

Nature of Traffic Robbery Victimisation Experience in Lagos

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<https://doi.org/10.57233/gijmss.v8i1.13>

Abstract

Traffic robbery is a prevalent disturbing social phenomenon in Lagos State, impacting commuters and transport workers, necessitating an examination of victimization experiences and offender-victim dynamics. The research investigated the nature of traffic robbery victimization experiences, strategies employed by offenders, and the extent of the crime as reported in newspapers. Utilizing content analysis, the study examined 167 traffic robbery cases from 2015 to 2023 as reported in five newspapers using the routine activity theory to understand the dynamics between offenders and victims. The research also discussed the victimization experience and convergence of the offenders and victims, it documented the extent of the crime as captured by various newspapers (Vanguard, Punch, Tribune, Sun and Guardian), and also interrogated the strategies or methods deployed by traffic robbers. The study further addressed the nature and extent of traffic robbery victimization experiences, shedding light on the dynamics of the crime over an eight-year period. Consequently, the common method used by offenders is dispossessing victims of their valuables, leading to fear-driven victim experiences, with spikes in incidents observed in June and December, particularly in Vanguard and Punch publications. Findings reveal that incidents like traffic robbery are fear-driven. Commonly used methods by the offenders include the dispossession of victims' phones and other valuables, and the use of guns. Mitigating crime like traffic robbery in Lagos requires government intervention in providing adequate security personnel to deter and apprehend criminals, improving road infrastructure, enhancing street lighting, and creating job opportunities for vulnerable youth to keep them engaged with activities that would shift their attention from crime and make them productive.

Keywords: Offenders, Routine Activity, Traffic Robbery, Victimisation Experience.

1. Introduction

Traffic robbery is a serious social problem in Lagos State that occurs during rush hours and has hampered traders' and trading activities. It has become a pervasive threat to commuters in Lagos State, disrupting daily life and instilling fear among residents. The major locations where it is committed are Ikorodu, Ikeja, Kosofe, Apapa, Agege, Lagos Mainland, Badagry, Mushin, Oshodi-Isolo and Alimosho Local government of Areas of the state. One of the issues people face in Lagos is the issue of traffic, the underlying causes of traffic robberies are lack of opportunities, economic inequality and absence of law enforcement agent. Despite the fact that the Lagos traffic situation has provided a

convenient space for trading, it has also created the opportunity for crime. There are now several gangs that have seized the opportunity provided by traffic situations to attack and dispossess unsuspecting commuters of their possessions (Ajiola, 2024).

The incidents usually begin during a deadlock of heavy or uncontrollable traffic. The yellow buses are attributed to causing the gridlocks in Lagos State, while the robbery on this route is targeted at both private cars and other motorists plying the route. Traffic robbers are usually hoodlums who seize the opportunity of heavy traffic buildups to dispossess people of their possessions, and in the process, such activities result in ugly encounters and in some cases, death (Abiodun, 2021). The traffic congestion presents criminal gangs the leverage to victimize their victims. As of April 2021, the Lagos State police claimed to have arrested 42 traffic robbers within two months (Tade & Olaitan, 2024).

Vanessa Ogle (2023) examined the vulnerability of migrants who rely on informal transportation sectors for both work and mobility. Her work exposes how their precarity within the urban transport system exposes people to a higher risk of experiencing violence, including robbery, highlighting the uneven distribution of "pain" within the city.

Lagos is a metropolitan city in Nigeria, a city marked by vulnerability and opportunities, the city is both a place of 'gain' and 'pain'. When a worker finds himself or herself with something profitable, the city becomes a place of gain for such individual, while for the unemployed, it becomes a source of hardship for them. In a bid to survive, unemployed traffic robbers map out strategies to survive the tussle of city life, thereby engaging in criminal activities. The prevalence of traffic robberies could be attributed to the economic gaps that exist in the society. In countries with economic crisis, the vulnerable population usually has limited access to scarce resources so, they take to the road to engage in outlawed conduct to survive the harsh economic realities in such societies. Certain individuals resort to criminal activities as a final option for coping with the various pressures they encounter in their lives (Oladejo & Tamber, 2014). Traffic robbers often use different methods to operate, in getting at their targets.

The stealing or attempted removal of anything valuable from someone's care, custody, or control by force or threat of force is known as robbery (OVC, n.d). Robbery is a property crime, and anyone could be a victim of it. Armed robbery indicates the use of a weapon, which is considered a grievous crime or offense. It can occur in any location, especially commercial settings. Traffic robbery has similarities with "One-chance" criminality in its mode of operation. One-chance criminality is an organized crime, perpetrated by people who work together, using manipulative strategies to hail passengers into their waiting vehicle by capitalizing on the transportation needs of passengers (Tade & Olaitan, 2024). In the case of traffic robbers the syndicate organized themselves in numbers around the victims.

Traffic robbery is time and space specific, those who commit crime stay closer to the location. They stay closer because they understand the terrain better. Thus criminals committing armed robberies on fixed targets travel further than other kinds of criminals (Rengert, 2014), while rapists stay closer to the home (Olatunji, Guardian June, 28 2019).

The growth of private transportation system combined with commercial vehicles such as the yellow commercial buses, taxis, motorbikes (Okada), tricycles (KekeMarwa) has led to traffic congestion throughout the city and poor quality of public transport system heighten security threats (Tade & Olaitan, 2024). The implication is that when there is heavy congestion, offenders would find a way to terrorize commuters.

Traffic robbers sometimes use several strategies to perpetrate their crime; some of the ways include cajoling commuters to wind down their glasses, and saluting them (once you give in, that is all); creating potholes in reaching their target, as well as using some of the itinerant boys on the road that usually clean car glasses for a pay. Commuters are in serious danger as long as traffic jams and slow-moving of vehicles persist. Babajide Sanwo-Olu, the governor, is always taking action to combat the issue of this crime in Lagos State. The state recently bolstered the Lagos State Command with five armored personnel carriers (APC), 200 motorcycles, 150 double cabin cars, 30 saloon patrol cars, and thousands of gas canisters, to mitigate the ugly phenomenon (Punch, Aug. 6, 2020).

The Police Act of 2020 lists the nine responsibilities of the force in Part II, (Punch Aug. 6, 2020). Among these are the following: "maintain public safety, law, and order"; "protect the lives and property of all persons in Nigeria"; and "prevent and detect crimes and protect the rights and freedom of every person in Nigeria as provided in the Constitution, the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, and any other law." Safeguarding the security of citizens is a fundamental privilege one is supposed to enjoy. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states in Section 14(2) (b) that the welfare and security of the populace shall be the main goals of the state. The robbery is not limited to motorists alone; commuters, tricycle riders, and pedestrians could also be victimized.

The offenders has various mode of operations from snatching of victims bags during traffic, Dispossessing the victim of phones and other valuables, breaking of car glasses and others. Most of this nefarious act usually occur in the crime hotspot of the state.

The prevalence of traffic robbery has been on the rise, causing significant distress for victims. City life is marked by survival strategies; as Herbert Spencer would say, the less fit in society would die out if they could not survive the hustle of city life. The migrating pattern and tendencies of city life draws rural settlers into setting their desires to explore city life. Significant economic disparities are frequently observed in large cities, where immigrants frequently encounter difficulties such as destitution, joblessness, and

substandard housing. People may turn to illegal activities like robbery in order to survive as a result of this economic vulnerability. Urban areas with high population density, especially when it comes to traffic congestion, can offer criminals opportunities and a sense of anonymity. Victims are more vulnerable in situations where escape routes are limited due to congested roads and slow-moving vehicles.

As reported by Punch Newspaper on 24th August 2023 that “no fewer than 88 suspected criminals were arrested 24 hours after the launch of the special operation flush in the state. A motorist, in an interview with PUNCH Metro on Monday, Samson Olanrewaju stated that he and other drivers were robbed by up to seven thieves on Friday at around 8:30 p.m. at the Third Mainland Bridge in the Ido region (Oyewo, August 24, 2023).

In Lagos State, traffic robbery is still a common and concerning occurrence in spite of severe economic hardship and continuous government interventions. Both locals and tourists' safety, well-being, and financial security are seriously threatened by this ongoing crisis. The number of traffic robbery incidents is rising, which has left commuters and drivers feeling very afraid and anxious. Robberies are frequently fueled by traffic congestion, which further impedes economic growth and productivity. Because these interactions are violent and unpredictable, victims sustain long-term psychological harm.

Crime like Traffic robbery create the culture of fear and unpleasant memory, the fear is driven by the post traumatic or aftermath of the event. When crime life traffic robbery is prevalent, it erodes sense of safety within an environment which can lead to a decline in social cohesion an increased fear-based behavior. The level of fear is based on individual experiences and overall crime rate within the area.

People learn to live with risks of fear during traffic. Essentially, this paper clearly establishes traffic robbery as a serious and growing problem in Lagos, highlighting its impact on residents, commuters, and businesses. Interrogating into potential root causes, such as economic inequality, lack of opportunities, and the enabling environment created by traffic congestion is important. The paper discusses the negative consequences of traffic robbery, including fear, insecurity, economic disruption, and psychological trauma faced by victims. The excerpt briefly touches upon potential solutions, such as improved law enforcement, infrastructure development, and job creation.

Therefore, the objectives of this study are; to analyse the extent of the crime as captured by newspapers in Lagos State, to identify the strategies deployed by traffic robbers to rob their victims in Lagos and to make recommendations on how to mitigate the incidence of traffic robbery in Lagos.

The study provides valuable insights into traffic robbery victimization experiences, offering practical implications for government, security agencies, and society.

2. Literature Review

The city of Lagos is popularly associated with traffic congestion and has become a constant challenge, despite strategies and traffic regulations to manage the situation by relevant government agencies (Abiodun, 2021). Efforts implemented appear not enough, and this adversely affects the lives of area residents.

Insufficiently designed road networks and poor public transportation systems exemplify deficiencies in transportation infrastructure, which exacerbate traffic congestion and facilitate criminal activities such as traffic robberies (Enwerem & Ali, 2016). When infrastructures are not properly *planned*, that can create opportunities for criminals to commit crimes unhindered. The situation can also lead to traffic congestion and breed crime.

The abrupt and unforeseen occurrence of these events may result in physical attacks, gunshot, injuries, or other manifestations of violence that can result in enduring disability, persistent pain, and devastating health outcomes for the victims (Amosun & Adedeji, 2022). The physical injuries incurred as a result of a traffic robbery can necessitate comprehensive medical intervention, rehabilitation, and prolonged assistance, thereby imposing substantial financial hardships and diminishing the overall standard of living for numerous victims (Enwerem & Ali, 2016).

The implementation of infrastructure investments, such as enhancements to road networks and the utilization of traffic management systems, has the potential to alleviate traffic congestion and enhance commuter safety (Okafor et al., 2023). Enhancements in public transportation systems and the promotion of alternative modes of mobility have the potential to mitigate traffic congestion, thereby reducing the likelihood of criminals targeting stationary vehicles (Adisa & Adejoh, 2020). The implication of this theory is as follows: When there are infrastructural deficiencies or poor public transportation systems, it exacerbates traffic congestion, thereby creating opportunities for offenders to operate unhindered. Poor infrastructure, such as a bad road network, can frustrate commuters when traffic jams occur, thereby making vehicles vulnerable to robberies. Personally, I have experienced gridlock in Lagos, where even short distances can take hours, increasing anxiety and creating a sense of vulnerability, especially at night.

The law enforcement agencies in Lagos are currently facing significant challenges in ensuring public safety against incidents of traffic robberies. The limited availability of personnel exacerbates the situation, leading to increased levels of officer fatigue and delayed response times (Falako, 2017).

Crime patterns in Lagos, including traffic robbery, are still major concerns in Lagos State. Hotspots for robberies, high unemployment rates, and traffic congestion are found to be strong issues. The impact of poverty on communities

in Lagos is significant. Lack of opportunities can lead to desperation, pushing individuals towards criminal activities as a way to make ends meet. Therefore, socioeconomic factors like high unemployment rates can also contribute to crime, including traffic robberies. Routine Activity Theory emphasizes the need for social and economic development programs to address the root causes of crime. An ethnographic study on the experiences of armed robbery victims in Nigeria's cities of Lagos and Ibadan investigated the real-world experiences of robbery victims (Ruwan et al, 2020). The findings draw attention to the psychological harm, monetary losses, and insecurity that victims of traffic robberies experience.

With increased police presence and the use of advanced technology, we can better understand how to tackle crimes like traffic robbery in Lagos. Addressing the root causes, such as unemployment, poor infrastructure, and the psychological impact they pose on victims, will require intervention from the government.

2.1 Theoretical Explanation

The Routine activity theory according to Cohen and Felson (2015) is a theory in criminology that is closely related to crime that exists in an environment that focuses more on situation of crime rather than the offenders. The Routine activity theory is a component of the opportunity viewpoint in criminology, positing that criminal opportunities are the primary catalysts for criminal occurrences (Reyns, 2017).

The theory identified motivated offender, lack of guardianship, and suitable target, as elements that create opportunity for crime to flourish. When these three elements come together, crime eventually occurs. Guardianship can be interpreted in different ways, guardianship could refer to presence or any law enforcement agency. The routine activity theory explains how our daily activities pave way to our becoming a suitable target, and this happens in a situation characterized by lack of guardianship.

Routine activity theory is interested in the victimization process. When an offender wants to commit a crime and the absence of guardianship lagging it becomes much easier for crime to flourish in that space and time. Traffic robbers closely monitor their environments and victimize their victims when the presence of law enforcement agent either weak or ineffectual.

In the case of traffic robbers, crime occurs when people's daily routines create opportunity for crime e.g. an office worker who closes late from work and is held in traffic, or a dark hotspot devoid of light, create opportunities that makes traffic robbery to flourish.

The theory is relevant to the study because it contributes to the understanding of the interplay between offenders and victims in the context of traffic robbery, highlighting the significance of situational factors and fear in victim experiences.

3. Methodology

Content analysis was employed, focusing on articles related to traffic robbery by using "Traffic Robbery" as key search terms to analyze reported incidents. Time, month, sex of offender, number of suspect involved, title of the publications, place of incident, age of the offenders, date, items stolen and robbery dimensions were computed together in Microsoft excel sheet and analysed.

Secondary data from newspaper publications, specifically Vanguard, Punch, Tribune, Sun, and the Guardian newspapers, formed the basis for the analysis of victimization cases. Simple percentage and frequency tables were used to capture the nature and prevalence of traffic robbery victimisation experience because this would be understood by wide audience, researchers and policy makers. With percentage and frequency it becomes easier to understand the trends, patterns and disparities of the incidents.

The results show that June and December have the highest reported cases of traffic robbery victimization as reported by various newspapers while March and October have the lowest rate of occurrence.

4. Result and Discussions

To analyse the extent of the crime as captured by newspapers in Lagos State, the study poses a question as; What is the Current Prevalence Rate of Traffic Robbery incidents in Lagos State according to Newspaper Reportage?

Table 1: The frequency of Nigerian newspaper reports of traffic robbery cases presented by Vanguard, Tribune, Punch, Guardian and Sun from January 2015 to December 2023.

Month	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
January	0	1	0	0	0	6	7	2	1	17
February	0	2	0	1	0	0	11	2	0	16
March	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	1	0	8
April	0	0	1	2	4	0	2	3	0	12
May	0	1	0	0	3	0	9	2	0	15
June	0	2	0	0	5	1	6	4	2	20
July	0	0	0	1	2	3	5	1	2	14
August	2	1	0	3	4	1	4	0	1	16
September	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	8	2	12
October	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3
November	4	0	3	4	1	0	4	0	0	16
December	1	4	0	1	2	5	2	3	0	18
	8	12	4	12	23	16	58	26	8	167

Source: Field Work 2023

Traffic robbery cases presented by the Vanguard, Tribune, Punch, Guardian and Sun newspapers from January 2015 to December 2023, totaled 167 incidences. From table 1, June has the highest number of traffic robbery cases, with 20 cases reported. October has the lowest number of cases, with only 3 cases reported. The average number of traffic robbery cases per month is 13.83. In the month of June during which traffic robberies were more prevalent, the police commissioner issued a statement on the alarming rate of the incident and opined that:

The command had been fighting traffic robbery relentlessly, even before the recent donation of crime-fighting equipment and communication gadgets to the command by the Lagos State Government, adding that the fight against the menace would be intensified (Francis, Punch, June 18, 2021).

The month of June 2023 marked a beginning of gradual inflationary crises following the president's inaugural speech or announcement ending the fuel subsidies. Prices of commodities immediately skyrocketed across many urban centres. In Lagos food inflation rose sharply especially the rice, tomatoes, pepper, eggs etc. Since pickpocketing and traffic robberies in Lagos are usually masterminded by gangs who do not have any means of survival, the food insecurity and general austerity in the economy could be a major driver of crime in June. And security heightened and brought about reduction by October 2023,

Lagosian had begun to fill the debilitating effects of the removal of subsidies on their meagre income, hence the sharp reduction in the number of vehicular traffic on major highways. People preferred to use public transportation or trek to work than driving. This reduced traffic congestion on the road. If there is no traffic, crime can hardly be perpetrated by the gangs.

The statement gives the public the assurance that the Lagos State Government would actively combat traffic robbery before and after receiving resources from the state government, and that the fight would continue and even intensify. Crime is a social ill in the society, for the incident of traffic robbery to have continually persisted, it implies that the security architecture is weak. Lagos state government in a bid to ensure a greater and safer Lagos launched “Operation Flush” to reduce the prevalence of the traffic incident, posing as fear for the people in the metropolis.

Mercer, a global human resources consultancy, has this to say:

Crime-ridden cities are denying themselves of opportunities to grow. As well, Lagos aims to sustain its goal of being a smart megacity that is mentioned in the same breath as the top investment destinations in the world. Although it is the undisputable capital of commerce in Nigeria, its crime control has not stepped up commensurately (Punch, August 6, 2020).

Between March to June this year, 127 suspects were arrested, according to the police. For a city aiming for the mega-status, this crime must be curbed said the Commissioner of Police, Hakeem Odumosu (Francis, Punch, June 18, 2021).

Aspirations to develop into a smart megacity and a desirable investment destination are undermined by the implications of traffic robberies, which also limit growth potential. High crime rates, particularly violent ones like traffic robberies, discourage entrepreneurship, innovation, foreign and domestic investment by fostering a climate of fear and uncertainty. This emphasizes the need for more potent tools and tactics to combat crime, especially violent crimes. According to this assertion, there is a complicated relationship between crime and urban development, with crime serving as a significant barrier to expansion.

Table II: Frequently Reported Cases according to Five Selected Newspapers, Vanguard, Tribune, Punch, Guardian and The Sun

Edition	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Vanguard	6	5	1	7	10	3	12	3	3	50
Tribune	0	1	0	0	0	3	8	4	2	18
Punch	0	4	1	3	8	6	21	8	2	53
Guardian	2	2	0	2	2	0	9	6	0	23
Sun	0	0	2	0	4	3	7	6	1	23
Total	8	12	4	12	24	15	57	27	8	167

Source: Field Work 2023

The paper provides a content analysis of traffic robbery reported cases in Lagos State between 2015 and 2023 based on selected five newspapers: Vanguard, Punch, Tribune, Guardian and Sun. Table II shows the yearly trend in 2015-2017 the report cases were minimal with a total of 24 cases over 3 years. Newspapers like Tribune and Sun reported little or no cases probably indicating underreporting. In 2018- 2022 there was a gradual increase, the cases increased reaching a peak of 24 cases in 2019.

Punch, Guardian and Vanguard reported more cases showing growing awareness or an increase in traffic robbery incident. 2021 dramatically increased with 57 cases across all newspapers indicating heightened criminal activity and robust coverage by the media. Punch alone reported 21 cases more than any newspaper in a single year. In 2022 to 2023 a decline reported cases of 27 in 2021 and 8 in 2023. These might suggest an improved enforcement or reduced media coverage.

Another question posed by the research is: Which instruments or methods are commonly used by perpetrators during Traffic Robbery incidents?

S/N	Method	Frequency	Percentage
1	Dispossessing the victim of phones and other valuables	43	25.75
2	Cutlasses, Axes and Iron Rods, Hammer, Assorted Charms Used In Breaking Victim's Cars	23	13.77
3	Pump Action Gun/ Live Cartridges/ Toy gun/ Berretta pistol	30	17.96
4	Run away with one carton of the battery	1	0.60
5	6 cars stolen	1	0.60
6	Others	69	41.32
	Total	167	100

Source: Field Work 2023

The table above summarizes the key methods employed by offenders during traffic robberies incident, with dispossession of victims' belongings being the most prevalent tactic, followed by the use of cutlass, axes, firearms and other methods.

They still tried attacking us in traffic yesterday (Thursday) evening when I was coming with my husband from a function. They are armed robbers with small knives and sprays and all. Please help raise the awareness and save lives as it's happening every single day now on that bridge towards the tail end to descend into Gbagada. They will be there this evening once there is traffic. "Yesterday was my third experience. Thank God for husband that struggled. He was too shocked to believe his eyes because I had told him and we saw it again (Olasupo, Punch, Dec. 9, 2022).

Robbers usually seek out vulnerable spots, such as congested areas, where victims may be stranded and have few means of escape. The mention of knives and pepper spray raises the possibility of bodily harm and confusion as a means of controlling victims. Machete is the third most commonly used weapon used by offenders in the process of robbery.

The acquisition of firearm illustrates reliance on weapons to ensure compliance from the victims. As intimidation reduces resistance, the possession of firearms for 100,000 indicates an organized network.

One of the suspects, Amos Abayomi, who was arrested with a machete in between traffic in the morning of Friday, in Ketu, disclosed that he uses to rob in traffic with a syndicate of other gang especially in the morning and at night (Orji, Sun, February 16, 2021).

The firearm was found in the custody of one of the suspects, Lekan Abdulateef, who admitted to purchasing it from the dealer for N100,000. He also admitted to robbing drivers with his firearm as they were traveling through the Ojota to Maryland, 7up, China Town, Eko Bridge, and Mile 2 area (Kadri, July 13, 2021).

The use of firearms in robberies presents a significant risk to public safety and demands prompt action. Targeting several locations raises the possibility of cooperation or connections within a larger criminal enterprise as captured below:

It was gathered that the operatives, on May 17, 2021, arrested one Nwugo Oforuiké, 30, a member of a cult group who hails from Imo

State, with one locally-made pistol, one live cartridge, one car key, one Infinix Hot 8 light phone, one neck chain and one iron rod (Odita, Guardian, May 19, 2021).

The possibility of violence and intimidation during robberies is highlighted by the possession of a locally manufactured pistol, a live cartridge, and one iron rod. Carrying an iron rod implies the possibility of further physical harm in the event that the firearm is broken or unavailable. This episode emphasizes how organized crime groups, especially cults may be involved in traffic robberies. For the purpose of upsetting these networks, carrying out focused interventions, and improving public safety, it is essential to comprehend the suspect's history, weapon ownership, and targeting techniques.

One Toheeb Isiaka, who was caught with a toy gun, confessed that he had snatched more than 20 phones from innocent motorists in the last two weeks at different spots in the area. He also confessed that once he pulled out his toy gun, motorists became jittery and immediately surrendered their valuables like phones, wallets and jewelries (Odita, Guardian, March 31, 2021).

This sheds light on the intricate relationship between gun violence, fear, and value loss in criminal activity. Victims being around a toy gun could be extremely traumatic. Extreme fear, anxiety, panic attacks, and flashbacks are possible for victims. It can be embarrassing to be robbed, particularly if the thief threatens you with a gun. The abrupt and forceful robbery can cause victims to lose all sense of security and control. In their own surroundings, they could feel exposed and uneasy. Victims may restrict their freedom and quality of life by avoiding locations or circumstances that make them think of the robbery.

I was coming back from work at Lekki, so I drove down the Third Mainland Bridge towards Ido, close to Ijora Olopa where the incident happened. There was light traffic. Those guys were robbing two cars ahead of me already. I couldn't reverse because there was traffic. I immediately wound up the glass to at least protect myself. But as soon as they finished with those two cars, I just heard sounds from the two sides of my car, they broke the side windscreen and began demanding my phone and other things. They entered and removed money from my safe. They had cutlasses

and knives. One of them removed everything in my safe, and made away with my power bank, an iPhone 6 and a laptop (Oyewo, Punch, August 24, 2023).

Other methods

Traffic robbers employ various methods to victimize individuals, leveraging surprise, fear and traffic congestion. The combination of these methods demonstrates the strategic approach used by the offenders to maximize their impact while minimizing resistance from victims.

These boys with cutlasses usually would demand you drop something for them or get your car vandalized. You are then forced to cooperate when you imagine that what you are parting with is a small fraction of what would be used to repair the car (Punch, August 6, 2020).

Another means of asking for tips is the other way used by the offenders. Boys threatening car vandalism exploit victims' fear of costly repairs and emotional attachment to their vehicles. The use of cutlasses reinforces the threat and creates an immediate sense of danger and compliance.

Use of pepper spray

Another method employed by offenders is the use of pepper spray.

I should also mention that these boys sometimes pretend to want to wipe your windshield and carry pepper spray (Olasupo, Punch, December. 9, 2022).

Falsely claiming to provide services such as windshield cleaning weakens defenses and gives the thief sense of surprise. The boys' possession of pepper spray indicates their intention to temporarily incapacitate victims for easier victimization. They also used opportunistic targeting, taking advantage of traffic stop situations where drivers are distracted and thus more vulnerable.

We were just running helter-skelter; the criminals were coming to the cars and opening the doors. If you locked the car, they would break it. The Indian who came to Nigeria to look for what to eat got stabbed (Nwannekanma, Guardian, June 24, 2021).

Another victim recounted:

It is the same experience on the Maza-Maza-Alakija section of the Lagos-Badagry Expressway every night. There is usually traffic on both sides inward Alakija and outward Mile 2. These boys with cutlasses usually would demand you drop something for them or get your car vandalised. You are then forced to cooperate when you imagine that what you are parting with is a small fraction of what would be used to repair the car (Olasupo, Punch, August 6, 2020).

The perpetrator weaponized fear of the victim as a tool, and by posing as threats with cutlasses; they induce fear and obedience, pressure victims into making tough decisions.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Terrifyingly high rate of traffic robberies in Lagos State is a serious threat to everyone's safety, health, and development. Notwithstanding the security measures in place, reports and analyses point to a widespread issue that interferes with day-to-day activities, causing anxiety and fear, and impeding economic activities because it reduces confidence and mobility. Comprehending the extent, configuration, and consequences of this phenomenon is imperative in order to formulate efficacious interventions and guarantee a safe and prosperous urban milieu for everybody. Activities of the offenders must be looked into to ensure a greater Lagos for her citizens, if the activities of this offenders are not properly checked, the economic institution would suffer losses. The findings underscore the importance of seasonal variations in traffic robbery incidents, emphasizing the need for heightened security measures during peak months.

With the data presented, government and the society should pay close attention to the seasonality of incident, security agencies should heightened a design to monitor event of traffic robbery incident in Lagos State especially during June and December since the prevalence is at high percentage during this period. The use of surveillance camera can help monitor and combat this incidence consequently, deterring other criminals from this act. The need to gainfully engage and employ the youth in the slum area should be considered by the government.

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