Perceived Usefulness of E-policing Technology in Property Crimes detection and Control among Police Personnel in Selected Southeast Police Commands, Nigeria

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Abstract

Technology application in the 21st century has been acknowledged as a panacea for sustainable socio-economic advancement in almost all facets of development, of which, policing is not an exception. Yet the applicability of technology by individuals and groups cannot be dissociated from their perceived usefulness of technology within the context of their daily endeavours. This study investigated the perceived usefulness of Electronic Policing (E-Policing) technology in property crimes detection and control among police personnel in selected police commands, Southeast Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive cross-sectional survey research design. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique was adopted in selecting 605 respondents who participated in the study through a questionnaire administration. Data collected from the survey coded into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software package version 26, which aided in processing all the relevant data. Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics including frequency count and simple percentage. Data analysed were presented using frequency table and charts. The chi-square statistical test was further performed to examine the relationship between selected covariates and perceived usefulness of e-policing technology in property crimes detection and investigation among the police personnel. Findings of the study showed that there was seemingly neutrality in the perception of the police personnel in terms of the usefulness of e-policing in detecting and investigating property crimes within the Southeast zone of Nigeria. The study therefore recommended the need for Information Technology (IT)-based recruitment system in the NPF, as this would ensure that only individuals who have the ability to manipulate computers are recruited into the NPF.

Keywords: E-policing, Perceived Usefulness, Police, Technology, Property crime

Introduction

Technology application in the 21st century has been acknowledged as a panacea for sustainable socio-economic advancement in almost all facets of development, of which, policing is not an exception (Oyebo, 2010). In fact, technology application in the 21st century is most important in the policing system, considering the fact that security of lives and property is one of the most important needs that guarantee the survival of individuals within their communities. The role of policing is saddled on the institutionalised policing agency of every society. In the Nigerian context, the role of policing is saddled in the hand of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). This implies that the responsibility of protecting the lives and properties of citizens in the country is the primary responsibility of the NPF (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2003). This is in line with the provisions made in the Nigeria Police Act (2020) which stipulates that,

> The police shall... prevent and detect crimes, and protect the rights and freedom of every person in Nigeria as provided in the Constitution, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and any other law; …maintain public safety, law and order…protect the lives and property of all persons in Nigeria…(p.7).

In addition to these duties, the police are charged with the performance of other auxiliary duties including assisting in regulating traffic on the highway, providing assistance during disasters and acting as escorts in various spheres. This implies that the roles of the police are enormous and requires adequate resources in terms of skills, equipments, manpower, and finance.

However, in the 21st century, developments in technology have yielded significant changes in the trend of crimes in such a way that traditional crimes are being facilitated or enhanced by the potential and easy access to technological facilities. New forms of crimes are equally emerging and threaten the traditional models of policing (Adigun, Mutiu & Raimi, 2018, as cited in Osawe, 2021). In recognition of this challenge across nations, most developed nations have become proactive in tacking these new waves of crime through the development, application and compliance with technological innovations. This is made possible through the realisation of the usefulness of technology in controlling the complex wave of crime in the present

time. As such, a number of technological innovations are made available specifically for policing duties such as Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV), finger print scanner, voice recognition software, location monitoring systems, auto-tracking system, digital speed cameras, alarm systems, DNA and forensics, body-worn cameras, Criminal Investigation Record System (CIRS), crime mapping systems, drones, virtual community policing (Adigun et al, 2018), among a host of other software and hardware technologies. These technological advances have in recent years altered the nature of policing so significantly to the extent that traditional policing models are becoming obsolete and incompatible with current global trends in policing (Goodison, Davis & Jackson, 2015). Thus, adoption of these systems is considered as a panacea for improved policing and transparency of police operations. However, scholars have noted that technology is a complex system that is perceived to either improve police efficiency or constrain police officer's crime prevention skills based on the level of importance attached to it by police personnel. This implies that the Perceived Usefulness (PU) of technology in policing is a key factor that influences technology application.

Perceived usefulness is one of the key constructs that are embedded in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which refers to "the extent to which a person believes that using a particular technology will enhance her/his job performance," (Davis, 1989). In TAM framework, PU is hypothesized to be the direct predictor of Behavioural Intention (BI) to use a particular technology of interest (Park, Rhoads, Hou & Lee, 2014). Using this framework, perceived usefulness of technology in police operations is hypothesised to have a direct relationship with police officers' ability to control complex crime situations. This implies that technology would most likely be adopted in police structures that perceive it as very useful for policing operations.

However, scholars have expressed the view that technology application remains difficult in most developing nations' policing systems due to many structural deficiencies, which compound to make technology seem useless to the operations of the police. Some other scholars have equally attributed the inability of the NPF to contain the rising wave of crimes in the present time, to their inability to recognise the potency of technology in modern day policing. Although there seems to be effort

by the NPF to prioritise technology application in policing through the establishment of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Department or the 'G' Department, such efforts have not been sustained by practical actions in equipping the unit to a globally acceptable standard, perhaps due to the less importance placed on technology application within the NPF. Considering the explosion of crime rates in various urban and rural communities in Nigeria, this study is of the position that e-policing prioritisation is key to control the trend. However, it is yet uncertain how the police personnel within the NPF perceive the usefulness of e-policing in addressing these concerns. This study was therefore positioned to investigate perceived usefulness of technology in property crimes investigation and detection among police personnel in selected police commands within the Southeast Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine perceived usefulness of e-policing in relation to property crimes investigation and detection among police officers in the selected police commands.
2. To determine the relationship between selected variables and perceived usefulness of e-policing in relation to property crimes investigation and detection in the selected police commands.

Brief Review of Relevant Literature

Concept of Perceived Usefulness of Technology

Perceived usefulness of technology is one of the independent constructs in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as developed by Davis (1989). It refers to the degree to which a person or organisation believes that using a particular technology would enhance their job performance. This construct directly influences both attitude and behavioural intention towards the use of technological tools. According to Davis (1989, as cited in Surendran, 2012), a technology high in perceived usefulness is one that a user believes has a positive usage to his or her job performance. He consequently defined perceived usefulness as *"*the prospective user's subjective probability that using a specific application system will enhance his or her job or life performance*"*. It is related to perception of a technology's influence on job effectiveness, more productivity at work, such as consuming less time or money, and to relative motivation for usage of that particular technology (Yanga &

Yoo, 2004). In line with Davis's conceptualisation, Mathwick, Rigdon and Malhotra (2001) defined perceived usefulness as the extent to which a person perceives a particular system as useful to boost his or her job performance. In this premise, Tan and Teo (2000) suggested that perceived usefulness is an important factor that determines the adoption of technological innovations. By implication, the greater the perceived usefulness of technology in policing, the more likely police officers would adopt it in their operations.

Meanwhile, perceived usefulness has gained popularity in diverse academic fields such as banking and finance (Pikkarainen, Pikkarainen, Karjaluoto & Pahnila, 2004; Wu, Lin, Li & Lin, 2010; Medyawati, Christiyanti & Yunanto, 2011), education (Moses, Wong, Bakar & Mahmud, 2013; Tanimu, 2018; Weng, Yang, Ho & Su, 2018), agriculture (Ashoori, Noorhosseini & Alishiri, 2015; Berhanu, Mehretu & Ephraim, 2017) etc. However, the concept has remained relatively unexplored in the field of policing. Extrapolating from the few conceptualisations above, perceived usefulness of technology in this paper is therefore defined as the ability of the police officers and police organisation at large to see, conceive, realise or come to the understanding of the value, relevance, usefulness and impact of technology in enhancing police operations in terms of protection of lives and properties, prevention of rimes, detection of crimes, as well as investigation of crimes especially. This is conceptualised with the view that the perception of the police organisation including its officers towards the usefulness of technology, has a significant implication on their level of compliance with such technology; even though some scholars have argued that increases in technology can as well constrain police officers in their duties (Garicano & Heaton, 2010).

Importance of Technology in the 21st Century Policing Systems

The role of technology in the 21st century policing cannot be overemphasized, particularly due to the fact that criminality has assumed new dimensions which were hitherto unknown to the traditional policing structures. Hence, the police as the first agent in the prevention of crimes in the society, are equally expected to re-strategize and use every resources within their control to cue into the scheme of technological application in policing, so as to become ahead of criminal syndicates in terms of their technological skills, available gadgets, as well as consistent update in

technological advances. This is considering the importance of technology in crime prevention within the 21st century, which has been documented in extant literature. For instance, ICT Information (2012) noted that technology plays a crucial role in today's law enforcement environment because Information Systems (ISs) support real-time access to information held in investigative and community policing such as case management, criminal records, forensics and firearms licensing systems. High speed and robust communications equally provide the police with the ability to communicate and track information across teams and between organizations.

Similarly, Chan, Brereton, Legosz and Doran (2001) noted that information technology has often been held out as providing a solution to the paperwork problem in policing and other bureaucracies by streamlining administrative processes (such as by eliminating the need for multiple forms and multiple entry of data), making information easier to retrieve and reducing the number of hard copy records that must be generated and maintained by police organizations. Chan et al (2001) succinctly captured their views as:

> Technology has redefined the knowledge and skills required for doing police work. Information, always a valuable commodity in policing, must now be entered, stored and retrieved in a way dictated by the technology. Policing knowledge, which used to be carried inside police officers' heads, has now become synonymous with data that are too complex and voluminous for the human brain to cope with. Officers, especially those in junior operational positions, need to acquire computer skills simply to get their work done. This means that their daily work has become dependent on technology: whether they are able to complete a report, retrieve a piece of information, or get out of the station now depends on whether they have access to a computer, whether the system is "down", whether the computer is powerful enough and whether they have the skills to use the technology (p.17).

Murray (2000) was also of the view that technology has always had a close affinity with police work. Not only does technology promise to improve police effectiveness and efficiency in controlling crime, it may also enhance their professional status and organizational legitimacy. The author also noted that investment in information technology helps to increase police capacity to store and process large volumes of data; to improve their intelligence and investigative capabilities; and to provide ready access to criminal records and other crime-related information. Kumar (2012) supported the above notion by asserting that information technology improves effectiveness and efficiency, capacity to store and process large volumes of data,

improves intelligence and investigative capabilities and makes ready access to criminal records and other kinds of relevant data. Technology application in policing makes possible the collection, storage and rapid dissemination of information, and enhances public safety and reduces crime.

In the same light, Russel (2007) suggested that technology has facilitated the prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution, adjudication and punishment of crime. Examples include the use of encryption to ensure that data are held securely, neural networks to detect financial crime, biometric systems to identify suspects, hard drive imaging to secure data from alteration or destruction, sharing of data held in official data bases to identify suspects and risks, electronic courtrooms to present evidence clearly, and electronic monitoring of offenders to enhance surveillance during periods of home detention. Neyroud and Disley (2008) were of the opinion that the relevance of mobile technologies to police tasks relate to timely access to accurate information, reduced administrative work for police officers, improved communication and quick retrieval and transmission of relevant information. Technologies serve multiple purposes in police operations by rendering the police officers accountable through documentation and control of actions, provide a sense of security through connecting to control rooms and colleagues, support officers with awareness of current state of affairs, such as other incidents, the active queue of incidents and remote access to police databases as they innovate police operations (Sorensen & Pica, 2005).

Churchill, Snowdon and Munro (2001) also suggested that wireless, portable communication technologies offer newer and better ways of being constantly available and in touch with information and with other people, improved management of processes and enhanced mobility, flexibility and information dissemination. There are also a range of mobile information systems using wireless data sharing and transfer that help the police to reduce the amount of paperwork, increase data integrity, promote information sharing within the police department and between other police departments, and support problem solving. The systems are support information sources encountered by police officers including incident reports, crime management, arrests of criminals, crime investigation, and crime analysis. In doing so, the processes of reporting and investigating incidents are

linked by information technology. This linkage is viewed to create a precise, timely, and complete information system for police officers (Williams & Aasheim, 2005).

Despite these conceived importance of technology in policing, the perceived usefulness of technology in relation to the police operations varies across police department and national police structure; and influences significantly the adoption or non adoption of technology by police personnel.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). This model as proposed by Davis (1989) is a model focusing on the individual level of analysis based on the theory of reasoned action. This model posits that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of a particular technological tool determines an individual's intention to use a system, with intention to use serving as a mediator of actual system use. The purpose of this model is to predict the acceptability of a tool and to identify the modifications which must be brought to the system in order to make it acceptable to users. In the bid to predict this, two major independent constructs are postulated by this model viz: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Perceived usefulness refers to the degree to which a person believes that the use of a system will improve his or her performance; while perceived ease of use refers to the degree to which a person believes that the use of a system will be effortless (Davis, 1989). Therefore, the technology acceptance model hypothesizes a direct relationship between perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. For instance, in two systems that offer the same features, a user will adopt the one he or she finds more useful to facilitate his or her task performance, as well as the one that he or she finds easier to use (Dillon & Morris, 1996).

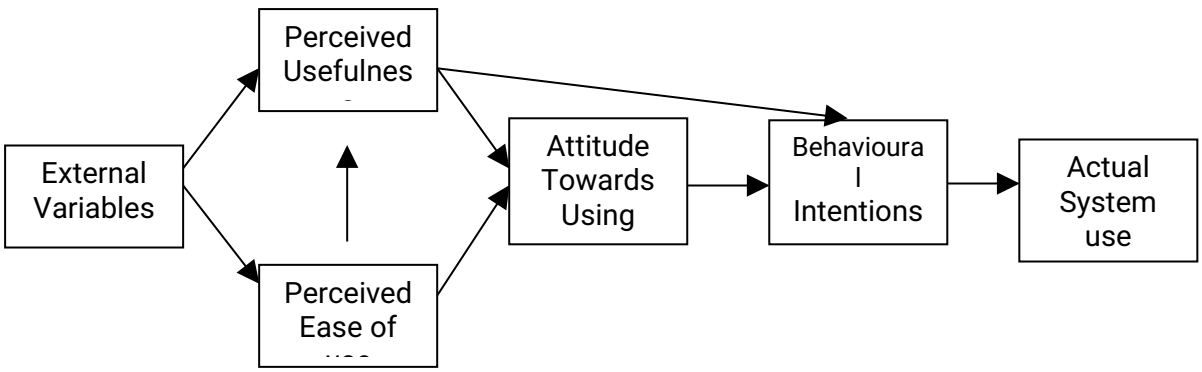

Figure 2. Diagrammatic Representation of TAM

This theory is very relevant to this study because the use and non use of any technological tool by the police in their effort to crimes prevention could be determined by their perception of how useful and easy these technological tools can be for them to detect and investigate crimes. Hence, if the members of the police force perceive e-policing systems as less useful for their respective duties, they will be resistant and nonchalant to utilise such tools and vice verse. Thus, using this theory, it is hypothesized that perceived usefulness has a significant influence on police officers' compliance to e-policing systems.

Materials and Method

The study was conducted in the Southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria which consists of five States including Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo, with their respective police commands. The area is located between latitudes 04°17' N and 07°06' N and longitudes 05°23' E and 09°28' E (Dimelu, Ozioko, Madukwe & Eze, 2014). However, two States' police commands including Abia and Anambra to represent all the States' police commands in the zone. The study adopted the descriptive cross-sectional survey research design, which was chosen in consideration of its flexibility in generating reliable data within a very short time frame in such a way that enabled the researcher to quantitatively describe the current situation with regards to the study theme and allowed the researcher an opportunity to use a sample to study the characteristics of a larger population at a point in time and at a relatively lower cost (Nwosu, Abunike, Onwuchekwe & Onuchukwu, 2020).

The study participants comprised of 641 respondents who were selected through the combination of simple random sampling and proportionate stratified random sampling techniques. The participants were administered with a questionnaire on a face-to-face basis with the help of two research assistants. Data collected from the research exercise were coded into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software package. Thereafter, the SPSS was used to process all the necessary statistical data. The data were thereafter, subjected to descriptive statistics including frequency count and percentages, as well as inferential statistics using the

chi-square test to determine the relationship between selected covariates and perceived usefulness of e-policing among the police personnel.

Results/Findings

Table 1.
Summary of Data Analysis on Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable Categories	Gender		Total
	Male	**Female**	
Marital Status			
Single	129 (33.4%)	94 (42.9%)	223 (36.9%)
Married	133 (34.5%)	61 (25.6%)	194 (31.2%)
Divorced	75 (20.5%)	32 (14.6%)	107 (18.3%)
Separated	31 (8.0%)	23 (10.5%)	54 (8.9%)
Widowed	18 (3.6%)	9 (6.4%)	27 (4.6%)
Total	**386 (100.0%)**	**219 (100.0%)**	**605 (100.0%)**
Educational Qualifications			
FSLC	133 (34.5%)	42 (19.2%)	175 (28.9%)
GCE/SSCE/WAEC	143 (37.0%)	80 (36.5%)	223 (36.9%)
OND/NCE	81 (21.0%)	74 (33.8%)	155 (25.6%)
HND/B.Sc	29 (7.5%)	23 (10.5%)	52 (8.6%)
M.Sc/PhD	-	-	-
Total	**386 (100.0%)**	**219 (100.0%)**	**605 (100.0%)**
Respondents' Ranks			
Inspector	51 (13.2%)	34 (15.5%)	85 (14.0%)
Sergeant	133 (34.5%)	56 (25.6%)	189 (31.2%)
Corporal	123 (31.9%)	97 (44.3%)	220 (36.4%)
Constable	79 (20.5%)	32 (14.6%)	111 (18.3%)

Total	**386 (100.0%)**	**219 (100.0%)**	**605 (100.0%)**
Respondents' Work Departments			
Finance and Administration	79 (20.5%)	51 (23.3%)	130 (21.5%)
Operations	89 (23.1%)	32 (14.6%)	121 (20.0%)
Logistics	70 (18.1%)	48 (21.9%)	118 (19.5%)
Investigation	63 (16.3%)	34 (15.5%)	97 (16.0%)
Training and Command	38 (9.8%)	28 (12.8%)	66 (10.9%)
Research and Planning	28 (7.3%)	11 (5.0%)	39 (6.4%)
Information and Communication Technology	19 (4.9%)	15 (6.8%)	34 (5.6%)
Total	**386 (100.0%)**	**219 (100.0%)**	**605 (100.0%)**

Analysis conducted on the responses offered by the respondents as contained in table 1 shows that slightly higher proportion (36.9%) of the respondents was single compared to the proportion (31.2%) of those who were married. The analysis equally showed that slightly higher proportion (42.9%) of female police officers was single compared to the proportion (33.4%) of single male police officers. This could be associated with gender issues within the NPF structure that make it difficult for female police officers to marry from the civilian population. Data analysis equally showed that divorce rate among police officers was slightly higher among the male police officers while separation was slightly higher among the female police officers. Widowhood among the sampled police officers was observed to be higher among the female police officers than among the male police officers.

A majority (36.9%) of the respondents only attended up to the secondary school level of education, of which no significant difference was found between the males (37.0%) and female (36.5%) police officers. This was followed by 28.9% of those who only had the FSLC, of which the proportion (34.5%) of males were greater than that of females (19.2%). Data analysis however showed that the least proportion (8.6%) of the police officers attended up to the bachelor degree level of education, of which slightly higher proportion (10.5%) of females fell within this academic group compared to that of the proportion (7.5%) of the males. This data informs the reason

why majority (36.4%) of the respondents were corporals as compared to the least proportion (14.0%) of them who were inspectors. Data equally showed that more female police officers (44.3%) were corporals than the proportion (31.9%) of males who were corporals. Surprisingly, slightly higher proportion (15.5%) of females was inspectors compared to that of male police officers (13.2%). Finally on the socio-demographic of the respondents, data analysis showed that the highest proportion (21.5%) of the samples emerged from the finance and administration unit, of which slightly higher proportion (23.3%) of them were females, compared to proportion (20.5%) of males. This was followed by 20.0% of the respondents who were in the operations units, in which higher proportion (23.1%) of males constituted the sample compared to that of females (14.6%). The least among the units is 5.6% of the respondents who were in the ICT unit, in which females constituted more (6.8%) of the samples compared to males (4.9%).

Table 2.

Perceived Usefulness of E-Policing in Property Crimes Investigation and Detection

Items/Statements	Totally Useless	Somewhat Useless	Neutral	Somewhat Useful	Very Useful	Total
– Identifying property crime trends and problems in your area of duty	113	185	150	119	38	605
	18.7 %	30.6%	24.8 %	19.7%	6.3%	100.0 %
– Determining what to do about property crime trends and problems in your area of duty?	84	166	178	140	37	605
	13.9 %	27.4%	29.4 %	23.1%	6.1%	100.0 %
– Sharing information with the public on property crime trends	28	90	166	191	130	605
	4.6%	14.9%	27.4 %	31.6%	21.5%	100.0 %
– Checking the history of a specific location or person(s) associated with property crimes before responding to call of service	17	92	155	242	99	605
	2.8%	15.2%	25.6 %	40.0%	16.4%	100.0 %
– Collecting and searching for information during property crimes investigations	23	67	160	239	116	605
	3.8%	11.1%	26.4 %	39.5%	19.2%	100.0 %
– Locating suspects, wanted persons and other persons of interest associated with property crimes.	46	132	189	150	88	605
	7.6%	21.8%	31.2 %	24.8%	14.5%	100.0 %
– Locating reported stolen properties (such as cars, mobile phones etc)	70	113	187	167	68	605
	11.6 %	18.7%	30.9 %	27.6%	11.2%	100.0 %
– Determining the profile of suspected property criminal(s)	41	121	195	186	62	605
	6.8%	20.0%	32.2 %	30.7%	10.2%	100.0 %
– Providing important security information to citizens in terms of emergency property crimes situations.	32	87	167	217	102	605
	5.3%	14.4%	27.6 %	35.9%	16.9%	100.0 %
– Sharing information among your fellow officers in property crime situations	41	88	165	227	84	605
	6.8%	14.5%	27.3 %	37.5%	13.9%	100.0 %

Result of the item by item analysis performed on the scale contained in table 2 showed that in terms of identifying property crime trends and problems, the greater proportion (30.6%) of the respondents perceived e-policing as being somewhat useful in that regard. In terms of determining what to do about property crime trends and problems, the highest proportion (27.4%) of the respondents equally perceived that e-policing is somewhat useful in that regard. In terms of sharing information with the public on property crime trends, the highest proportion (27.4%) of the respondents was neutral regarding the usefulness of e-policing in that regard. Data analysis equally showed that the highest proportion (40.0%) of the respondents rated it 'fairly' in terms of the usefulness of e-policing in checking the history of specific locations or person associated with property crimes. Furthermore, the greater proportion (39.5%) of the respondents equally rated 'fairly' in relation to the usefulness of e-policing in aiding police officers to collect and search information during property crimes investigations. On the question of locating suspects, wanted persons and other persons associated with property crimes, the highest proportion (31.2%) of the respondents were neutral about the usefulness of e-policing in facilitating that. 30.9% representing the highest proportion of the respondents were equally neutral on the question of the usefulness of e-policing technologies in locating reported stolen properties. Going further, the largest proportion (32.2%) of the respondents was equally neutral on the usefulness of e-policing systems in determining the profile of suspected property criminals. However, in terms of providing important security information to citizens during emergency property crime situations, the highest proportion (35.5%) of the respondents perceived e-policing systems as "fairly" useful in that line. Finally, the highest proportion (37.5%) of the respondents equally perceived e-policing as "fairly useful" in terms of sharing information about property crimes among individual police officers.

In the overall, all the items were summed using the 'compute variable' function in SPSS, in order to provide a general overview of police officers' perceived usefulness of e-policing in relation to property crimes investigation and detection.

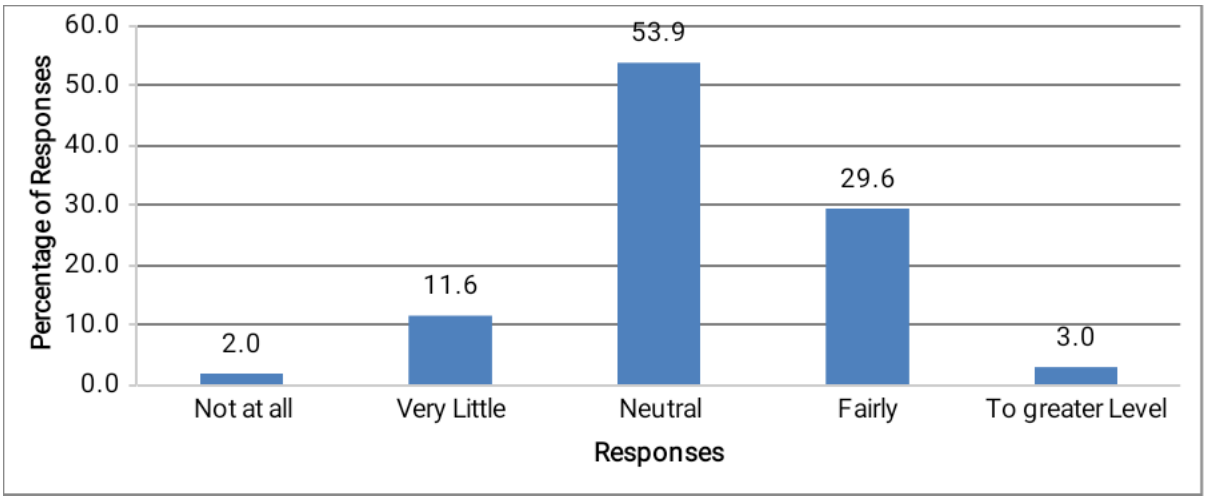

Figure 1. *Respondents' Overall Perceived Usefulness of E-Policing in Relation to Property Crime Investigation and Detection*

Data analysed in figure 1 showed that slightly above half proportion (53.9%) of the respondents were neutral in the items that measured perceived usefulness of e-policing in relation to property crimes investigation and detection in the selected Southeast Police Commands. This was however followed by about a quarter proportions (29.6%) of them who had fair ratings about it. These findings imply that perhaps majority of the respondents were deliberately trying to avoid the favourable or unfavourable response options. This may be so considering the fact that the police force is a sensitive organisation; perhaps the respondents being police officers, were trying to be careful about the information they give out to the public domain about their organisation. This could have dire implications to the reliability of the data. However, in the overall, the analysis showed that to certain extent, e-police was perceived as being fairly useful to the police force particularly with regards to property crimes investigation and detection within the selected police commands.

Table 3.

Relationship Between Selected Covariates and Perceived Usefulness of Technology

Variables	Perceived Usefulness of E-Policing			Total	Chi-square	Df	Sig.
	Positive	**Neutral**	**Negative**				
Gender							
Male	73 (18.9%)	161 (41.7%)	152 (39.4%)	386 (100.0%)			
Female	41 (18.7%)	79 (36.1%)	99 (45.2%)	219 (100.0%)	2.265	2	.322
Total	114 (18.8%)	240 (39.7%)	251 (41.5%)	605 (100.0%)			
Official Rank							
Inspector	21 (24.7%)	30 (35.3%)	34 (40.0%)	85 (100.0%)			
Sergeant	32 (16.9%)	78 (41.3%)	79 (41.8%)	189 (100.0%)			
Corporal	37 (16.8%)	88 (40.0%)	95 (43.2%)	220 (100.0%)	3.793	6	.705
Constable	24 (21.6%)	44 (39.6%)	43 (38.7%)	111 (100.0%)			
Total	114 (18.8%)	240 (39.7%)	251 (41.5%)	605 (100.0%)			
Finance & Administration	27 (20.8%)	56 (43.1%)	47 (36.2%)	130 (100.0%)			
Operations	18 (14.9%)	52 (43.0%)	51 (42.1%)	121 (100.0%)			
Logistics	18 (15.3%)	41 (34.7%)	59 (50.0%)	118 (100.0%)			
Investigation	23 (23.7%)	31 (32.0%)	43 (44.3%)	97 (100.0%)	23.518	12	.024
Training & Command	11 (16.7%)	31 (47.0%)	24 (36.4%)	66 (100.0%)			
Research & Planning	9 (23.1%)	9 (23.1%)	21 (53.8%)	39 (100.0%)			
ICT	8 (23.5%)	20 (58.8%)	6 (17.6%)	34 (100.0%)			
Total	114 (18.8%)	240 (39.7%)	251 (41.5%)	605 (100.0%)			
FSLC	29 (16.6%)	75 (42.9%)	71 (40.6%)	175 (100.0%)			
GCE/SSCE/WAEC	41 (18.4%)	93 (41.7%)	89 (39.9%)	223 (100.0%)			
OND/NCE	36 (23.2%)	57 (36.8%)	62 (40.0%)	155 (100.0%)	7.766[a]	6	.256
HND/B.Sc	8 (15.4%)	15 (28.8%)	29 (55.8%)	52 (100.0%)			
Total	114 (18.8%)	240 (39.7%)	251 (41.5%)	605 (100.0%)			

Data presented in table 3 showed that gender did not significantly predict the

respondents' perceived usefulness of e-policing in relation to property crimes detection and investigation. This is evident on the relative frequencies for the two genders where only 18.9% of males had positive perception about the usefulness of e-policing, as well as 18.7% of females who had positive perception of it. The chi-square test equally reiterates the fact that no statistically significant variation was observed between the males and females in relation to perceived usefulness of e-policing in property crimes detection and investigation.

Data analysis equally showed that ranks of the respondents were not a statistically significant in predicting their perceived usefulness of e-policing, in relation to property crimes detection and investigation. This is observed both in the chi-square test values (p = .705), as well as the relative percentages for the different ranks where there was no significant margin between the groups. For instance, in the positive response category, only 24.7% of inspectors responded to it, 16.9% of Sergeants responded to it, 16.8% of Corporal responded to it, and 21.6% of Constables equally responded to it. These data showed that there was a seeming close margin in their responses, which invariably implies that they had similar perceptions regarding the usefulness of e-policing in property crimes detection and investigation.

Data analysis however showed that operational units were slightly statistically significant in predicting police officers' perceived usefulness of e-policing in relation to property crimes detection and investigation (p = .024). This implies that the usefulness of e-policing in property crimes detection and investigation was different across the various police units. This equally implies that efforts towards influencing e-policing compliance among police personnel should focus more on the units and departments which have higher scores of negative perception of e-policing.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study investigated perceived usefulness of e-policing technology in relation to property crimes detection and control among police personnel in selected police commands within the Southeast Nigeria. Property crime remains one of the prevalent forms of criminality in Nigeria, particularly within the confines of the Southeast Nigeria, probably due to the high premium placed on property acquisition

as a yardstick for measuring wealth within the zone. Thus, it was assumed that with e-policing, the police would be more effective in controlling these forms of criminality. However, technology adoption remains a serious challenge within police organisations in developing nations like Nigeria, particularly due to negative perceptions about its usefulness in handling the peculiar form of criminality in such societies. Based on the findings of this study, it could be concluded that there was seemingly neutrality in the perception of the police personnel in terms of the usefulness of e-policing in detecting and investigating property crimes within the Southeast zone of Nigeria. This neutrality in their perceptions could be associated with the desire of the police personnel to protect the image of the police force as a security conscious organisation. Based on the foregoing, the following were recommended:

1. Recruitment into the police force should be IT-based. This would ensure that only individuals who have the ability to manipulate computers are recruited into the NPF. It will also help to produce a standard and a culture that all existing and prospective police personnel would be conscious of.
2. Computer literacy courses should be made compulsory in the Nigeria Police training institutes, and computer proficiency should equally be introduced as criteria for promotion in the NPF. This would trigger seriousness in the minds of every police personnel to make personal efforts to improve on their e-policing compliance capacities.

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