An Assessment of Violent Crimes: Armed Robbery and Murder in Lagos State, Nigeria from 2015-2019

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Abstract. This study examined the prevalence of the violent crimes (murder and armed robbery) inLagos State between 2015 and 2019. Data was collected from Lagos State Police Command Ikeja, Nigeria Watch (**www.nigeriawatch.org**) 2015-1019, an online database which sources information from daily Nigerian press corporations (Vanguard, Leadership, The Guardian, Sun, This Day, Daily Independence, Punch, Nigerian Tribune, The Nation and Daily Trust) as well as other human rights organizations. Data covered the period between 2015 and 2019. The archival and retrospective research secondary data was used. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as bar charts to compare the prevalence of murder and armed robbery in Lagos State between 2015 and 2019. Chi Square was also used to check the associations between the prevalence of murder and armed robbery between 2015 and 2019 in Lagos state. Results showed that there was a significant association between the number of murders (X^2= 35.39, 9.49, p<.05) and armed robberies (X^2= 603.57, 9.49, p<.05) between 2015 and 2019 in Lagos State. It was therefore recommended that programs should be put in place to build people's trust on the law enforcement agencies thereby increasing crime reportage.

Keywords: Assessment, Violent crimes, Armed robbery, Murder, Lagos State

1. Introduction

Nigeria is currently caught in the web of crime dilemma, manifesting in the convulsive upsurge of both violent and non-violent crimes (Emeh, 2011). Notable in this regard are the rising incidents of armed robbery, assassination and ransom-driven kidnapping, which are now ravaging the polity spreading fears and anxieties about public safety (Emeh, 2011). The upsurge of crime has been ongoing globally, while Nigeria have also been on the global crime map since 1980s (Dambazau,2007). These throes of crime for decades might be as a result of poverty, poor parental upbringing, and greed amongst the youth; get rich quick mentality, inadequate crime control model of national security among others.

Events of past few years show that the spate of crime has assumed a debilitating proportion and requires the intervention of policy makers in this regard. According to Osawe, crime portrays the inability of government to provide a secure and safe environment for lives, properties and the conduct of economic activities considering the alarming increase in criminal activities in Nigeria such as armed robbery, terrorism and other related crimes (Osawe, 2015). Olanrewaju avers that crime relates to drug use which has the social consequence on students manifesting in

various forms including assassination, kidnapping, kidnapping, lack of interest in education, armed robbery and other criminal offences (Olanrewaju, 1994).

Harries (2006) found violent and property crimes to be correlated with population density, while Baltagi (2006) had opined that although crime rates tend to increase with population density, the correlation is not significant. Kepple & Freisthler (2012) in their study found out that violent and property crime rates are positively associated with percentage of commercially zoned areas, percentage of one-person household and unemployment rate.

As it is in contemporary times, delinquency and criminal behaviours might be viewed as a common phenomenon in Nigeria and Africa at large and with the high rate of occurrence in recent time, it has also pose a great concern to citizens and the government at all levels. Crime statistics spread sheet on offences against persons, property and lawful authority and local acts, 2009 in all state commands in Nigeria and for the year 2008, were 35,109 offences against persons while in 2009 it was 38, 955 (an increase of 3,846 cases), offences against property in 2008 was 47,626 and in 2009 it was 64, 286 (an increase of 16,660 cases), offences against authority in 2008 was 5,938 and in 2009 it was 7,878 (an increase of 1,940 cases), offences against local acts in 2008 was 90,156 and in 2009 it was 1,378 (a decrease of 88,778 cases) (Nigeria Police Watch, ND). The actual experience of crime in Nigeria. revealed by the report of 2013 National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) by CLEEN Foundation confirmed that as much as a quarter of respondents (25.0%) said that they had been victims of crime during 2012. The survey also indicated that the number of victims of crime was highest in Enugu state with 70.0%, followed by Ekiti and Ebonyi States (both 65.0%). The national average was 25.0%. Katsina State had 9.0%, while Ogun State had the lowest score of 5.0%. Analyzing experience of crime by regions in Nigeria for 2012, the south east recorded highest with 44.0% while the North West recorded lowest score of 18.0% while, Lagos state also recorded 18.0%.

In this context, Lagos was second state most vulnerable site to kidnapping (4.0%), twentieth to robbery, seventh in physical assault (35.0%), fourth in theft of mobile phones (55.0%), third in car theft (5.0%) in Nigeria (CLEEN Foundation, 2013). Besides, the Lagos police command foiled 462 and 418 cases of robbery in 2012 and 2013 respectively. Out of the 1448 and 1263 vehicles stolen in Lagos in 2012 and 2013 respectively, 1187 vehicles were recovered in 2012 and only 954 vehicles have been recovered in 2013. In all, the police recovered 371 arms and 26058 ammunition in 2013 while 328 arms and 3553 ammunition were recovered in 2012. The police arrested 569 robbery suspects between November 2011 and October 2012 as against 522 recorded in the previous year. Moreover, 270 people were murdered in different parts of Lagos while a total of 32 policemen died in gun exchanges with armed robbers leading to the police killing 140 robbers (Manko, 2012).

Despite a Lagos law that has led to the disappearance of commercial motorcycle operators from the major streets of the city following claims that they are responsible for most criminal activities, the state of Lagos still ranks high as one of the states with the highest crime rates in Nigeria according to a new survey released by the CLEEN Foundation. In the survey, 67% of Lagos residents have fear of becoming victims of crimes; the general public believes that crime rate in Lagos actually increased from 12% to 21% between 2011 and 2014 making robbery (28%) and theft of property (17%) the more prevalent crimes in the state. The survey also shows that unlike its counterparts in the southwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria, which have seen reduction in assault-related crimes, assault cases in Lagos state skyrocketed from 27% to 38% in 2014 from 11% in 2011 (Ogundipe, 2014). The increase in crime, judging by available statistics appears to continue every year. Frightening as the data seem, they do not make the nature of the crime that produced them manifest. If 67.0% of Lagos residents have fear of becoming victims of crimes, 23.0% claimed to have experienced crime, the general public believed that crime rate in Lagos increased from 12.0% to 21.0% between 2011 and 2014 with robbery at 28.0% and theft of property at 17.0% as the more prevalent offences in the state (CLEEN Foundation, 2013), then crime rate in Lagos is high enough to justify this inquiry.

This study had look at the prevalence of violent crimes of murder and armed robbery in Lagos state between 2015 to 2019.

2. Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to assess the prevalence of the violent crimes (murder and armed robbery) in Lagos State between 2015-2019. While, the study had also sought to:
- Examine numbers of armed robbery cases in Lagos state between 2015 and 2019.
- Examine numbers of murder cases in Lagos State between 2015 and 2019.

3. Research Questions

- Will there be a statistically significant association between the numbers of armed robbery cases in Lagos State from 2015 to 2019?
- Will there be a statistically significant association between the numbers of murder cases in Lagos State from 2015 to 2019?

4. Scope of the Study

This study focused on assessing the prevalence of violent crimes (murder and armed robbery) in Lagos State between the years of 2015 and 2019.

5. Hypothesis

- There will not be a statistically significant association between the numbers of murder cases in Lagos State from 2015 to 2019.
- There will not be a statistically significant association between the numbers of armed robbery cases in Lagos State from 2015 to 2019.

6. Concept of Armed Robbery

Iwarimie-Jaja (1993) offers a detailed and simplified definition of the offence, He argues that it is the criminal act of a person or group of persons, who take arm whether guns, knives, club, bow and arrow or even spear, with the intent to commit robbery, or actually commits robbery, at day or night, on a person, premises or residences owned by another person or persons. This definition is the same with the meaning and definition given to the offence by Decree 2 Amended 1978 of the Federal Military Government of Nigeria.

Armed robbery in the opinion of the researchers, is an act whether or not premeditated, which is directed at the dispossession of another person's belongings, without the person's consent, either with force or threat of it, with any objects capable to inflict bodily harm on the victim, or the potential of it, and whether or not the offence was committed in the public, private, morning, afternoon or night. Common element in all these definitions is that the offence has the possibility or ability to cause bodily injury or shows the potential to wanting to do so.

Conklin (1972) viewed armed robbery and dubbed it the most "feared" crime; it entails a double element of fear: losing one's properties and, especially risking physical harm. He maintains armored robberies done

in bank received extensive media coverage, perhaps as the researcher of this study evince, because a large sum of money is involved, or they represent strategic position in the capitalist economy.

7. Empirical Review

Otu (2003), had reported, that between 15 August 2000 and 21 November 2000, a total of 563 armed robbery cases were reported in Nigeria. Number of the victims killed and injured stand at 113 and 275 respectively. The number of armed robbers killed on the other hand, is 271, and those arrested are 763. Two hundred and nine (209) weapons were recovered, while 29 policemen's weapons were lost. Also, 81 policemen were injured and 24 killed.

Similar report is provided in *This day Sunday Newspaper* of 29 October 2000. It reported estimate that by December 2000, about 1350 people would have been shot and killed by armed robbers in Nigeria during the year under review. Another 2564 would have been maimed. Still, another 3064 armed robbery operations would have been accomplished. The paper (2000: 11) concludes that this data is not exhaustive. It depicted and graph iced the gory scenario of armed robbery in modern Nigeria as: Every day, at least three people somewhere in the country will be killed, and as readers go through the paper, a head is being blown away, a stomach is being ripped open and limb is being shattered by bullets whizzing of the barrel of an armed robbers' gang.

Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a: 149) drew from other important sources, and documented armed robbery trends in the city of Port Harcourt between the periods 1970-1990. He observed that the least recorded years are 1971 and 1972, that each had one case. This apparently reflects the inadequacy in crime statistics as earlier pointed out in section 2.8.3 because it is fraught with suspect, to assume that only one robbery incident each occurred during these two years. The maximum record is against 1984 and 1985, with 50 and 45 cases each. Incidentally, these latter periods mark the gory entry of Nigeria into the era of economic and social morasses.

Reviewing further literature, Iwarimie-Jaja (1999a: 155-156) notes that armed robbery which he rightly described as the most horrifying crime to the Nigeria populace, recorded a total of 2258 cases between the period of 1985 and 1987 in twenty one states of the Federation. Of this, 343 figures he notes involved loss of life.

According to the UNODC report of 2013, firearms are the most widely used lethal weapon for homicide, accounting for (41 percent) of the total global homicide rate in 2012, which represents 177,000 out of the total of 437,000 homicide; the use of physical force and blunt objects among others accounts for about (35 percent) of the total global homicide rate for the period, which represents 157,000 out of the total of 437,000 homicide cases; while homicide due to sharp objects (knives, machetes, razors, swords, bayonets, broken glass, screwdrivers, ice picks, and stilettos) accounts for (24 percent) of the total global homicide rate for the same period which represents 104,880 out of the total of 437,000.

While in 2012 only 437,700 persons were victims of intentional homicide globally which represents 6.2 persons per 100,000 population (UN's Secretary General's report on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, 2015).Available (UNODC 2012) data indicates that, of persons convicted of homicide, by sex and by region globally as at 2012, America recorded (96 percent for convicted males, and 4 percent for female convicts); Asia recorded (95 percent convicted males; 5 percent female convicts); while Europe recorded (92 percent males, and 8 percent for female homicide convicts). On the global scale, of the 53 countries surveyed, males constitute (95 percent of global homicide convicts, while females represent 5 percent of the convicts).Another gender dimension to homicide is the fact that females are often the victims of intimate partner and family homicide globally. Of all the women killed in 2012, about 93,000, 43,600 of them which represents (47 percent) met their death on account of family members or intimate partners. Records from various regions reveals that (42 percent) of women killed in Africa occurred through these medium, Americas (38 percent); Asia (55 per cent); Europe (55 percent); while Oceania recorded (73 percent). Conversely, of all the male homicide victims, only (6 percent) were killed by family or intimate partners. Records reveal that (5 percent) of men in Africa out of the global (6 percent) were killed by intimate partners; Americas (5 percent); Asia (6 percent); Europe (18 percent); Oceania (26 percent).

8. Theoretical Review

8.1 Life Course Theory

The life-course approach argues that crucial life events can have an impact on criminality (Sampson & Laub, 1993; 2003b), in that negative life events (e.g. job loss, divorce) could increase the likelihood to engage in criminal behavior and positive experiences (e.g. strong parental attachment, job satisfaction) are likely to reduce offending (Sampson & Laub, 2005). More specifically, the life-course perspective proposes that as offenders become older, strong social bonds develop and thus the individual may reconsider criminal behaviour, as there may be aspects of their life that would be deemed at risk, such as employment or marriage (Elder, 1985; Laub, Nagin, & Sampson, 1998; Sampson & Laub, 1990). Benda (2005) also noted that social bonding had an impact on the age of first arrest. There are strong links between this theory and recidivism following imprisonment, as researchers have argued that incarceration reduces the offender's options to continue their life in a traditional manner, including their ability to develop career prospects or maintain strong social attachments to family and friends (Baaij et al., 2012; Cale, Plecas, Cohen, & Fortier, 2010; Nieuwbeerta, Nagin, & Blokland, 2009).

8.2 Strain Theory

Strain theory was introduced by Merton (1957), with the belief that there are approved societal goals, or norms, held by a given culture that members of society work towards and reap the benefits when achieving such goals (e.g. work hard to develop a career to achieve job security and wealth). However, for some individuals, there may be instances in which the social reward is insignificant, or is dissimilar to that received by other members of society, thus creating feelings of illegitimacy and putting a strain on the situation (Vold, Bernard, & Snipes, 2002). This strain can be felt by various people, yet tends to have more of an impact on those with a lower socioeconomic status. Thus, strain arises within cultures as a result of a disparate emphasis on goals being equally achievable by all members of society (e.g. wealth and success) and limitations placed on people as a result of social structure (e.g. restricted educational opportunities; Merton, 1957). In view of the societal goal of 'wealth', individuals who struggle to achieve this via the approved social means and methods may then review other methods in which to achieve this, such as burglary, gambling or drug dealing (Vold et al., 2002). Cloward (1959) extended Merton's view that some individuals were limited in their ability to legally achieve the successful cultural goals; to consider that such individuals also had numerous illegal options within their subculture, society or neighborhood. Furthermore, Cloward (1959) added that it was not simply that the opportunity arose in an environment to behave criminally, but that the individual must also be aware of how to take advantage of such an opportunity through learned means.

8.3 Eysenck Personality Theory

At the root of Eysenckian theory are two major shaping forces: one's inherited nervous system and environmental conditioning forces. These impact three critical personality features or temperaments: extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism. Each is claimed to be associated with norm-violating behavior. The *extravert* (a quality measured by various scales and corresponding to conventional use of the term) is outgoing, risk-taking, impulsive and requires a lot of activity. While these needs certainly can be accommodated through law-abiding activities, they predispose the individual to seek out excitement, which oftentimes can be found in deviant or criminal activity. The source of this extraversion lies in the person's central nervous system. Persons with lower arousal levels of the cerebral cortex require more stimulation to achieve optimal arousal. The *introvert*, by contrast, requires only very low levels of stimulation. To add to this problem, the person who has low cortical arousal is also more difficult to indoctrinate with a conscience through a conditioning process. Their low arousal results in less absorbency of social lessons and response to sanctions. *Neuroticism* (distinct from the more typical clinical mental disorder) refers to ones' degree of emotionality. It is how excitable one is, which is proffered to be a function of the autonomic nervous system. The more neurotic individual is thought more likely to engage in deviance, due to lack of control.

Finally, psychotocism (extreme insensitivity, cruelty, etc.) was thought to be a function of testosterone, serotonin, and monoamine oxidase levels, but has been considered far less than the extraversion and neuroticism continua.

9. Methodology

The archival research design was adopted since retrospective data was used. Quantitative data on crime fatalities were collated from the Lagos State Police Command, Ikeja, Nigeria Watch (www.nigeria upwatch.org), an online database which sources information from daily Nigerian press corporations (Vanguard, Leadership, The Guardian, Sun, This Day, Daily Independence, Punch, Nigerian Tribune, The Nation and Daily Trust) as well as other human rights organizations. The data covered the period between 2015 and 2019. This restriction was placed due to the availability of data within the period under study.

The data was analyzed using the Chi Square statistical tool to test the associations between the prevalence of murder and armed robbery between 2015 and 2019 in Lagos state. Tables and a bar chart were used to show a descriptive representation of murder and armed robbery in Lagos State. The analysis was based on the overall crime incidents and fatalities in Armed Robbery and murder between 2015 and 2019 in Lagos State.

10. Results

Table 1: Showing the frequency of murder and armed robbery in Lagos State between 2015 and 2019

YEAR	MURDER	ARMED ROBBERY
2015	186	87
2016	268	471
2017	209	366
2018	201	10
2019	289	319
∑	**1,153**	**1,253**

Data Source: Crime Statistics, Lagos State Police Command, Ikeja

Figure 1: Bar Chart showing the prevalence of Armed Robbery and Murder in Lagos State between 2015 and 2019.
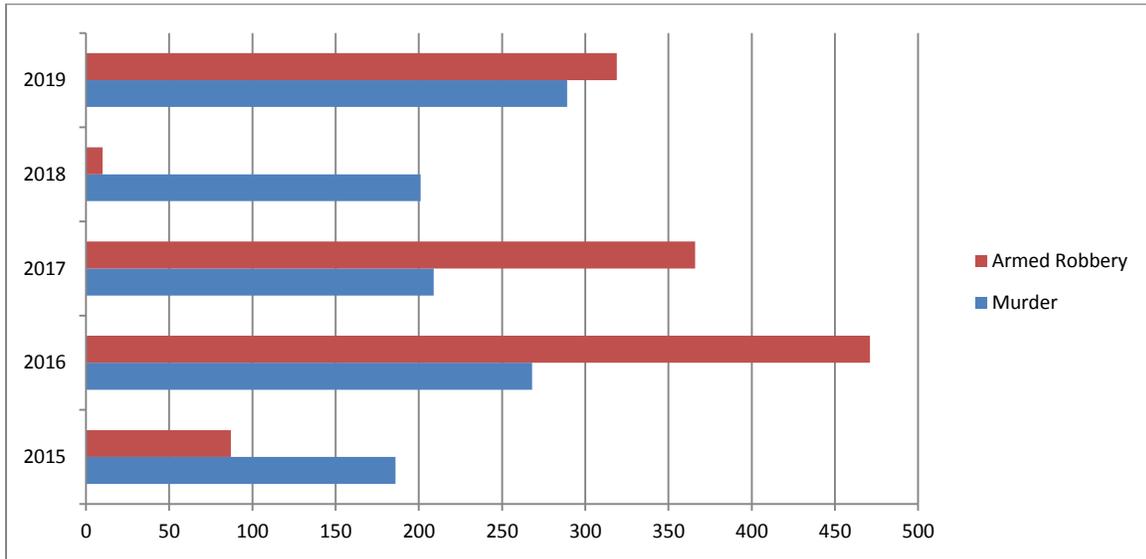
Testing Hypothesis 1: There will not be a statistically significant association between the numbers of murder cases in Lagos State from 2015 to 2019.

YEAR	Frequency Observed (fo)	Frequency Expected (fe)	fo - fe	(fo – fe)²
2015	186	230.6	-44.6	1989.16
2016	268	230.6	37.4	1398.76
2017	209	230.6	-21.6	466.56
2018	201	230.6	-29.6	876.16
2019	289	230.6	58.4	3410.56
$\sum$	**1,153**			**8141.2**

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe}$$

$$= \frac{8141.2}{230.6}$$

= **35.30**

Degree of Freedom = N – 1
Where N= Number of categories
So, df = 5 – 1
df = 4

Interpretation of Result: From the table of chi square at significant level of 0.05 and degree of freedom of 4, the critical value is 9.49. Since the calculated value (35.30) is greater than the critical value (9.49), I reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis and then conclude that there is a significant association between the number of murders committed between 2015 and 2019 in Lagos State.

Testing Hypothesis 2: There will not be a statistically significant association between the numbers of armed robbery cases in Lagos State from 2015 to 2019.

YEAR	Frequency Observed (fo)	Frequency Expected (fe)	fo – fe	(fo – fe)²
2015	87	250.6	-163.6	26764.96
2016	471	250.6	220.4	48576.16
2017	366	250.6	115.4	13317.16
2018	10	250.6	-240.6	57888.36
2019	319	250.6	68.4	4678.56
$\sum$	**1,253**			**151255.2**

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe}$$

$$= \frac{151255.2}{250.6}$$

= 603.57

Degree of Freedom = N – 1

Where N= Number of categories

So, df = 5 – 1

df = 4

Interpretation of Result: From the table of chi square at significant level of 0.05 and degree of freedom of 4, the critical value is 9.49. Since the calculated value (603.57) is greater than the critical value (9.49), I reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis and then conclude that there is a significant association between the number of armed robberies committed between 2015 and 2019 in Lagos State.

11. Discussion of Findings

This study assessed the prevalence of the violent crimes of armed robbery and murder in Lagos State between 2015 and 2019. Data collected from the Department of Crime Statistics, Lagos State Police Command, Ikeja revealed that there has been a total of one thousand one hundred and fifty-three (1153) murders in Lagos state between 2015 and 2019 and a total of one thousand two hundred and fifty armed robberies within the same time. Data from the bar chart shows that the highest number of armed robberies (471) in Lagos State was recorded in 2016, while the lowest number (10) was recorded in 2018. This number shows that there was a sharp decline in the number of armed robberies between 2016 and 2018; however, the number had increased in 2019 with 319 recorded cases of armed robbery. Data from the bar chart above also shows that the highest number of murders in Lagos state between 2015 and 2019 was recorded in 2019 (289). The lowest recorded number of murder cases within this time range falls at 186, a number recorded in 2015. The data pattern shows a steady increase in the prevalence of murder in Lagos State between 2015 and 2019. The figure also shows that armed robbery has been more prevalent than murder in Lagos state between 2015 and 2019. A total of 1,253 armed robberies have been recorded while 1,153 murders have been recorded within the same time range. Two hypotheses were also tested in the study. Both null hypotheses were however rejected since a significant association was found between the number of murders and armed robberies that occurred between 2015 and 2019 in Lagos State.

12. Conclusion

From the findings of the study, we can conclude that armed robbery has been more prevalent than murder in Lagos State between 2015 and 2019. From the data presented, we can also conclude that there has been a steady increase in the prevalence of murder in Lagos State between 2015 and 2019. Armed robbery on the other hand showed no specific pattern, however, there was a sharp decline in the number of armed robberies between 2016 and 2018; however, the number peaked again in 2019 with 319 recorded cases of armed robbery.

There are cases of violent crimes reported in various media platforms on a daily basis in Nigeria. If we can track the prevalence of these crimes in specific areas, and know the areas that are highly affected, resources can be directed to curb the menace in those areas. Most agencies that fight against crime in Nigeria, especially the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) have undermined the relevance of reviewing crime statistics and also overlooked the predictive ability of statistical data on crime. However, this study is a wake-up call and has analyzed the prevalence of crime in Lagos State, and from the data presented, we can try to predict future rates of the violent crimes of murder and armed robbery in Lagos State, and put appropriate measures in place to prevent them.

13. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:
- Further studies should be carried out to examine the causes of violent crimes in Lagos State.
- The law enforcement agencies should be re-oriented on the importance and predictive ability of crime statistics.
- Programs should also be put in place to build people's trust on the law enforcement agencies, thereby increasing crime reportage.
- Community Policing should be encouraged at all levels of the state.

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