

# CRIME AND ROAD CRASHES PREVENTION IN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IN NIGERIA: THE CASE STUDY OF KWARA, KOGI AND EKITI STATES

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## ABSTRACT

Loss of lives on Nigerian roads occasioned by crime and criminalities is on the increase and indeed worrisome. The main thrust of this study is to investigate crime and road crashes prevention in Public Transportation System in Nigeria. The participants were drivers from commercial transport companies and government-owned corporations. Passengers who travelled from Ekiti, Kogi and Kwara states to Abuja and Lagos were also used as participants. The study also made use of the passenger manifest form. The study revealed among others that majority of drivers and passengers agreed that armed robbers frequently strike on their routes during journeys to cause road traffic crashes (with 91% response rate). It also revealed that many of the criminals board vehicles with the unsuspecting innocent passengers (88% response rate), while others disguise as religious/clergymen, preaching the gospel, before suddenly unleashing havoc on passengers on board (about 81% indicated this). Consequent upon this, the participants agreed that commotion ensues, which leads to loss of control of vehicles by drivers and ultimately the occurrence of road traffic crashes. Finally, 94% of the respondents further agreed that mechanically deficient vehicles, potholes and other road conditions, apart from causing road traffic crashes, also enhance the operations of the hoodlums on the highways.

## INTRODUCTION

The increasing loss of lives on the road in Nigeria has become a worrisome experience. In 2006, about 4, 944 deaths occurred in 9,114 road crashes with 17,390 persons injured. The situation in 2007 was 4,673 killed in 8,477 crashes leaving 17,794 injured. In the three (3) states covered by this study, a total of 498 and 391 people were killed in the year 2006 and 2007 respectively. This resulted from 402 and 413 crashes respectively. The injured persons for the same period were 1,142 and 1,486 respectively. (See Table 1)

**Table 1: Road Traffic Crashes by state 2006-2007**

State	Crashes		Killed		Injured	
	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
KWARA	107	170	195	188	387	603
KOGI	221	113	230	103	562	418
EKITI	74	130	73	100	193	465
TOTAL	402	413	498	391	1,142	1,486

Source: Federal Road Safety Corps, Nigeria - (Policy, Research and Statistics Department) 2007

It is important to mention that the highway connecting the Northern and Southern parts of the country transverse Kwara, Kogi and Ekiti States. The vehicular volume on the highway is high. The fact that drivers of transit vehicles speed, and such vehicles are suspected to carry passengers with money and other valuables leave the states vulnerable and breeding grounds for many traffic related criminal cases resulting in loss of lives and property. (See Table 2)

**Table 2: Crash along the Selected Routes 2006-2007**

No	Routes	2006 Crash Cases	2007 Crash Cases	Total	No. Of Crime Related Crashes	Distance in Kilometer
1.	Ilorin–Ogbomosho-Ibadan-Lagos	58	49	117	48	291
2	Ilorin-Lokoja-Abuja	72	88	160	25	482
3.	Lokoja-Ibadan-Lagos	78	101	179	21	531
4.	Lokoja – Abuja	62	91	153	31	193
5.	Ekiti – Ibadan – Lagos	49	57	106	38	401
6.	Ekiti – Lokoja – Abuja	51	81	132	41	480

*Sources: Nigeria Police Force, Lagos 2007 and Federal Office of Statistics, Lagos, 2008*

Absence of adequate security on highways in the country has left the highways unsafe. Therefore, the study seeks to investigate crime and criminalities as key ingredients of road crashes and the relationships between safety and security in road traffic administration and safety management in Nigeria.

## REVIEW

Facts show that there were increasing rate of crime and road crashes in public transportation system in Nigeria. The country has lost a good number of her productive population to the incidences of crime on board public transportation, which most times result to road crashes. Ordinarily, the nation is still grappling with the scourge of road crash related death, which soars geometrically. Worse still, this wanton destruction of lives on the roads is compounded by the activities of criminals whose aim primarily is to cart away valuables items of commuters. Experience has it that some criminals hijack vehicles and drive to nearby bushes to unleash terror on the helpless victims, while in some cases stones, tyre rims and woods are used to stop vehicles. According to Idowu, (2006) “oranges and foam balls have been at various ugly times laced with nails and set on roads as traps to deflate the tyres that ran over them. Tyres have been shot on motion as well as direct attack on the drivers and passengers. Many lives have been lost at different times when buses were attacked on the highways”. Some criminals board vehicles as passengers and along the way, rob people of their valuables.

At the end, the actions of these criminals on board the passenger vehicles result in road traffic crashes and gun shots killing or injuring passengers in the vehicles.

The nature of Nigerian roads, the driving culture, unexpected behaviour of other road users, road engineering and crime at various points during a journey account for the high rate of death on our roads. It is on this premise that this study looked at crime and road crashes prevention in Public Transportation System in Nigeria.

According to a survey conducted by these researchers and their research assistants in August 2010, the incidences of high rate of crime were directly linked to the presence of road blocks mounted by the men of the Nigeria Police. Table 3 shows the routes where road blocks are mounted by the Police during the time of the study.

The study as shown in Table 3 below indicates a direct relationship between crime and presence of Police checkpoints on the highways.

**Table 3: Police checkpoints on some major highways in Goe-political Zone in Nigeria.**

	Routes	Goe-political Zone	Length of the road	Time of study				Total checkpoints
				6am–10am	11am–12noon	1pm–5pm	7pm–11pm	
1	Enugu–Onisha	South-East	92km	4	3	2	12	21
2	Asaba-Benin	South-South	133km	3	2	2	15	22
3	Abaji-Lokoja	North-Central	193km	4	2	3	10	19
4	Ibadan-Lagos	South-West	132km	3	3	2	14	22
				<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>84</b>

$$\text{Total number of checkpoints (6am – 11pm)} = 84$$

$$\text{Total number of checkpoints at night (7pm – 11pm)} = 51$$

*% of checkpoint at night;*

$$\text{Simple \%} = \frac{\text{total checkpoints at night}}{\text{total checkpoint (day \& night)}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

$$\frac{51}{84} \times \frac{100}{1} = 60.7\%$$

Therefore, 60.7% of Police checkpoints exist at night. However, limited researches conducted have failed to profer functional solutions to these problems especially on those bordering on crime on board public transportation in Nigeria. This study, intended to address these problems, seeks to uncover how crime and criminalities are responsible for road traffic crashes in public transportation system in Nigeria. It also recommends ways of checkmating these ugly acts.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Generally, this study endeavoured to find out how crime and criminalities cause road traffic crashes in public transportation in Nigeria.

Specifically, this study seeks to identify the following;

- Criminal activities causing road traffic crashes in Nigeria
- Neglected road safety precautions which contributes to crime and criminalities and road traffic crashes in public transportation
- Relevant precautions needed to reduce crime and road traffic crashes on board public transportation.

## **METHOD**

The study made use of questionnaire designed to answer the research questions raised. Data on road traffic crashes between November 2007 and July 2008 were obtained from relevant agencies in Nigeria like the Police, Federal Road Safety Corps and National Bureau of Statistics.

The population includes public transportation industries in Kwara, Kogi and Ekiti states. Random sampling technique was used to select the sample of 590 respondents used for this study. Based on the completed passenger-manifest forms collected from each state i.e 115 passenger-manifests from Kwara, 161 from Kogi, and 78 from Ekiti, using an average of 14 passengers per vehicle, 1610, 2254 and 1092 passengers travel per day from Kwara, Kogi and Ekiti state respectively. Therefore, at one driver per vehicles, 1725, 2415 and 1170 people travel from Kwara, Kogi and Ekiti respectively on daily basis. Out of the figure, 250 respondents representing 14.5% were sampled from Kwara, 200 respondents representing 8.35% from Kogi and 140 respondents representing 11.9% were sampled from Ekiti. The questionnaires were randomly administered to the respondents at their various rest areas, between 6am-10am, 11am-12noon, 1pm-5pm, 7pm-11pm during the journeys.

The periods of administration of questionnaires were chosen to relatively cover all the traveling periods, assumed to be prone to crime on board public transportation

The questionnaires were validated by experts in the Nigerian Police, Federal Road Safety Corps and the Vehicle Inspection Officers.

The underlisted routes were considered:

- Ilorin-Ogbomosho-Ibadan-Lagos axis
- Ilorin-Lokoja-Abuja axis
- Lokoja-Ibadan-Lagos axis
- Lokoja-Abuja axis
- Ekiti-Ibadan-Lagos axis
- Ekiti-Lokoja-Abuja axis

## **LIMITATION**

The limitation of the findings of this study could be hinged on the area covered, the instrument used, sample and sampling technique as well as time frame. For instance, the instrument of the passenger manifest forms covered only the State Capitals.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- How are crimes and criminalities contributing to increased road traffic crashes in Nigeria?
- What are the causes of road traffic crashes in Nigeria?
- How can crime on public transportation and other causes of road traffic crashes be reduced in Nigeria?

## RESULTS

The results of the study are presented below and grouped according to the research questions.

**Table 4: Question One**

How are crimes and criminal tendencies contributing to increased road traffic crashes in Nigeria?

	Items	% Agreeing	% Disagreeing
a	Crime anxiety while driving is a major cause of road traffic crashes	87	13
b	Armed robbers frequently strike during journey to cause road traffic crashes	91	09
c	Armed robbers do board public transport at times to strike and consequently cause road traffic crashes.	88	12
d	Armed robbers disguise as religious/clergymen, preaching the gospel before attack on board public transportation which usually causes road traffic crashes.	81	19
e	Pick pocketing is often recorded on board public transportation.	87	13
f	Snatching of Vehicles by armed robbers which usually cause road traffic crash is often recorded on your route.	78	22
g	Loss of bags and baggage is a common phenomenon on board public transport.	80	20
h	Relics of Armed robbery blockage cause road traffic crashes.	94	06
i	Armed robbers often throw sticks, stones, and tyre rims on moving vehicle to cause road traffic crashes so as to rob passengers of their belongings.	94	06
j	Confusion is deliberately created at motor parks by pick pockets and armed robbers in order to carry out their operations.	78	22
k	Night journey is hazardous mainly because of armed robbery which causes road traffic crashes.	87	13

The following references can be drawn from the responses of the participants in Table 4. The majority of the drivers and passengers believe that crime anxiety while driving is a major cause of road traffic crashes. (87% indicated this). Most of the drivers and passengers are of the strong conviction that armed robbers frequently strike on their routes during journeys to cause road traffic crashes (91% supported this view), while 88% viewed that armed robbers do board public transportation at times to carry out their criminal activities and consequently causing road traffic crashes on the road. Surprisingly, 81% of the participants agreed that armed robbers disguise as religious people, preaching the gospel before unleashing havoc on innocent passengers on board public transportation which worse still cause road traffic crashes. Pick-pocketing was believed to be recorded often on board public transportation with 87% affirming. About 94% of the drivers and passengers had the view that relics of armed robbery blockage cause road traffic crashes, while 94% also agreed that armed robbers often throw sticks, stones and tyre rims at moving vehicles to cause road traffic crashes so as to rob passengers of their belongings. Additionally, 87% of the participants

supported the fact that night journey is hazardous mainly because of armed robbery which causes road traffic crashes.

**Table 5: Question Two**

What are the causes of road traffic crashes in Nigeria?

	Items	% Agreeing	% Disagreeing
a	Potholes and bridges on the road enhance armed robbery attacked and cause road traffic crashes.	95	05
b	Sharp bends and black spots on the road, apart from causing road traffic crashes, are areas used by armed robbers to attack passengers on board public transportation.	97	03
c	Alcohol/drug intake by drivers is a major cause of road traffic crashes.	96	04
d	Visual acuity is reduced at the night, therefore, travellers on night journeys are prone to road traffic crashes than those who travel during the day.	96	04
e	Vehicles having mechanical fault, apart from causing road traffic crashes, easily fall prey to armed robbery attack.	94	06

The following interpretations can be made from the responses in table 5. Majority of the participants agreed that potholes on the road enhance armed robbery attack and cause road traffic crashes (95% response rate). In the same vein, many of the respondents (97%) supported the view that sharp bends and black spots on the road, apart from causing road traffic crashes, are areas used by armed robbers to attack passengers on board public transport. Intake of alcohol and drug by drivers is a major cause of road traffic crashes (96% indicated support). Also vehicles with mechanical deficiency, apart from causing road traffic crashes, easily fall prey to armed robbery attack with 94% of the respondents concurring to this assertion.

**Table 6: Question Three**

How can crime on public transportation and other causes of road traffic crashes be reduced in Nigeria?

	Items	% Agreeing	% Disagreeing
a	Rehabilitation on the roads is a good measure to curb crime and road traffic crashes.	92	08
b	Transportation Company/Union should engage armed security men at the point of entry, during journey and at the point of exit on board public transportation.	94	06
c	Night journeys by public transportation should be discouraged to reduce incidence of crime and road accident crashes.	96	04
d	Surveillance camera should be installed in public transportation premises to identify criminals for possible arrest and prosecution.	96	04

All the questions producing very similar percentages of respondents agreeing could be attributed to inadequate safety resources and the lackadaisical attitude of transport companies to acquire them.

## IMPLICATION FOR ROAD SAFETY AND SECURITY IN NIGERIA

The result of this study indicated that majority of the drivers and passengers agreed that armed robbers frequently strike on their routes during journeys to cause road traffic crashes. It means such criminals board vehicles with the unsuspecting innocent passengers. In other instances, armed robbers disguise as religious /clergy men, preaching the “word of God” before unleashing havoc on passengers on board. Consequent upon this, the respondents agreed that commotion is usually caused in the vehicle and ultimately the occurrence of road traffic crashes occasioned by loss of control. This supports the findings of Pearlstein et al (1982) that crime on transit has increased in proportion to transit ridership and that is concentrated in both space and time. While the rates of occurrence are disproportionately high during the evening hours, bus drivers experience much higher rates of exposure to criminal incidents than transit passengers. This view was corroborated by the findings of Moeketsti, et al (2001) that robbery and theft were the major criminal acts while on board public transportation and that these dastardly acts did happen from time to time.

The study also revealed that potholes and bridges on the road enhance armed robbery attacks and cause road traffic crashes. The responses of the participants support the fact that sharp bends and black spots on the road apart from causing road traffic crashes are areas used by armed robbers to attack passengers on board public transportation.

It was also discovered that intake of alcohol/drugs by drivers causes road traffic crashes, while mechanically deficient vehicles, aside from causing road traffic crashes, easily allow occupants to fall prey to armed robbery attacks. Badejo (1998) supported this when he opined that of all the factors which contribute to the alarming occurrence of road traffic crashes, the human factor is the most significant. He further outlined issues identified as human factor in crashes causation to include; bad drivers; drunken drivers, drugs and driving; deliberate criminals on the road; mal-functioning engine; tyre

burst and brake failure among others. WHO (2003) corroborated this while declaring that road traffic collisions kill nearly 1.2 million people around the world every year due to speeding, driving under the influence of alcohol, poor road design; poor enforcement of road traffic regulations and unsafe vehicle design.

Apart from this, rehabilitation of the road is a good measure to curb crime and road traffic crashes. Armed robbers most times lurk around the bad portion of the road to carry out nefarious activities enhanced by the condition of the road. This supports the “broken windows theory” as explained by Moeketsi et al (2001) that, “when something is broken, e.g a broken window on a bus, and is not subsequently repaired (resulting in a dilapidated environment) criminal activity is encouraged. The neglect of repair of bad portions of the road would definitely lead to creation of havens for armed robbers. In establishing security on board public transportation, transport companies should employ security men at the point of entry, during journey and at the point of exit on board public transport. Accenting to this is the statement of Omar (2002), while responding to crime and crime prevention on public transportation, that security force would be made available at airports, taxi ranks as well as at bus and train stations.

In reducing the soaring rate of crime and road traffic crashes on board public transportation, it is very expedient to discourage night journeys. In this regard, Agunloye (1990) found that night-time road traffic movement takes place at night between 6:30 pm and 6:30am, 60% of which comes between 6:30pm and 9:00pm and between 5am and 6:30am. He discovered further that traffic is light at this period but fast. Long distance vehicle drivers are more fatigued at night than during the day, drivers are unable to see beyond few metres thereby causing collision with stationary objects or running off track. Balogun (2003) supported this while he declared that night travel crash is peculiar in severity and there is less help to victims.

It is evident that Nigeria has lost, to a great extent, colossal human capital to road traffic crashes and crime on the road. There is no nation that can withstand the destruction of her human capital without taking necessary steps to remedy the situation. Human capital drives technological, economic and social development. This study has revealed that crime is one of the major causes of road traffic crashes in Nigeria. It also established that armed robbers board public transportation at times to strike and consequently cause road traffic crashes. Some armed robbers also disguise as religious men before unleashing havoc on innocent travelers. The study also found that night journey is highly unsafe in Nigeria considering the fact that safety factors are at the lowest ebb at night and armed robbers always have a field day during night journey.

## **CONCLUSION**

Through the networking of activities, it is believed that the incidents of crime and road traffic crashes on board public transportation in Nigeria would be checkmated. Thus, the human capital in Nigeria preserved more than ever before, while fear of travelers is considered allayed.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Road rehabilitation is a good measure to curb crimes and road traffic crashes. Therefore, Nigerian roads should be rehabilitated.
- Transport companies should engage armed security men to conduct thorough checks before boarding.
- Night journeys by public transportation should be discouraged to reduce incidence of crime and road traffic crashes.
- Surveillance cameras should be installed in public transportation premises and in vehicles to identify criminals for possible arrest and prosecution.
- Road blocks and Police checkpoints should be well marked out on the road in a more scientific method.
- The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) should be empowered to conduct road safety audits on all Nigerian roads and also be legislatively empowered to declare a road safe or unsafe for travelers and as a result ban vehicles from plying such roads.
- Advocacy drive by the FRSC and enforcement on drunk driving should be intensified up to reduce deaths on the road.
- Road Travelers Card should be introduced in Nigeria as a form of identification to ensure security of passengers on long distance buses.

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## **AUTHORS BIOGRAPHIES**

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He joined the Federal Road Safety Corps, Nigeria in 1988 and has served in various management capacities. He is presently the Planning Officer of the Corps. He has to his credit many research publications in the field of road traffic management.

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**QUESTIONNAIRE ON CRIME AND ROAD CRASHES PREVENTION ON PUBLIC  
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IN NIGERIA**

Dear Respondent,

Please, your cooperation is needed in completing this questionnaire. Any information given by you shall be treated with care and for this research purpose ONLY. Where applicable, kindly choose an option by putting a tick ( ) in the appropriate column suitable in answering each of the following questions.

**Note:** A = Agree

D = Disagree

S/N	ITEMS	A	D
1.	Crime anxiety while driving is a major cause of road traffic crashes.		
2.	Armed robbers frequently strike on your route during journey to cause road traffic crashes.		
3.	Armed robbers do board public transport at times to strike and consequently cause road traffic crashes.		
4.	Armed robbers disguise as religious people, preaching the gospel before attack on board public transportation which usually cause road traffic crashes.		
5.	Pick pocketing is often recorded on board public transportation.		
6.	Snatching of Vehicles by armed robbers which usually cause road traffic crashes is often recorded on your route.		
7.	Loss of bags and baggage is a common phenomenon on board public transport.		
8.	Relics of Armed robbers blockage cause road traffic crashes.		
9.	Armed robbers often throw sticks, stones, and tyre rims on moving vehicle to cause road traffic crashes so as to rob passengers of their belongings.		
10.	Confusion is deliberately created at motor parks by pick pockets and armed robbers in order to carry		

	out their operations.		
11.	Night journey is hazardous mainly because of armed robbery which causes road traffic crashes.		
	<b>CAUSES OF ROAD TRAFFIC CRASHES</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>
12.	Potholes and bridges on the road enhance armed robbery attacked and cause road traffic crashes.		
13	Sharp bends and black spots on the road, apart from causing road traffic crashes, are areas used by armed robbers to attack passengers on board public transport.		
14	Alcohol/drug intake by drivers is a major cause of road traffic crashes.		
15	Visual acuity is reduced at night, therefore, travelers on night journeys are prone to road traffic crashes than those who travel during the day.		
16	Vehicles having mechanical fault, apart from causing road traffic crashes, easily fall prey to armed robbery attack.		
	<b>PREVENTION OF CRIME AND OTHER CAUSES OF ROAD TRAFFIC CRASHES ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>
17	Rehabilitation on the roads is a good measure to curb crime and road traffic crashes.		
18	Transportation Company should engage armed security men at the point of entry, during journey and at the point of exit on board public transportation.		
19	Night journeys by public transportation should be discouraged to reduce incidence of crime and road accident crashes.		
20	Surveillance camera should be installed in public transportation premises to identify criminals for possible arrest and prosecution.		