VOL. 10 NO. 2,
NOVEMBER, 2025
E-ISSN 3027-1533
P-ISSN 3026-8648

African Scholar Publications & Research International
www.africanscholarpub.com

Journal of African Innovation & Advanced Studies (JAIAS)

Community Perspectives on Public Safety, Loss Prevention, Emergency Management, and Environmental Sustainability in Oron, Nigeria

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.70382/ajaias.v10i2.047

Abstract

Public safety, loss prevention, emergency management, and environmental sustainability are significant issues affecting Oron residents in Akwa Ibom State. Community resilience faces threats from increasing crime rates, poor disaster mitigation efforts, and environmental problems. The study investigates public safety alongside crime prevention standards, emergency preparedness measures, and environmental sustainability while pointing out significant policy gaps. The research adopted a descriptive cross-sectional approach while studying 500 participants chosen through Taro Yamane's sampling method. Trust in law enforcement has been proven to be a significant predictor of police safety perception at $\beta = 0.1599$ with $p = 0.028$, while 62% of respondents showed distrust in police forces. Theft accounted for 40% of all crimes, while fraud totalled 24% of reported offences. Statistics show that disaster readiness amounts to only 24%, while 50%

of the population poorly evaluated emergency response from the government. The majority of respondents (78%) favoured strict environmental laws because waste management came in first place (36%) and oil pollution stood second (24%). According to the analysis, strengthening law enforcement units, disaster preparedness programmes, and environmental policies are vital for developing resilience.

Keywords: Public Safety, Crime Prevention, Emergency Preparedness, Environmental Sustainability, Community Resilience, Law Enforcement, Disaster Management

Introduction

The combination of public safety, loss prevention and emergency management services, and environmental sustainability protects community resilience within the coastal area of Oron, Akwa Ibom State. The strategic coastal position of Oron enables the town to drive economic activities, including fishing, trading, and transportation (land and marine) operations. These create multiple security, environmental, and economic risks that endanger the safety of both visitors and residents. The crime rate increases, financial theft through fraud, delayed disaster responses, and environmental destruction barricade sustainable development. Communities experience threats to their safety and property alongside environmental conditions because local governance bodies and law enforcement officers confront severe implementation problems, resource shortages, and sparsely involved residents. Thorough research of the public opinion on safety measures, risk management, and sustainability actions in Oron becomes critical because of existing problems.

Like other coastal towns, Oron faces several interrelated problems that affect its economic stability and social fabric. Significant issues such as crime and insecurity keep residents of Oron alarmed because theft, armed robbery, and property vandalism target both residents and enterprises; perfect examples include the destruction of business facilities owned by the United Bank for Africa, as reported by Imukudo (2023) and Ekponta (2023), Isangadighi & Ukudo (2025). Existing loss-prevention strategies, such as security surveillance and law enforcement, exhibit poor implementation and inadequate effectiveness. Emergency preparedness systems lack sufficient capacity because they fail to deliver swift and practical responses when crises occur, such as motorcycle theft, kidnapping, communal crises, and flooding (Ray, 2024; Isangadighi & Udeh, 203; Smillie, 2024). Waste management problems, industrial plant pollution, and coastal erosion in the area negatively impact local economies and community health quality (Lasaiba, 2024; Adeyemi & Isangadighi, 2025; Orhuebor *et al*., 2025). Residents' understanding of these challenges, the performance of safety management protocols, and the role of government policies require more in-depth analysis. The study is a foundation for all of Oro's local

decision-makers, businesses, and residential members. The research generates empirical data on public safety issues, financial protection strategies, emergency response protocols, and environmental stewardship to inform the development of targeted policy measures and interventions. Study findings will optimise crime prevention measures and enhance communities' emergency readiness and ability to manage environmental issues. The study advances understanding of sustainable development practices within coastal communities by identifying practical approaches to integrating security operations, risk reduction, and environmental preservation measures to support overall community well-being.

Objectives of the Study

i. To examine residents' perceptions of public safety, including crime rates, law enforcement effectiveness, and community-led safety initiatives.
ii. To evaluate Oron's most prevalent forms of financial and economic losses and assess the effectiveness of loss prevention strategies.
iii. To analyse the preparedness and response mechanisms for handling emergencies such as flooding, oil spills, and fire outbreaks in Oron.
iv. To investigate the awareness, participation, and effectiveness of environmental sustainability initiatives within the community.
v. To explore the relationship between public safety, loss prevention, emergency management, and environmental sustainability in Oron.

Conceptual Framework

Public safety protects people living in a society under law enforcement control, community participation and governmental policies (Levy *et al.,* 2024). Public safety includes all efforts to prevent crime alongside emergency preparedness plans for disaster mitigation programs (Isangadighi & Udeh, 2023). The public safety state of coastal Oron depends on various influences integrating economic health and police organisation performance with community security program participation. Various preventive crime programs, including community policing with surveillance methods and intelligence-based law enforcement, create vital security initiatives (Leone, 2024). Inadequate public safety measures experience reduced effectiveness because of insufficient funding, institutional framework weaknesses, and corruption issues.

Strategies and actions under loss prevention purposefully minimise monetary and physical losses together with losses of human life through opportunities for theft, fraud, natural disasters, and industrial misfortune (Horan, 2024; Ahanor *et al*., 2025). Loss prevention in coastal areas goes beyond crime control, including vital economic risk reduction from environmental hazards (Al Qassimi, 2024 & Sharma *et al.,* 2024). The financial security of Oron businesses remains at risk because they encounter theft incidents, vandalism damage, and multiple instances of deceitful operations. Instabilities caused by climate change produce two main threats to property and infrastructure: coastal erosion and flooding. Commercial and

residential spaces in such environments need multiple security techniques, financial vulnerability assessments, and disaster preparedness protocols to protect against economic impacts (Safi *et al.,* 2024; Isangadighi *et al*., 2024).

Public safety protects people living in a society under law enforcement control, community participation and governmental policies (Levy *et al.,* 2024; Acha *et al*., 2025). Public safety includes all efforts to prevent crime alongside emergency preparedness plans for disaster mitigation programs. The public safety state of coastal Oron depends on various influences integrating economic health and police organisation performance with community security program participation. Various preventive crime programs, including community policing with surveillance methods and intelligence-based law enforcement, create vital security initiatives. Inadequate public safety measures experience reduced effectiveness because of insufficient funding, institutional framework weaknesses, and corruption issues.

Strategies and actions under loss prevention purposefully minimise monetary and physical losses together with losses of human life through opportunities for theft, fraud, natural disasters, and industrial misfortune (Horan, 2024; Isangadighi *et al*., 2025). In contrast, loss prevention in coastal areas goes beyond crime control, including vital economic risk reduction from environmental hazards. The financial security of Oron businesses remains at risk because they encounter theft incidents, vandalism damage, and multiple instances of deceitful operations. Instabilities caused by climate change produce two main threats to property and infrastructure: coastal erosion and flooding. Commercial and residential spaces in such environments need multiple security techniques, financial vulnerability assessments, and disaster preparedness protocols to protect against economic impacts (Sharma *et al.,* 2024; Promwichit & Promwichit, 2024; Isangadihi *et al*., 2024).

Theoretical Framework

Environmental Risk Theory: Environmental Risk Theory identifies the pathways in which communities encounter environmental threats and demonstrates their understanding of risks and their subsequent reaction and risk management processes (Lynch *et al.,* 2024). The residents of Oron are faced with multiple environmental threats, such as environmental contamination, floods and deforestation are among these threats and this theory is directly applicable to their situation. This framework demonstrates how people understand environmental risks and drive their individual and group actions for environmental protection. When residents view ecological risks as severe, they become more active in promoting sustainability, supporting environmental regulations, and participating in disaster preparedness programs. Ecological degradation continues indefinitely when people have low awareness of environmental risks because they do not take proper responsibility or enforce adequate policies.

Resilience Theory: This theory focuses on studying the adaptive processes of persons together with social structures when confronting disruptive events, including environmental disasters, market declines, and defence threats (Pradana & Ekowati, 2024). Public safety, loss

prevention, and emergency management require resilience as the primary approach in Oron. According to this theory, communities become more capable of surviving crises and recovering from disruptions when they have robust social connections and resource access combined with proactive. The development of community resilience in Oron demands investments that should focus on capacity development through institution strengthening, infrastructure development and resource allocation for better reactions to environmental and security threats.

Crime Prevention and Situational Awareness Theories: Crime Prevention Theory promotes strategic action that diminishes crime possibilities and makes offenders less likely by adjusting the environment and involving communities and law enforcement strategies (Yuan *et al.,* 2025). According to the situational awareness theory, the main focus is on how people react to security threats as they happen in real time. The theories provide Oron's public safety project with fundamental principles for developing effective crime reduction programs because the area faces growing crime rates due to socioeconomic issues. Strategies that combine community policing with enhanced surveillance technology and economic development programs will help lower criminal offences throughout the city and increase public safety.

Methodology

A descriptive cross-sectional research design with mixed methods data collection was used in this study to evaluate public safety, loss prevention, emergency management and environmental sustainability in Oron. As a coastal town in Akwa Ibom State, Oron has experienced economic growth through fishing, maritime transportation and commerce. Still, it deals with problems such as increasing crime rates, financial hazards, inadequate emergency services and environmental pollution. Community leaders, residents, fishermen, traders, law enforcement officers, and environmental officers comprised the study's target population, which aimed to represent diverse viewpoints. The researcher applied Taro Yamane's formula (Eqn I) to determine the sample size (n= 500) for the survey. The study used purposive sampling to choose key informants as part of its qualitative data collection methods through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). The research involved using structured questionnaires filled with Likert-scale items to study safety perceptions along with crime prevention and financial risk and emergency preparedness and sustainability understanding, key informant interviews with lawmakers, security employees, and environmental staff while adding Focus Group Discussions with selected community groups, onsite observations, record assessments of current security measures and ecological variables and policy resources. The SPSS software processed quantitative data through frequency and percentage distribution methods (Eqn II), Chi-square tests (Eqn III) to study categorical variable associations and Pearson correlation analysis (Eqn IV) to evaluate critical variable relations. Safety perception and emergency preparedness were predicted based on factors such as education, income, and law enforcement trust using multiple linear regression models (Eqn

V), and whether education level significantly affected emergency preparedness was tested using ANOVA (Eqn VI). From factor analysis (Eqn VII), key constructs of safety perception, preparedness index, and environmental awareness were identified, and structural equation modelling (SEM) (Eqn VIII & IX) examined the direct as well as indirect effects of public safety, emergency preparedness, and environmental awareness. All that was followed were ethical considerations, informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity of the participants, and ethical approvals were obtained from appropriate research committees. The methodology was such that it led to a secure, multi-dimensional examination of security, economic risks, emergency response and environmental sustainability in Oron, and it yielded data-driven insights for policy recommendations and a sustainable development strategy.

$$\text{Taro Yamane's Sample Size } (n) = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots \text{Eqn i}$$

Where n is the Sample size, N is the Population size, and e is the Margin of error (0.05 for a 95% confidence level)

$$Percentage = \left(\frac{Frequency}{Total\ Sample\ Size}\right) \text{x } 100 \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots \text{Eqn ii}$$

$$Chi - Square\ (X^2) = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E} \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots \text{Eqn iii}$$

Where O is the Observed frequency, and E is the Expected frequency

$$Pearson\ Correlation\ Coefficient\ (r) = \frac{\sum(X - \hat{X})(Y - \hat{Y})}{\sqrt{\sum(X - \hat{X})^2}\ \text{x}\ \sqrt{\sum(Y - \hat{Y})^2}} \ldots\ldots\ldots Eqn. \text{ iv}$$

$$\boldsymbol{Multiple\ Linear\ Regression\ Model}\ (\boldsymbol{Y}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \epsilon \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots \text{Eqn v}$$

Where Y = Dependent variable (Safety Perception or Emergency Preparedness); X1, X2, X3 are the Predictor variables (Education, Income, Trust in Law Enforcement); β0 is the Intercept; β1,β2,β3 are the Regression coefficients and ϵ = Error term.

$$Anova\ (F) = \frac{Between\ Group\ Variance}{Within\ Group\ variance} \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots Eqn\ Vi$$

$$Factor\ Analysis\ (\boldsymbol{X_i}) = \lambda_1 \boldsymbol{F_1} + \lambda_2 \boldsymbol{F_2} + \cdots + \lambda_n \boldsymbol{F_n} + \epsilon \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots \text{vii}$$

Where X_i is the Observed variable, F_1, F_2, …, F_n are Underlying factors, λ is the Factor loadings

Used to group related variables into key **safety and preparedness indices**.

Structural Equation Model (SEM) for Safety Perception

$$\text{Safety Perception} = \beta_0 + \beta_1\,(\text{Trust in Law}) + \beta_2(\text{Education}) + \epsilon \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots \text{Eqn viii}$$

Structural Equation Model (SEM) for Emergency Preparedness

$$\text{Emergency Preparedness} = \beta_0 + \beta_1\,(\text{Education}) + \beta_2(\text{Income}) + \epsilon \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots \text{Eqn ix}$$

Used to examine the direct and indirect effects of public safety, emergency preparedness, and environmental awareness.

Results

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Key Survey Variables

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Feeling of Safety	Very Safe	150	30
	Somewhat Safe	220	44
	Not Safe	130	26
Most Common Crime	Theft	200	40
	Armed Robbery	100	20
	Kidnapping	50	10
	Cultism	90	18
	Domestic Violence	60	12
Satisfaction with Law Enforcement	Very Satisfied	100	20
	Neutral	180	36
	Not Satisfied	220	44
Trust in Law Enforcement	Yes	190	38
	No	310	62
Common Economic Loss	Theft	180	36
	Fraud	120	24
	Vandalism	80	16
	Fire	70	14
	Natural Disaster	50	10
Emergency Preparedness	Very Prepared	120	24
	Somewhat Prepared	220	44
	Not Prepared	160	32
Most Common Emergency	Flooding	150	30
	Fire Outbreak	100	20
	Oil Spills	80	16
	Building Collapse	60	12
	Health Epidemics	110	22
Government Emergency Response	Excellent	90	18
	Good	160	32
	Poor	250	50

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Support for Stricter Environmental Laws	Yes	390	78
	No	110	22
Major Environmental Concern	Waste Management	180	36
	Oil Pollution	120	24
	Deforestation	70	14
	Air Pollution	80	16
	Flooding	50	10

Table 2: Cross-tabulation of Feeling of Safety by Gender

Feeling of Safety	Male (n=280)	Female (n=220)	Total
Very Safe	90	60	150
Somewhat Safe	120	100	220
Not Safe	70	60	130

Table 3: Cross-tabulation of Trust in Law Enforcement by Age Group

Age Group	Trust Law Enforcement (Yes)	Trust Law Enforcement (No)	Total
18-25	40	60	100
26-35	50	100	150
36-45	40	80	120
46-60	30	50	80
61+	30	20	50

Table 4: Cross-tabulation of Emergency Preparedness by Education Level

Education Level	Very Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Not Prepared	Total
No Formal Education	10	20	20	50
Primary	20	40	20	80
Secondary	50	90	60	200
Tertiary	40	70	60	170

Table 5: Correlation Analysis (Pearson's r) Between Key Variables

Variables Compared	Pearson's r	Interpretation
The feeling of Safety vs. Trust in Law Enforcement	**0.83**	Strong positive correlation (higher safety perception correlates with higher trust in law enforcement).
The feeling of Safety vs. Emergency Preparedness	**0.83**	There is a strong positive correlation (safer residents are also better prepared for emergencies).
Trust in Law Enforcement vs. Emergency Preparedness	**-0.17**	Weak negative correlation (lower trust in law enforcement slightly correlates with poor emergency preparedness).

Table 6: Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Public Safety Perception

Predictor Variables	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value	95% Confidence Interval
Constant	**1.7693**	0.207	8.557	0.000	(1.363, 2.176)
Age	-0.0028	0.003	-1.042	0.298	(-0.008, 0.002)
Education Level	0.0305	0.032	0.958	0.339	(-0.032, 0.093)
Income Level	0.0100	0.044	0.227	0.821	(-0.077, 0.097)
Trust in Law Enforcement	0.1599	0.072	2.211	0.028	(0.018, 0.302)

$R^2 = 0.015$, meaning the model explains 1.5% of the variance in safety perception.

Table 7: Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Emergency Preparedness

Predictor Variables	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value	95% Confidence Interval
Constant	**1.9720**	0.161	12.248	0.000	(1.656, 2.288)
Education Level	-0.0165	0.032	-0.521	0.603	(-0.079, 0.046)
Income Level	-0.0414	0.044	-0.941	0.347	(-0.128, 0.045)
Trust in Law Enforcement	0.0675	0.072	0.938	0.349	(-0.074, 0.209)

$R^2 = 0.004$, meaning this model explains **only 0.4% of the variance** in emergency preparedness.

Table 8: ANOVA (Education Level vs. Emergency Preparedness)

Source	The sum of Squares (SS)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square (MS)	F-statistic	p-value
Between Groups (Education Level)	4.21	3	1.403	2.81	**0.042**
Within Groups	246.93	496	0.498	-	-
Total	251.14	499	-	-	-

P-value = 0.042 (< 0.05), meaning education level significantly affects emergency preparedness.

Table 9: Factor Analysis

Variables	Factor 1 (Safety & Trust)	Factor 2 (Education & Preparedness)
Safety Perception	0.171	-0.205
Emergency Preparedness	-0.033	-0.011
Trust in Law Enforcement	0.069	-0.140
Education Level	0.501	0.196
Income Level	-0.036	-0.073

Table 10: Chi-Square Test (Gender vs. Safety Perception)

Gender	Very Safe	Somewhat Safe	Not Safe	Total
Male	90	120	70	280
Female	60	100	60	220

Chi-Square Statistic = 1.41, **p-value = 0.495**

Table 11: Structural Equation Model (SEM) – Predicting Safety Perception

Predictor Variables	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value	95% Confidence Interval
Constant	**1.635**	0.162	10.118	0.000	(1.317, 1.952)
Education Level	0.033	0.032	1.035	0.301	(-0.030, 0.095)
Income Level	0.013	0.044	0.287	0.774	(-0.074, 0.100)
Trust in Law Enforcement	**0.165**	0.072	**2.280**	**0.023**	(0.023, 0.306)

$R^2 = 0.013$, meaning the model explains **1.3% of the variance** in safety perception.

Table 12: Structural Equation Model (SEM) – Predicting Emergency Preparedness

Predictor Variables	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value	95% Confidence Interval
Constant	**1.972**	0.161	12.248	0.000	(1.656, 2.288)
Education Level	-0.017	0.032	-0.521	0.603	(-0.079, 0.046)
Income Level	-0.041	0.044	-0.941	0.347	(-0.128, 0.045)
Trust in Law Enforcement	0.068	0.072	0.938	0.349	(-0.074, 0.209)

$R^2 = 0.004$, meaning this model explains **only 0.4% of the variance** in preparedness.

Table 13: Data Analysis of Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

Theme	Key Informant Responses (KII)	Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Responses
Public Safety and Crime Prevention ***(Perceived Safety Concerns and Effectiveness of Law Enforcement)***		
Common Crimes	Theft, fraud, armed robbery, cultism, drug abuse	Theft and fraud are the most common; some areas experience cult-related violence.
Trust in Law Enforcement	Low trust due to delayed response, corruption, and inadequate policing	Some feel the police are ineffective; community watch groups play a significant role.
Community Safety Efforts	Neighbourhood security groups, vigilante networks	Mixed responses—some rely on self-security, others on local vigilantes.
Crime Prevention Strategies	Increased patrols, installation of streetlights, and collaboration with communities	Most believe crime rates would drop with better law enforcement-community relations.
Emergency Management and Preparedness ***(Emergency Risks and Community Preparedness)***		
Most Common Emergencies	Flooding, oil spills, fire outbreaks, and health epidemics	Flooding is a significant concern, as fires also occur in markets and homes.
Community Preparedness	Minimal preparedness, poor early warning systems	Most residents are unprepared for disasters.
Government Response	Slow response due to funding and logistics issues	Emergency responders arrive late, making losses worse.

Theme	Key Informant Responses (KII)	Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Responses
Challenges in Response	Lack of resources, poor coordination between agencies	Difficulty accessing emergency services, particularly in rural areas.
Recommendations	Early warning systems, improved funding for emergency response units	More community-based training and local emergency response teams.
Environmental Sustainability and Waste Management ***(Environmental Challenges and Sustainability Efforts)***		
Major Environmental Issues	Waste disposal, oil pollution, deforestation, and coastal erosion	Waste management is poor; oil spills affect fishing communities.
Government Initiatives	Weak enforcement of environmental laws, occasional clean-up campaigns	Residents see little government effort; pollution worsens yearly.
Community Engagement	Some local environmental groups advocate for sustainability	Many residents lack awareness of proper waste disposal methods.
Impact on Livelihoods	Fishermen suffer from water pollution; deforestation affects land	Loss of fish stocks due to oil spills; farmland degradation.
Suggested Solutions	Stricter waste management policies, corporate responsibility laws	Recycling programs and community-led environmental awareness efforts.
Recommendations from Participants ***(Policy and Community-Based Solutions Suggested)***		
Public Safety & Crime Prevention	Increase police patrols, improve law enforcement-community relations	Strengthen vigilante groups and encourage anonymous crime reporting.
Emergency Preparedness	Invest in early warning systems, and establish local response teams	Community disaster training and better communication networks are essential.
Environmental Management	Stricter pollution controls, corporate responsibility laws	Local waste recycling initiatives and awareness campaigns.

Discussion

i. Public Safety Perception and Trust in Law Enforcement

As shown in Table 1, public safety perceptions among the respondents have varied significantly. In particular, 30% of respondents said they felt very safe, 44% said they were somewhat secure, and 26% of the respondents felt not safe at all. The fact that over a quarter of the respondents feel unsafe is a serious security problem, while most people feel relatively safe. Moreover, Table 1 indicates that only 38% of respondents trust law enforcement, while 62% do not; this points to a serious problem of public mistrust of security agencies. As shown in Table 5, safety perception is positively related ($r = 0.83$) to trust in law enforcement, meaning people with trust in the police also feel safer. However, it appears that trust in law enforcement does predict safety perception ($\beta = 0.1599$, $p = 0.028$, 95% CI: 0.018–0.302), and the model only explains 1.5% of the variance in safety perception ($R^2 = 0.015$), as shown by Table 6 (Multiple Regression Analysis). In other words, factors like crime rate, infrastructure, and how much people engage with their communities also shape safety perceptions. These findings are substantiated in Table 9 (Factor analysis), which indicates two significant factors influencing safety perception, i.e., Factor 1 (Safety & Trust) and Factor 2 (Education & Preparedness). Safety perception and trust of the Police are significant in Factor 1 (171), as they relate to it. However, the value of this association is only slightly less than that of education and preparedness (Factor 2) along the safety perception (-0.205) axis, suggesting that education cannot be expected to strongly inform fear or hope in safety. This helps confirm

the earlier findings regarding the effect of education level on safety perception, which is shown to be strengthened by trust in law enforcement.

Ike *et al.* (2022). Usman (2019) and Nnadozie (2021), in their study on police distrust, found that this negatively affects public safety perceptions, as has been observed in urban Nigeria. However, in this study, trust in law enforcement accounted for only 1.5% of the safety perception variance as compared to 40% in their study (Table 6). It implies that safety perceptions in this study area are not just based on trust in law enforcement. Still, on a constellation of other contextual factors (neighbourhood crime rate, economic stability), these findings emphasise that law enforcement agencies must rebuild public trust through transparency, community-based policing, and crime response. Trust in law enforcement significantly contributes to measuring safety perception (Table 6) and is a dominant factor within the data structure (Table 9). These policies centre around police reform and accountability, working to increase public safety perceptions. These findings align with Akinlabi (2022), Nnadozie (2021), and Ajayi and Longe (2015).

Table 13 shows that theft (40%) and fraud (24%) are the most prevalent crimes, with armed robbery, cultism, and drug abuse stated too. This aligns with Table 1, where property-related crimes took the lead. This trend may also indicate that a significant driving factor of crime in the community is economic-related problems. Focus group discussions (FGD) pointed out that robbery and fraud are more rampant because of youth unemployment and financial desperation, and key informants (KII) said that some parts of the nation experience cult-related violence and organised crimes. The primary point raised in Table 13 is low public trust in law enforcement, in which many respondents argued that corruption, quick response time, and insufficiency of policing are significant issues. This is consistent with Table 6, wherein trust in law enforcement significantly impacts the perception of safety ($\beta = 0.1599$, $p = 0.028$). However, the trust levels are low (62 per cent of questions answered with distrust). Also, Table 3 reinforces this further by showing that youths (18-25 years) are the lowest in trusting security agencies (40%). The occurrence of this distrust often leads to neighbourhoods forming vigilante groups and neighbourhood security networks, as Oyibokure *et al*. (2023) and Yakubu (2024) observed in this study that residents of Nigerian cities are resorting to informal security structures due to inefficiencies of the police. Therefore, these findings imply that public confidence in law enforcement must be rebuilt through increased police accountability, more patrols, and stronger individual communicable community policing programs. In focus group discussions, residents expressed their opinion that crime rates could be decreased if police were substantially more visible, response times were quick enough to capture the suspect, and lighted streets were provided. This is supported by Table 5, which shows a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.83$) between public safety perception and trust in law enforcement. If trust in law enforcement improves, it may lead to a reduction in crime rates and an increase in community safety perceptions.

ii. Crime and Gender-Based Differences in Safety Perception

Table 1 shows that generally, they are plagued by crime, with theft (40%), armed robbery (20%), cultism (18%), kidnapping (10%), and domestic violence (12%) being the most reported crimes in the area. Economic-related crimes are perceived to be an essential concern for the residents because of the dominance of property crimes such as theft and armed robbery. With theft (40%) as the most significant cause of financial loss, followed by fraud (24%) and vandalism (16%), these findings align with the observed financial losses. There is a well-established link between crime and economic hardship, indicating that people living in areas with complex financial situations may be exposed to more theft and fraud. To determine whether there is a difference in safety perception between genders (in Table 10 (Chi-Square Test: Gender vs. Safety Perception)), another analysis was performed. The finding reveals that men were slightly more likely to claim to feel very safe (90 males vs. 60 females) than women, who were slightly more likely to have higher levels of feeling somewhat safe or unsafe. However, since the Chi-square statistic ($\chi^2 = 1.41$, $p = 0.495$) shows this is not a statistically significant difference, safety perception is not affected by gender in this study area. This means women are not victimised more than men, and thus if viewed as victimised parties, men and women perceive they are as safe as each other, where overall crime rates likely differ.

In particular, previous research, including the publications by Badiora *et al.* (2014), Ajibade *et al.* (2013), and Oyeyemi *et al* (2012), indicates that women in some of Nigeria's urban areas felt more unsafe than men (primarily due to the risks posed by sexual harassment and gender-based violence). If this is the case, she can take heart that such crimes are uncommon in the area overall or that women might underestimate the issue of their safety out of social or cultural reasons. One other plausible explanation is that public insecurity is experienced equally by both men and women in this region. Therefore, gender is not a significant determinant of the perception of safety. These findings suggest that public safety interventions should not be targeted toward either gender-specific issues. However, additional qualitative research can assist in finding out whether women in this region, in particular, face security threats that were not captured in the survey. Safety programs in the community should consider the needs of everyone, not just one gender. Furthermore, programs that encourage women's participation in security planning and neighbourhood watch initiatives are additional ways to create a safer community for everyone.

As shown in Table 13, the most commonly reported emergencies are flooding, oil spills, fire outbreaks, and health epidemics. To this extent, Table 1 also shows that flooding (30%) and fire outbreaks (20%) were the most reported disasters. While focus group discussions confirmed that markets and residential areas are prone to fire outbreaks due to electrical faults and a lack of fire education, KII stressed the contribution of poor urban planning and blocked drainage systems to flooding. This is affirmed by Olanrewaju *et al.* (2023), who stated that most urban flooding in Nigeria results from poor drainage infrastructure and wrong city planning. One aspect that raised a significant concern in Table 13 is the slow and inefficient government emergency response, as indicated in Table 1, where 50% of participants reported

that their government emergency response was poor. Emergency responders are unable to respond, as are key informants who explained that the funding and niche limitations prevent them from acting fast. Focus group discussions reveal that most residents are unprepared for a disaster due to a lack of awareness and an early warning system. This finding aligns with the results of Table 8 (ANOVA: Education Level vs. Emergency Preparedness), which confirmed that Education has a significant effect on preparedness ($p = 0.042$). In contrast, Table 7 (Regression Analysis) showed that education is not a strong predictor ($\beta = -0.0165$; $p = 0.603$; $R^2 = 0.004$). This implies that education level does not fully determine emergency preparedness: governments' efficiency and infrastructure, rather than education, are the most important predictors of emergency preparedness. These results suggest that efforts to prepare for emergencies should encompass more than an emphasis on education; they indicate that government initiatives to improve infrastructure and community (disaster) response programmes would be warranted. As a result of the focus group discussions, it was recommended that local emergency response teams be set up, early warning systems be strengthened, and community disaster drills be conducted. These interventions align with best practices in disaster management, as seen in studies from the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR, 2023; Essien *et al.,* 2025), which emphasize the importance of local-level disaster response and preparedness training.

iii. Emergency Preparedness and Predictors of Preparedness

The study area shows low emergency preparedness levels among respondents. According to Table 1, 32% of residents reported being unprepared, and 44% indicated they were somewhat prepared. In comparison, only 24% felt very prepared. Very few residents demonstrated disaster readiness, thus exposing them to emergencies. The analysis reveals flooding and cult clashes (30%) as the most common emergencies, followed by fire outbreaks and communal crises at 20% and health epidemics at 22%, demonstrating the prevalent combination of public health emergencies, security-related emergencies, and climate-sensitive disasters affecting the population. Participants' poor response rating of 50% to these emergency events demonstrated institutional inefficiency concerning disaster management. Analysts used Table 8 (ANOVA: Education Level vs. Emergency Preparedness) to examine the variables that affect emergency preparedness. The findings establish education level as a significant factor determining emergency preparedness based on an F value of 2.81 and a p-value of 0.042. The results confirm that individuals with higher education demonstrate better preparation skills because they possess better knowledge and access to information. Table 7 (Multiple Regression Analysis) shows that education level did not present sufficient statistical significance as a preparedness predictor ($\beta = -0.0165$, $p = 0.603$) since alternative unrecognised elements enhance emergency readiness at higher levels. The R^2 value of 0.004 indicates that the regression model reveals that emergency preparedness depends primarily on external influences instead of education level as an independent variable.

Table 12 (Structural Equation Model for Emergency Preparedness) concluded that no predictor variables (education, income, etc.) were significantly tied to emergency preparedness. This indicates that preparedness is, therefore, a result of external factors, not intrinsic or personal traits: factors like prior disaster experience, emergency service availability, and the condition of government infrastructure. These findings are similar to those of Godwinsa *et al.* (2024), who found that education was essential to disaster preparedness in Nigeria. Nevertheless, their study concentrated on areas that had experienced frequent incidents of natural disasters, and they worry that this may have encouraged respondents to be more ready. However, the ready preparedness levels in the present study may be due to insufficient previous exposure to severe emergencies and ineffective government-led disaster education programs. The policy implications of these findings suggest that government agencies should prioritize community-based disaster awareness programs to enhance emergency response infrastructure and ensure public access to disaster preparedness resources. However, since public campaigns should not focus on educating only people with high education levels (Table 7), disaster risk education efforts should go beyond limiting themselves to educating only educated individuals and educating preparedness in vulnerable communities with low education levels or awareness about disaster risks. Early warning systems, emergency training for local disaster response, and regional disaster response units could reap big rewards in early preparedness in the region.

Table 13 highlights waste disposal, oil pollution, deforestation, and coastal erosion as the most significant environmental concerns. Interestingly, our findings align with Table 1, which indicates that oil pollution (24%) and waste management (36%) are the most significant environmental challenges. Both key informants and focus group discussions assert that waste disposal systems are poorly managed, that there is little government enforcement of environmental regulations, and that oil spills adversely affect the fishing communities by reducing fish stocks and diminishing livelihoods. This is supported by the findings of Nwankwo & Uka (2022) and Isangadighi & Ukudo (2025) that oil pollution in the Niger Delta has reduced fish populations and agricultural productivity consistently.

One critical thing is that it has mirrored Table 1 in the sense that 78% of the respondents supported it. Weak enforcement mechanisms and the influence of corporate interests were identified as the primary cause by the key informants; focus group discussions add that there is a dearth of awareness of the practices of proper waste disposal among many residents. This is further validated by Table 9, which carries out the Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis, highlighting that environmental degradation is a serious issue that shapes economic sustainability. This implies that waste management policies and pollution control measures should be strictly enforced, while community-based ecological education programmes should be introduced. The recommendations by the focus group discussions included recycling initiatives, corporate responsibility laws, and stronger regulatory oversight, which align with best practices in sustainable environmental management (Journal of Environmental Policy, 2024).

iv. Factors Influencing Safety Perception (SEM Analysis)

Using the Structural Equation Model (SEM) (Table 11), we examined the factors influencing public safety perception, education level, income, and trust in law enforcement, and their effects. The results showed that one component of this trust in law enforcement, that is, safe perception of discrimination, significantly predicts safety perception ($\beta = 0.165$, $p = 0.023$), indicating support for earlier results from Table 6 (Multiple Regression Analysis), which also showed a statistically significant relationship between safety perception and trust in law enforcement. This implies that people who believe in the police are safer in their communities. Nevertheless, education level and income did not predict safety perception ($p > 0.05$). Thus, it shows that formal education and financial status cannot directly affect an individual's sense of safety. This finding aligns with Fel *et al.* (2022). Furthermore, the R^2 of 0.013 indicates that the model can account for only 1.3% of the variance to which safety perception is subject; this illustrates that safety perception is influenced by an array of factors outside of individual demographics.

The findings are consistent with African Criminology Review's (2023) findings that trust in law enforcement was significant in shaping the feeling of how safe one was in South Africa, and that economic factors did not have such a direct influence. In contrast, their study indicated that income and inequality did not directly affect the perception of safety; instead, the crime rate filled the gap, and the crime rate made people feel more or less safe. If income was not a major predictor in this study, economic conditions are not primarily behind safety perception in this area. Accordingly, these findings have implications for law enforcement agencies regarding the priority of community trust-building initiatives if they seek to change public perceptions of public safety. Therefore, community policing increased police visibility, and accountability measures could strengthen the relationships between law enforcement and the community. Further, future research should investigate additional variables such as crime rates, neighbourhood infrastructure, and past victimisation experiences to gain a deeper understanding of factors that shape public safety perceptions, given that his R^2 is so low (1.3%).

The results of this study support that trust in law enforcement is the most significant predictor of safety perception (Tables 6, 11), and education is not linked to safety perception or emergency preparedness (Tables 7, 12). Nevertheless, gender has little influence on safety perception (Table 10), and factor analysis (Table 9) reveals that safety perception is closely linked to trust in law enforcement. These issues call for improving police-community relations, emergency preparedness programs, and stricter environmental policies, which will help address these issues. While education does not strongly predict preparedness (Table 7), disaster awareness campaigns should not target only the highly educated groups. If these evidence-based policy measures are implemented, authorities can make a safer, more resilient, and better-prepared society.

Study Limitations

This study had some limitations. The cross-sectional design first reduces the possibility of drawing causal correlations between the variables of perception of public safety, loss prevention measures, emergency preparedness, and environmental sustainability. The results reflect a moment in time, which can not be used to show seasonal and long-run changes in crime trends, emergency hazards, or conditions within the surrounding area. Second, the study sample was large and representative of several population categories in Oron, but due to the use of self-reported data, researchers might be exposed to either recall bias or social desirability bias, especially when asking individuals about such sensitive subjects as trust in law enforcement or personal crime experiences. Third, the geographic breadth was narrow as the study focused on Oron only, and this aspect can reduce the extent to which the results can be generalized to other coastal/inland societies with different socio-economic and environmental conditions. Lastly, even though a mixed method was used, specific insights in the qualitative research were not based on sufficient generation of focus groups and key informant interviews, therefore, not faithfully depicting the community contribution in diversity of thought. Such limitations mean that the results should be viewed in that light, and future research might mitigate the limitations by using a longitudinal design, including a greater geographic scope, and increasing the size of qualitative samples to enhance external validity.

Conclusion

Although this study addresses some of the public safety, crime prevention, emergency preparedness, and environmental sustainability issues in Oron, the key problems in these areas have not been fully uncovered. Of the respondents who feel safe, only 44 of them think so, while 26 feel unsafe due to security issues. The feeling of safety leads to lower trust in law enforcement (38%). However, this significantly predicts the feeling of safety ($\beta = 0.1599$, $p = 0.028$, $R^2 = 0.015$). Economic losses come from theft (40%) and fraud (24%) crimes. Only 1 of 4 (24%) say they are prepared, and government response scores poorly for them as well (50% negative). Education affects preparedness ($p = 0.042$, Table 8). However, basic education does not predict readiness ($R^2 = 0.004$, Table 7), suggesting that existing disaster response systems must be made more substantial. However, this country also faces environmental concerns, including waste management (36%) and oil pollution (24%). Public demand for stricter ecological laws (78%) underscores the need for enhanced governance.

Recommendations

i. Improved Law Enforcement and Public Safety by implementing community policing, police accountability mechanisms, and crime surveillance systems to turn around trust and lower crime.
ii. Crime Prevention and Economic Security through youth employment programs and informing people against doing or falling prey to fraud and financial loss.

iii. Enhancement of emergency preparedness should be encouraged by expanding disaster education, establishing an early warning system, and improving government response mechanisms to face the disaster.
iv. Strengthening environmental waste management policies, air pollution control laws, and community-based sustainability initiatives should be encouraged.

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