Beyond the University's Halls: Understanding Criminal Activities on Peace and Security among Students of University of Cape Coast, Ghana

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Abstract

Peace and Security is critical to the improvement of students' social welfare. Informed by Life style exposure theory and Routine activity theory, the study examined the impact of criminal activities on peace and security among university students: a case of University of Cape Coast, Ghana. The qualitative research approach was used due to the nature of the study. The descriptive cross-sectional design was used for the study. The study used in-depth interview to understand the live experiences of the students in the study. In total 30 students and five security personnel from the university were selected for the study. The findings revealed that the rate of crime on campus is increasing and students had a negative perception about their living environment. Again, it was found that majority of the respondents agree that crime rate has increased recently on UCC campus and communities like Amamoma, Kwaprow and Ayensu are the hotspot residence. The major perpetrators were reviewed to be town members. Crime affects student's peace and security and some of these effects were fear and panic, psychological effect, academic performance, loss of focus, worries, loss of properties, and insecurity. Based on the findings accumulated from the study, the researcher recommends that students should take personal security measures like locking of doors, walking in groups and placing their personal belongings in appropriate places in order to reduce the workload of the campus security.

Subject Areas

Criminology

1. Introduction

Global events have drawn attention quite clearly to the assertion that peace and security are essential to sustainable national development. The issue of crime is critical to the study of criminology. Criminologists periodically evaluate the concept of crime, and recent research have looked at changes in crime as a result of using various sources of data (Mosher, Miethe & Hart, 2010) [1]. Crime activities beg for serious concern as they often influence the decision of people to live in certain areas. Frequency of criminal activities affects the livelihood and developmental processes in any community under the spotlight (Havi, 2014) [2]. Human security concerns like crime, terrorism, and other types of vulnerability affect nations around the world. These assaults are widespread and therefore are made by people, extremist movements, and terrorist operations who employ every available tools to further their narrow political viewpoints. In addition to this hydra-headed security dilemma, the globe also confronts serious threats from organized and transitory criminal gangs and networks that have become so proficient at what they do that they have attracted notice and awareness on a global scale (Barnes, 2017) [3]. These so-called "non-traditional potential dangers" are indeed a significant source of concern for governments worldwide, particularly for those who lack the resources to address these societal issues. Drug trafficking, human trafficking, cybercrime, the trade in illegal weapons, financial fraud, and the marketing of fake and pirated goods are just a few examples of the transnational organized crime that has spread across the world (UNODC, 2010) [4]. The killings of innocent people, destruction of property, fear-based livelihood, hardship, and tension are only a few of the immediate and long-term impacts of these crimes and safety problems. Wright & Decker (2002) [5], stated that despite its political influence, democratic reputation, riches, and cutting-edge technologies, a nation like the United States of America nonetheless has significant levels of crime, including theft in most of their major states. For instance, the US registered 322,905 robberies in 2014, which makes it the country with the second-highest crime levels worldwide (Burton & Leoschut, 2013) [6].

Individual, societal, and national growth are all guaranteed by peace, which is a both social and political condition. When there are wholesome connections present, there is harmony. It is a state pertaining to the equity and welfare of the societal or economic system (Lochan, 2019) [7]. Additionally, it has to do with a functioning political system that advances the common good. Peace is not just the elimination of conflict or war in the setting of domestic and international affairs, but also the existence of economic and sociocultural agreement and togetherness (Pugh, Cooper & Turner, 2016) [8]. In general terms, it can also mean

having a sense of security or not having any fear. It may also relate to the security of a certain individual, group, community, nation, or the entire world. Nevertheless, security in its purest form refers to being protected from extremely severe dangers. It also has to do with dangers to fundamental principles like human rights. Although there are many different interpretations of these terms, it is clear that peace and security are intertwined. When taken as a whole, it refers to a situation in which people, organizations, regions, countries, and the entire world advance without any danger. Regions or countries in this situation are typically more secure internally, more likely to be ruled democratically, and more protective of human rights. Danger and anxiety from conflict are produced, but it also prevents social, political, or economic growth (Gupta, 2008) [9].

Research reports shown that in practically every part of the globe, industrialization and rising economic interconnection have supported and encouraged the transition of crime outside national boundaries. Enhanced information and communication innovation delivery systems, accelerated country's border smearing, and increased international movement of people, products, and assistance have enhanced possibilities for economic activity while also creating a variety of transnational crimes—including but not restricted to drug trafficking, property theft, counterfeiting, human smuggling, fraud and cybercrime, commercial vices like obscenity and—easier to commit (Albanese, 2011) [10]. Schackner's documentation (as mentioned in Pezza, 1995) [11] argued that, there has been observed issue of safety on college campuses dates back to the fifteenth century. Again, the literature suggested that there have been several instances of violent, even fatal, clashes between townspeople and students. Moreover half of the student body at Princeton University was suspended in 1807 as a result of riots and insurrection. Another time, according to Smith's documentation (cited in Pezza, 1995) [11], such actions led to the expulsion of the bulk of the senior class at Harvard College.

In recent times, the safety of university campuses has become an issue of widespread. The issue could be attributed to the higher perception of risk of students due to several high-profile cases that are covered by the national media in recent years. It could also be perhaps as a result of the increase in enrollment of students in our universities which is not commensurate with the number of security personnel provided by university authorities on our campuses. Further, the matter has been analyzed from the perspective that increases in female enrollments levels could be a factor since women are normally perceived as vulnerable when it comes to safety and security issues. Studies conducted by Chekwa, Thomas and Jones (2013) [12]; Fernandez (2001) [13] and Ratti (2010) [14] have found out that crime and violence are prevalent in schools and higher learning communities (Burton & Leoschut, 2013) [6].

In Ghana, it is common to read about stories of campus violence that sometimes compel student leaders to petition university authorities to solve the problem. For instance, it could be recalled vividly that a group of students of the

Common Wealth Hall (Vandals), University of Ghana petitioned the Vice-Chancellor sometimes ago on their displeasure about the insecurity on campus. In their petition they cited instances where a level 100 student's laptop was snatched from her and another student was slapped for refusing to hand over her laptop and other valuables when she was attacked by unknown assailants. They concluded in their petition by saying, "campus is not safe. Thus, urging the university authority to ensure proper security measures to improve upon the peace and security on campus.

In higher education institution like the university, safety and security of persons particularly student's resident on university campuses remains topical. The high rate of criminal activities has caused anxiety among students living on campus. Students find it difficult to carry out their academic responsibilities and other day-to-day activities. Criminals usually take advantage of intense environment during exams week and attack and rob students of their valuables (Abnory, *et al.*, 2016) [15]. The University of Cape Coast (UCC) community has been concerned about the safety of its students, staff, and visitors. Some of the university's safety efforts include security patrols by unarmed campus security staff, many of whom are not state-certified and academically untrained. Per the Ghana Police Service's District Police Headquarters' Criminal Investigations Department report, UCC, there were about 1000 criminal cases between the periods of two (2) years, 2016 to 2018 which the student population at the school reported (GPS, 2019) [16]. Countless times, violent crimes such as burglaries and other violent acts have put the lives of pupils in danger. The high rate of criminal activities has caused anxiety among students living on campus. Students struggle to complete their daily tasks, including their academic obligations. In spite of security measures put in place by the school authorities, the students still fall victim to armed robbery and thefts on campus specifically within the surrounding communities.

Furthermore, a search of University of Cape Coast's directorate for legal, consular and general services indicated that the institution does not have a visitor or overnight guest policy to control the amount of unidentified people who come to campus. In recent years, safety in the university learning environment has taken center stage, transforming the university experience (Owusu *et al.*, 2016) [15]. This might be attributed to campus re-engineering for round-the-clock usage, rising enrollment, and the national media's coverage of the reality of possible vulnerabilities. Times without number, the security section have had course to advise the university community to pay attention to their own safety, by reporting crime and unsafe conditions, and by helping others. Students' perceptions of safety at school may be affected positively or negatively by a variety of preventive measures, including security and monitoring. The researchers wonder if the situation still persists at the University of Cape Coast and its environs. The scant amount of study on university students' experiences in Ghana is an indication of how little has been written on the safety and security on campuses

specifically to unravel the implications of criminal activities on campus and how the students cope with this situation. In the quest to answers to the problem, the study to ask: 1) How do criminal activities affect peace and security of students on UCC campus? and 2) Which strategies do students adopt to cope with these criminal activities on UCC campus?

Significantly, the results of the study will enable the stakeholders of the university like the government, the university council, the campus security section and the university community to understand the impact of these criminal activities on peace and security on students' life in the university campus. Consequently, it will provide recommendations that will help to improve the security system in the university. When it comes to policies and methods, the research will also assist us comprehend which ones worked and why, as well as which ones did not and why they did not. Such important details could contribute to the body of research on crime assessments and be valuable for upcoming initiatives and programs. However, due to the researchers' individual impressions and opinions that could affect the study's outcome, the subjective character of the research methodology makes the study biased. The qualitative nature of the work did not permit the researcher to make general conclusions about the study. This is due to the fact that qualitative research is restricted in terms of population to be covered. Again, as a result of the limited time and resources, the researchers only placed much focus on students' opinion and interest without contacting the police to know their share of the story.

2. Literature Review

The pertinent literature was examined before being discussed. There are descriptions of the review's theoretical, conceptual, and empirical components. The major subjects of the theoretical review were the Life Style Exposure Theory and the Routine Activity Theory. The conceptual analysis looks at things like how individuals view crime and criminal activity, peace and safety, and how students view campus security and safety services. Reviewing other authors' works that are connected to or have an impact on this study was the goal of the empirical review.

2.1. Theoretical Issues

The review ought to relate to the study's primary themes. For clarity's sake and to place the study in its proper context, theoretical underpinnings for the study are discussed:

2.1.1. Routine Activity Theory

Between 1947 and 1974, Lawrence E. Cohen and Marcus Felson created the Routine Activity Theory, which serves as the theoretical foundation for situational crime prevention tactics. The theory attempts to explicitly describe the factors that contribute to victim risk (Siegel, 1998) [17]. In other words, The

Theory explains the rate of crime via a series of hypothetical situations that show how a victim of a certain crime becomes a victim of that crime. According to the idea, a person's risk of being a victim depends largely on how they act on a daily basis. According to the theory, the three conditions for direct-contact predatory crime to occur are the presence of a potential offender, a suitable target, and the lack of a capable guardian against crime (Cohen & Felson, 1979 [18]; Felson & Boba (eds.), 2010 [19]). According to the theory, if one or more of the circumstances are true, there is a higher chance that a person may become a victim of crime.

Someone leaving their hostel to go on vacation, for instance, makes a suitable target. When you leave your hostel to go on vacation in a place where there are lots of young men, drug addicts, etc., it fosters motivated criminals. Because no one is there to keep an eye on things there, they are compelled to steal from the hostel in this instance. The idea, however, focuses more emphasis on the three indicators of crime being present at the same time and location than it does on the offender's motive. It takes into account factors that raise the possibility that criminal conduct may happen at a particular time and place. This idea takes into account both the victim's and the offender's regular behavior. An offender may often prowl through particular neighborhoods looking for residences that seem to be prime targets for break-ins or into businesses looking for opportunities for stealing.

The hypothesis holds that a target's fitness depends on how valuable a potential offender perceives it to be, how movable the target is, how simple it is to conceal the target, and how reachable it is (Cohen & Felson, 1979) [18]. Target suitability is therefore evaluated by the potential offender's reasonable judgment while taking into account the local security concerns. In light of this, an increase in a target's appropriateness results in a proportional increase in the risk of becoming a victim of crime (Spano & Freilich, 2009) [20]. In contrast, communities with a lot of police protection, alarms and other security measures, and community watch teams reduce their risk of victimization by fostering guardianship, which is acknowledged by this theory to lower crime rates (Harper, 2014) [21]. Data demonstrating that crime rates increased between 1960 and 1980 as a result of less people staying at home, or more particularly, because there weren't enough competent guardians, also supports this theory (Siegel, 2006) [22]. In spite of the abundance of goods in such regions, wealthy community residents often have low reported crime rates for property crimes.

Due to the strict security measures in place and the dearth of motivated offenders, this may be explained (Harper, 2014) [21]. The concept at the University of Cape Coast explains how the local neighborhoods, in particular the surrounding areas, and the students who live there end up as targets or victims of criminal behavior. More often than not, students who reside in adjacent villages frequently lack a suitable guardian. Students cross isolated locations on foot to study at night. The concept helps us better understand the key causes of neigh-

borhood crime. They are always at risk of having their belongings, such as phones, laptops, wallets, and other valuables, stolen because there are hardly ever any security personnel on campus or security inspections.

In addition, students are staying in hostels with either minimal or none at all. The bulk of UCC's on-campus dorms lack adequate security and safety. Hostels lack common security features like brick walls, security personnel, video cameras, etc. Students at UCC run the risk of falling victim to ordinary crimes like burglary when they are away from their hostels, or they can easily be stolen of their things or even raped when they are there since the thieves do not need to make a great effort to get into the student's dormitories. Some of the dormitories are not even equipped with burglar proof doors to dissuade thieves.

The theory argued that a target's likelihood of being more or less acceptable depends on four variables, known as VIVA (value, inertia, visibility, and access), which are taken into account by the offender to establish a target's level of threat (Cohen & Felson, 1979 [18]; Felson & Clarke, 1998 [23]). These traits are displayed by UCC students and the things they own. Size, weight, and shape, as well as any other physical characteristics that prevent the offender from judging the thing appropriate from the offender's point of view, are examples of inertia. Access is related to how the area is laid out and where the object is located, both of which increase the likelihood of an attack or make it simpler to execute one. A characteristic that marks a person or thing as a potential attack target is visibility, or making targets obvious to offenders. The limitations of the routine activity theory are strengthened by the lifestyle exposure theory.

2.1.2. Lifestyle-Exposure Theory

Those who regularly engage in behaviors that put them at risk of being taken advantage of are more likely to become victims of crime, according to the lifestyle theory. It's customary to combine this notion with the theory of routine activities. Hindelang, Gottfredson, and Garofalo developed the concept of lifestyle exposure in 1978 [24]. The theory observes that risk of victimization varies with demographic variables, a frequent antecedent of lifestyle, and attempts to link an individual's lifestyle to their risk of victimization. According to this theory, a person's lifestyle has the biggest impact on the possibility that they will experience crime as a victim (Harper, 2014) [21]. In this context, lifestyle is described as "regular daily activities, including occupational (work, education, managing the home, etc.) and recreational activities." People may unwittingly come into contact with crime as a result of their daily activities, or they may just raise the risk that victims may become victims of crime. Often, being at home lessens the likelihood of a victim being hurt, whereas being in public raises that risk (Harper, 2014) [21]. Lifestyle disparities are influenced by how society responds to or modifies its varied roles, responsibilities, and structural limitations. Because they are linked to structural constraints that both enable and limit one's behavioral options and shared expectations for appropriate behavior, age, sex, race, income, marital status, education, and occupation are some examples of both ascribed

and accomplished status characteristics that are significant predictors of predatory crime (Harper, 2014) [21].

Respect for these cultural and institutional norms leads to the development of established behavioral patterns and links to similar situations. One should anticipate that they will encounter unsafe or vulnerable situations more frequently as a result of specific habits and connections that increase their risk of victimization. According to the central tenet of this theory, people are singled out for attention because of their lifestyle decisions, which put them in contact with criminals and places where crimes may be perpetrated (Harper, 2014) [21]. This concept suggests particular lifestyle choices, such as binge drinking, drug use, promiscuity, residing in a region with a history of crime, and associating with known offenders. In general, campus conduct that encourages late-night drinking and drug use heralds' violent victimization. Students at UCC are at risk for criminal attacks because of their lifestyle decisions, which include using mobile phones and driving conspicuous, costly cars, among other things. Most of these students who often utilize such pricey things frequent clubs and movie theaters, which have laxer security. These students are more vulnerable to assault because of their circumstances.

2.2. Conceptual Review

2.2.1. Crime

The term "crime" first arose in the Latin word "crimen," which denotes a "offence" or "charge." Crime is a negative occurrence and a social fact, regardless of the city, region, or country (Wilson, 2015) [25]. The World Health Organization (WHO) (2015) [26] defines crime as "the willful use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation". Colleges may experience violent or personal crimes such as burglaries, hooliganism, abduction, riots, robberies, pickpocketing, muggery, rape, shoplifting, theft, and vandalism. Crime has existed from the dawn of man, regardless of how advanced a civilization may be. The inability of security services to effectively combat the aforementioned crimes has caused significant growth and development delays in the majority of the world's countries (Osawe, 2015) [27]. Despite the fact that crime is pervasive worldwide and not uniformly distributed across space, it varies in intensity from society to society since no society is completely impenetrable to crime (National Research Council, 2010 [28]; Ratcliffe, Strang & Taylor, 2014 [29]).

Numerous innocent people have been hurt or killed due to criminal activities around the world, making crime one of the problems that governments all over the world must deal with. Crime is a huge problem for human security that has an impact on everyone on the planet (Ukoji & Okolie-Osemene, 2016) [30]. Global in scope and historically connected to society is the phenomena of crime.

Ejemeyovwi (2015) [31] stated that for a crime to occur, there must be victims, offenders, and properties present at a location over a specific period of time, just as Mehran (2019) [32] defined crime as an act that appears to infringe and breach an existing law of a state. Any crime requires a motivated perpetrator, a suitable target, and the lack of a guardian like closed-circuit television. The lives of individuals and worldwide economic activity are now seriously threatened by crimes against people and property. According to the UNODC (2010) [4], crime challenges governance because it makes life miserable, brief, and harsh, keeps instilling fear in people, and fosters a widespread sense of insecurity in society (Okpuvwie & Toko, 2020) [33], it is impossible to overstate the effect of crime on the socioeconomic stability of society since people constantly fear being attacked or killed by criminals and hoodlums.

2.2.2. Criminal Activities on Campus

Crime does not just happen in society because there are many reasons why people commit crimes, and there is no single cause of crime because it is a complex phenomenon that varies over time and among cultures. Some persons engage in illegal activity because of the rewards, allure of the intended victim, and favorable circumstances that surround them (Ayuba *et al.*, 2016) [34]. Ukoji and Okolie (2016) [30] found that the majority of offenders engage in criminal activity for a variety of reasons, such as drug use, lack of job, pressure to close the wealth-poverty gap, greed, and inadequacy of the criminal justice system as a means of national security, among others. Salim (2015) [35] pointed out that a number of factors, including as poverty, family stability, personal and social health, demographic factors, and political considerations, are associated to crime. Sowmyya (2015) [36]. There are no people who are born criminals. His theory argued a person only acts criminally because of the circumstances and environment surrounding him. Similarly, Mahofa, Sundaram and Edwards (2014) [37] observed that the incentive to conduct criminal crime is unevenly distributed throughout space. This is as result of offenders are typically concentrated in locations with high unemployment, low economic status, and physical deterioration.

Students must deal with the realities of criminal activity on college campuses. Theft of a car, vandalism, battery, harassment, fraud, possession of a firearm, and disorderly conduct are just a few of the other crimes that can be committed on campus. The university campus is a place where these kinds of criminal activity might occur, but there have also been other notable incidents that have taken place there that have garnered notice from all over the world and elicited a variety of reactions. Though university campuses are sometimes portrayed as secure havens for students, they have occasionally welcomed those who have been victims of crimes (Carrico, 2016) [38]. Teenagers and young adults between the ages of 17 and 30 make up the majority of students on the campuses of our country's colleges. The university campus should be safe and secure for them because most of these students in this age group are experiencing freedom from

their parents and have their own sense of responsibility for the first time in their lives. In response to the frightening incidents that sent shockwaves across several campuses and put the health and safety of the students and staff at risk, colleges and universities have been pushed to take action (Jackson, & Gouseti, 2015) [39].

Despite the fact that sexual offenses will almost always get unreported to some extent out of embarrassment and concern for the public perception, there should at least be a uniform framework via which all higher education institutions must make this information available to the general public (Carr, 2005) [40]. Although historically police have not always been present on university campuses, the majority of colleges and universities now have their own police forces that serve as the primary line of defense for their campuses. In order to maintain peace and order on campuses with a large number of young adults and to support the goals of the institutions to provide a comprehensive education in a secure environment, campus police agencies are crucial (Carrico, 2016) [38].

2.3. Empirical Review

Universities of Cape Coast are beginning to see crime and violence as issues, and something needs to be done to address them. Student victims of personal and property crimes are often the victims of major offenses that impair both their academic performance and personal wellbeing.

2.3.1. Effect of Criminal Activities on Peace and Security

The study "Victims of Crime: The Experience of Criminal Justice Activities" was done by Scott in 2012 [41]. 43 people who had been criminally injured took part in the study and then went to a police interview to talk about their terrible experience. The study compared participants' peritraumatic emotions to those they experienced after criminal victimization to those they experienced during criminal justice-related activities such a police interview and court testimony. The findings supported the idea that criminal victimization might be a painful experience for those exposed, which is visible psychologically and psychophysiological. In addition, victims could experience increased stress while taking part in criminal justice activities like appearing for a police interview, providing testimony, or being cross-examined in court, especially in the days and weeks before these events.

The study also made clear that victims' perceptions of the necessity of demonstrating victimization during police interviews had an impact on their feelings of power and violation at various points throughout their experiences. For instance, during the crime script's scene and approach stages, there was a correlation between the perceived need to demonstrate victimization and increased feelings of violation and loss of control. It is reasonable to assume, according to Scott, that by recognizing and addressing the drawbacks of criminal justice activities, victims' experiences might be less traumatic, which would increase their general satisfaction and compliance, willingness to seek out other services, attrition rates, and future involvement in the criminal justice system.

A diagnosis of local security was made in the Sani, Nunes, Azevedo, & Sousa (2019) [42] study, Campus Criminal Victimization Among Higher Education Students. In addition to addressing and defining direct and indirect criminal victimization among college students, this study also looked at the relationships between victimization and other characteristics. With a mean age of 21.76 years, the participants included 775 students of both sexes. The "Diagnosis of Local Security Questionnaire" was used to obtain data from self-reports. In total, 8.6% of the students reported being victimized directly, while 39.7% reported being victimized indirectly. Robbery and theft were the offenses that were most frequently reported, whereas sexual assault, domestic abuse, and fraud were less common. Most incidents involved a stranger, took place at night on the street or at the institution, and involved a stranger. Research done by Hanson, Sawyer, Genelle, Begle, and Hubel (2010) [43], Tan and Haining (2016) [44] argued that being a victim of crime appears to have an impact on quality of life and wellbeing, as well as grade point average and the school dropout rate (Mengo & Black, 2016) [45]. In addition, 70% of participants said that security was important while deciding which college or institution to attend (Chekwa, Thomas & Jones, 2013) [12].

2.3.2. Measures Employ to Cope with Criminal Activities

As stated by Armah (2016) [46] in his study entitled "Situational Crime Prevention at Ngleshie Amanfro: The Role of the Community," the goal of this investigation was to examine the Situational Crime Prevention measures put in place by the residents of Ngleshie Amanfro to combat the sudden rise in armed robbery incidents in the neighborhood and the effectiveness, if any, of these measures against robbery attacks. His research showed that, in order to keep crime in check, particularly armed robberies in communities, stakeholders should not underestimate the importance of a well-planned community with motorable roads to allow for simple access to the many areas within the community.

This study's conclusion and those of other studies on crime prevention in Ghana (Owusu *et al.*, 2015 [47]; Lhayea, 2016 [48]) indicate that target hardening—the installation of iron bars and gates—appears to be the most widespread and easily accessible situational measure among Ghanaians. The replacement of doors, windows, locks, and barbed wires were additional less invasive target hardening techniques that were implemented.

Consequently, a study done in 2016 by Owusu *et al.* [15], themed "Is our safety and security guaranteed on the University of Cape Coast campus? perceptions of undergrad students. The purpose of the study was to learn how university of Cape Coast students felt about their safety there. 500 respondents were surveyed as part of the study to collect information for the quantitative data analysis. To have a more in-depth understanding of the opinions of ten (10) students, interviews with them were also conducted. Through the use of interviews, the study gathered data to address this research issue. Most of the students who were interviewed said that the university should offer additional dormitory amenities.

Again, they suggested that college emergency phone lines be established and that campus security should be boosted. The students recommended sufficient security personnel oversight to make sure that those on duty perform their duties well. The results of the interviews corroborate the survey's findings, which found that most people generally feel extremely safe on campus during the day but not at night. I feel comfortable during the day, but not at night, as stated by one of the respondents. I try to avoid going for a nighttime walk as a result. The majority of the interviewees expressed dissatisfaction with the campus lighting, particularly when the lights are out. They recommended fixing solar-powered streetlights. The majority of the interviewees claimed that the campus security staff lacked the necessary training, and as a result, they did not feel comfortable reporting some incidents to them when they posed a threat. In general, the researcher concluded that creating a secure learning environment and ensuring its safety requires an all-encompassing strategy that not only addresses harmful behavior (such as individuals who have a propensity for violence and bullying), but also addresses the fundamental components of the school environment to prevent such tendencies. In order to create a safe and secure school, it is necessary to address both the physical and psychosocial aspects of the school environment.

3. Methods

3.1. Research Design

In Mugenda's opinion (2003) [49], The study would use a descriptive research design, which is the approach used to do research. According to Orodho (2014) [50] descriptive design can be employed to gather data regarding people's attitudes, opinions, or behaviors. He adds that researchers might gather, present, and interpret information using descriptive designs in order to make their findings more understandable. The researcher's goal is to determine how criminal activity affects student safety and peace at the University of Cape Coast, hence this design was chosen with that goal in mind. A qualitative research approach would be used in the study. Typically, the interpretivist frame of view underlies the qualitative research design. Creswell (2009) [51] asserted that interpretivists think that different interpretations of the same evidence are possible. As it embraces numerous points of view from persons belonging to various groups, they see interpretivism as being far more inclusive. The qualitative research approach is a group of techniques used to gather, examine, and provide reports on texts, visual data, and people's experiences by digging into participants' opinions and expertise, according to Creswell (2009) [51].

Concerning the research design, the study adopted the qualitative approach because the phenomenon under consideration is mostly reliant on people's perspectives. The case study research design and the interpretivist paradigm served as the study's foundation.de Swardt, Van Rensburg, and Oosthuizen (2017) [52] point out that a case study focuses on a specific research issue in greater detail than a broad statistical survey or extensive comparison analysis would. It is fre-

quently employed to condense a big body of knowledge into one or a few manageable instances. The case study research design was used by the researcher because of the nature of the phenomenon. Based on information gathered from a number of sources, such as interviews, observations, and so on, it provides an in-depth examination and intensive description of a particular individual, group, or organization. The case study method was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to choose and concentrate on a smaller number of "information-rich" cases that allowed for the greatest level of participation and analysis. Additionally, the researcher conducted this study without having any predetermined beliefs about the results. Therefore, students who reside on the university campus and in the nearby neighborhoods are best suited to describe how criminal activity affects peace and security among students at the University of Cape Coast. Since the campus security section is the first point of contact in the event of a crime, the researchers took their thoughts into account in order for the study to fulfill its objectives. Based on the students' personal experiences rather than the researcher's own preconceived notions, the researcher analyzed the experiences of the students.

3.2. Study Setting

The study was done on the territory of (UCC). A public collegiate university called the University of Cape Coast (UCC) is situated in Cape Coast's ancient town. The school is on a hill overlooking the vast Atlantic Ocean and has a remarkable seashore. There are two campuses where it is located: The Southern Campus (Old Site) and the Northern Campus (New Site). A few kilometers from its campus are Elmina and Cape Coast Castle, two of Ghana's most significant historical landmarks. The University is surrounded by five (5) different communities: Amamoma, Kwaprow, Kwasipra, Apewosika, and Akotokyir. To meet the nation's urgent demand for highly trained and competent labor in the educational sector, the University of Cape Coast was founded as a university institution in October 1962. The two existing public universities at the time were ill-equipped to carry out its initial goal, which was to train graduate instructors for second cycle institutions, teacher training colleges, and technical institutions. With the ability to award its own degrees, diplomas, and certificates thanks to a parliamentary act, the institution became a fully independent university on October 1, 1971. As a result of the diversification of its programs and the extension of some of its faculties and schools, the university is now able to address the workforce requirements of the country's other ministries and industries in addition to the Ministry of Education. Since then, the university has expanded its scope to include the training of physicians and other medical specialists, as well as business professionals, executives, managers, lawyers, and agriculturalist (Figure 1).

The target population were security patrol team and all students, particularly those from the nearby neighborhoods, make up the target demographic. There
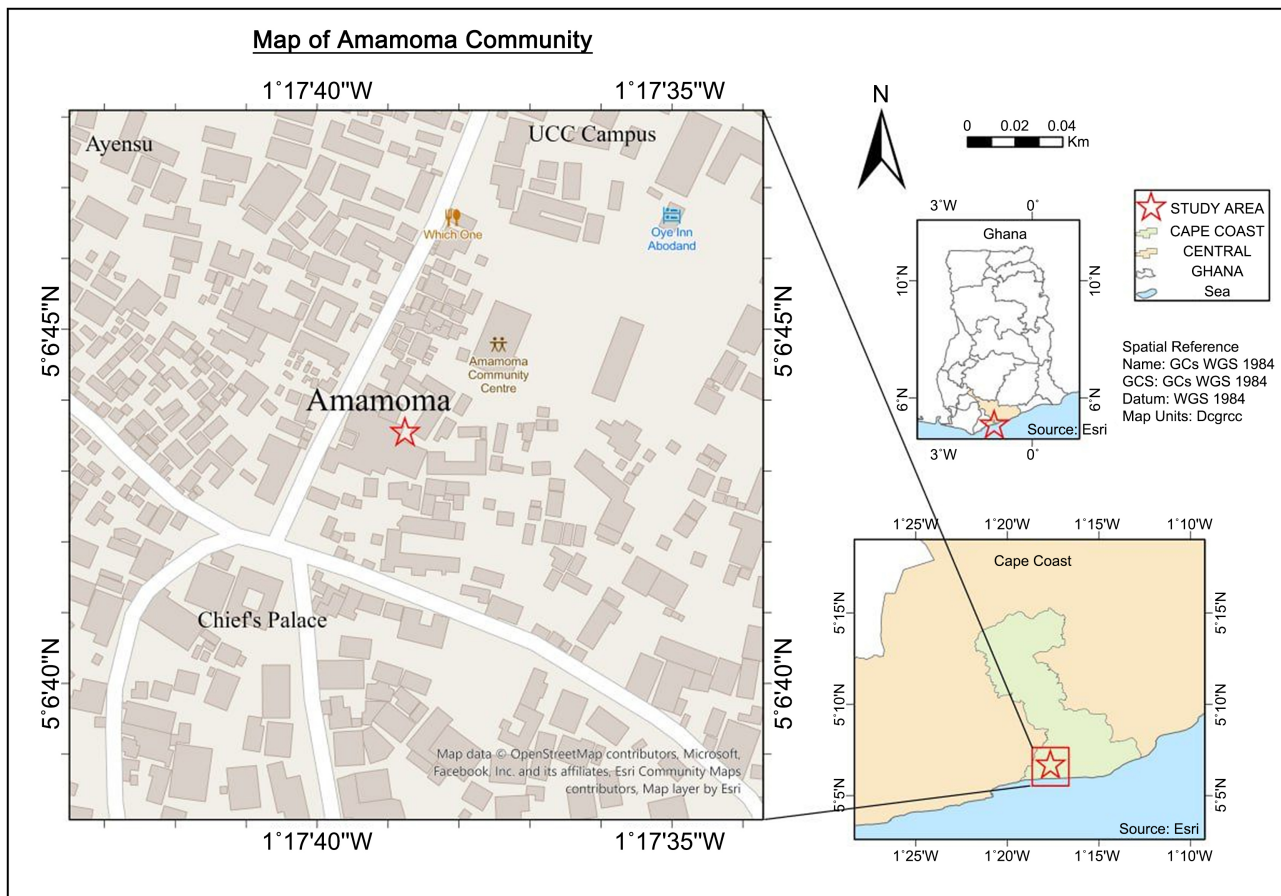
Figure 1. A map showing communities in university of cape coast. Source: Isaac Nyarko (2023).

are about 20,000 students enrolled at the University of Cape Coast, most of whom reside in the neighborhood. Drawing from a sample and sampling procedure, a smaller (but ideally representative) selection of units from a population used to ascertain truths about that population" is what a sample is (Kish, 2005) [53]. To ensure that the sample for the study meets the requirements for the study, it is carefully chosen. Patton (2002) [54], opined that purposive sampling concentrates on choosing information-rich cases whose examination will provide light on the problems under research. Again, in purposive sampling, the sample units are chosen because they have the necessary characteristics and expertise that will allow the researcher to perform a deep exploration and comprehension of the fundamental issue under discussion in the study (Fogelman & Comber, 2002) [55]. Instead of attempting to generalize about the experiences of students residing in university communities, the researcher's objective is to gather information and comprehend the fundamental nature of the issue. The researcher must choose a sample from which the most may be learnt, so deliberate sampling was necessary for this study since it is "based on the idea that the investigator wants to find, understand, and acquire insight" (Merriam, 2009) [56]. To be more precise, the researcher employed criterion sampling, a type of deliberate sampling in which individuals fulfilled the predetermined criteria for the study

(Patton, 2002) [54] Students who live close to Amamoma, Apewosika, Kwesipra, Ayensu, and Kwaprow must be the initial group of volunteers in this study. Thirty students were purposively chosen for the study. The study took into account five members of the campus security patrol team. The sample size is often modest, ranging from 5 to 35 respondents, which is a key characteristic of qualitative research. This makes it possible to examine the phenomenon in greater detail.

The data method and instrument used were interview and in-depth interview guide, which enabled the researchers to comprehend the real-world experiences of the study's participants. According to Patton (2002) [53], "qualitative interviewing begins with the premise that the perspective of others is significant, knowable, and able to be made explicit." A qualitative research tool, namely an interview guide, was used to collect data in accordance with the qualitative methodologies research paradigm guiding this study (in-depth interview). This was chosen because it is widely recognized as the greatest technique for gathering primary information about the perceptions, expertise, and experiences of a specific issue from the "actors" or "people" who would be directly impacted by the research (Patton, 2002) [54]. The data collection procedure included a cover letter (introductory letter) which was received from the department to make administering the instrument easier. This introduction letter's goals are to elicit cooperation from the respondents and to build rapport between the researchers and them. Following the granting of permission, the respondents would get a briefing on the significance of the study before being asked to participate in it. However, it would be made clear to respondents that the work is only for scholarly purposes. The responders would be guaranteed of their privacy and confidentiality, and they would have the freedom to decline the study at any time without facing any additional questions or repercussions. To help with better data collection and responsiveness, the interview schedule will thereafter be individually administered. This would guarantee a complete information recovery.

In analyzing the data, the study used the qualitative analytical techniques of continuous comparison analysis (CCA) and keywords-in-context (KWIC). These are the most typical data analysis techniques found in qualitative research (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007) [57]. These techniques were adopted in part because, in contrast to the CCA, which is typically used to answer broad, overarching questions about the data, KWIC is a suitable tool to utilize when one is interested in capturing the precise words used by the participant (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007) [57]. By employing the CCA, the researcher may always go back and double-check with the respondents on the generated themes, increasing validity, and legitimacy (Janesick, 2000 [58]; Maxwell, 2010 [59]). Trends and patterns that emerge from the careful analysis of the data will be noted down, and then they will be grouped into thematic headings that support the objectives. Comparisons will be performed with each interviewee's response after going through

all the transcribed material (which will then have already been transcribed and coded in likewise manner). Themes for the discussion and interpretations will be derived from similar responses that have been grouped together. Finally, specific themes will be discussed using direct quotes from the interviews.

4. Results and Discussions

This chapter presents the analysis, interpretations and discussion of the results of the empirical tests. The chapter is divided into three main sections. Section 4.1 is a description of the background characteristics of the population under study while sections 4.2 and 4.3 present the results on the impact of criminal activities on peace and security of students in UCC campus, strategies that students employ to cope with criminal activities in UCC, and causes and measures to prevent crime activities from the securities perspective. Graphical tools such as bar chart, pie chart, and tables (simple and percentage) were used to represent such data.

4.1. Background Data of Respondents

Figure 2 shows that 15 out of 30 representing 50% of the student respondents were males while 15 out of 30 representing 50% of the respondents were females. This show a fair opportunities given to students' respondents and the research devoid gender bias.

4.1.1. Academic Level of Respondents

Figure 3 indicated that a high number, 12 (40%) out of 30 respondents were level 300 students, while 8 (26.7%) of the respondents were in level 400, 7 (23.3%) respondents were in level 200 and the remaining 3(10%) were in level 100. This shows that about 27 out of 30 respondents are continuing students who live in the diaspora and might have some experience about crime and crime rate in the university and can make a better representation of the students.
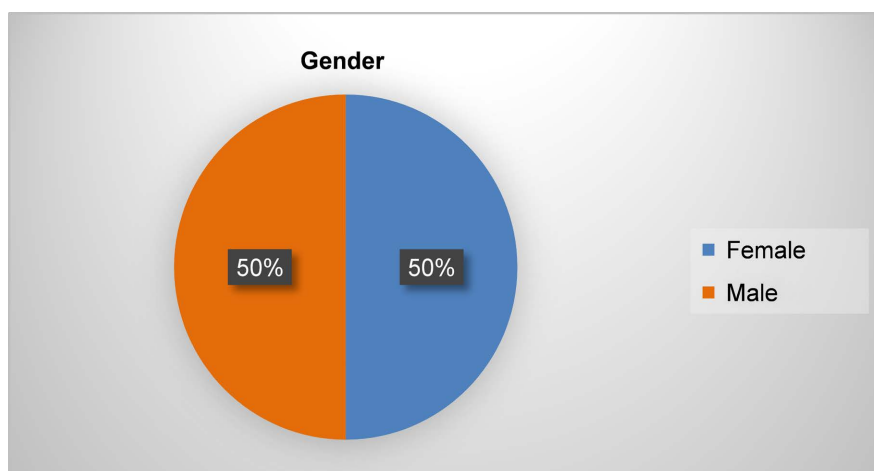

Figure 2. A pie chart showing respondents' gender distribution. Source: Field data, (2022).
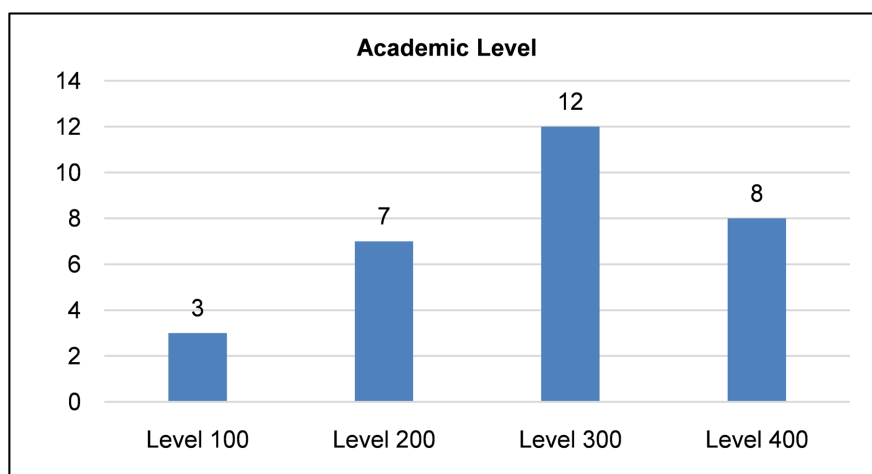
Figure 3. A bar chart showing the academic level of respondents. Source: Field data, 2022.

4.1.2. Area of Residence

Table 1 shows the area of residence of respondents. 46.7% of respondents stay at Amamoma, followed by Kwaprow (13.3%), 10% of the respondents stay at Ayensu, while 6.7% of respondents stay at kwasipra, 10% stay at Apewosika, 3.3 percent stay at Kukudo and oldsite respectively. This shows that majority of the respondents stay at Amamoma thus, closer to the main university campus. This finding coincides with the view of Kirk (1988) [60], who discovered that dangerous locations on campuses tended to be less populous, have more realistic vegetation, and had subpar lighting. It became clear that a safer campus would be one with trimmed bushes, better footpaths, adequate lighting, and low crime rates.

Further decomposition of the data to was done to established the relationship between the respondent' area of residence and their academic level.

Table 2 shows a cross tabulation of area of residence and academic level of respondents. This indicated how respondents in various academic levels are distributed among the various university communities. It can be observed that among the 11 respondents who are in level 300, seven of them stayd at Amamoma, while two of them stayed at Ayensu and 1 stay Apewosika and Kwaprow respectively. Furthermore, among the nine respondents who are in level 400, three of them stay at Amamoma, two of them stayed at Kwasipra, while remaining stayed at Apewosika, Ayensu and Kwaprow respectively. Moreover, among the nine respondents who are in level 200, four of them stayed at Amamoma, two of them stayed at Kwaprow as well as the rest stayed at Apewosika, Kukudo and Oldsite in that regard. This, then signify that students at all levels would prefer staying at either Amamoma, Ayensu and/or Kwaprow but Amamoma was predominantly preferred habitat by students in the University of Cape Coast. This finding confirms Flannery and Quinn-Leering, (2000) [61] who argued that University campuses are generally seen to be safe places to learn. Violent crime rates in the neighborhoods where universities are found are ten times higher than on university campuses. But a lot of college students encounter dangerous behavior while they're on campus, either as offenders or victims or both.

Table 1. The area of residence of the respondents for the study.

Area of residence	Freq.	Percent
Amamoma	14	46.7
Apewosika	3	10.0
Ayensu	3	10
Kukudo	1	3.3
Kwaprow	4	13.3
Kwasipra	2	6.67
Oldsite	3	10.0
Total	30	100

Table 2. The respondents' area of residence and their academic level.

Area of residence	Academic Level				
	100	200	300	400	Total
Amamoma	0	4	7	3	14
Apewosika	0	1	1	1	3
Ayensu	0	0	2	1	3
Kukudo	0	1	0	0	1
Kwaprow	0	2	1	1	4
Kwasipra	0	0	0	2	2
Oldsite	1	1	0	1	3
Total	1	9	11	9	30

Source: Field data (2022).

4.2. Implications of Criminal Activities on Peace and Security of Students in UCC Campus

To achieve the first objective that seeks to examine the implications of criminal activities on peace and security of students in UCC campus, respondents were asked whether criminal activities affect students and some of the effects it has on their peace and security. The results were shown in Figure 4 and Figure 5.

As shown from the analysis in Figure 4, 30 out of 30 respondents stated that criminal activity affects peace and security on UCC campus. This means 100% of the respondents are not happy about the criminal activities going on campus. Consequently, Figure 5 shows some of the effects that criminal activity has on peace and security of students, 14 out of 30 representing 46.67% of respondents stated that criminal activities put fear and panic into students, 4 (13.33%) stated that it has psychological effect on students, 3 (10%) stated that it affects academic

```
     21. Do
  criminal
activities
    affect
 students'
 peace and
security on
  campus?        Freq.     Percent        Cum.

       Yes          30      100.00      100.00

     Total          30      100.00
```

Figure 4. Result of whether criminal activities affect students.

```
22. What are some of the effects of
    criminal activities on students'
                    peace and s        Freq.     Percent        Cum.

            Academic performance           3       10.00       10.00
                  Fear and Panic          14       46.67       56.67
                      Insecurity           1        3.33       60.00
                Loss of property           2        6.67       66.67
Physical strength and poor performance     1        3.33       70.00
        Poor academic performance          1        3.33       73.33
             Psychological effect          4       13.33       86.67
They become afraid and find it difficul    1        3.33       90.00
                They loss focus            1        3.33       93.33
               Walking in groups           1        3.33       96.67
                     Worriness             1        3.33      100.00

                          Total           30      100.00
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Figure 5. Effects of criminal activities on students' peace and security in UCC campus.

performance. Some other effects stated are loss of focus, worries, loss of properties, and insecurity. These findings corroborate the findings of Scott (2012) [41] who concluded that the idea that criminal victimization might be a painful experience for those exposed, which is visible psychologically and psychophysiological, and Mengo and Black (2016) [45] who opined that being a victim of crime appears to have an impact on quality of life and wellbeing, as well as grade point average and the school dropout rate.

4.3. Strategies to Cope With Criminal Activities in UCC Campus

To achieve the fourth objective that seeks to identify the strategies that students employ to cope with criminal activities in UCC campus. Respondents were asked the strategies they employ in order not to fall victim to crime. The results were shown in **Figure 6**.

From **Figure 6**, 11 out of 30 representing 36.67% respondents stated that they employ the strategy of walking in groups, 7 (23.3%) respondents stated that they go to campus early and return in other not to be attacked at night, and 3 (10%) stated that they stay for few hours on campus. Other strategies stated are look

23. What strategies do you employ as a student in order not to fall victim to cr	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Extra careful	1	3.33	3.33
Go early and Return early (Studying on	7	23.33	26.67
Lock doors	1	3.33	30.00
Securities should take their duties ser	2	6.67	36.67
Students should move in groups	2	6.67	43.33
Study for few hours on campus	3	10.00	53.33
Take precausional measures	2	6.67	60.00
Walking in groups	11	36.67	96.67
lock doors	1	3.33	100.00
Total	30	100.00	

Figure 6. Result of strategies to cope with criminal activities in UCC campus.

doors, taking personal measures, and being extra careful. This finding replicate the views of Owusu *et al.* (2015) [47] and Lhayea (2016) [48], who argued that in order to keep crime in check target hardening—the installation of iron bars and gates—appears to be the most widespread and easily accessible situational measure among Ghanaians. The replacement of doors, windows, locks, and barbed wires were additional less invasive target hardening techniques that were implemented.

4.3.1. Students and Security Personnel Opinions on the Causes of Criminal Activities on Campus

Questions were directed to students living in the University surrounding communities about the causes of these criminal activities happening around. It was discovered that there are no security posts at vantage points within the surrounding communities. With the few checkpoints available at some routes that connect main campus to the surrounding communities of the University, you hardly see security guards on duty. It was emphatically stated that there is the need for security posts and checkpoints within the surrounding communities with security guards on duty throughout the day and night period. The researcher also discovered that security patrols within the communities are rare to be countered and the few patrols which are done last within a short period.

Again, some students also expressed their opinion that these criminal activities happen as a result of improper layout or planned settlement within the communities, ineffective control mechanisms, financial difficulties and unemployment situations among members of the surrounding communities. It was stressed that inadequate streetlights, walking alone at night and drug abuse or addiction are all major contributed factors that lead to crime in the University surrounding communities.

An undergraduate student also expresses her opinion in this manner,

There are inadequate security personnel to ensure peace and security within the surrounding communities. The few security men and police who are ensuring peace and security are not well motivated. I think there is the need

to employ more security personnel to improve the security of students. In addition, the security and the police patrolling in the communities should be well motivated.

The responses from the University security patrol team members to the above questions partly confirm and partly stand contrary to that of the students. As expressed by a security person,

"*Though we go on few patrols, we don't normally patrol around the University surrounding communities because they are not part of the University. For me, most of these criminal activities happened because of the absence of security patrols within the communities. I have also observed that most of these criminal activities occurred at places that are bushy within the communities*" (*Patrol Team Member, UCC, Sept.* 2022)

Another security personnel expressed his opinion that,

All these criminal issues are happening because of no inadequate security measures taken by the communities surrounding the University to control crime within the community. Again, most of the students are rich and they drive big cars around so these criminals around mostly target them (*Patrol Team Member, UCC, Sept.* 2022).

The continuous occurrence of these criminal activities within the University surrounding communities make the communities a bit difficult to live. This data is consistence with that of Quinn and Flannery (2000) [61], who discovered that students in the neighbourhood where colleges are located have a 10 times higher rate of criminal activity than students on university campuses (hall).

4.3.2. Strategies to Cope With Criminal Activities in UCC Campus

Based on the analysis and findings, it is very clear that students who live in the surrounding communities of the University fall victim to crime each and every day. To the best of researcher's knowledge about seventy percent of the student's populace live in the surrounding communities of the University. These students residing in the communities are because of limited accommodation spaces in the University's halls of residence. With this, it is the responsibility of the University to provide suitable security services to such students in order to generate a serene environment for the betterment of students. According to Dennis and McCreedy (1996) [62], around 86 percent of non-residential students surveyed in their study had a strong fear of becoming a victim of crime. In light of this, Akiba (2010) [63] argued that educators, administrators and policymakers have a responsibility to promote a safe and secure learning environment for all students.

The findings of the study identified that majority of the students' especially female students normally walk in per or groups, leave campus early to their hostels, and hide their belongings when walking alone as a way of not falling victim to crime.

A female student expressed her opinion that,

I mostly go out with my roommate anytime I want to buy something in the evenings. At times I feel like taking a walk around in the evening but I am scared so I try to stay indoors all the time. I also lock my door immediately I enter my room every day in order not to be attacked by these criminals (*Patrol Team Member, UCC, Sept.* 2022).

One security personnel expressed his opinion that

To me, controlling crime in the surrounding communities would be a difficult task but if the University Authorities can meet with the leaders of the communities' things will change for good. The community watch dogs are the most effective system if only they can monitor and control their activities in the communities.

In the perspective of the security personnel, they expressed their views that the various stakeholder of the University should collaborate with the leaders of the communities to draw out appropriate measures that will deal with these criminals' issues once and for all. They suggested that one effective way is by involving community members and creation of community watch dog to patrol within the communities to control crime.

Summarily, the presented results and discussion dovetail on the implications of criminal activities on peace and security among university students. It was found that majority of the respondents agree that crime rate has increased recently on UCC campus and communities like Amamoma, Kwaprow and Ayensu are the hotspot residence. The study reviewed that all the respondents agree that crime affects students. The major perpetrators were reviewed to be town members. Crime affects student's peace and security and some of these effects were fear and panic, psychological effect, academic performance, loss of focus, worries, loss of properties, and insecurity. Due to the effect of crime on student's peace and security, students employ strategies such as walking in groups, going to campus early and returning early, staying for few hours on campus, and looking doors.

5. Conclusion

The study highlighted the implications of criminal activities on peace and security among university students, particularly using University of Cape Coast as a case study. The study's findings have consequences for the safety and comfort of students on campus. It was concluded that the university campus is rife with criminal activity because of the complicated nature of the settlement and the lack of any workable procedures to safeguard the safety and security of students in the areas around the university. The administration of the University of Cape Coast has not taken any significant action to combat crime in the areas around the university that are home to students from the diaspora, which threatens their safety and tranquillity. Ineffective institutions supporting security initiatives at

the University's surrounding neighbourhoods are to blame for the widespread criminal activity there. The study therefore, suggested that the School Authorities work with the leaders of the various communities to develop effective security measures that will help to overcome the security threat in the communities since the majority of students reside in the communities surrounding the university. This will help to improve the safety of students. Furthermore, the study advises students to adopt personal security precautions like as locking doors, walking in groups, and putting their personal items in the proper places in order to lessen the workload of the campus security. However, due to deficiency that may arise from the study, additional research is required to look at the impact of criminal activity on academic performance of students living abroad in order to understand the extent to which it affects university students' academic performance. Again, the interview was limited to discussing the students and campus security staff. This prevented university administrators including the dean of students, the director of academics, and the SRC body from having a chance to express their opinions regarding the issue. Future research can provide a forum for the university's various authorities to discuss the issue.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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