

Violent Crime Dynamics and Socio-Economic Development in Cross River Southern Senatorial District, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the relationship between violent crimes and socio-economic development of Cross River Southern Senatorial District, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to examine the extent to which kidnapping, armed robbery, affect socio-economic development of Cross River Southern Senatorial District, Nigeria. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey research design. Data was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. Three hundred and eighty-four (384) respondents were selected from the study area. A self-report questionnaire developed by researcher and approved by the supervisors was used as instrument for data collection. The data obtained were statistically analysed using simple linear regression. Each hypothesis was tested at 0.05 per cent level of significance. The result obtained from the analysis revealed that, kidnapping, armed robbery, significantly affects the socio-economic development of Cross River Southern Senatorial District, Nigeria. From the findings of this study, it is evident that there is a significant relationship between violent crime and socio-economic development in the study area. The study recommended among other things that there is an urgent need to improve the level of training of security personnel to meet up with the growing and emerging technologies in crime prevention and improve the general conditions of service of police officers in Nigeria. This will motivate them to discharge their constitutional responsibilities efficiently and effectively. The government should allocate additional resources to enhance the capabilities of the Nigeria Police Force, placing particular focus on contemporary policing methods. This includes providing training in forensic science, psychology, and the application of DNA and ballistics techniques to support effective law enforcement.

Keywords: violent crime, kidnapping, armed robbery, socio-economic, development

Introduction

The heightened incident of criminal and violent behaviour in recent years has become a major concern across Nigeria and the world at large. From Europe to the developing countries of the world like Niger, Ghana, Chad, Cameroon etc, violent crime threatens social stability and are becoming major obstacles to development (Ofe Ako-Mbi et al, 2021). Violent crimes encapsulate harmful, destructive and injurious acts such as murder, manslaughter, rape and aggravated assault amongst others. It is a dual interaction between an offender and a victim in which coercive force is applied by the former to subdue the latter by harming him or her taking away his or her properties and causing him or her death (Tamar, & Ania, 2017).

Crimes such as murder, armed robbery, kidnapping, and terrorism are considered violent and the most inhumane crimes that have continued to plague Nigeria. The causes are not farfetched as studies by (Ukoji & Okolie, 2016; Tamar, & Ania, 2017) have associated rising youth unemployment to the increase in violent crimes. Individual level risk factors include age and gender, while individual level protective factors centre on social connections with family, friends or school groups (Ogbuehi, 2018). Family risk factors for violent crime include harsh parenting styles, physical or psychological abuse, and the involvement of other family members in crime (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Direct costs of violent crime victimisation

include those related to health care, lost work productivity, law enforcement and prosecution of offenders, rehabilitation, and repairing damage to property (Nnodim & Ochogba, 2018). For victims, mortality, physical and psychological damage, disability, and social problems are immediate and long-lasting outcomes of violence, which indirect impact varies across countries. Weakness in state security is associated with higher levels of violence at the individual and societal levels. Rapid urbanisation, low education levels, and high-income inequality, especially when divided along religious, ethnic, or racial lines, further increase the risks of violence in a society (Mbah, Egwu & Emesini, 2018).

Nigeria and other developing countries are particularly affected by violent crime, with interpersonal violence as a leading cause of death and disability (Mahofa, G., Sundaram, A., & Edwards, 2016). In addition, violent crime can indirectly suppress growth in developing countries when local or international agents are influenced, by their perceptions of violent crime in the region, to refrain from investing socially or economically in developing the area (Ibrahim & Ahmad, 2020). Fear of violence prevent development by preventing local citizens from travelling to work and school, encouraging capital flight, increasing brain drain as educated citizens leave troubled areas, and lowering social cohesion (Ayuba, 2020). This widespread occurrence of acts of violence—such as assault, homicide, rape, kidnapping, sexual assault, and maltreatment in Nigeria, has the potential to destabilize the peace and security of the Nigerian people; stall economic activities, discourage both foreigners and indigenes from investing; disrupt industry and economic development and progress, and lead to greater unemployment, and in general, to the restriction of governance (Ayuba, 2020).

In a bid to check the rising trend of violent crime in the world and Nigeria particularly different intervention programmes have been put in place by government. Such interventions can be broadly separated according to the point at which the prevention program is implemented. Programs that aim to prevent or reduce violent crime can be grouped into primary, secondary or tertiary interventions (Avidime & Ojonugwa, 2019). Primary prevention programs are broad based and aim to prevent the occurrence of a problem or behaviour, secondary prevention programs focus on individuals at risk of developing the behaviour, and tertiary prevention programs focus on reducing the problem behaviour in individuals who already exhibit the behaviour (for example, youths already displaying violent behaviours) (Olofin, 2020). Interventions can be classified according to whether they address violence at either the individual, family or community levels; indeed, it is argued that the most successful interventions are those that address all three levels (Odoma & Akor, 2019). Interventions can also be classified according to the societal sector in which they are implemented. Social interventions include parent training programs, school-based education programs, family enrichment, gender equality education, life skills training programs, and edutainment initiatives.

Economic-based interventions that target violent crime problems include microfinance credit schemes and raising the price of alcohol. Health sector programs include screening and referral programs, victim advocacy and support groups, and psychological or medical interventions. Programs often involve coordinated, multisector responses involving multiple agencies working together to reduce violent crime (Okorie-Ajah, 2018). Despite the fact that violent crime is emerging as a priority in policy agenda worldwide, the research community know little regarding the socio-economic development implications of violent crime particularly in developing nations. The objective of this study is to provide empirical evidence of the relationship between violent crimes and socio-economic development of Cross River Southern Senatorial District, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

- (i) Examine the extent to which kidnapping significantly affect socio-economic development of Southern Senatorial District, Cross River State, Nigeria;
- (ii) Determine the extent to which armed robbery significantly affect the socio-economic development of Southern Senatorial District, Cross River State, Nigeria

The following research hypotheses were tested in this study:

- (i) There is no significant relationship between kidnapping and socio-economic development of Southern Senatorial District, Cross River State, Nigeria;
- (ii) Armed robbery has no significant relationship with socio-economic development of Southern Senatorial District, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Theoretical framework

Anomie Theory

Anomie theory provides an explanation of the concentration of crime in society. The concept of anomie was introduced to Sociology by Durkheim and denotes a situation in which social norms are ambiguous, non-existent, weak, or conflicting. This results in people being unsure of what they have to do and making them unable to control their wants and desires (Tumer, 1978). Merton adopted Durkheim's concept of Anomie to explain the causes of different rates and types of deviance in society. He suggested that there existed cultural values that put a lot of emphasis on certain desirable goals and that cultural avenues or means of achieving such goals are out of balance. An example is that culture dictates a strong concern of acquiring material goods and other possessions yet the means for acquiring them are unavailable to all, hence anomie can be said to exist to those who have no access to the means.

According to anomie theory, an urban setting generally experiences high rates of deviance because it has powerful values emphasizing success goals but does not give all population segments equal opportunities to realize such goals. The insatiable hunger in capitalist economies for more goods, money and property, stimulated by modern mass advertising and salesmanship, fosters this endemic discontent for more and more personal possessions (Mays, 1970) which fosters anomie for those without means to cope with ever changing demands for satisfaction of wants. Many young people in urban areas do not have employment opportunities through which they can realize their goals. Merton hence locates causes of deviance in cultural and social arrangements. He holds that deviance results from disjunctions between structural means and cultural values.

Innovation is likely when people accept cultural success goals but do not have access to legitimate means. Most lower-class criminals accept goals of success but do not have access to or refuse to use legitimate means. They are therefore 'innovators' because they invent new illegitimate means for realizing material success such as burglary and robbery. Social structures are not sufficient in enforcing conformist definitions and as a child's upbringing is continuously left to the already overburdened parents, there is ample exposure to non-conformist definitions especially from peers and the mass media. This is compounded by the fact that the young people have unlimited time with little to do. To occupy themselves, they may resort to deviant activities as opposed to sport, which is a more positive way of utilizing the time available at their disposal. Anomie theory' holds that innovation is likely when people accept cultural success goals but do not have access to or refuse to use legitimate means. Ritualism is likely when people lose sight of cultural goals but adhere rigidly to the means for realizing these abandoned goals. Rebellion occurs when individuals actively reject goals and means while substituting new and highly disapproved goals and means. Violent street gangs are a good example of rebellion, for the members of these gangs have rejected traditional success goals and means in favour of new success goals - toughness and the creation of fear- and illegitimate means of violence and physical intimidation.

Cultural success goals are seen by a larger proportion of the youth as unnecessarily time consuming and are unlikely to provide material possessions quickly, hence the culturally unacceptable goals provide an easy outlet out as well as give instant gratifications from the illegitimately acquired goods. This is a quicker process to achieve highly glorified status that comes with such possessions. In general, demographic, lifestyle and institutional changes have been conducive to the increase of urban crime. In low class areas there is congestion and high

likelihood of incidences of crime. These factors may hence be critical to the breeding of frustrations and hopelessness in life, making some people less likely to shun deviant behaviour. Desperation at not being able to meet day to day needs and wants pushes people away from conformity and leads to increase in cases of deviance (Phillips, et al 1982).

Merton's theory of Anomie has stimulated considerable research and speculation. Its prime virtue is that it views deviance as a response to cultural and social conditions. It does not explain all deviance in all societies, but it represents an important insight into the sources of deviant behaviour. Anomie theory was adopted in this study because it can be used to explain increased crime in urban areas as a result of organized gangs and rural urban migration, which increases population in urban areas without providing adequate legitimate opportunities for sustenance. It can also be relied upon to capture a common present society phenomenon where there is an ever-increasing breakdown of social fabric as well as a decline in supervision of the youth whose parents work long hours and abdicate parental care leaving it to house-helpers. The differentiation of crime patterns while being attributed to unequal security deterrents in different sections of an urban setting can also be conceived within the theory of anomie. Differential association and Anomie theories explain causes for the increase in violent crime. Increases in the rates of violent crime affect socio-economic development.

Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. The adoption of this design is based on the premise that the design enables the researcher to use the sample drawn from the population to represent the various elements of the study population. The design is further preferred because it gives a detailed description of existing phenomena with the intents of using such data to justify current practices and make better plans for improving existing conditions. The study was carried out in Cross River Southern Senatorial District which lies between latitude 6.167 and longitude 8.6601 East of the Greenwich meridian within the tropical rainforest belt of Nigeria estimated at 9° 28'. The area is boarded by Cameroon Republic in the East, to the North by Benue State, to the West by Abia and Ebonyi States to the Southwest by Akwa Ibom State while to the South by the Atlantic Ocean. The area also lies with the Cross River Basin with a total area of 53,855 km² from which about 44,105 km² is in Nigeria and Cameroon. Cross River Southern Senatorial District, made up of seven (7) local government areas (Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Biase, Odukpani Calabar Municipality and Calabar South Local Government Areas).

The population of the study comprised male and female adult respondents residing in Cross River Southern Senatorial, Nigeria. The study population consist of respondents aged 18 years and above. Since the population of the study is unknown, Cochran sample determinant was adopted in determining the sample size. To determine the sample size for male and female adult in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River, age 18 years and above Cochran's formula (1963) was adopted. The formula for Cochran sample size determinant is stated thus:

$$n = \frac{Z^2(pq)}{e^2}$$

Where:

- n = Required sample size
- Z = Confidence level (put at 95% or 1.96)
- p = Proportion of male and female adult in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River state age 18 years and above (given in this study as 50%). That is 0.5
- q = Compliment of p (put at 50%, i.e, 1 - 50%). That is 0.5
- e = Level of accuracy or margin error (put at 0.05).

Applying the formula therefore,

$$n = \frac{1.96^2(0.5)(0.5)}{0.05^2}$$

$$n = \frac{3.8416 (0.25)}{0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025}$$

$$n = 384.16$$

$$n = 384$$

Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted in this study. The technique is preferred because the study population is large and made up of several clusters like towns, villages, households, and people. In the first stage, Southern Senatorial District was divided into seven local government areas, namely: Calabar South, Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Odukpani, Biase, and Calabar Municipality. From these seven local government areas (clusters), the balloting method of simple random sampling technique was used to select four (4) local government area. The selected local government are: Calabar South, Akpabuyo, Bakassi, and Calabar Municipality. Two wards were selected from each of the four local government areas using the simple random sampling techniques. From the eight (8) selected wards, two communities were randomly selected. This brings the total number of selected communities to sixteen (16). These brings the total number of selected communities to sixteen (16) communities. These communities were selected using the balloting methods of the simple random sampling technique. The two (2) communities per cluster were selected from the list of communities provided by the council headquarters. The first two communities in the list of communities per ward were selected. Finally, to select the study respondents, systematic random sampling technique was adopted. All living houses in each sampled community were enumerated into even and odd numbers. Only even numbered houses were systematically sampled in each enumerated cluster and only adult found in those selected houses were given the questionnaire to complete. This technique was applied throughout the sixteen (16) selected communities. From each of the selected communities, twenty-four (24) respondents were selected. This imply that 24 respondents were selected from the sixteen selected communities in Cross River State Southern Senatorial District, Nigeria. This brings the total sample size to 384 respondents.

The questionnaire was the main instrument of data collection. The questionnaire consisted of closed and opened-ended questions, which was divided into three parts. Section 'A' of the questionnaire focuses on respondents' socio-demographic data including their age, sex, marital status, and level of education. Section "B" contained structured closed-ended questions on substantive issues raised in the research questions and hypotheses. The instrument was designed using four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The use of questionnaire in this study is predicated on the fact that it does not disclose the identity of the respondents and can be used on a large population. Section 'C' of the instrument is design to measure the dependent variable, which is socio-economic development. Ethical clearance was obtained ethical committee of the University of Calabar Teaching Hospital, Calabar. Accordingly, all the participants were provided with consent form on which clear explanations were made regarding their participation in the study. The participants were assured of confidentiality and safety with regard to the study. They were made to know that their participation in the study is voluntary and the need to record their responses was clearly explained to them. Interviews only commenced after the consent forms had been signed or thumb-printed

by participants. Data collected from respondents were properly coded and analysed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Data collected from respondents were properly coded and analysed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Responses from the respondents was analysed using percentages, weighted means, and standard deviation. The hypotheses were tested using simple linear regression statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Demographic data

Results of analysis of demographic data of respondents as presented in table 1 revealed that; out of the 367 accessible respondents', 142 respondents representing 38.69% are females, while 225 representing 61.30% are males. As for age distribution of respondents', 64 (17.43) are between 18-27 years, 111 (30.24) are between 28 – 37 years, 57 (15.53) are between 38 – 47 years, 105 (28.61) are 48 - 57 years, 30 (8.17) are 58 years and above. For respondents' marital status, 109 (29.70) are single, 205 (55.85) are currently married, 22 (5.99) are divorced/separated, 17 (4.63) widowed, 14 (3.81) are widowers. On respondents' educational background 21 (5.72) have completed primary education, 148 (40.32) completed secondary education, 198 (53.96) completed tertiary education. On respondent occupation, 133 (36.23) are students, 131 (35.69) are civil servants/traders, 103 (29.06) are artisans/ entrepreneurs.

TABLE 1: Respondents' demographic data

Variable	Category	N	Percent (%)
Gender	Female	142	38.69
	Male	225	61.30
	Total	367	100.00
Age	18 - 27 years	64	17.43
	28 – 37 years	111	30.24
	38 – 47 years	57	15.53
	48 – 57 years	105	28.61
	58 years and above	30	8.17
	Total	367	100.00
Marital status	Single	109	29.70
	Married	205	55.85
	Separated	22	5.99
	Widowed	17	4.63
	Widower	14	3.81
	Total	367	100.00
Education background	Primary Edu	21	5.72
	Secondary Edu	148	40.32
	Tertiary Edu	198	53.96
	Total	367	100.00
Occupation	Student	133	36.23
	Civil servant/traders	131	35.69
	Artisans/entrepreneurship	103	29.06
	Total	367	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2024

Test of hypotheses

There is no significant relationship between kidnapping and socio-economic development of Cross River Southern Senatorial District, Nigeria. The independent variable in this hypothesis is kidnapping, while the dependent variable is socio-economic development. Both variables were measured continuously and inferential statistics involving simple linear

regression was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance and the result is presented in table 2. The result of analysis as presented in table 2, revealed R-value of 0.195^a. Correlation coefficient is a standardized measure of an observed degree of relationship between variables, it is a commonly used measure of the size of an effect, and that values of ± 1 represent a small effect, ± 3 is a medium effect and ± 5 is a large effect. Also, the R^2 -value of .038 imply that 38% of total variance is accounted for by predictor variable (kidnapping). Furthermore, the regression ANOVA revealed that the $F(2, 366) = 14.481$; $p < .05$, is significant. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant linear association (contribution) of the predictor variable (kidnapping) on socio-economic development in the study area. The adjusted R^2 (.036) shows some shrinkage of the unadjusted value (.038) indicating that the model could be generalized on the population. Based on the result, it was concluded that there is a significant relationship between kidnapping and socio-economic development of Cross River Southern Senatorial District, Nigeria.

TABLE 2: Summary of simple linear regression analysis of the relationship between kidnapping and socio-economic development

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Kidnapping	15.2398	6.77687
Socio-economic development	20.7602	13.11185

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sig
Regression	2401.069	2	2401.069	14.481	.195 ^a	.038	.036	.000 ^a
Residual	60521.830	364	165.813					
Total	62922.899	366						

Fieldwork, 2024

Hypothesis two

Armed robbery has no significant relationship with socio-economic development of Cross River Southern Senatorial District, Nigeria. The independent variable in this hypothesis is armed robbery, while the dependent variable is socio-economic development. Both variables were measured continuously and inferential statistics involving simple linear regression was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance and the result is presented in table 3. The result of analysis as presented in table 3, revealed R-value of 0.229^a. Correlation coefficient is a standardized measure of an observed degree of relationship between variables, it is a commonly used measure of the size of an effect, and that values of ± 1 represent a small effect, ± 3 is a medium effect and ± 5 is a large effect. Also, the R^2 -value of .052 imply that 52% of total variance is accounted for by predictor variable (armed robbery). Furthermore, the regression ANOVA revealed that the $F(2, 366) = 27.461$; $p < .05$, is significant. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

This implies that there is a significant linear relationship (contribution) of the predictor variable (armed robbery) on socio-economic development of Southern Senatorial District. The adjusted R^2 (.051) shows some shrinkage of the unadjusted value (.052) indicating that the model could be generalized on the population. Based on the result, it was concluded that armed robbery has no significant relationship with socio-economic development of Southern Senatorial District, Cross River State, Nigeria.

TABLE 3: Summary of simple linear regression analysis of the relationship between armed robbery and socio-economic development

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Armed robbery	14.2289	6.69327
Socio-economic development	20.7602	13.11185

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sig
Regression	8558.456	2	8558.456	27.461	.229 ^a	.052	.051	.000 ^a
Residual	54364.443	364	148.944					
Total	62922.899	366						

Fieldwork, 2024

Discussion of findings

Kidnapping and socio-economic development

The statistical analysis for hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant relationship between kidnapping and socio-economic development of Southern Senatorial District, Cross River State, Nigeria. The result of this study is supported by previous studies such as Uyang et al (2019); Ajah et al (2018); Oketa, (2018). The study by Uyang et al (2019); Okorie-Ajah et al (2018) revealed that the economic effects of kidnapping include direct and indirect costs. Whereas the individual level, the costs include the economic value of money that may be lost to kidnappers, while the indirect economic cost of kidnapping include expenditures on preventive measures, such as the employment of private security personnel. Similarly, Ibrahim and Ahmad (2020) examined the problem of kidnapping and its consequences on socio-economic development of Nigerians. The findings from the study show that, the prevalence of kidnapping in Nigeria is as a result of laxity in the law implementation process to prosecute offenders. Consequently, the social and economic live of the people are negatively affected with the prevalence of kidnapping in Nigeria.

Armed robbery and socio-economic development

The result of hypothesis two shows that armed robbery has a significant relationship with socio-economic development of Southern Senatorial District, Cross River State, Nigeria. The findings of the study corroborate the findings of Ogunseye, (2007), Alston, (2005); Idemudia, (2005); Igbo (2001). The study by these scholars revealed that Nigerian society is insecure and vulnerable to crime. In urban areas, the situation is perceived to have become worse, and in addition, the “contagion” has diffused to the rural areas too (Idemudia, 2005). It is also obvious that Nigeria’s crime problem has implications for its position in the economic global market. A recent survey carried out by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reveals that “Nigeria is rated as the riskiest country for business in the world” (2005). The survey points chiefly to armed robbery among other crimes. Studies by Igbo (2001); Adisa, (1994); Alston, (2005) have shown that armed robbery is probably the only crime that has caused so much trepidation, apprehension, insecurity, public anger, shame, and concern to successive governments in Nigeria. Furthermore, it has been described as the most glamorous and fastest growing crime affecting much of the country. Armed robbery has also led to the sudden death of a good number of innocent citizens, security agents, and robbers themselves. People, families, and companies have lost lives and/or valuable belongings to “men of the underworld” (Rotimi, 1984). The findings of the study is in tandem with that of Ofe Ako-Mbi et al (2021), their study

revealed that armed robbery remained a source of continuous threat, harassments, violence and intimidation to the city dwellers of Bamenda, North West Region of Cameroon.

Conclusion and recommendations

The study examines the relationship between violent crime and socio-economic development in the Cross River Southern Senatorial District, Nigeria. High levels of violent crime have been shown to hinder socio-economic development by deterring investment, disrupting educational and economic activities, and creating an atmosphere of fear and instability. Conversely, the lack of socio-economic development, characterized by high unemployment rates, poor educational infrastructure, and inadequate social services, often fuels criminal activities as individuals resort to crime out of necessity or frustration. To break this cycle, it is imperative for policymakers and stakeholders to implement multi-faceted approaches that include enhancing law enforcement capabilities, investing in education and job creation, and improving social services. Community engagement and the promotion of social cohesion are also crucial in fostering a sense of collective responsibility and resilience against crime. Sustainable socio-economic development in the Southern Senatorial District requires a concerted effort to reduce violent crime through integrated policies that address both immediate security needs and long-term socio-economic challenges. By creating an environment conducive to growth and stability, the region can pave the way for a brighter, more prosperous future for its inhabitants.

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