

## **Gender Dimensions and Victims of Property Crime by Commercial Motorcycle Riders in Anambra State, Nigeria**

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**Abstract:** This paper appraised gender dimensions and victims of property crime by commercial motorcycle riders in Anambra state, Nigeria. The theoretical frameworks for the study was Strain theory by Robert K. Merton (1957). The study participants were members of the public which included; traders, civil servants, artisans, students, etc. The sample size for the study comprised 400 respondents. The sampling technique for the study was the multi-stage sampling procedure. The study found out that women are more vulnerable to property crime by commercial motorcycle riders. However, the study recommends, among others, that the government should come up with policies that will ensure their safety in using transportation means especially motorcycle.

**Keywords:** Commercial Motorcycle Riders, Crime, Criminal, Gender, Okada and Property Crime

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### **I. BACKGROUND AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

One of the most serious problems of urban centres in developing world is mobility (Sule, 2007). Before the advent of automobile, urban morphology was essentially concentric (Francis and Andrew, 1995). The cities of that period were characterized by centralized functions that encouraged short trips. The development of the automobile in the 20th century and the resultant effect made the movement of people who perform different functions in a decentralize cities easier. With population growth, land use became disperse, trip length increased and better form of transport to meet the ever increasing and specialized functions, remain an illusion. Francis and Andrew (1995) observed that the proliferation of vehicles in the cities did not solve transportation problem but resulted in what they described as a state of relative immobility and congestions which result in the introduction of unconventional modes of public transportation.

Commercial motorcycle riders, popularly known as “Okada” in Nigeria, are motorcycle operators who carry passengers for a pay. It is one of the major and most common means of informal transport in the country. Its popularity and widespread acceptance has rapidly risen in recent years. Unfortunately, the rise has been accompanied by increased levels of risk of accidents, crime, reckless driving, and poor attitude of the riders in dealing with the members of the public. They are threat to the security of life and property of the Nigeria citizens; some of them aid and abet crimes. Some of them constitute nuisance to the general public, thereby neglecting their main function which is conveying people and goods from one place to the other. They have also been accused of causing accidents on the road leading to the death of many innocent citizens due to reckless riding. Fighting motorists and setting ablaze people’s vehicles at any slightest provocation are also their daily habit. On many occasions, commercial motorcycle riders carry out jungle justice by taking laws into their hands. Oluwadiya, Oginni and Olasinde (2004) observed that commercial motorcycle riders are becoming increasingly implicated in officially reported cases of criminality like armed robbery, snatching of handbags, vehicle and mobile phone theft etc. As a result of all these, they have come under heavy scrutiny. This prevails in form of legislations, restriction and in some instances prohibiting their operations in some cities in Nigeria.

In June 2005, Abuja (the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria) phased out commercial motorcycle riders from operating in the nation’s capital city, after accusing the operators of “violating traffic regulations, posing security threat, constituting nuisance and dispensing jungle justice (Idika, 2008). The Lagos State Government restricted commercial motorcycle riders from plying federal and state roads due to the increasing evil activities perpetrated by some of the riders in the state.

Ofuonyeadi (2008) reported the death of three policemen who were killed in Lagos by armed robbers operating with motorcycles. He also reported a case of a 3-man robbery gang with motorcycle who shot to dead

a 42-year old mother of five in Lagos. Arising from all these criminal engagements by commercial motorcycle riders, the state government has since banned them from operating in major roads and streets in the state.

According to Udo (2009), some Okada riders are high way criminals, reporting on the arrest of a five-man gang of armed robbers operating with motorcycle in Ibadan, South west Nigeria, He revealed that, one of the armed robbers confessed to the police on how they had been using motorcycles to rob people especially women of their handsets, handbags and other valuable properties in the city of Ibadan. He added that another set of armed robbers were caught while using a motorcycle to rob a Lebanese in Ibadan. In reaction to criminal activities associated with the use of motorcycle, Oyo state government came up with a law which banned the operation of commercial motorcycle riders in the city of Ibadan, the state capital. Cross River state government in 2005 banned the operation of commercial motorcycles in the state capital due to reported cases of using motorcycles to snatch people's mobile phones, handbags and other valued properties. Rivers state on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008 decried the high rate of property crimes in the state and traced the origin to the activities of commercial motorcycle operators in the state. This came with a restriction order stopping them from operating in the state. Joseph (2013) traced the apparent nexus between the operation of commercial motorcycle riders and the rise in criminality of various forms in Edo state. According to him, motorcycle operators in Benin and its environs have been implicated in several reported cases of property crimes, armed robbery as well as kidnapping. He noted that motorcycle riders have also become a law unto themselves, as they have often been found to be involved in gang-beating car drivers who were involved in traffic accidents with their members. This happens even when the motorcycle rider is clearly at fault. The government of Edo state has since banned the operation of commercial motorcycling in Benin City.

In Enugu state, the government in 2010 banned commercial motorcycle riders from operating in Enugu urban. They were accused of constituting nuisance in the state as well as indulging in crimes. A case of kidnapping of the wife of the Deputy Leader of Ebonyi State House of Assembly by a gang of commercial motorcycle riders was reported by the police in the state (Pius, 2009). NAN (2013) reported another incident of the kidnapping of Gombe State lawmaker with a motorcycle.

In Anambra state, commercial motorcycle riders are accused of being involved in many criminal activities ranging from burglary to snatching of handbags and theft of vehicle parts, mobile phones to abduction, rape and even murder. It is in corroboration with this that the Commissioner for Transport in the state, "Dr. Ifeanyichukwu Ejikeme" why lamenting on the activities of the riders in the state, noted that:

*Anambra State government may have concluded plans to chase out of the state some of the riders, especially the non-indigenes among them over alleged activities capable of causing a breakdown of law and order (Enyim 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2015, page 34).*

In the meantime, commercial motorcycle riding in Anambra state today is seen by majority of the people as a means for some unscrupulous persons to commit crime. To some, commercial motorcycle riders in the state only use that as a smokescreen to abet and commit crime. They act as informants to criminals; use motorcycle as surveillance to monitor the environment only to know where they will carry out their nefarious activities. With high rate of reported cases of involvement of commercial motorcycle riders in property crime in the state and the inability of the security agencies to rise up to the security threat, many have started to argue that the disadvantages of operating commercial motorcycles have so far outweighed the advantages. Therefore the need to monitor their activities closely in the state becomes imperative.

### **Gender and victims of property crime by commercial motorcycle riders**

Women constitute an important proportion of the general population in the World. In most developing countries like Nigeria, gender dimensions of transportation planning and management have been one of the least considered aspects of urban transportation and development. Harassment, sexual assault and loss of property are huge threat faced by women when using public transportation and transportation infrastructure in cities. Hundreds of thousands of women in the Nigerian cities and other developing countries lack reasonable access to adequate supply of safe public transportation services (Lynch and Atkins, 1988; Oyesiku and Odufuwa, 2002; Odufuwa, 2007). The problem manifest in countless cities in Nigeria, literature shows that, most Third World cities in regards to public transportation offer little or no perspectives for women (Fernando, 2002; World Bank, 2002 and TRB, 2009), and the general quality of life of women is substantially lower than the general population (Rakodi and Llylod-Jones, 2002). The World Bank in recent time emphasized the need for gender concern and integration of mobility needs of women into transportation planning and management. It can be deduced from this situation that, crime have gender, spatial and non-spatial distribution, which resultantly affects the general livelihoods of most people, particularly women.

The fear of criminal activities and affection for security of life and properties in recent time are obviously a limiting factor to frequent and levels of use of public transportation (Newton, 2004). According to Odufuwa (2007), threats to life while using public transportation have become a disturbing issue to most Nigerians. These issues in recent time have dominated an array of debates involving policy makers and city

managers. Presently, the situation has taken different dimension with the use of emerging public transportation modes to perpetuate criminal activities and it makes live in most Nigerian cities more frightening. It should be noted that, not only is the incidence of crime becoming more frequent and alarming, the nature of the crimes; especially physical assault, sexual harassment, pick-pocketing etc., have become more heinous. It has become a daily rhythm to people, often daily announcements of bolder and sophisticated crimes taking place in most cities appears not to spear any head. Both the rich and the poor bears the brunt; but the fact worth mentioning here is that, women who are the majority users of public transportation appears helpless in the face of crime when using public transportation such as motorcycle. Odufuwa, Oriola and Otubaga (2012) argued that women tend to bear the brunt of a weak security system in the use of public transportation services in Nigeria.

Ndefreke (2004) noted that most of the victims of property crime by commercial motorcycle riders are female commuters. This is due to the fact that all the commercial motorcycle riders are males and their target are most often females who they consider being weaker than them, and who are most likely to carry valuables like handbags containing different materials and wear expensive necklace or jewelleryes. He further noted that young people are more victims of these crimes committed by commercial motorcycle riders than older people, due to late nights and higher motorcycle patronage. Siegel (2005) corroborated this position by submitting that young people face a much greater victimization risk in the crime due to their lifestyle such as going out to public places at night, drinking and socializing with people who may have criminal behaviour. Igbo (2007) debunked the above ground and maintained that anybody can fall a victim of property crime anytime anywhere. Property crimes that take place in shops, residential areas are often facilitated by the role of women as gate-keepers, during surveillance by the criminals, some crimes tend to occur when men are in their work places. Odufuwa, Oriola and Otubaga (2012) noted that most women face the threat of insecure public transportation and the possibility of sexual and physical harassment among others. These mobility problems have been on the increase in most Nigerian cities like other developing countries during the last few years.

Joseph, Agba and Christopher (2013) asserted that females fall most victims of crime by commercial motorcycles riders. They associated this to their physical weakness, materials in their possession such as handbags, phones, jewelleryes and indecent dressing. They argued that many commercial motorcycle riders know that females are not strong. Little threat from a commercial motorcycle rider will make them afraid and handover their phones or handbags to the cyclist. This also accounts for the reason why many of them become victims of rape. Though both males and females are targeted by these hoodlums, females are the ones who suffer most. In most occasions, females always carry handbags which are always very attractive to these criminal motorcycle riders.

## **II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Strain Theory.**

The strain theory has its origin in the works of the French Sociologist, Emile Durkheim, but was elaborated upon and made popular by the American Sociologist, Robert K. Merton (1957). The theory states that social structures within the society pressures people to commit crime. It emphasizes that individuals act without regard for law and order in strain situations. Robert Merton attributes deviance to the social structure – a result of disjuncture between culturally defined goals and culturally prescribed means of achieving them. According to Merton, the society usually sets certain goals for people (e.g. achievement or success goal), and at the same time, the society prescribes means of achieving the goals (e.g. honesty, hard work, education, etc.). “Balanced” societies place equal emphasis on the goals and the means of achieving them, but “unbalanced” societies place more emphasis on the goal and less on the means. Nigeria can be said to belong to the unbalanced society where more emphasis is placed on people’s wealth and less emphasis is placed on the means of their wealth. Equally, legitimate opportunities of achieving the goals are not available to all. In other words, the social structure denies some people legitimate opportunities of realizing the societal goal. When this happens, the individuals affected may respond to the frustration in one of five ways, which were identified by Merton as follows:

- Conformity
- Innovation
- Ritualism
- Retreatism
- Rebellion

The conformist, according to Merton, accepts both the goals and prescribed means for achieving the goals. Individuals who choose the adaptation of innovation accepts society’s goals, but since they have few legitimate means of achieving them, they design their own means of getting ahead. More so, people who adapt by ritualism abandon the goals they once believed to be within reach and resign themselves to their present lifestyles.

Retreatism is the adaptation of people who give up both the goals and the means and retreat into the world of drug addiction or alcoholism. They have internalized the value system and therefore are under internal pressure not to innovate (Agnew, 2004). Finally, rebellion occurs when both cultural goals and the legitimate means are rejected. Merton’s analysis established the fact that, the society’s structure prevents the lower class members of the society such as commercial motorcycle riders from achieving the societal goals such as cars, employment and houses. This unfortunate situation inevitably propels them to indulge in criminal activities such as robbery, snatching of phones and handbags, jewelleries among others.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Design of the Study

Cross-sectional survey design was adopted for this study. Questionnaire instrument was employed in data generation.

#### 3.3: Target Population and Sample Size

According to National Population Commission (NPC, 2006), Anambra State has a total population of 4,182,032. However, the total population used for this study was 299097 because the study adopted the population from two Local Government Areas in Anambra State. From Anambra Central senatorial zone, we have Awka South Local Government Area with a total population of 189,654 (2006, NPC), which is 4.53% of the state population; and from Anambra South senatorial zone, we have Orumba North Local Government Area with a total population of 109,443 (2006, NPC), which is 2.72% of the entire state population. The study participants were adult residents of the two local government areas, aged 18-years and above at the time of the study. However, It was difficult to get those 18-years and above from the NPC (2006) figure, hence the researcher relied on data from office of the two secretaries in the two local government councils, which put adult population in the two local government areas at two hundred fifty five thousand, six hundred and eighty-seven (255, 687). The choice of adult population 18 years and above is because they have the maturity to give relevant information on the study objectives. From this population, the sample size was drawn using Yameni

(1967) formula. The formula for the sample size determination. is given as:  $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$

Where:

n = the sample size

N = the population size

e = the level of precision (allowable error) that is 5% or 0.05.

Therefore, the sample size estimation is given as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1097}{1 + 1097(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{299097}{748}$$

n = 400 approximately.

#### Sampling Techniques

The sampling technique for the study is the multi-stage sampling. It involves a combination of probability and non-probability techniques. The non-probability technique is introduced bearing in mind, the difficulty in obtaining a sampling frame required to carry out a probability study. In the first stage, Anambra State was clustered into three (3) Senatorial Districts made of seven (7) LGAs each as was shown below:

**Table 1:** Cluster of LGAs in Anambra State

Senatorial District	L.G.A
Anambra Central	Anaocha, Awka North, Awka South, Dunukofia, IdemliNorth, Idemli South, Njikoka.
Anambra North	Anambra East, Anambra West, Ayamelum, Ogbaru, Onitsha North, Onitsha South, Oyi.
Anambra South	Aguata, Ekwusigo, Ihiala, Nnewi North, Nnewi South, Orumba North, Orumba South.

Field survey, 2016

Then using the balloting method of simple random sampling technique, two clusters were selected in which Anambra South and Anambra Central senatorial districts were adopted. Secondly, the stratified sampling

technique was adopted to select one urban and rural local government area from the selected senatorial districts. Hence, Orumba North and Awka South local government areas were selected.

**Table 2:** Cluster of towns in Awka South and Orumba North LGAs.

L.G.A.	Towns
Awka South	Awka, Amahaobia, Nibo, Nise, Okpuno, Mbaukwu, Umuawlu, Isiagu, Ezinato
OrumbaNorth	Ajalli, Ogbu, Awah, Amaokpala, Amaetiti, Oko, Nanka, Okpeze, Ndiike, Ufuma, Ndiowu, Omogho, Ndiokolo, Ndiukwenu.

Field survey, 2016

Using a Simple random sampling technique, two communities were selected from the two local government areas adopted. Awka town was selected from Awka South local government area, while Ogbu town was selected from Orumba North local government area. Again, Simple random sampling was used to select one village from each town selected. In order to give equal chances of being selected, names of all the villages in each of the towns were written on pieces of paper separately, folded and put in a bowl and shuffled thoroughly. A pupil was called to pick out a folded paper from the bowl. Ifite village was picked from Awka town in Awka South local government Area, while Ugwu village was picked from Ogbu town in Orumba North local government Area. This same process was repeated to select one clan and one street from each of the villages in each of the towns picked. In Ugwu village Ogbu town in Orumbra North, Nkpeshi clan was selected, while Prof. Tony Eze Street was selected from Ifite village Awka town in Awka South local government Area. Furthermore, the lottery procedure was used to select one hundred households in each of the clans and the street in the two towns. The households were given numbers and every third household was picked from the clan and the street. Altogether, two households were selected to give all the households equal chances of being included, and two adult members in a family were selected from each household. The eligibility of each of the respondent in each household, which could be a father, mother, trader, artisan, civil servant, or student, was based on the presence of adults at home at the time the researcher and his team visited. This was how the researcher generated the data for the study.

The respondents for the in-depth Interview were selected using purposive sampling technique and they included the Divisional Police Officer B Division Aroma, Awka; the State Commandant Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), Anambra State; the chairman of Road Transport Workers Union, Anambra State; the State Commandant Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, Anambra State; the Commissioner for Transport, Anambra State; the Chairman Community Based Local Vigilante group, Ifite, Awka town in Awka South local government area and a female victim of property crime from Orumba North Local Government Area. These respondents were carefully selected because of their informed knowledge on the objective of the study.

**Methods of data collection and Analysis**

Data for this study were collected through primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include questionnaire administration to respondents and in-depth interviews. On the other hand, data were secondarily sourced through the library and other documents dealing with gender and property crimes. Both qualitative and quantitative components of data collected for this study were analysed.

**Qualitatively**, responses from respondents, as were generated through interviews, were subjected to content analysis while the quantitative components of data generated were analysed using frequencies and percentages.

**IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Four hundred (400) copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents, out of which only 379 copies, representing 94.6% of the questionnaires were properly filled and collected back by the researcher, against 5.4% copies that were not collected back. The response rate was considered fair and 379 completed questionnaires were used for the analysis of data.

**Table 3:** Respondents’ views on the gender most vulnerable to property crimes by commercial motorcycle riders.

Variables	Frequency	Percent %
Males	73	19.3
Females	245	64.6
I am not certain	51	13.5
<b>Valid Total</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>97.4</b>
Missing Values	10	2.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Data in table 3 show that a substantial proportion of the respondents population that is 64.6% were of the view that females fall victim most to property crimes by commercial motorcycle riders, 19.3% of the respondents were of the view that males fall victim to property crimes by commercial motorcycle riders while 13.5% of the respondents were not certain to that effect. This implies that females are the most prone to become victims of motorcycle riders criminalities. This position is supported by Ndefereke (2004) when he argues that most of the victims of property crime by commercial motorcycle riders are female commuters. This is due to the fact that all the commercial motorcycle riders are males and their target are most often females who they consider being weaker than them, and who are most likely to carry valuables like handbags containing different materials and wear expensive necklace or jewelleryes.

Joseph, Agba and Christopher (2013) also corroborated this when they asserted that females fall most victims of crime by commercial motorcycles riders. They associated this to their physical weakness, materials in their possession such as handbags, phones, jewelleryes and indecent dressing

**Table 4:** Respondents’ views on the reasons why most females fall victims to property crimes by commercial motorcycle riders.

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent %</b>
Females are perceived as weaker sex	129	34.0
Females often possess more attractive/valuables than the males	183	48.3
Most female victims dress indecently	39	10.3
I am not certain	28	7.4
Others	0	.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 4 shows that a substantial proportion of the respondents which is 48.3% were of the view that females fall victim to property crimes because they are often perceived to possess more attractive and valuable properties than the males. However, 34.0% of the respondents indicated that females were perceived as the weaker sex. Only 10.3% of the respondents indicated that indecent dressing of most female victims was the major reason for females falling victims to property crimes by motorcycle riders while 7.4% of the respondents were not certain about the reasons. This corroborates with the views of a respondents in an interview. Here are his words:

There may be different reasons why females are the major targets of those criminal Okada drivers; but I think the major reason is how the criminals perceive their victims. A criminal cannot attack you if he does not feel you have something valuable. Going by many reported cases of handbag snatching or most times at gun point by those criminal Okada riders, one can only conclude that they perceive the female handbags to contain valuable properties; coupled with the fact that most females may not have the courage to fight them back. For this reason, it is always easier for them to steal from the females more than the males (IDI, Police Officer, Awka South L.G.A, Anambra State).

**Table 5:** Respondents’ view on whether or not young females fall most victims to property crimes more than the older ones.

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent %</b>
Yes	253	66.8
No	76	20.1
I am not certain	41	10.8
<b>Valid Total</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>97.7</b>
Missing Values	9	2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field survey, 2016

Table 5 shows that the majority of the respondents (66.8%) agreed that young females fall most victims to property crimes by commercial motorcycle riders’ more than older ones. A lower proportion of the respondents (20.1%) disagreed to that while only 10.8% of the respondents were not certain to that effect. The above findings is supported by Ndefreke (2004) when he noted that young people are more victims of these crimes committed by commercial motorcycle riders than older people, due to late nights and higher motorcycle patronage. Siegel (2005) also corroborated this position by submitting that young people face a much greater victimization risk in the crime due to their lifestyle such as going out to public places at night, drinking and socializing with people who may have criminal behaviour.

## V. CONCLUSION

Females were found in the study to be the gender most vulnerable to property crimes by commercial motorcycle riders than the males; this falls in line with the study by Odufuwa (2007) which found out that most women face threat of insecure public transport with the possibility of sexual and physical harassment among others. These mobility problem according to him have being on the increase in most Nigerian cities like other developing countries during the last few years. Joseph et al (2013) were of the opinion that female are more vulnerable to property crimes by commercial motorcycle riders due to their physical weakness, materials in their possession such as handbags, phones, jewelleries. More so, individuals who go out at odd hours, those who board motorcycles to unknown or unfamiliar places and who make frequent use of commercial motorcycles were found to stand the risk of being victims of property crimes by commercial motorcycle riders. In addition, young female individuals were found to be more victims of property crimes in the hands of commercial motorcycle riders than older female individuals because they use Okada more.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Since this study shows that women stands much risk of becoming victims of property crimes associated with Okadameans of transportation, this study recommends that the government should come up with policies that will ensure their safety. It is the hope of the researcher that this study will signpost more specifically gender perspectives of public transportation planning, development and management.
2. In line with the above recommendation, the government should intensify efforts in infrastructural development to come up with developmental plans that will create massive employment opportunities for the youths in the formal sector of the economy.
3. To reduce risks associated with using motorcycle means of transportation, there is a need for a safer and effective transportation system in Nigeria. Public transportation in the country should be made more safe, efficient and attractive.

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