in and around our campuses	0.758	11	High Importance
13	Media like campus press and mainstream media are capable of exposing crime in our campuses	0.797	8	High Importance
14	A synergy among the various stakeholders in crime prevention in the Nigerian Tertiary Institutions will go a long way in curbing crime in our campuses	0.887	2	Very High Importance

Source: Field Survey by Author, 2026

From Table 2, it can be deduced that respondents unanimously agreed that lecturers and academic staff, as well as school management authorities, have significant roles to play in curbing crime within Nigerian tertiary institutions. The respondents perceived that lecturers and academic staff are the most important stakeholders in the prevention of crime within tertiary institutions (89%), while institutional management authorities (88.2%) and the synergy among the stakeholders in the prevention of crime (88.7%) were perceived to go a long way in curbing crime within campuses of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This perception therefore implies that the stakeholders are central actors that can promote security, discipline, and orderliness within the academic environment. The prominent position assigned to lecturers may be linked to their direct and continuous interaction with students, which places them in a strategic position to monitor behavioural patterns, provide moral guidance, identify early signs of deviant behaviour, and mentor students toward positive conduct. Beyond their academic responsibilities, lecturers often serve as counselors, advisers, and role models whose actions and attitudes can significantly influence students' social orientation and value systems.

This finding is consistent with Emily (2024) and Lapite *et al.* (2024), who reported that lectures influence students' attitudes and discouraging deviant behaviour through supervision, counseling, and value re-orientation. Their study further emphasized that institutions with stronger lecturer-

student relationships often experience lower levels of indiscipline and student unrest. Similarly, Kyle *et al.* (2017) and Ramzah (2020) observed that effective academic supervision and staff involvement in student affairs contribute significantly to campus stability and crime reduction. The high rating assigned to school management authorities also agrees with previous empirical studies on institutional governance and campus security. Asiyai & Oghuvbu (2020) found that tertiary institutions with proactive management structures, effective disciplinary systems, and clear security policies tend to record lower incidences of cultism, examination malpractice, and violent behaviour. Management authorities are responsible for developing and implementing institutional policies, allocating resources for security operations, establishing disciplinary structures, and coordinating various stakeholders involved in crime prevention. Crime prevention is not the sole responsibility of security personnel or institutional management alone, but rather as a collective responsibility that requires collaboration among students (87.3%), non-academic staff (78.7%) lecturers (89%), management authorities (88.2%), campus security (87.1%), parents and guardians (83.8%), law enforcement agencies (88%), NGOs and civil societies (75.8%) parents (83.8%), host communities (62.2), religious bodies (70.7%), and government institutions like NUC, NBTE, and NCCE (77.3%). The integrated efforts, cooperation, and information sharing among stakeholders are essential for effective crime control within campuses. This finding aligns with the principles of Stakeholder Theory,

which emphasize that organizational success and sustainability depend on the active participation and coordination of all actors connected to the institution.

Ogunode *et al.* (2023) emphasized that effective institutional administration and stakeholder participation are critical to maintaining discipline and security within higher institutions. Similarly, Danyawo (2025) found that crime prevention strategies that encourage collaboration among institutional authorities, security personnel, students, and community actors are generally more effective and sustainable than isolated enforcement approaches. The findings also support the position of Ogunnowo *et al.* (2022), who argued that collaborative security frameworks involving multiple stakeholders produce more sustainable outcomes in campus crime prevention. In the same vein, Uzuegbu-Wilson (2019) maintained that the complexity of insecurity within Nigerian tertiary institutions requires integrated responses involving management authorities, students, security agencies, parents, and surrounding communities. Therefore, the findings of this study reinforce the argument that effective crime prevention within Nigerian tertiary institutions can only be achieved through collective responsibility, coordinated stakeholder engagement, and sustained institutional collaboration.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following strategies work best when combined as no single stakeholder can end campus crime alone (Schuck, 2017; Yusuf & Afolabi, 2014; Okpa, *et.al*, 2025; Ogunode, Ayeni & Olorundare, 2024).

Administrative and policy strategies used mainly by Management, NUC, NBTE at State and Federal levels. This can be implemented by showing zero-tolerance policies; anti-cultism legislation enforcement, security accreditation benchmark, amnesty and renunciation programs, admission screening and whistleblowing protection policy. Another key strategy is situational / environmental strategies. This cuts across target hardening, surveillance access control, space design and tech deployment.

Social and educational strategies to be led by lecturers, religious bodies, NGOs, SUG and parents among others. This can take the form of orientation and continuous sensitization, moral/value re-orientation, skill and entrepreneurship programs, mentorship systems and curriculum integration.

Another popular strategy is enforcement and deterrence to be led by police, NSCDC, DSS and campus security. This can take the form of joint security task force; stop-and-search operations, swift prosecution, intelligence gathering and show of force.

Community and partnership strategies to be led by host communities, parents, media and NGOs. This can be implemented through town-gown committees, landlord regulation, parent involvement, media partnership and NGO collaboration.

Next to this is the technological strategies which is expected to be cross-cutting, funded by TETFund, Management and Private Partners. This can be achieved through database sharing, CBT and e-examination, AI monitoring and digital attendance.

Rehabilitation and secondary prevention form another strategy that could help in combating crime within the Nigerian Tertiary Institutions. This can be implemented through counseling units, peer educator programs, restorative justice and welfare support through work-study programs, scholarships for indigent students to reduce theft/fraud motive.

V. CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, frantic effort had been made to identify critical stakeholders suitable to curbing crime within the Nigerian tertiary institutions. These stakeholders included Academic staff and Lecturers, Student Union Authority, Management authorities, security outfits, and host communities among others. Effort to determine the degree of relevance of each stakeholders revealed that a good synergy among all the stakeholders was highly rated by the respondents. The roles of the Academic staff, Students' Authorities, Management Authorities, Security Units measured very high as critical stakeholders. The study also went further to identify various offenses most frequently reported across Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education to include: cultism and gang-related violence, examination malpractice, sexual harassment and assault, theft and burglary, physical assault and bullying, drug abuse and trafficking, cybercrime/Yahoo Yahoo, Property vandalism and arson, kidnapping and abduction, forgery and admission fraud, harassment and extortion and protest turning violence among others

Generally speaking, literatures highlight other measures of curbing crime within the Nigerian Tertiary institutions to include: administrative and policy strategies, situational/environmental strategies, social and educational strategies, enforcement and deterrence strategies, community and partnership strategies, technological strategies rehabilitation and secondary prevention among others.

Principally, this study was able to establish the fact that a strong synergy among all the critical stakeholders would go a long way in ameliorating if not eradicating crime within the Nigerian tertiary institutions. However, it is recommended that the principles of the Stakeholders' Theory must be religiously followed in order to attain good result.

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