

## **Public Perception of the Involvement of Commercial Motorcyclists in Crime in South-South Nigeria**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This paper examines the perception of the public on the involvement of commercial motorcyclists in crime. The method of data collection included questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews directed at key informants selected through multi-stage sampling techniques. Most of the respondents perceived that commercial motorcyclists are involved in different criminal activities such as armed robbery, snatching of valuables and kidnapping. The respondents identified unemployment and greed as major factors predisposing commercial motorcyclists to crime; 76.8% of respondents claimed that most victims of motorcycle criminal activities are female, and this is because of their physical weakness and the valuables they possessed during transits. Respondents also considered that young people fall victims than old people because they go out often and board motorcycles more frequent. To tackle crime committed by commercial motorcyclists, government has placed a curfew on commercial motorcyclists and encouraged constant police patrol. Effort of professional commercial motorcyclists association toward addressing crimes committed by riders was still at rudimentary level. It is recommended that government should place more emphasis on the formulation of friendly socio-economic policies that address the harsh and unfavorable economic conditions which manifest in the high level of unemployment and poverty.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Commercial motorcyclists, kidnapping, rape, snatching, armed robbery, crime.*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Crimes associated with commercial motorcyclists have been on the increase in Nigeria (Okoro, 2004; Adebayo, 2008; Aborisade, 2010). The frequent occurrence of these crimes has become a major source of worry not only to the government but the generality of the masses. The proliferation of criminal activities with the use of motorbikes has resulted in the colossal loss of lives and properties (Basse, 2009). Apart from the lack of respect for traffic law, Ofuonyeadi (2008), Pius (2009) and Okache (2010), observed that on daily basis, commercial motorcyclists were accused of indulging in crimes such as murder, theft, handbag and mobile phone snatching, rape, kidnapping and ritual killings. The geometric increase in crime with the use of motorcycles has created fear in the minds of commuters, because it has become apparently difficult to differentiate between genuine commercial motorcycle operators and criminals.

The prevalence of economic crises and the unhealthy structural adjustment policies introduced in Nigeria aggravated the problem of the urban poor. This was manifested in the drastic lost job and mass retrenchment among others (Udomi, 2002; Madunago, 2004; Chikezie, 2006; Sule, 2007). It became very expensive to import enough vehicles in enough quantity to cope with the rising demand for means of transportation. The few available retail transporters become elitist in providing transport services by insisting on "drop" rather than mass carriage of passengers. Some of them refused to drop passengers at their designation. Commercial motorcyclists therefore, took over the services of dropping passengers at their destinations (Nsa, 2007; Ugboma, 2004). Unemployed graduates and highly skilled workers who were retrenched became commercial motorcyclists.

Though the emergence of commercial motorcycle came as a big relief to the prevailing transportation and unemployment problems with other advantages such as curbing loss of economic man hour, lateness to work, and other challenges associated with traffic jam, the problem associated with its operations are enormous. Akogun (2008) observed that the problem with commercial motorcyclists is not only that of recklessness and non-adherence to traffic regulations, but that many of them have been accused of indulging in criminal activities.

The alarming report on crimes with the use of motorbikes and the apparent inability of the law enforcement agencies to prevent and control its persistence is still a major concern to government. The advent of motorcycles as means of public transport, ease transportation problem in Nigeria, but the abolition of commercial motorcycles in some urban centres in Nigeria due to their reported involvement in crime have not only compounded transport problems but has rendered many jobless. The pertinent question is, are all

commercial motorcycle operators criminals? Do the public see them as criminals? If there are, what are the factors that actually propel them to crime? It is within this context that this study is designed to survey people's opinion on the purported involvement of commercial motorcyclists in criminal activities in Nigeria.

The general objective of this study therefore was to investigate public perception of the involvement of commercial motorcyclists in crime in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, this study aimed to determine the:(1) perception of the public on the involvement of commercial motorcyclists in crimes; (2) perception of the public on the likely factors that predisposes commercial motorcyclists to crime;(3) categories of persons that are most likely to be victims of commercial motorcycle criminals; (4) measures put in place by government for curbing crime committed by commercial motorcyclists.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The emergence of commercial motorcyclist**

One of the most serious problems of urban centres of developing world is mobility (Sule, 2007). Before the advent of automobile, urban morphology was essentially concentric (Francis & Andrew, 1995). The cities of this period were characterized by centralized functions that encouraged short trips. The development of the automobile in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the resultant ease of movement conferred on these, multifarious functions. With population growth, land use became disperse, trip length increased and better form of transport to meet their ever increasing and specialized functions, remain an illusion. Francis and Andrew (1995) observe 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 to the introduction of commercial motorcycles.

Commercial motorcycle as a mode of public transport in Nigeriastarted in late 1980s to ease the transportation problems in urban areas (Kraxberger, 2004). The use of motorcycle for public transportation is not an entirely new, before public motorcycles became widespread, motorbike services had actually been provided for a fee since the early 1980s in few urban cities of Calabar, Uyo, Bauchi and Makurdi(OgunsanyaandGaltima, 1993; Gbasanmosi, 2006). Commercial motorcycles has also served as the common mode of inter-rural and rural-urban transport in the disperse settlement of eastern states and areas where the conventional public transport system services were not available.

It was stressed that the increase in population and urbanization without a corresponding or proportionate development of the transportation sector created a vacuum for the commercial motorcycles to fill (Udoh, 2000; Sule, 2007). According to Ogbuji (2001) and Gbadamosi (2006) the parlous state of the Nigerian economy, collapse of public transportation system and the inability of the available commercial cars to satisfy the movement of the ever growing urban population among others are indices that led to the emergence of commercial motorcycle transport in Nigeria.

### **The involvement of commercial motorcycle operators in crime**

Data from Cross River State Police Command between January to December, 2008, showed that one thousand, three hundred and fifty two (1352) commercial motorcyclists were arrested for indulging in different criminal activities such as snatching of mobile phones, handbags, rape, and unlawful possession of dangerous weapons. Victims of these criminal activities are dispossessed of their belongings at gun point and others were often given indelible marks with the use of cutlass (Silas, 2006.) Apart from the psychological trauma associated with such encounter, loss of lives and properties, some passengers and pedestrians had sustained injuries that have held them down for several months and years, resulting in lost of economic man hours (Ayo, 2000; Onoyo, 2004; Igwe, 2008;Uyi, 2010).

Different scholars have established the fact that the use of commercial motorcycles for public transport is a misnomer (Basseyy, 2008). Apart from the lack of respect for other road users, the evils perpetrated by commercial motorcyclists are enormous. Ugboma(2004), Silas (2006) and Okoye (2009)observe that the excesses of commercial motorcyclists popularly called "Okada" in the urban centres have become worrisome. However,Ekpenyong (2006) observe that not all those who indulge in crime using motorbikes are commercial motorcyclists. To him, since not all robbers in police uniform are regarded as police, thus not all who indulge in crime with the use of motorbikes should be regarded as commercial motorcyclists. Though his position may sound logical, a careful observation of the criminal activities reveals that a significant number of "Okada" operators are involved in crime.

### **Crime commonly committed by commercialmotorcyclists**

A perusal of the crime reportedly committed by commercial motorcyclists reveals that there fall under offences against the person, property and local authority.

#### *Offences against the person*

Inyang (2004) observes that offences against the person are the second most prevalent offences in Nigeria. Commercial motorcyclists have been reportedly accused of involving in diverse offences that constitute

a threat against persons. These offences generally involve harm or physical injury inflicted against other persons, thus causing them to suffer pain and anguish. Pius (2009) observes that in some urban centres, crimes involving commercial motorcycle riders are often against person, he identified some of the crimes to include kidnapping, rape, murder, armed robbery and the unlawful possession of dangerous weapons. Effah (2005) in his analysis of crimes in Nigeria identifies murder, manslaughter, aggravated assault, trafficking, rape, kidnapping and assassination as some of the offences against persons prevalent in Nigeria. Offences against the persons violate the sanctity of the person. Obioha (2004) identifies this type of offences as non-property crimes. These do not exclusively rest on economic or property gains. These are non-materialists unlike the property oriented criminal activities. Some of these crimes involve physical injuries to the human victim.

Nwankwo et al (2008) note that some commercial motorcyclists are known to have kidnapped or abduct not only their passengers but other innocent members of the society for either political or economic motive. Effah (2005) observes that some commercial motorcyclists are contracted by politicians to steal ballot boxes and other materials to aid in rigging election. To him, some politicians have resorted to using commercial motorcyclists to highjack ballot boxes because it is easy to escape with motorbike than motor vehicle.

### ***Offences against property***

Offences against property are generally the most prevalent crimes in Nigeria. Siegle (2005) observes that occasionally property crime occurs when there is an opportunity or situational inducement to commit crime. Offences against property include theft, and stealing, snatching of phones, handbags and wallet advanced fee fraud (419), receiving stolen property, robbery and cheating. The official crime statistics as documented by Federal Bureau of Statistics 2008 indicates that between 1999 and 2006, twenty seven thousand nine hundred and forty (27,940) persons were recorded for involving in crime against property in Calabar, Cross River State.

The figure outstrip that of crime against the person for the same periods which was sixteen thousand four hundred and seventeen (16,417) and other offences which was recorded as eight thousand, two hundred and twenty three (8,223). The statistical record is in conformity with the view of Bassey (2009) that crime against property in Nigeria outstrips crime against persons. Adler et al (1995) opine that larceny (theft, stealing) is the prototype of all property offences. It is also the most prevalent crime in Nigeria. It includes purse, handbag and phone snatching; pick pocketing, vehicle theft, 419 and robbery.

It is common in some part of Nigeria to see people armed with guns, rifles, pistols and other dangerous weapons, robbing on motorbikes. These men of the underground world harass, brutalize and intimidate innocent citizens at night and in broad day light, sometimes regardless of the visible presence of armed policemen. A cursory look at the crime occurrence and offenders, shows that some commercial motorcyclists are involved in crime against property such as snatching of handbags and phones, duping (419) of not only their passengers but pedestrians. Of all these criminal activities, duping of people (419) is most common among Okada riders and is a major challenge in Nigeria (Chawki 2009).

### ***Offences against lawful authority***

These are offences that breach or contravene the laws passed by the state and local government authorities concerning public order, including environment (Igbo, 2007). These offences include perjury, or false testimony, on Oath, escape or rescue from lawful custody, bribery and corruption as well as traffic offences. Of all these offence violation of traffic laws and regulations are prevalent amongst Okada riders. Akwaowo (2009) submits that in almost all urban centres, commercial motorcycles operators are known to have violated traffic laws with impunity. He further notes that a significant number of Okada riders are found to have violated the state government regulation on their mode of operation.

### **Effort at curbing crimes committed by commercialmotorcyclists in Nigeria**

Different states government had adopted measure to curb crime reportedly committed by commercial motorcycles depending on the prevalence of the problem. Kwaru (2009) observes that in an attempt to curb crimes reportedly committed by commercial motorcyclists, the Borno state government mandated all commercial motorcyclists operating within and beyond Maiduguri metropolis to wear reflective jackets as uniforms. The policy, which was an act of parliament, passed by the state's House of Assembly, provided that all commercial motorcyclists obtain identification cards and wear reflective jackets as uniform which would have serial numbers conspicuously written on them.

The federal government took a bold step to abolish the use of motorcycles in some part of the federal capital territory (Abuja). Though the ban attracted both positive and negative reactions from commercial motorcyclists and the public, some states government such River, Abia, Imo and Cross River a few years later banned the operation of commercial motorcyclists in the state capital (Idika, 2008; Pius, 2009). In Lagos, Ebonyi and Oyo States place restriction on the operation of commercial motorcycles. In these states, rather than banning their operation, the state government had restricted their operation. They are not allowed to operate on the major

roads. This policy is not only to prevent road accident which is prevalent in some major cities in Nigeria but as a way of reducing all the atrocities being carried out by commercial motorcyclists.

### **Theoretical framework**

Merton Anomie theory and Routine Activities theory of Cohen and Felson (1979) are adopted as theoretical base of this study.

#### **[[Anomie theory**

Merton (1968) in Haralambos and Holborn (2004) argues that deviance resulted from the culture and structure of society itself. He begins from the standard functionalist position of value consensus, that all members of the society share the same values; however, since members of the society are placed in different positions in the social structure, they do not have the same opportunity of realizing the shared values. This situation can generate deviance. He observed that in a class-oriented society, the opportunities to get to the top are not equally distributed. Very few members of the lower class ever get there. Merton analysis emphasizes the importance of two elements in any society; the goals that people believe are worth striving for and institutionalized means to attain the desired end. If a society is to be stable, these two elements must be reasonably well integrated. Disparity between goals and means fosters frustration, which leads to strain. From this perspective, the social structure is the root of the crime problem.

Merton underscored the facts that individuals in disadvantage situations created by the social structure adapt in different ways. Conformity is the first and common mode of adaptation. The conformist accepts both the goals and prescribed means for achieving the goals. Individuals who choose the adaptation of innovation accept society's goals, but since they have few legitimate means of achieving them, they design their own means of getting ahead. These means may be robbery, handbag and mobile phone snatching. Moreso, 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 (Adler et al, 1995). Finally, rebellion occurs when both cultural goals and the legitimate means are rejected.

#### **Routine activities theory (RAT)**

The Routine Activities Theory (RAT) of Cohen and Felson (1979) is one of the theories of environmental criminology. RAT states that for a criminal event to occur there must be a convergence in time and space of three factors. These are the presence of a motivated offender, the absence of a capable guardian and the presence of a suitable target (person or object). Whether or not these elements converge or coincide is a product of the routine activities (day-to-day movement) of potential targets and offenders. Commercial motorcycle transport may encompass part of the routine activities of offenders, suitable target, (passengers, and materials) and absence of capable guardians (for example, police officers, security staff, CCTV cameras or members of the public) (Newton, 2004).

Daily activities of people such as going to work, pursuing recreation and running errands can bring offenders in contact with suitable victims and target. The likely offender may be the commercial motorcycle operator, the suitable target may be persons, an object or place while the guardian may be police patrols, security guards, vigilant staff, friends, neighbours or close circuit television (CCTV) system being monitored.

Applying these theories to the study, the involvement of commercial motorcyclists from Cohen and Felson theoretical enterprise reveals that the prevalence of crime by commercial motorcyclists is due to the availability of target which may be the passengers and materials that are attractive to the potential offender (commercial motorcyclist) and the absence of guardian such as the police or other law enforcement agents to prevent the crime from occurring.

Similarly, Merton's analysis established the fact that, the society's structure prevents the lower class members of the society such as Okada operators from achieving the societal goals such as cars, employment and houses. This unfortunate situation inevitably propelled commercial motorcycle operators to indulge in criminal activities such as robbery, snatching of phones and handbags, kidnapping among others.

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

### **Study area**

The study area was Uyo, the capital of Akwa Ibom State. Uyo is located geographically between latitude 5.05 North and Longitude 80° East. It is bounded in the north by Itu, Ibiono and Ikono Local Government Areas and the Ravine which extends to about sixteen kilometers. On the West, it is bounded by Abak Local Government Area where it shares a common boundary with Etinan. Uyo has a total population of 309, 572

according to 2006 population census (<http://www.aksgonline.com/iga.aspx>). It has functioned as the administrative headquarters within the former Cross River State. With the creation of Akwa Ibom State in 1987, it was consequently upgraded Uyo to an urban centre and state capital.

Uyo was chosen because in recent times, it has witnessed high incidence of criminal activities involving commercial motorcyclists who have migrated there from neighbouring cities like Calabar and Aba. The rapid social transformation occasioned by continued urbanization as well as modernization and development had pulled migrants from neighbouring states to Uyo. The construction of recently commissioned international airport has opened up more opportunities in Uyo.

#### **Sampling technique and sampling size**

A multi-stage sampling method was used to select respondents for the study. The procedure began with the purposive selection of Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The second stage involved the selection of five (5) wards out of the ten (10) wards in Uyo using the simple random sampling technique. The selected wards include Urban One, Urban Two, Urban Three, OffotUsangAbak and OffotUsangEfianyong. The third stage involved the selection of four (4) enumeration areas each from the five (5) wards using the simple random sampling method. This makes a total of twenty (20) enumeration areas. From the enumeration areas, three hundred (300) head of households were chosen purposively as the final respondents. That is, fifteen (15) respondents each were purposively chosen from each enumeration area selected.

The sample size of three hundred and thirty was selected for study. Three hundred members of the public were administered questionnaire; ten officers each of the Nigeria Police Force, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps and members of the Akwa Ibom Professional Commercial Motorcyclists Association (APCOMA) were purposively chosen and interviewed.

#### **IV. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

Two major research instruments were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data for the study. These were the questionnaire and in-depth interview.

#### **V. QUESTIONNAIRE**

Survey research is probably the best method available to the social researcher, who is interested in collecting original data from a large population (Babbie, 2005). Surveys are excellent vehicles for measuring attitude orientation and perception in a large population. A survey (questionnaire) comprising open-ended and close-ended questions were administered on respondents. The instrument covered two broad areas- socio-demographic characteristics of respondents such as age, sex, occupation and marital status- and the objective of the study.

Three hundred (300) copies of questionnaire were administered on the public in five (5) wards in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State. The questionnaire as instrument of data collection was considered appropriate because it is capable of covering a wide geographical area, ensured anonymity, thereby encouraging respondents to provide accurate responses without fear of being known, thus, it ensures utmost confidentiality.

#### **VI. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW**

In-depth interviews are unstructured, open-ended, discovery-oriented method that generated significant information on the topic under study. An in-depth interview is an aspect of qualitative research that focuses on how individuals view and understand the world, and construct meaning out of their experiences (Haralambos and Holborn, 2004). The technique revealed a clear advantage, because questions and responses of the interviewer and interviewee were clarified and the topic under study was explored in a great depth through systematic probing.

The in-depth interview was conducted with ten (10) Police Officers, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps Officers each and executive members of the Akwa Ibom Professional Commercial Motorcyclists Association (APCOMA). The interview was structured in such a way that it allows for the realization of objective of study. The responses from the interview were carefully integrated with those of the questionnaire to give the study a reliable and valid outcome.

#### **VII. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

##### **Background characteristics of the respondents**

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The survey indicated that more males (61.0%) were involved in this study than females who accounted for (39.0%) of the entire population selected. This implies that males dominated the entire study. This may be attributed to the fact that males were more willing to complete a questionnaire than females.

**Table 1: Distribution of respondents by socio-demographic characteristics**

Characteristics	Categories	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	166	61.0
	Female	106	39.0
	Total	272	61.8
Age	16-30	168	61.8
	31-45	79	29.0
	46-60	19	7.0
	61 and above	6	2.2
Marital status	Total	272	100
	Married	85	31.3
	Single	161	59.2
	Separated	14	5.1
	Widow/widowers	12	4.4
Educational Attainment	Total	272	100
	Primary	44	16.2
	Secondary	79	29.0
	Tertiary	121	44.5
	Others	28	10.3
Occupation	Total	272	100
	Trader	53	19.5
	farmer	12	4.4
	Civil servants	72	26.5
	Others	135	49.6
Religion	Total	272	100
	Christianity	242	88.9
	Islam	18	6.6
	Others	12	4.4
Total	272	100	

Source: Survey, 2010.

Most of the respondents were within the youthful age bracket; majority (97.8%) were aged 16 to 60 years, an age range where a lot of people would still be strong to patronize commercial motorcyclists, go out frequently and observe activities of commercial motorcyclists. Further, respondent's age above 61 years (2.2%) may not frequently patronize commercial motorcyclists.

Regarding marital status, 59.2% had no family responsibilities as they were single, while 31.3% were married. Further, majority of the respondents (44.5%) had tertiary education, 29.0% had secondary education while 16.2% had primary education. This implies that majority of the respondents were literate enough to give well informed view about commercial motorcyclists. A large percentage of the respondents 49.6% were engaged in different socio-economic activities like schooling or learning of trade, which is a major feature of urban areas, 26.5% of respondents were civil servants while 23.9% were either traders or farmers. About 89% of the respondents were Christians, 6.6% were Muslims and 4.4% had other religious affiliations like Ekanker and Grail message. The implication is that the survey was conducted in a Christian-dominated state.

### Involvement of commercial motorcyclists in crime

The public had different perception as regard the involvement of commercial motorcyclists in crime. Table 2 indicated that majority of the respondents (79.8%) perceived that commercial motorcyclists were involved in crime, while only 20.2% of the respondents were of the view that commercial motorcyclists did not involve in crime.

**Table 2: Respondents perception on the involvement of commercial motorcyclists in crime**

Question	Sex		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female		
Do you think commercial motorcyclists involve in crime?				
Yes	132	85	217	79.8
No	34	21	55	20.2
Total	166	106	272	100
Arrest of commercial motorcyclists for crime				
Have you seen any commercial motorcyclist arrested for crime?	Sex		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female		
Yes	97	59	156	57.4
No	69	47	116	42.6
Total	166	106	272	100

Source: survey, 2010.

With reference to the arrest of commercial motorcyclists for being involved in crime, the table also indicates that 57.4% of the respondents agreed that they have witnessed commercial motorcyclists being arrested for crime while 42.6% of the respondents claimed they have not seen any commercial motorcycle operator arrested for being involved in crime.

It is perceived by respondents that commercial motorcyclists involved in different criminal activities. A summary of the types of crimes is shown in table 4. About 34% of the respondents perceived that commercial motorcyclists involve in armed robbery/snatching of valuables from commuters and pedestrians, 29.0% considered that commercial motorcyclists kidnapped people for ransoms or money rituals, 23.2% perceived that they dupe (419) people while, 13.6% of the respondents held that commercial motorcyclists involve in rape crimes. This finding is in tandem with the observation of Ofuonyeadi (2008) that commercial motorcyclists are known to have robbed, kidnapped and snatched valuables from unsuspecting pedestrians and commuters.

**Table 2: Perception of the respondents on types of crime commonly committed by commercial motorcyclists**

Types of Crime	Frequency	Percentage
Armed robbery/snatching of valuables	93	34.2
Kidnapping for ransom/murder	79	29.0
Rape females	37	13.6
Duping of people	63	23.2
Total	272	100

Source: Survey, 2010

The result presented in table 4 is buttressed by the opinion expressed by an interviewee. A male police officer in Itam police station has this to say:

Young man to be sincere with you many of these Okada riders you see on the streets of Uyo are criminals. Many of them use Okada operation as a cover up to rob people. Three days ago an Okada rider dropped my friend's wife, while she opened her bag to give him money, he snatched her handbag containing all the money she sold goods for the day and left. This happened along Nwaniba road (IDI, male police).

The view of this respondent is that commercial motorcyclists actually engage in crime, and his relative has been a victim of this unfortunate circumstance where an Okada rider snatched her handbag containing money.

**Another interviewee noted that:**

Okada riders are the most difficult people to control. Apart from not respecting traffic laws which they are known for, some of them are robbers. What they do in the day is to monitor people around and at night they come to rob them. Okada riders are involved in many of the robbery cases in this town. (IDI, male, civil defence)

This respondent maintained that commercial motorcyclists violate traffic regulation and are involved in robbery which normally takes place at night after they must have monitored their victim during the day.

The statistical analysis and the responses generated through the in-depth interview clearly indicate that some commercial motorcycle riders are deeply involved in criminal activities like robbery, kidnapping and duping of people. Silas(2006) suggested that there was no city in Nigeria where commercial motorcyclists operated without a record of their involvement in crime. According to Ugboma(2004), it is very difficult to separate commercial motorcyclists from crimes like murder, theft, kidnapping and armed robbery which has become regular crimes in urban areas. Moreso these finding is in line with the view of Okoye (2009) that Okada riders violate traffic laws create public disorder, destroy government properties, rape and kidnap people.

**Factors inducing commercial motorcyclists to crime**

Different factors in our society accounted for the involvement of both men and women in crime. Those factors that propelled commercial motorcyclists to crime as perceived by the respondents are shown in Table 3. The major factor is unemployment which accounted for 38.2% of the entire respondent. Similarly, 30.9% of the respondents identified greed for material things as a predisposition to crime by commercial motorcyclists. In addition, 25.0% of the respondents perceived that financial problems experienced by most Nigerians accounts for the involvement of commercial motorcyclists in crime. However, 5.9% of the respondents view security lapses as been witnessed in our society as a factor for the involvement of commercial motorcyclists in crime.

**Table 3: Perception of the respondents on factors that propel commercial motorcyclists to crime**

Propelling factors	Frequency	Percent (%)
Unemployment	104	38.2
Financial problems	68	25.0
Greed for materialism	84	30.9
Ineffective Security	16	5.9
Total	272	100

Source: Survey, 2010

The analysis in table 3 indicates that unfavorable economic situation and high level of unemployment currently being experienced in Nigeria is a major predisposition to crime. Many youths in the absence of a meaningful employment opportunity take up Okada operation as a cover for committing crime. This finding supports Adeniran's (2006) submission that the involvement of youths in crime is directly linked with the failed political leadership and high level of unemployment experienced by youths in Nigeria.

Greed for material things plays a crucial role in the involvement of commercial motorcyclists in crime in Nigeria. In Nigeria, many people are unemployed and engulfed with poverty; this does not stop them from craving excessively for material acquisitions like cars, motorcycles, and other valuables. The inordinate desire for material acquisition in our society was a motivation for crime (Ihejianaizu and Egbe, 2001; Odu, 2008). Moreso, financial problems plays a significant role in the involvement of Okada riders in crime in Nigeria as reported previously (Ihejianaizu, 2002; Obioha, 2004).

Ineffective security network, lapses on the part of security operatives or absence of security operatives as claimed by the respondents is an encouraging factor to the involvement of commercial motorcyclists in crime in Uyo Local Government Area. This finding is consistent with that of Okoro's (2004) that increases in crime rates in Nigeria was due to ineffective security network.

A synthesis of the findings on the factors that propelled commercial motorcyclists to crime is in direct support of Merton's Anomie theory cited in Haralambos and Holborn (2004) which insisted that the society's structure prevents, people in the lower class such as Okada riders from achieving their cherished societal goals such as education, houses, cars, meaningful employment and access to good health care services. This unfortunate situation the Okada riders find themselves predisposes them to different criminal activities, for the purpose of achieving those things which they could not achieve legitimately.

#### Categories of victims of commercial motorcycle criminals

There are different characteristics of victims of commercial motorcycle criminals. With reference to gender that fall victims of commercial motorcycle criminals more, the result is presented in table 4. Majority of the respondents (80.7%) perceived that more females fall victims of commercial motorcycles criminals than males which accounted for only 19.3%.

**Table 4: Respondents' perception on categories of persons that fall victims of commercial motorcycle criminals and reasons**

Question	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Between females and males who do you think fall victims of commercial motorcycle criminals more?</b>		
Male	50	19.3
Female	209	80.7
Total	259	100
<b>Reasons for females falling more victims</b>		
Females are weaker than males	98	46.9
Possession of attractive materials	88	42.1
Indecent dressing pattern	23	11.0
Total	209	100
<b>Between young and old people, who do you think fall victims of commercial motorcycle criminals more?</b>		
Young people	179	68.1
Old people	84	31.9
Total	263	100
<b>Reason for young people falling victims of commercial motorcycle criminals more</b>		
Young people keep late nights	83	46.4
Go out often	54	30.2
Walk/board commercial motorcycles often	42	23.4
Total	179	100

Similarly, on the reasons for females being more victims of commercial motorcyclists' criminals, 46.9% of the respondents ascribed them to their physical weakness, 42.1% to valuable materials in their possession such as handbags, phones, jewelries and 11.0% to indecent and sexy dressing. This accounts for why many of them become victims of rape. Also, 68.1% of the respondents perceive that more young people fall victims of commercial motorcycle criminals than old people because they often keep late nights, go out often and board commercial motorcycles more. In confirmation of the result, a male police officer maintained that:

Though both males and females are targeted by these hoodlums, when it comes to crime involving Okada, females are the ones who suffer more. You see, females always carry handbags which are always very attractive to these Alalok (Okada rider). Of course, females are those who fall victims of rape (IDI, female, police)

The interviewee is of the opinion that while both males and females can fall victims of commercial motorcycle criminals, females falls more because of the handbag which they always carry. This view was expanded by another police officer. He said:

I will say females suffer more. Many of these Okada boys know that females are not strong. Little threat from the Okada will make them afraid and handover their phones or handbags to cyclist (IDI, police, male).

The statistical analysis in table 6 and the responses from the interviewee clearly show that females fall victims of commercial motorcycle criminals than their male counterparts. These findings did not only debunk the view of Igbo (2007) that victims of crime are mostly men than women but support the view of Ndifreke (2004) that female commuters are most likely to be victims of crime than males. This may be due to the fact that Okada riders are males and may target more of females who they considered to be weaker than males and are most likely to carry valuables like handbags containing different materials and wear expensive neck less or jewelries.

Similarly, the finding shows that young people have high victimization risk than old people. This finding is in line with Siegel's (2005) submission that young people face a much greater victimization risk due to their lifestyle such as going out in public places at night, drinking and socializing with people who may have criminal behavior.

#### Measures to curb crime reportedly committed by commercial motorcyclists

The prevalence of crime by commercial motorcyclists in Uyo propelled the state government to adopt different measures to address this problem. The measures as identified by the respondents are capture in table 7. The table indicates that 58.9% of the entire respondents are of the perception that the governments has place curfews or restricted the operation of "Okada" riders from 6am to 6pm daily in Uyo metropolis. This is to curbs crimes committed with the use of motorcycles which were so rampant at night and early hours of the morning. However, some of the crimes can still take place in the day if the propelling factors are not addressed.

In the same vein, 34.1% of the respondents are of the view that government had motivated the police to embarked on more constant patrol, less than 7% of the respondents notes that government has opted for the use of informal means of social control (Aduma patrol) to compliment the effort of the police. Perhaps, this may be because of the ineffectiveness on the part of police in contending with the problem.

**Table 6: Respondents perception on measures adopted by government to curb crimes committed by commercial otorcyclists**

Measures adopted	Frequency	Percentage
Restriction of operation hours of commercial motorcycle operators.	128	58.9
Police patrol	74	34.1
Aduma patrol	15	6.9
Total	217	100

The analysis in table 8 revealed that respondents have different perception on the measures adopted by the government towards curbing crimes committed by commercial motorcyclists.

The table revealed that 67.7% of the respondents perceived that the measures adopted by the government toward addressing crime problem reportedly committed by commercial motorcyclist are effective, as the rate of crime reportedly committed by commercial motorcyclists in Uyo have reduced since the introduction of this measures. Only 32.3% of the respondents perceived that the measures are not effective.

**Table 7: Perception of the respondents on the effectiveness of the measures put in place by government**

Question	Frequency	Percentage
Do you think the measures are effective?		
Yes	147	67.7
No	70	32.3
Total	217	100

The view of the respondents as captured in table 7 and 8 are supported by a male police officer. He maintained that:

I think what the government have done tangibly is to place a partial ban on Okada riders. They are only allowed to operate from 6am to 6pm daily. The police on their part are to ensure that the Okada riders adhere to those operation hours. I think this measure is working but not as expected. That is why we are advising the government to place a total ban on them as same state capitals have done (IDI, male, police).

The view of the interviewee is that government have actually restricted the operation hours of commercial motorcyclists, but the measure is not working as expected, thus they are advocating for a total ban on commercial motorcycle operation in the state capital. A male police officer at Itan police station shade more light on the measures to address the crime problem involving Okada riders in Uyo and the role of the police. He posited that:

The most decisive step government have taken is the ban on the use of commercial motorcycles. Once it is 6pm, commercial motorcyclists are not allowed to operate. On our part, what we do is to enforce the regulation. We seize motorcycles from Okada riders who operate after 6pm (IDI, male police, Itan)

It could be deduced from table 7 and 8 and responses from the in-depth interview that the government has actually put measures in place to address crimes reportedly committed by commercial motorcyclists and that these measures are effective. However, on the part of Akwa Ibom Professional Commercial Motorcyclists Association, their measures adopted towards addressing crime reportedly committed by "Okada"riders is still at a rudimentary level as registration of the riders have just started and reflective jackets are yet to be introduced. Perhaps, this association may have political undertone since almost all the executive members were appointed by the state government with none of the commercial motorcyclists holding a key position.

## **VIII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The unfavourable economic situation which manifest in the high level of unemployment and poverty being witnessed in Nigeria are significant factors that predisposed commercial motorcyclists to crime. Other factors that predisposes commercial motorcyclists to crime include greed or inordinate desire for material things such as cars, house, phones among others; and infective security situation in the country. Different persons fall victims of commercial motorcycle criminals. Females and young people (male and female) have high victimization risk. Female are weaker physically to withstand threat from criminals than male, female are always in possession of handbags containing valuables on the street and often dress indecently. Similarly, youth people go out often than old people and board commercial motorcycles than old people. These factors expose them to have victimization risk.

The government had adopted different measures towards addressing crime associated with Okada riders. These measures include the restriction of commercial motorcyclists' operation hours, the use of police to enforce the regulation, the use of Aduma patrol to compliment the effort of the formal agencies of social control like the police and Nigeria security and civil defense corps. The measures are considered effective as crime rate involving commercial motorcyclists have gone down since the introduction of these measures.

The Professional Commercial Motorcyclist Association (PCOMA) apart from periodic meetings and sensitization of the Okada riders on the need to be law abiding, have not adopted any reasonable measures toward checkmating the criminal activities of commercial motorcyclists . This is because the association had just commenced the registration of commercial motorcyclist with other plans to introduced reflective jackets and identity cards for all commercial motorcycle operators. This measure is considered as the starting point for the association towards checkmating the activities of commercial motorcyclist

Against the background of the conclusion drawn from the study, the following under listed recommendations are offered:

Government should place more emphasis on the formulation of friendly socio-economic policies that are aimed at addressing the harsh and unfavourable socio-economic conditions which is exemplified in the high level of unemployment and poverty being experienced in Nigeria. This could be realized through infrastructural development and creation of enabling environment to attract foreign investors. This will help in the creation of employment opportunities for the youth.

Skills acquisition should be encouraged. Since majority of the commercial motorcyclists who eventually involve in criminal activities are unemployed youths. The government through the Niger Delta Development Corporation should expand the skills acquisition centres and new skills should be introduced into the scheme. Also, the programme should be extended to non graduates of tertiary institutions. This will help youths to acquire skills and become self employed rather than depending on government for jobs which are not readily available.

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