

Comparative of Crime Victim Survey Report with the Police Report on Crime Patterns, and Trends in Gboko Town, Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study compares crime reports using data obtained from crime victims and Police reports from Gboko town in Benue State, Nigeria between 2017 and 2018. The dark figure inherent in the periodic crime record has severally been pointed out in Sociological literature, but determining the extent of these hidden figures has consistently been obscured due inability to compare Police data with data from crime victims. The significance of this study lies in raising the contribution of crime victims to periodic crime data, and to determine the true extent of crime patterns and trends in Gboko town. To do this a sample size of 400 household heads were systematically drawn from Gboko town based on a sample frame obtained from the National Population Office at Markurdi using Yamane's formula of determining sample size. The town was segmented into five clusters, with 80 respondents drawn from each using questionnaire and key informant interview method as data collection instrument. Analysis of data revealed that the volume of crime victimization in Gboko town was relatively higher compared to the Police reports. It also showed differences in crime patterns and trends reported. Based on these findings, we recommend among others the involvement of crime victims' reports in the Police periodic analysis of crime patterns and trends, compensation of crime victims, and encouragement of victims to speak out.

Keywords: Crime, Crime victimization, Crime report, Gboko town.

I. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria has in recent times been called everything from a country in the descent into the dark, to a country beset with pervasive wave crime of different sorts across the land. Scholars contend that perhaps one of the most gruesome and crippling indices accounting for its failed state status in most recent times has been unprecedented, widespread, and growing incidence of mass crime of different sorts such as armed robbery, human kidnapping, and extortion in many states across the nation (Ishor, Iorkosu & Apavigba, 2018; Anosika, 2009). Consequently, the pervasive wave of crime in Nigeria is especially crippling to society, because of the special toll they take on the core psyche of a people. As it is often tantamount in the minds of the people to the humiliation of the main symbols and institutions of national security

(Ijeoma, 2010), more painfully, the widespread occurrence of crime in Nigeria has the most potential to undermine the peace and security of the Nigerian people, disrupt economic unemployment and in general, to the immobilization of government and society.

On an almost daily basis, hardly any newspaper is without gory news of some grotesque assassinations, murder, armed robbery, kidnapping, etc being experienced in our urban centres (Anosika 2009, Ishor, Iorkosu & Apavigba, 2018). This however reflects only those that occur and are noticeable in places by the public, government officials, and stakeholders in newspapers and magazine houses. So if ground statistics or crime incidence in contemporary Nigerian cities, towns, and villages are adequately compiled. The staggering picture would be more alarming than the current situation reported in the mass media and what police report show (Moses, 2012). several scholarly works such as Yashau. Alemika and Chakwuma. 2005. Anosika 2009. Gyong, 2010 confirmed the above fact that Nigeria has experienced an upsurge in crime during the past two decades.

Crime prevention and control as well as effective administration of criminal justice are dependent on reliable and valid data on the extent nature and pattern of crime and victimization in the society. Nigeria of the present does not have such statistics (Yangeve 2012). This is because there are logical inconsistencies with the data on crime victimization generated by the criminal justice agencies due to the under-recording and manipulation of data for different purposes. The absence of reliable data on crimes and victimization has hindered the understanding of crime patterns and trends in the country. Apart from identifying crime pattern and trends, victim's surveys help to elicit a clearer picture of the level of criminal victimization as well as the opinion of a cross-section of society on matters relating to crime and punishment, their perception of criminal justice agencies, and the method of handling offenders and victims (Moses, 2013)

The information about crime given a range of factors is not always accessible or accurate. Compiling official statistics

depends on both the public to report crime and the police to record the details once they occur. But the pattern and trend of criminal events themselves often militate against reporting (Yangeve 2012). Some incidents are not regarded as significant enough to warrant reporting; others too 'sensitive' to disclose details to 'strangers' behind a desk in a police charge office. This and other factors have created doubts about the credibility of the police crime report.

Statement of Research Problem

As is the case with almost all criminal activities, those who are actually affected by a phenomenon stand a better chance to express their experiences and feelings. This is confirmed by Gyong (1989) that the problem of crime can best be accounted for by those citizens who have directly or indirectly been subjected to the traumatic experience of criminal victimization. If the above notion is valued, then more valid is the assertion that the victims are a crucial element in any crime phenomenon. Nevertheless, the victim of crime is rarely considered especially in the generation of data on the crime phenomenon in Nigeria. The scholarly work on the crime victim survey is lacking in the area. The study, therefore, set to load the void, and seeks to obtain data on criminal victimization from the victim survey and compare it with the police crime report in Gboko Town.

Purpose of the Study

The study was stimulated to measure the volume of criminal victimization in Gboko town, secondary, the study seeks to compare a crime victim survey with a police crime report in Gboko town. And lastly to investigate the pattern, trend, and the predominant types of criminal victimization in Gboko town.

Research Hypothesis

The research hypothesis for this study is:

H0: There is no significant difference between the police crime report and the crime victim survey in Gboko town

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The volume of criminal victimization

The consequence of criminal victimization on the citizens and society at large cannot be overemphasized. Individual and society aspiration for development, human rights, and the high standard of living are undermined by a high level of criminal victimization (Yangeve 2012). Adequately, knowledge of the actual volume of crime victimization has however been difficult to grasp due to logical inconsistencies in the police crime data which is in turn due to the reporting and recording tendencies and behaviour of the victims and police respectively, a factor which makes it difficult for crime control in the society. The extent of criminal victimization can be seen in the rate of crime in society. According to Alemika and Chukwuma (2005), Nigeria has witnessed a high rate of

crime and victimization that have defied the measures introduced by various successive civilian and military dispensations for its management.

Alemika et al (2005) have argued that the measurement of crime and victimization is undermined by difficulties most of which arise from the collection of crime and victimization information. They pointed out that the understanding difficulties associated with crime and victimization information include:

a. Some crime occurs Without being noticed
 b. Many victims of crime do not report them to the police
 c. The police may sometimes resolve cases brought to them without recording and invoking the criminal process. These difficulties are often collectively acknowledged as the problems 'dark' and 'grey' of crime figures which imply 'unknown' undetected and unreported crimes and detected reported but not recorded' incidents of crimes and victimization (Alemika et al 2005). The extent of criminal victimization which is to be seen in the rate of crime in the society is in turn measure by three basic standards. According to Chockalingham (2003), they are official statistics. Self-reports and victims surveys. Considerably two sources of crime victimization data have used the area.

Police Crime Victim Statistics or Report

These are reports produced by criminal justice agencies such as police, court, and prison. The report is regarded as the indicator of the volume and pattern of criminality in society. Alemika et al (2005) argued that this report is inaccurate due to dark figures (unreported crime) grey figures (reported but unrecorded crimes) and the manipulation of records to satisfy the political and institutional interest. Backing the view, Chockalingham (2003) argued that police statistics can be considered an accurate account of the volume of crime perpetuated as not all crimes are reported to, and recorded by the police. The scholarly works such as Chockalingham (2003) Alemika and Chukwuma (2012) Gyong (2010) affirmed that crime victimization is a nagging problem, and the official crime data in Nigeria is not reliable and accurate. They believe that the problem of criminal victimization as clearly demonstrated by the police report of crime shows that victimization is not only on the increase but has assumed a complex character.

Crime victim survey

Over the past decades, the advent of victim surveys has facilitated a broad understanding of the crime problem as well as a better assessment of its burden on citizens at the international level. In the past only police and criminal justice data were used to measure crime, it is now widely acknowledged that such information alone is not sufficient and should integrate with victims' survey results (Moses 2012). It can be inferred from the above that, this is one of the criminological research methods which identifies and ask individual victim questions about the experiences of criminal

victimization over a period of time. To maigure and pointing (1988) victim survey which emerged mainly to find out about the dark figures of crime have become more widely accepted as an imported alternative to officially (police) provided statistics as indices of crime level. Louw (1998) has argued on the strengths of victim-survey in determining the extent of crimes that are not recorded by the police. Thus enable the extent to which changes in crime levels as recorded by the police are real or a function of the changing reporting tendencies.

Comparison between Crime victim survey and police crime victims report

The criminal victimization survey approach in determining the level and dynamics of crime was developed as a result of dissatisfaction with official statistics produced by the criminal justice agencies. According to Alemika and Chukwuma (2005), police crime statistics, though regarded as the best indicators of criminal activities in society generated by official sources was criticized for incompleteness (due to non-reporting and non-recording) and manipulation (for institutional and political interests). Consequently, a victim survey was developed to fill the gap left by the official crime statistics. In this regard Gyong (2010) argued that victim survey has the potential of enhancing our knowledge of the patterns of reporting of criminal victimization to the police.

Efforts by the police in preventing and controlling crimes particularly in developing countries where there are shortages in human and material resources rest heavily on the cooperation of the public by reporting crimes Gyong (2010) argued that a very important and credible means through which the police can get to know the volume of crimes that occur in the society is through the reports its gets from citizens who directly or indirectly are affected by crime. According to him, this is particularly so in developing countries where police patrol is mostly carried out with little or no informed knowledge of the crime situation coupled with a clear instance of inadequate human and material resources. In the same vein, Chockalingham (2003) asserts that the nature of reporting crimes varies from country to country depending on the type of crime according to him: the general ratio between crimes actually committed and crimes make known to the police is quite high.

Pattern, Trend, and Types of Crime Victimization

Crime prevention and control requires knowledge of where and when crime and criminal victimization are mostly occurring. Criminologists have found that criminal victimization is not random. Crime is likely to occur in some places than others. According to Hindelang, etal (1978): Adler (1998), victimization is not a phenomenon that is uniformly distributed, it occurs disproportionately in particular times and places, it occurs disproportionately under certain circumstances (e.g according to whether or not the person is alone); it occurs disproportionately according to the prior relationship between the potential victim and the potential

offenders. This is because different lifestyles imply different probabilities that individuals will be in particular places. Information about where and when the crime is likely to occur can assist law enforcement agencies to undertake optimal deployment of resources for crime prevention and control. As crime differs in character, so also, their pattern of commission differs. For instance, a crime like murder occur primarily in big cities, that is, the larger the city in terms of population, the higher the murder rate.

For a crime like rape, Alemika etal (2005) argued that rapists and rape victims were often acquaintances. Beime and Messechmidt (2006) rapes are mostly to occur around the victim's residence and that women are more likely to be raped by an ex-husband, a boyfriend, an acquaintance, or date than by strangers. He also pointed out that grievous body harm involves strangers more than relatives, friends, and acquaintances. Alemika and Chukwuma (2005), argue that crime like assault occurs more frequently farther away from home than around home. Empirical studies (Yin 1985 Ferraro and Lagrange, 1989) have shown that age, sex, and size of municipality of residence are significant factors associated with victimization. Generally, Victimization occurs more in open public areas, although rapes and simple assault tend to occur in houses and are more likely at night. In all the studies (Gyong 1988; 2010: Chockalingham 2003: Alemika and Chukwuma 2005: NISER. 1998). The theft was the most predominant character property crime. This shows that property crime is predominant in Nigeria.

Theoretical framework

There are many criminologists' theories that explain crime victimization and it reporting to the police. This paper dwells on crime pattern theory.

Crime Pattern Theory

Crime pattern theory is a combination of rational choice and routine activity theories according to the theory how victims are locations come to the attention of offenders influences the distribution of crime events over time and space (Brantingham & Brantingham 1993) crime pattern theory argues that rational offenders while engaging in their routine activities will not places without security and security officers. The theory, therefore, concerns itself with the interactions of offenders and their physical and social environments. The concept of place thus becomes essential to crime pattern theory for not only place logically required for criminal events, but the characteristics of a place may influence the likelihood of a crime occurring (Eck and Weisburd 1995). What characteristics make the Nigerian environment conducive to crime? Analysts point to a weak criminal justice system and corrupt socio-economic and political institutions (Yishau 2005). the police can easily be bribed to stay away from the crime scene until the operation is over (Alemika and Chukwuma 2005). In one of his press releases, the inspector general of police Ogbannaya Onovo acknowledged the fact that some policemen were working with criminals (Ologun,

2010). This view corresponds with Alubo (2006) who argues that our leaders keep quiet as fire rages in different parts of the country and then sends armed soldiers or police to restore order after the damage had been done. Agreeing with the theory, Obasanjo as cited in Ahmed (2008) once “indicted law enforcement agencies, especially the police. For aiding and abetting the organised crime. He also became worried by how the “police hire guns to armed robbers”. Similarly Ijeoma (2010) also agreed with this theory when he argued that the police sometimes say armed robbers forcefully took their guns from them. It is a great lie. He describes this as “top secret”. The police facilitate the crime. He painfully continues that most criminal incidents in Nigeria are masterminded by the police

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey research design was adopted in this study. A survey research design describes the nature of the existing condition and identifies standards against which these conditions can be compared (Kerlinger, 1973). The population was made up of all the target population of Gboko town, which is 125,999 (National Population Office, Makurdi). The sample size for the study was 400 using Taro Yamane’s Formula of determining sample size. The sampling technique adopted for this study was cluster sampling. Based on this, the entire Gboko town was segmented into 5 clusters, and 80 respondents (households of both sexes) were chosen from each clustered area. The instrument used for this study was a design questionnaire. The DPO and PPRO of two police stations in Gboko were interviewed. The instrument consisted of 20 items structured open and closed-ended format. Variables were quantified in the table and frequencies distributed in percentages. The research hypothesis was statistically tested using the t-test and qualitatively analyzed.

IV. RESULTS

Table 1: Distribution of the volume of victimization by location

| Location of residence | Victimize F | Victimize % | Not victimize F | Not victimize % | N | % |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----|-----|
| Gboko North | 50 | 62.5 | 30 | 37.5 | 80 | 100 |
| Gboko West | 49 | 61.3 | 31 | 38.7 | 80 | 100 |
| Gboko Central | 55 | 68.8 | 25 | 31.2 | 80 | 100 |
| Gboko South | 51 | 63.8 | 29 | 36.2 | 80 | 100 |
| Gboko East | 52 | 65.0 | 28 | 35.0 | 80 | 100 |
| Total | 257 | 80.4 | 231 | 19.6 | 400 | 100 |

Source: Victim survey study, 2018

The table shows that the volume of crime victimization in Gboko town is relatively very high. This is evidence of the fact that 80.4% of the respondents were victimized while 19.6% were not victimized. The DPO of Gboko central police station attested that: *I can rate the level of crime victimization in Gboko as high, this is because of the daily record we have on paper.*

Table2: Comparing between police report and victim survey in Gboko Town

| Police Report | F | % | Victim survey | % |
|--------------------|------|------|---------------|------|
| Armed Robbery | 107 | 7.0 | 34 | 3.6 |
| House breaking | 102 | 6.7 | 7 | 0.7 |
| Cheating | 52 | 3.4 | 231 | 24.4 |
| Murder | 27 | 1.8 | 2 | 0.2 |
| Rape | 52 | 3.4 | 75 | 7.9 |
| Assault | 175 | 11.5 | 111 | 11.7 |
| Theft | 905 | 59.5 | 222 | 23.4 |
| Kidnapping | 4 | 0.3 | 1 | 0.10 |
| Grievous body harm | 98 | 6.4 | 175 | 18.5 |
| Total | 1522 | 100 | 948 | 100 |

Source: police annual crime report, 2018, Makurdi Crime Victim survey, 2018

The table sought to compare a crime report (crime annual report) with a crime survey. The result indicated the police crime statistics for the years 2017 and 2018 in the study area on the nine crimes measured in the study was 1522 while that of victim survey was 948. This can be statistically said that the police crime report is not properly captured hence the victim survey study was left out. This is explainable in the fact that most of the criminal victimizations are not reported to the police nor are often not recorded by the police. It is evident in these statistics that crime statistics obtaining through crime victim surveys represent a comprehensive picture of the occurrence of crime in the society than police reports which are characterized by dark and prey figures.

The PPRO of Gboko west police station in an interview said: *it really very hard to know the crime victimisation, this is because some of the criminal acts are not reported to us. The members of the public are in most cases adamant in reporting some criminal to us. This makes the actual record of crime victimisation difficult.*

Table 3: Distribution of households’ member on crime victimization in Gboko

| Types of crime | F | % |
|--------------------|-----|------|
| Armed Robbery | 10 | 2.5 |
| House breaking | 15 | 3.8 |
| Cheating | 65 | 16.3 |
| Murder | 5 | 1.3 |
| Rape | 32 | 8.0 |
| Assault | 105 | 26.3 |
| Theft | 125 | 31.3 |
| Kidnapping | 1 | 0.3 |
| Grievous body harm | 42 | 10.5 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Source: Victim Survey study, 2018

The table shows that the majority of 31.3% of the respondents were victimized through theft. This was followed by assault 26.3%, cheating 16.3, grievous body harm 10.5, rape 8.0%, housebreaking 3.8, armed robbery 2.5%, and kidnapping the least 0.3% victimization.

Table 4: T-test comparison between police crime report with crime victim survey in Gboko Town

| Variable | N | X | df | T-cal | P |
|---------------------|-----|-------|------|-------|------|
| Crime Report | 107 | 58.29 | 1.74 | 1.744 | <0.5 |
| Crime survey report | 29 | 61.62 | | | |

The result of the calculated value of 1.74 is greater than the table value 1.645 at 0.05 alpha level and 1.74 degrees of freedom. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant difference between the police crime report and that of victim survey is affirmed. The implication is that to have a good knowledge of crime patterns and trends in Gboko town, there should be a strong and positive correlation between police crime reports and the victim a survey on crime victimization.

IV. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Objective one: The findings of the study indicate that the volume of crime victimization in Gboko town is relatively higher. 53.8% attested to this finding tally with Gyong (2010) and that of Alemika and Chukwuma (2005). They argued that the volume of crime victimization in Nigeria is relatively high. Considering the high rate of criminal victimization in Gboko town and Benue at large, Governor Suswam with the approval of the presidency set up the joint task force popularly known in Tiv as operation “ Zenda” was established to curb criminal activities in the area and Benue state at large.

Objective Two: The findings also reveal that there are discrepancies in reporting of crime victimisation between the members of the public (Crime victim survey and that of the police report). It is worth mentioning that, some criminal victimization is not recorded by the police as the study location. It is also revealed that most crime victimization was not reported to the police. The major reason for the non-reporting of crime was found to be the loss of confidence and trust in polices by the victims. This finding agreed with Moses (2013) and that of Gyong (2010). They argue that the police crime report is characterized by “dark and grey” figures. The hypothesis tested shows that to have a better understanding of the crime pattern and trend there should be a strong and positive correlation between the police report and the victim survey on crime management and control in Gboko town.

Objective three: Findings on the types of crime victimization in Gboko town revealed that most of the respondent was victimized through theft. This could be attributed to the fact that Gboko is particularly a business and a commercial town

of Benue state. This finding tally with Yangeve (2012), who observed that theft, was a common type of crime victimization in Makurdi metropolis and the state capital.

V. CONCLUSION

The negative consequences of crime victimization cannot be quantified in terms of death psychological trauma; physical pains etc on the crime victims. The persistent increase in the rate of crime victimization in our society constituted a security threat to the peaceful existence of the citizens.

Considerably, this work has been established the fact that crime victimization is generally underreported by the police and therefore police report on criminal victimization cannot be solely relied open for an effective policy on crime victimization. This reality makes it necessary for any crime data generating an effort to give serious attention to crime victim surveys which can provide a comprehensive understanding of the volume of crime, the pattern, and trends in crime victimization in the society.

In another dimension, the importance of crime victim survey in the generation of crime data as clearly shown in the study is the extent to which crime survey offers more effective and realistic information on the accurate picture of the volume of crime victimization to that of the police. It is an objective reality that the victim survey has the capacity to reduce the dark figure of crime and perfectly filling the hole created by the police report on crime victimization in the study location.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Flowing from the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made. They include.

1. The government should ensure compulsory involvement of crime victims survey report in the police periodic analysis of crime pattern and trend
2. Crime victim surveys should be incorporated into government policies such that the victims of crime could be catered for by the government agencies.
3. Law should be enacted for compensation of crime victim and encouragement of victims to speak out their opinion and perception without fear
4. Workshops/seminars should be organized by the government at all levels and non-governmental organizations for members of the public on the need to report criminal activities to the police. This would go a long way in encouraging crime reporting among crime victims.

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