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Inter-Agency Collaboration against Transnational Crime and Law Enforcement within Seme Badagry Border Migration Corridor Example

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Abstract

The seriousness of transnational organized crime globally particularly across Nigeria and her neighbouring countries cannot be overemphasized leaving scholars to banter on diverse perspectives to its root and control design models. , and at the international level, Nigeria has demonstrated a commitment to cooperating with other countries particularly in the West African sub-region to combat its threats both bilaterally and multilaterally level to no avail, the need for inter-agency collaboration however, within Nigeria (at national level), is expedient. Hence, the focus of this study is to examine inter-agency collaboration in law enforcement against transnational organized crime, Seme, Badagry border migration corridor example. Using social network and institutional theories as well as mixed-method research design were adopted to examine the topic of interaction within Lagos international airports as population producing purposively and simple randomly 132 sampled respondents, thirty-two (32) each component agencies (NAFs, EFCC, ICPC, NDLEA, NIS, NCS, NSCDC, NPF, NIA, DMI) personnels for quantitative data while of the study interviewed ten (10, one each personnel). So, structured and self-administered questionnaires supported by key informant interviews (KIIs) are two instruments for data collection. While frequency distribution table aligned with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 software was utilized for quantitative data, after thematic transcribed content analysis was adopted for qualitative data. Based on the findings, human trafficking, drug trafficking are the major forms and trends of TOC in Nigeria and they have no significant impact in the country. The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), and Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), are the prominent legal institution for inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC in Nigeria. A continuous strengthening of strong inter-agency collaboration was recommended among others.

Keywords:

Introduction

Regular and irregular migration and crime between origine and destination are constant push factors that present space for transnational organized criminality (TOC) that test the resilience, capacity, and vulnerability of state and non-state actors in law enforcement. The diverse nature and concerns of migration and related infractions bring to spotlight the strength and weakness of inter-agency collaboration and partnership in law enforcement anywhere across the globe. However, it follows that given the diverse dimensions and shades of crime, for its control strategy to be effective it got to be categorized and localized. This nuance, brings to mind the need for network across community police system and sister agencies in addressing the specifics of criminality. Such TOC as drug trafficking, human trafficking, wildlife trafficking, smuggling migrants, cybercrime, terrorism, cross-border banditry, cults, money laundering, advanced fee fraud, abduction, maritime crimes, among other activities (Mobolaji & Alabi, 2017; Eze-Michael, 2021; UNODC, 2022; 2023). Individuals in different countries that maintain successful operations and communication plans to carry out periodic, repeatable illicit exchanges are considered to be engaging in TOC (Eze-Michael, 2021). Because the offenders

are motivated to get material or financial gain from their actions, whether directly or indirectly, this challenge has real or prospective impacts across national borders. The masterminds behind these crimes pose serious challenges to Nigeria, just as they do to other countries (UNODC, 2022).

As TOC continues to be a serious threat to both national and international peace and security, and continues to expand with serious consequences for democratic institutions, public health, safety, economic stability, and development all over the world. However, the developing regions and countries are largely at the receiving end. This is occasioned by the existence of very wide propensity to emigrate, surging poverty, non-state armed groups, climate change, combine to generate peace and security challenges bedeviling countries especially Nigeria with wide range of manned and unmanned entry and exit borders (UNODC, 2023). Latest study released by UNODC and Nigeria's National Institute of Security Studies (NISS), TOC in the country has grown more brutal and sophisticated (UNODC, 2023). TOC refers to organized crimes or misconduct that are enabled across national borders and includes criminal groups or networks of individuals operating in multiple countries to plan and carry out illegal business operations in order to achieve their goals (Eze-Michael, 2021). They are coordinated across national borders and involves markets or groups of people operating in multiple countries to organize and carry out unlawful economic ventures (Suleiman, 2023).

TOC demonstrates the adaptability and dynamic nature of societies by swiftly blending in with different social settings. Since most TOC networks are transnational in nature and transcend geographical boundaries as well as linguistic and cultural barriers, TOC is a major problem for the entire world community (UNODC, 2013). According to UN and the Council of Europe, drug trafficking is the most prevalent illicit crime carried out worldwide. Others include cybercrime, smuggling of migrants, firearms trafficking, trafficking in environmental resources and counterfeit goods, and maritime piracy (Adesina, 2021; Council of Europe, 2005; Ebbe, 2012). In the current era, TOC is on the rise, primarily due to porous borders and unpatriotic actions by security agencies. This has significantly impacted a country's security standing in comparison to other nations. The intricacy of these organizations and their operations, their global reach, and the danger they pose to democracy and lawful economic progress demonstrate how serious the issue is; these groups blatantly subvert the idea of the nation state (Shelly, 1995; Mobolaji & Alabi, 2017).

TOC often destroy the political, economic, and social relationships between nations (Mobolaji & Alabi, 2017). They exploit the vulnerabilities of the state and society. TOC also undermines the rule of law, human rights, and good governance, and fuels corruption, violence, and conflict in the country. Combating TOC, according to Hatchard (2006), presents at least three difficulties for most African states including Nigeria. The first is how to handle crimes that come from areas beyond than their respective purviews. The second deals with investigating crimes having transnational elements while the third involves tracking down and retrieving criminal proceeds that have been transferred outside of the nation where the crime was committed (Hatchard, 2006).

Over time, the Nigerian government has aided international organizations in their attempts to put an end to illicit crimes within the country in an effort to stop the spread of TOC. International organizations that are pertinent, including UNODC, have joined forces with the Nigerian government to address the multifaceted threat of TOC and its detrimental impacts on governance and society (UNODC, 2022). These are efforts made at the international level. Within the national level, the commitment and effort of the Nigerian government towards

combatting TOC is hindered by a whole lot of setbacks including corruption, poor governance, a lack of political will. Mobolaji and Alabi (2017) posits that the intricate security challenge posed by TOC necessitates a joint and multifaceted strategy and response. Subscribing to this position, this study argues for the potential of inter-agency collaboration and coordination as a promising strategical approach to address and combat the increasing rate of TOC in Nigeria.

Consequently, noting the seriousness of TOC, Nigeria and its neighbouring countries, and at the international level, Nigeria has demonstrated a commitment to cooperating with other countries particularly in the West African sub-region to combat its threats both bilaterally and multilaterally level to no avail, the need for inter-agency collaboration however, within Nigeria (at national level), is expedient. Hence, the focus of this study is to examine inter-agency collaboration in law enforcement against transnational organized crime, Seme, Badagry border migration corridor example. The following questions evolve from the above gap: what is the nature of inter-agency collaboration, what local concerns sustain/obstruct inter-agency collaboration, what alternative support is needed for agencies to collaborate, how can TOC be discouraged among migrants and how can legal framework encourage inter-agency collaboration?

Material and methods

To provide framework for the study, the social network and institutional theories as well as mixed-method research design were adopted. Lagos State, Nigeria, being the location of one of two States with the most functional international airports constitute the study population where using purposive and simple random sampling, a total of one hundred and thirty-two (132) respondents, thirty two (32) each consisting of agencies (NAFs, EFCC, ICPC, NDLEA, NIS, NCS, NSCDC, NPF, NIA, DMI) personnels formed the sample size for quantitative data while of the study. Mixed-method design and data collection adopted. So, structured and self-administered questionnaires supported by key informant interviews (KIIs) are two instruments for data collection. While frequency distribution table aligned with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 software was utilized for quantitative data, after thematic transcribed content analysis was adopted for qualitative data.

Literature Review

This chapter reviews prior studies and scholarship on chosen the topic for this project. As outlined in Chapter One, the inquiry sought to: (1) examine the main types and trends of TOC in Nigeria and their impacts on the country; (2) examine the existing legal and institutional frameworks for inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC in Nigeria, and their effectiveness; (3) identify the best practices and lessons learned from other countries that have implemented inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC; (4) investigate the main challenges and gaps that hinder inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC in Nigeria, and the possibilities for overcoming them; and (5) suggest recommendations and strategies for improving and strengthening inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC in Nigeria. The following sub-sections contain a review of extant literature on the subject matter.

Definitions of TOC

Transnational organized crime (TOC) is a general term that encompasses a broad range of illegal activities that transcend national boundaries or have implications around the world. TOC is the planning and execution of illicit business and economic activities by networks or groups of people operating in multiple countries, who use systematic violence and corruption to further their objectives (UNODC, 2021). The Convention also describes it as a group of three or more

people who have been together for a while and are working together to commit one or more significant crimes or violations (United Nations [UN], 2000). However, there is no single, universally accepted definition of TOC, as different scholars and international institutions may emphasize different aspects of the phenomenon, such as the nature, structure, motivation, impact, or response to TOC. For instance, the Convention definition emphasizes the collective nature of these criminal groups, the execution of illegal activities, and the commission of serious crimes as their primary objective.

UNODC defines TOC as “any group having a structured presence across two or more countries, characterized by operating hierarchically, engaging in serious illegal activities, and employing violence or other forms of intimidation when necessary to protect and expand their illicit enterprises” (UNODC, 2000, p. 6). This definition by UNODC highlights the international reach, hierarchical structure, and use of violence within these criminal organizations. The European Union (EU) also defines TOC as “criminal groups originating in one or more countries that plan and execute criminal activities where two or more countries are involved” (European Commission, 2004, p. 3). This definition emphasizes the cross-border nature of such criminal activities and the involvement of multiple countries in the planning and execution of crimes.

TOC describes organized crimes that are made possible by cross-border connections. This includes criminal organizations or networks of individuals that operate internationally to plot and execute illicit commercial ventures in order to further their objectives (Eze-Michael, 2021). They involve marketplaces or groups of persons functioning in several countries to plan and carry out illegal commercial enterprises, and they are coordinated across national borders (Suleiman, 2023). TOC, as defined by Morselli (2009), is a network of people who work across borders in a variety of fields (such as narcotics, arms, and human trafficking) and are only loosely connected by a range of ties. Each person has varying degrees of involvement and dedication. This viewpoint draws attention to the variety of illicit acts these groups participate in as well as their network structure. Another definition of TOC put out by Shaw and McCormick (2000) is a structured organization of people and/or corporations that work beyond national boundaries in order to engage in illicit operations in order to achieve power, influence, and financial or commercial gains. The authors' emphasis here is on the illegal actions that cross national borders in the pursuit of power, influence, and financial gain. The definitions provided by the United Nations Convention, the UNODC, EU, Morselli, and Shaw and McCormick contribute to a deeper understanding of this transnational event.

There are other definitions put forward by scholars:

Varese (2010) defines TOC as “the convergence of crime and globalization, where criminal entrepreneurs operating in networked structures across borders take advantage of differences in legal regimes, enforcement capacities, and market opportunities”. Williams (2001) defines TOC as the “illicit provision of goods and services across national borders by groups that systematically resort to violence and corruption and that seek protection from, or even control over, segments of the state apparatus” (p. 48). Makarenko (2004, p. 131) describes TOC as “the use of transnational networks, alliances, and infrastructures by crime groups and entrepreneurs to conduct illicit activities and evade law enforcement”.

With components including geographic reach, hierarchical structures, violence, power-seeking, financial benefits, group intent, cross-border cooperation, and engagement in a variety of illicit activities, these varied definitions demonstrate the dynamic nature of TOC. Based on their areas of expertise and research interests, academics and organizations have provided a variety of

viewpoints that enhance our understanding of this phenomenon. Under this study, I operationalize and define TOC as a term that defines all sort of criminal activities that is done across national borders by criminal groups and networks, and includes drug trafficking, arms trafficking, human trafficking, money laundering, cybercrime, terrorism, migrant smuggling, advanced fee fraud, among others. These criminal groups or network of individuals adopt sophisticated methods and technologies to evade law enforcement and dishonestly exploit the differences in legal systems, cultures, and economies of different countries.

Trends and forms of TOC in Nigeria

TOC is a complex and multifaceted issue that demands global attention and concerted efforts. The position of the security of a country relative to other countries is greatly influenced by its TOC (Shelly, 1995; Mobolaji & Alabi, 2017). Nigeria is a major hub and transit point for various forms of TOC, such as human trafficking, drug trafficking, wildlife trafficking, advanced fee fraud, money laundering, cross-border banditry, cybercrime, terrorism, human smuggling (smuggling migrants), maritime piracy (crimes), kidnapping (abduction), extortion, and cultism (Mobolaji & Alabi, 2017; Eze-Michael, 2021; ENACT, 2023; Suleiman, 2023; UNODC, 2022; 2023).

Aside human trafficking, as major form of TOC, another type of TOC, smuggling is also widespread in Nigeria. This type of crime is driven by frustration, greed and desperation (ENACT, 2023; Suleiman, 2023; UNODC, 2023). Drug trafficking is another major type of TOC in Nigeria, which serves as a transit point for cocaine and heroin from South America and Asia to Europe and other African countries. Nigeria is also a source and destination country for cannabis, methamphetamine, and tramadol. Drug trafficking is facilitated by the country's strategic location along global shipping routes, large-scale transport infrastructure, and porous borders. Drug trafficking is linked to corruption, money laundering, violence, and terrorism in the country and the region (Bonsoh, 2017; Suleiman, 2023; UNODC, 2023). The UN and the Council of Europe claim that drug trafficking is the most common illegal activity committed globally (Council of Europe, 2005; Ebbe, 2012; Adesina, 2021).

Wildlife trafficking is now a growing problem in Nigeria like it is in other place like ivory, pangolin, and rosewood. Nigeria is the largest destination for ivory and pangolin scales from Africa, and the largest source of rosewood exports to China. Wildlife trafficking is driven by the high demand and prices for these products in Asia, as well as the weak enforcement and regulation of the wildlife sector in Nigeria. It poses serious threats to the biodiversity, environment, and economy of Nigeria and the region (Bonsoh, 2017; Suleiman, 2023; UNODC, 2023).

Maritime piracy is another type of TOC that affects Nigeria and even the Gulf of Guinea. Maritime criminals, often referred to as *pirates*, attack ships with the purpose of kidnapping crew members for ransom, or hijacking oil tankers for stealing crude oil. Maritime piracy is enabled by the lack of maritime security and governance, the abundance of oil resources, and the presence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region. It has negative impacts on the maritime trade, oil industry, and regional stability of Nigeria and even the Gulf of Guinea (ENACT, 2023; Suleiman, 2023; UNODC, 2023).

Also, forceful disappearance of persons, and yahoo plus that combine diabolism with online crime are fast growing into significant security threats. These forms of TOC constitute lucrative business for criminal groups in Nigeria, who exploit the weak security and law enforcement, the chronic rate of poverty and unemployment, and the political and ethnic tensions in the

country. It is also used as a tactic by terrorist groups such as Boko Haram Sect and ISWAP, who have abducted hundreds of civilians, including schoolchildren, for ideological and financial purposes (ENACT, 2023; Suleiman, 2023; UNODC, 2023).

Cultism also qualifies as a type of TOC in Nigeria. It is a phenomenon that involves the formation and operation of secret societies or gangs, often with violent and criminal activities. Cults and politics are sometimes intertwined in Nigeria, as cult members are hired by politicians and traditional rulers to intimidate opponents, rig elections, or carry out assassinations. Cults are also involved in drug trafficking, human trafficking, and kidnapping, among other crimes (ENACT, n.d.; Suleiman, 2023; UNODC, 2023).

Causes and effects of TOC

Some causes and effects of TOC have been previously highlighted under the trends of some types of TOC. This sub-section serves as an addition. It has been previously argued that TOC poses a profound challenge to global security and socio-economic stability. Because TOC subverts the rule of law, encourages corruption and violence, and takes advantage of weaker groups, it poses a severe threat to the security, stability, and prosperity of Nigeria as well as its neighboring countries (Adeyemi, 2013; Eboh, 2017).

In Nigeria, TOC, according to some scholars, is driven by weak governance, corruption, insecurity, and natural resources (Shelly, 1995; Mobolaji & Alabi, 2017; ENACT, 2023; Suleiman, 2023; UNODC, 2023). These views underscore its increasing sophistication and violent tendency that pose serious threats to the well-being, security, and development of the country and the region.

Institutional frameworks for inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC in Nigeria

Nigeria is a party and member to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its three Protocols, which provide the legal framework and tools for global cooperation and mutual assistance in combating TOC (UNODC, 2020). Nigeria has also enacted various domestic laws to address the different types of TOC, such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Act, the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act, the Terrorism (Prevention) Act, the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act, and the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act. To enforce these various laws and address the numerous forms of TOC, Nigeria has also established several specialized institutions, including the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), the Nigerian Police Force (NPF), among others (Okogbule, 2006; Okeke, 2019; Umejiaku, 2019; Ige, 2022; UNODC, 2022a).

Nigeria has also participated in numerous regional and international networks and initiatives to enhance cooperation and coordination with other countries and organizations, such as the West African Network of Central Authorities and Prosecutors (WACAP), the Judicial Cooperation Network for Central Asia and Southern Caucasus (CASC), the South East Asia Justice Network (SEAJust), the Global Programme for Strengthening Capacities of Member States to Prevent and Combat Transnational Organized and Serious Crime (GPTOC), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), and the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for West Africa (ARINWA) (Okeke, 2019; UNODC, 2022a).

However, despite these legal and institutional frameworks, the effectiveness of these frameworks in combating TOC is hampered by several significant challenges, such as lack of coordination and collaboration among different agencies, inadequate resources and capacity, political interference, corruption, weak judicial system and prosecution, jurisdictional conflicts, legal loopholes, poor data collection and analysis, and external influences (Owasanoye, 2013; Ojukwu & Ugwuoke, 2015; UN, 2015; 2019; Okeke, 2019; UNODC, 2022a). Thus, there is a need for more concerted and comprehensive efforts to strengthen the implementation and enforcement of the existing legal and institutional frameworks, as well as to address the underlying causes and consequences of TOC in Nigeria and beyond (Okeke, 2019; Ojukwu & Ugwuoke, 2015; Owasanoye, 2013).

Best practices and lessons from other countries with respect to implementing inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC

The United States has adopted a strategy to combat TOC that involves enhancing intelligence collection, analysis, and counterintelligence on TOC, as well as collaborating with law enforcement authorities at federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial levels and sharing information with foreign counterparts. The strategy also calls for building new partnerships with industry, finance, academia, civil society and non-governmental organizations to combat organized crime networks that operate in the illicit and licit worlds, as well as strengthening the rule of law and investing in improved data collection (National Security Council, 2020; 2021; Galindo, 2024; Virginia Commonwealth University [VCU], 2023).

The United Kingdom has established the National Crime Agency (NCA), which is the lead agency for fighting serious crime and TOC in the UK and abroad. The NCA works with other law enforcement agencies, such as the police, the Border Force, the Serious Fraud Office, and the intelligence services, to share intelligence, coordinate operations, and provide specialist capabilities. The NCA also cooperates with international partners, such as Europol, Interpol, and the Five Eyes alliance (Hanley-Giersch, 2012; UNODC, 2022).

Canada has established the Integrated National Security Enforcement Teams (INSETs), which are multi-agency units that bring together federal, provincial, and municipal law enforcement and intelligence agencies to prevent, detect, deny, and respond to national security threats, including terrorism and TOC (Public Safety Canada, 2021).

Japan has also adopted the Act on Punishment of Organized Crimes and Control of Crime Proceeds, which criminalizes the participation in an organized crime group, enhances the confiscation and freezing of crime proceeds, and facilitates international cooperation in mutual legal assistance and extradition (UNODC, 2019).

New Zealand has also adopted a Transnational Organised Crime Strategy for 2020-2025, which brings together government agencies to tackle organized crime by setting out a framework for greater coordination and prioritization of government responses across a wide range of crime types. The strategy also seeks to strengthen capability, improve understanding and raise awareness across relevant government agencies and other partners, such as the private sector and local communities (Anzsog, 2018; New Zealand Police, 2020; Sherlock, 2020).

South Africa has enacted the Prevention of Organized Crime Act (POCA), which provides a comprehensive framework for preventing and combating organized crime, including provisions for criminalizing the participation in an organized crime group, enhancing the confiscation and freezing of crime proceeds, and facilitating international cooperation in

mutual legal assistance and extradition. South Africa also participates in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and UNODC initiatives to enhance regional and international cooperation against TOC (Hanley-Giersch, 2012; Sherloc, 2020; Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2021; Ogbu, Shumba, & Abimbola, 2023; Rakubu, 2023).

The UN Security Council has recognized the importance of enhancing international and regional cooperation to counter TOC, and has urged member states to improve border management, strengthen judicial and law enforcement capacities, and develop capabilities to investigate arms-trafficking networks (UN Press, 2023).

The European Union (EU) has established the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats (EMPACT), which is a project-based cooperation framework that brings together law enforcement authorities from EU member states and partner countries, as well as EU agencies and international organizations, to tackle priority crime areas such as cybercrime, drug trafficking, migrant smuggling, and firearms trafficking (Europol, 2021).

The African Union (AU) has adopted the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption, which provides a comprehensive framework for promoting good governance, accountability, and transparency, as well as enhancing cooperation among African states in preventing, detecting, punishing, and eradicating corruption and related offences (African Union, 2003; Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2021).

The UNODC has also called for building new partnerships with industry, finance, academia, civil society and non-governmental organizations to combat TOC networks that operate in the illicit and licit worlds, as well as strengthening the rule of law and investing in improved data collection (UN News, 2023). Also, the Conference of the Parties to the UNTOC has highlighted the need for establishing key multilateral instruments addressing different forms of crime, and for enhancing operational cooperation between law enforcement agencies and other competent authorities, such as conducting joint inquiries and establishing joint investigative teams or bodies (UN, 2020).

Challenges and gaps in addressing TOC and recommended solutions

One of the key challenges in addressing TOC is the lack of adequate and timely intelligence sharing among different agencies, both nationally and internationally. Therefore, enhancing intelligence collection, analysis, and counterintelligence on TOC is a necessary first step. However, this should be accompanied by collaboration with law enforcement authorities at various levels and enhanced sharing with foreign counterparts (National Security Council, 2021; UN News, 2023).

Another challenge is the diversity and complexity of TOC networks, which operate across different sectors, regions, and jurisdictions. To counter this, a comprehensive and multidimensional approach is needed, which involves building international consensus, multilateral cooperation, and public-private partnerships to address the root causes and consequences of TOC, as well as the illicit markets and activities that sustain it (National Security Council, 2020; UNODC, 2023).

A third challenge is the impact of TOC on peace and security, especially in conflict-affected and fragile contexts, where TOC can fuel violence, corruption, and instability, and undermine the authority and effectiveness of state institutions. To prevent and mitigate this, the Security Council has recognized the importance of enhanced political and conflict-related analysis,

including on criminal networks that support TOC and terrorism, and expressed its intention to consider such threats in its agenda, as appropriate (UN, 2020; UN News, 2023; UN Press, 2023).

Results and interpretations

This segment deals with the presentation, analysis, interpretation and discussion of findings of the data collected from the field in the course of the study.

4.2 Response Rate

Questionnaire Printed	Questionnaire Distributed	Questionnaire Returned	Response Rate
132	132	132	100%

4.3: Demographic Profile of Respondent

Table 4.3.1 Sex distribution of respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	88	66.7	66.7
	Female	44	33.3	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

The sex distribution of respondents as presented in Table 4.3.1 shows that 88 respondents representing 66.7% of the respondents are males while 44 representing 33.3 % are females. This implies that the male respondents are greater in number.

Table 4.3.2 Age distribution of respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-25years	10	7.6	7.6
	26-35years	44	33.3	40.9
	36-45years	60	45.5	86.4
	45years and above	18	13.6	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

The age distribution of respondents as presented in Table 4.3.2 shows that 10 respondents representing 7.6% are between 18-25years of age, 44 respondents representing 33.3% are between 26-35years of age, 60 respondents representing 45.5% are between 36-45years of age, and 18 respondents representing 13.6% are 45years and above. This implies that the majority of respondents are between age bracket 26-35years.

Table 4.3.3 Distribution of respondents based on educational qualification

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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	primary	32	24.2	24.2	24.2
Valid	secondary	44	33.3	33.3	57.6
	Tertiary	56	42.4	42.4	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

The educational qualification distribution of respondents as presented in Table 4.3.3 shows that 32 respondents representing 24.2% attained primary school, 44 respondents representing 33.3% had secondary school, and 56 respondents representing 42.4% had Tertiary education.

Answering the Research Questions

Research question one: What are the main forms and trends of TOC in Nigeria and their impacts on the country?

Table 4.4.1 Forms and trends of TOC in Nigeria and their impacts

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD	MEAN	STD	DECISION
	Arms trafficking	30 (22.7)	57 (43.2)	37 (28.0)	8 (6.1)	2.83	0.852	Low perception
	Cybercrime.	51 (38.6)	38 (28.8)	30 (22.7)	13 (9.8)	2.96	1.007	Low perception
	Human trafficking	64 (48.5)	48 (36.4)	7 (5.3)	13 (9.8)	3.23	0.940	High perception
	Drug trafficking	62 (47.0)	42 (31.8)	16 (12.1)	12 (9.1)	3.17	0.966	High perception

Note: N=132, “SA” for Strongly Agree, “A” for Agree, “D” for Disagree and “SD” for Strongly Disagree.

Decision=Weighted Average=12.19/4=3.05

The data analysis shows that majority of the respondents appeared to feel that human trafficking, and drug trafficking are the major forms and trends of TOC. On the other hand, majority of the participant had low perception that Arms trafficking, and cybercrime are also add to forms and trends of TOC.

Research question two: What are the existing legal and institutional frameworks for inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC in Nigeria, and how effective are they?

Table 4.4.2 legal and institutional frameworks

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD	MEAN	STD	DECISION
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	Inter-Agency Committee on Anti-Corruption (ICAC)	38 (28.8)	45 (34.1)	39 (29.5)	10 (7.6)	2.84	0.931	Low perception
	Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)	34 (25.8)	48 (36.4)	36 (27.3)	14 (10.6)	2.77	0.954	Low perception
	Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA)	48 (36.4)	60 (45.5)	11 (8.3)	13 (9.8)	3.08	0.914	High perception
	National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP)	51 (38.6)	42 (31.8)	28 (21.2)	11 (8.3)	3.01	0.969	High perception

Decision=Weighted Average=11.7/4=2.93

The data analysis shows that majority of the respondents appeared to feel that the Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) are legalize institution in Nigeria. On the other hand, majority of the participant had low perception that Inter-Agency Committee on Anti-Corruption (ICAC), and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

Research question three: What are the best practices and lessons learned from other countries and regions that have implemented inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC?

Table 4.4.3 Practices and implementation of inter-agency collaboration and in combating TOC

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD	MEAN	STD	DECISION
	Establishing clear communication channels	63 (47.7)	28 (21.2)	27 (20.5)	14 (10.6)	3.06	1.054	High perception
	Developing Joint Task Force	51 (38.6)	39 (29.5)	30 (22.7)	12 (9.1)	2.98	0.992	Low perception
	Implementing information-sharing agreements	54 (40.)	42 (31.8)	28 (21.2)	8 (6.1)	3.08	0.930	High perception
	Investing in training and capacity building	40 (30.3)	48 (36.4)	33 (25.0)	11 (8.3)	2.89	0.938	Low perception

Decision=Weighted Average=12.01/4=3.0025

The data analysis shows that majority of the respondents appeared to feel that establishing clear communication channels, and implementing information-sharing agreements are one of the best practices in combating TOC. On the other hand, majority of the participant had low perception that developing joint task force and investing in training and capacity building are also practices in combating TOC.

Research question four: What are the main barriers and gaps that hinder inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC in Nigeria, and how can they be overcome?

Table 4.4.4 Barriers and gaps that hinder inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD	MEAN	STD	DECISION
	Lack of trust and communication among agencies	45 (34.1)	42 (31.8)	30 (22.7)	15 (11.4)	2.89	1.009	High perception
	Limited resources and capacity	48 (36.4)	39 (29.5)	30 (22.7)	15 (11.4)	2.91	1.022	Low perception
	Fragmented legal frameworks and jurisdictional issues	45 (34.1)	55 (41.7)	22 (16.7)	10 (7.6)	3.02	0.903	High perception
	Political interference and corruption	42 (31.8)	44 (33.3)	36 (27.3)	10 (7.6)	2.89	0.943	Low perception

Decision=Weighted Average=12.01/4=3.0025

The data analysis shows that majority of the respondents appeared to feel that establishing clear communication channels, and implementing information-sharing agreements are one of the best practices in combating TOC. On the other hand, majority of the participant had low perception that developing joint task force and investing in training and capacity building are also practices in combating TOC.

Research question five: What are the recommendations and strategies for improving inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC in Nigeria?

Table 4.4.5 Recommendations and strategies for improving inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD	MEAN	STD	DECISION
	Establishing a centralized task force	32 (24.2)	50 (37.9)	8 (6.1)	15 (11.4)	2.80	0.878	Low perception
	Enhancing information sharing	32 (24.2)	55 (41.7)	30 (22.7)	15 (11.4)	2.79	0.941	Low perception
	Conducting joint operations	48 (36.4)	36 (27.3)	36 (27.3)	12 (9.1)	2.91	1.000	High perception
	Investing in training and capacity building	39 (29.5)	40 (30.3)	44 (33.3)	9 (6.8)	2.83	0.937	High perception

Decision=Weighted Average=11.33/4=2.83

The data analysis shows that majority of the respondents appeared to feel that conducting joint operations, and investing in training and capacity building are the recommendations and strategies used for improving inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC. On the other hand, majority of the participant had low perception that establishing a centralized task force as well as enhancing information sharing.

Summary of Major Findings

From the study, the following were found out.

1. Human trafficking, drug trafficking are the major forms and trends of TOC in Nigeria and they have no significant impact in the country.
2. The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), and Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), are the prominent legal institution for inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC in Nigeria, they are effective in carrying their job role.
3. Establishing clear communication channels and implementing information-sharing agreements is one the best practices and implementation of inter-agency collaboration and in combating TOC.
4. Lack of trust and communication among agencies and fragmented legal frameworks and jurisdictional issues are major barriers and gaps that hinder inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC.
5. Conducting joint operations and investing in training and capacity building are core strategies used for improving inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC.

Discussion of Findings

From the study, it was discovered that human trafficking, drug trafficking are the major forms and trends of TOC in Nigeria and they have no significant impact in the country. The discovery received the support (Mobolaji & Alabi, 2017; Eze-Michael, 2021; ENACT, 2023; Suleiman, 2023; UNODC, 2022; 2023).

Nigeria is a major hub and transit point for various forms of TOC, such as human trafficking, drug trafficking, wildlife trafficking, advanced fee fraud, money laundering, cross-border banditry, cybercrime, terrorism, human smuggling (smuggling migrants), maritime piracy (crimes), kidnapping (abduction), extortion, and cultism.

It was discovered from the study that the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), and Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), are the prominent legal institution for inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC in Nigeria. The discovery is in collaboration with the study carried by various researchers (Okogbule, 2006; Okeke, 2019; Umejiaku, 2019; Ige, 2022; UNODC, 2022a), Nigeria has also enacted various domestic laws to address the different types of TOC, such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Act, the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act, the Terrorism (Prevention) Act, the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act, and the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act. To enforce these various laws and address the numerous forms of TOC, Nigeria has also established several specialized institutions, including the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), and the Nigerian Police Force (NPF), among others.

In this study, it was discovered that establishing clear communication channels and implementing information-sharing agreements is one the best practices and implementation of inter-agency collaboration and in combating TOC.

In addition, Lack of trust and communication among agencies and fragmented legal frameworks and jurisdictional issues are major barriers and gaps that hinder inter-agency

collaboration and coordination in combating TOC. Finally, conducting joint operations and investing in training and capacity building are core strategies used for improving inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC.

Summary

The study was designed to examine “Combating Transnational Organized Crime”. Five (5) research questions in line with the objectives of the study were developed. A mixed-method research design was adopted and the population of the study consists of three hundred and thirty (330) personnel of nine agencies in Abuja. A total of one hundred and thirty-two (132) respondents consisting of personnel formed the sample of the study. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 software was utilized for the analysis. Frequency distribution tables mean and simple percentages were used in the descriptive analysis or presentation of collected data.

The findings revealed that: human trafficking, drug trafficking are the major forms and trends of TOC in Nigeria and they have no significant impact in the country. The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), and Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), are the prominent legal institution for inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC in Nigeria.

Establishing clear communication channels and implementing information-sharing agreements is one the best practices and implementation of inter-agency collaboration and in combating TOC. Lack of trust and communication among agencies and fragmented legal frameworks and jurisdictional issues are major barriers and gaps that hinder inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC. Finally, conducting joint operations and investing in training and capacity building are core strategies used for improving inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC.

Conclusion

Based on the findings above, human trafficking, drug trafficking are the major forms and trends of TOC in Nigeria and they have no significant impact in the country. The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), and Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), are the prominent legal institution for inter-agency collaboration and coordination in combating TOC in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion drawn from the findings, the following recommendations can be made to reduce transnational organized crime in the study area:

1. A continuous strengthening of strong inter-agency collaboration was recommended among others. Law enforcement agencies should provide cultural competence training to their personnel. This training will help officers understand and appreciate the cultural and social diversity within the community they serve. By promoting cultural sensitivity and awareness, officers can better engage with diverse communities and tailor their policing strategies accordingly.
2. Law enforcement agencies should actively engage with the community through various initiatives such as community meetings, neighbourhood watch programs, and collaborative problem-solving efforts. Regular interactions and open communication channels will help build trust, enhance cooperation, and foster a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for public safety.

3. Establishing strong partnerships with community organizations, faith-based groups, schools, and other relevant stakeholders is crucial for effective combating transnational organised crime. Collaborative efforts can lead to the development of targeted crime prevention programs, resource-sharing, and joint initiatives that address the specific needs and concerns of different communities.
4. Law enforcement agencies should prioritize transparency and accountability in their operations. This includes establishing mechanisms for addressing complaints, conducting thorough investigations, and holding officers accountable for any misconduct. Transparent practices will help build and maintain public trust in law enforcement agencies.

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