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Investigating the Impact of Crime Reporting on Crime Control in Gwagwalada Area Council Abuja North Central Nigeria

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Investigating the Impact of Crime Reporting on Crime Control in Gwagwalada Area Council Abuja North Central Nigeria

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Abstract:

Worldwide the number of under reported crimes to law enforcement agents are on the increasing trend though it nevertheless more pervasive in developing nations particularly in Nigeria. This is due a number of facts such as lack of trust to law enforcement agents' fear of reprisal attacks by the offenders etc. This research was therefore set up to examines the impact of crime reporting as a panacea to crime control in Gwagwalada Area Council Abuja; specifically, the objective was to find out if reporting crime reduces criminal activities in Gwagwalada area council and identify the prime factors that hinder victims or witness of crime to report crime in Gwagwalada Area council of Nigeria. Theoretically this research adopted the Socio- Ecological Theory as its major thrust of the study. A research design is applied i.e. called descriptive which was used in the study. The research methodology includes selection and analysis of 220 administered questionnaires to selected study samples. Interview for this study was held with 10 Police officers.

Findings of the study revealed (amongst others) that there is low crime reportage in Gwagwalada Area Council, also that violent crimes are mostly reported crimes to the police. In addition, further to these findings, this study concludes that reporting crimes will reduce criminal activities in the area. It is however recommending (among others) that the government particularly the law enforcement agents should persistently carry out enlightenment campaign to the citizens on significance of crime reporting.

Keywords: Crime, Crime Reporting, Crime Control Gwagwalada, Nigeria,

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Introduction

Controlling the crime is a significant social issue and one of the chief undertakings of any government. Obviously, for this to happen, crime needs to go to the attention of the government. In this regard, the victim's decision to report victimization is essential. Victim reports are the key source of information for the police and are the basis for most subsequent actions of the justice system. Though, a lot of criminal victimization is not reported to the police. Recent findings show, for instance, that only half of all incidents of six types of crimes in 17 industrialized countries are reported to the police (Bouten, Goudriaan, & Nieuwbeerta, 2002). In regard to understanding why victims report (or fail to report) is important for the development and implementation of crime control strategies, and specifically for efforts to increase the percentage of crimes that are reported to the police.

The costs of crime are tangible and intangible, economic or social, direct or indirect, physical or psychological, individual or community. In fact, it is from the cost that the consequences of crime are derived. The price of crime can be incurred as a result of actual experience of criminal activities when there is physical harm when belongings are stolen, damaged or destroyed. It could also be in the form of mental and emotional pains as a result of shock due to the crime done against the victim. Besides, the cost of crime can be incurred in an attempt to report, prevent or control crime. As a consequence of the predominance of crime in society, the demographic makeup may be altered through the mass movement of people from crime-prone areas to areas perceived to be relatively crime-free. This can else lead to brain-drain and other socio-economic problems. Crime is a threat to the economic, political and social security of a nation and a major factor associated with underdevelopment; reason it discourages both local and foreign investments, reduces the quality of life, destroys human and social capital, damaged relationship between citizens and the states, thus undermining democracy, rule of law and the ability of the nation to promote development.

The prime tasks of the police are to uncover committed crime and to prevent future crime. To succeed in this, the cooperation of victims is indispensable. The police urge citizens to report crimes because it is necessary in order to maintain police statistics up-to-date and to keep the criminal justice system functioning. Unfortunately, not all victims report crime to the police (Jochem, 2011). In this respect, a victim's decision to report victimization to the police is crucial. The Victim reports are the main source of information for the police (Bennett & Wiegand, 1994) and are the basis for most of the subsequent actions of the justice system.

In addition, Diyoke, (2013) observed that many crimes do not make it into the official statistics because they are not reported or did not come to the attention of the police. Under-reporting distorts the real picture of crime in Nigeria and undermines the accuracy of information used by police to plan crime combating and prevention operations at national, state and local levels.

There is no way to know exactly how many crimes go unreported; Internationally, murders are typically the most accurate crime statistic because they result in dead bodies which can be counted. Under-reporting of crime is an international phenomenon and nowhere in the world is all crime reported to the police. In fact, if 60% of crimes such as assault and burglary are reported to the police, as is the case in some European countries, it is considered a good reporting rate.

According to Adesina, (2013) the reasons for under-reporting cited by Nigerians are similar to those also mentioned internationally. Many people don't report the crimes they are victims

of because they blame themselves for the incident (e.g. I should not have been walking out late at night), they fear stigmatization (e.g. fear that other people will blame the victim) or they fear reprisals from the perpetrator who may live near the victim. Others don't report crime because the incident may have been highly traumatic and the victim chooses to move on with his/her life rather than relive the crime by reporting it to the police. On the other hand, some victims may think that the incident was simply not serious enough to report to the police (e.g. petty theft).

Further public attitudes to the police also have an impact on reporting rates. People are more likely to report a crime if they have a positive attitude about the police. However, many crimes are not reported because the victims believe that the police will not care, that they will be corrupt (e.g. taking bribes and not acting against the perpetrators), or that they will be unable or unwilling to do anything to solve the crime.

If there is a rise of under-reporting rates over time, it is an indictment of public trust in the police and the criminal justice system. The less our police are trusted to resolve crime, the more likely it becomes that citizens will seek different means to combat crime, whether through employing more private security or taking the law into their own hands (Diyoke, 2013).

If people believe the police respect them, take their case extremely & can solve the crime, they will trust the police more & will also be more likely to report crime. This can lead to a rise in the levels of recorded crime which ironically, is not an outcome that police management needs to see. This is since the police are typically assessed positively if recorded crime levels are decreasing. Else this in turn creates a perverse incentive amongst police officials to under-record crime or to record severe crimes as less serious crimes (i.e. recording a house robbery as trespassing and theft).

Emile Durkheim considered crime to be an integral aspect of society and a "normal" social phenomenon in the sense that it has existed in all societies throughout entire history. Durkheim believe that mala prohibita crimes (crimes that violates social norms) functions in society as a means of defining the limits of acceptable behaviour, serving as vehicle for social change by extending and testing those boundaries (Haralambos & Holborn, 2007).

It is against this foregoing that the researcher pursues to investigate the impact of crime reporting in crime control using Gwagwalada Area council Abuja as a point of reference.

Statement of Research Problem

The main tasks of the police are to uncover committed crime and to prevent future crime. To succeed in this, the cooperation of victims is indispensable. The police urge citizens to report crimes because it is necessary in order to maintain police statistics up-to-date and to keep the criminal justice system functioning. Unfortunately, not all victims report crime to the police (Jochem, 2011).

In Nigeria, approximately 15 percent of victims do so. Reporting rates for violent offences are 25 percent, and for property crimes 53 percent. The willingness to report is especially low for sexual assault (7 percent) and high for burglary (87 per cent; CBS 2010). Internationally, reporting rates for property crimes range between 38 (Portugal) and 65 (Denmark) percent, with an average of 56 percent.[1] Reporting rates for violent offences vary from 25

(Switzerland) to 43 (Australia) percent, with an average of 39 percent (Goudriaan et al. 2004). Compared to these figures, the Nigeria holds a low position.

Nigeria is currently caught in the web of crime dilemma, manifesting in the convulsive upsurge of both violent and non-violent crimes (Emeh, 2011). Notable in this regard are the rising incidents of armed robbery, assassination and ransom-driven kidnapping, which are now ravaging the polity like a tsunami and spreading a climate of fears and anxieties about public safety (Emeh, 2011). The upsurge of crime has been ongoing as Nigeria has been on the global crime map since 1980s. These throes of crime for decades are traceable to poverty, poor parental upbringing, and greed amongst the youth; get rich quick mentality, inadequate crime control model of national security among others.

However, a lot of criminal victimization is not reported to the police and other criminal justice system, consequently, many offenders will never be found and prosecuted. For example, only half of all incidents of six types of crime in 17 industrialized countries are reported to the police (Bouten, Goudriaan, & Nieuwbeerta, 2002). This is also true in Nigeria, where every year over three million people (almost one in five citizens) become victims of one or more crimes and yet unreported (Diyoke, 2013).

In addition, due to fear of retaliation, oftentimes victims and witnesses are scared to report in case of reprisal attacks. They may be worried that if the perpetrator knows they have reported an incident then things may get worse. Some people are more scared to report incidents than not report incidents.

Similarly, because of lack of trust in agencies, Victims can be scared that they won't be believed and taken seriously by agency workers and that they will be asked to prove that the incident was motivated by hate which is difficult for victims to do. For instance, Diyoke, (2013) observed that attempt to report crime either by the victim or witness the Nigeria police often compound their problems by putting them through scourges of exploitation, while the courts finishes it up by eroding the rights of the victims.

To illustrate this point, a few instances will suffice. A relative of the researcher, Mr. Mathew Okoh went to withdraw ₦20,000 from a bank in Amakohia, Ihitte Uboma LGA of Imo State Nigeria on Nov. 20th 2016. He was tricked by a fraudster who took him on a motor-bike pretending to be a commercial motorcyclist; he was led to a place unknown to him where he was robbed of some belongings including the N20,000 by a gang of criminals to which the motorcyclist was an accomplice. He had to pay some money to aid apprehension of the criminals, luckily, four members of the gang were arrested as luck ran out against them same day as they were trying to rob another victim. The police admittedly recovered N8, 000 from the gang which admitted robbing Mr. Okoh. It was believed that the police recovered more than what they claimed to have recovered. The victim mounted pressure on the police to return the recovered money to him but they refused on the ground that the case will be charged to court and the said money will be used as "exhibit" in court, so it cannot be returned as it becomes "state property" what an irony. The victim who works in Abuja lacks the time and patience to prosecute the case in court and so left to face his job while the police did whatever they liked with the case and money.

In a similar vein Mr. Oluwasegun Abfarim, editor of the Week Magazine tells of his experience with the police. In his words "since 1995 I have been afraid of the law and its agents. Then my car was stolen and I had gone to the police station to report. I was instead detained and asked to prove my innocence. I was with them for three days before I was rescued by a lawyer, and the car was never found" (the week magazine, 13th May, 2008).

It is against these backgrounds of problems that this study intends to assess the impact of crime reporting in combating crime using Gwagwalada Area Council as a case study.

Conceptual and Theoretical Explanations of Crime

Scholars and social analysts have defined crime from different perspectives. As such, a general definition of the concept has eluded the academia for years. While Farmer Lindsay see crime as a category created by law (Lindsay, 2008).

Martin, (2003) provided a more comprehensive definition when she noted that crime or offence (or criminal offence) is an act harmful not only to some individual or individuals but also to a community, society or the state "a public wrong". It refers to actions that are forbidden by law; offence against the state, conducts such as committing murder, stealing property, resisting arrest, driving while under the influence of alcohol and possessing or selling illegal drugs and seen as an act that violates a political or moral rule; an act of a single individual acting from personal motive, or may be organized activity whereby gangs of mobsters seek to enrich themselves at the expense of the general public, and resort to violence and murder in order to achieve their goals Adesina, (2013).

Crime is traceable to the formation of groups by individuals who have related interests with the aim of having a strong network. For example, Babalola explains that "drug, cultism and terrorism have an inexorable nexus, one to the other. Once a person gets hooked to a particular brand of drug, he craves for it; he finds easy partnership in anyone that shares identical belief in that line of psychosomatic attitude. Together, they form groups with defined purposes. In the process of carrying out their concerted aspirations, they employ different kinds of weapons; broken bottles, knives and cudgels and recently guns and pistols. In addition, bombs have also become tools in the hands of armed robbers, militants and terrorists in most parts of the country who take advantage of the explosives to break into banks, Automated Teller Machines, and also to attack religious institutions, hotels/restaurants.

Theoretically, most discourses on the causes of crime are usually hinged on greed/grievance, relative deprivation, frustration and aggression theory of social conflict as well as the theory of reasoned action which sees criminal act as a well-planned action by the perpetrators. The trouble with crime is that it is usually associated with greed and violence which greatly motivate the violation of inalienable rights.

Specifically, the nature of crime incidents in Nigeria makes it pertinent for this study to focus on the Non-killing theory which explains the 'framework for research and action involving conscious efforts that are made to comprehend the practices, policies, institutions, cultures, politics, and behaviours that promote killing of humans and non-humans in society and to assess what is needed to transition from a killing state to a none killing one. Ideally, understanding the actions and behaviours that motivate crime would promote the no killing attitude in the society, and this would make human rights to improve appreciably. The theory is expected to guide policy and the cultural, political, and socio-economic behaviour of individuals and institutions towards creating a non-killing society' Allen and Okeke-Uzodike, (2010). Non-killing can be achieved and sustained when drivers of armed banditry, physical and structural violence, struggle for power and resources, envy and socioeconomic injustices are abated. To curb crime related killings, it is crucial to identify the sources of violent deaths, with the aim of understanding why and how people are engulfed in acts of violence.

Concept of Crime Reporting

Reporting crime to the police is defined as notifying the Police of a crime that took place. In most cases, crime reporting takes place at a Police Station. However, it is also possible to notify the Police by telephone and nowadays one can report minor crimes via the Internet in many (Western) countries. Of course, sometimes the police are already on the scene when a crime takes place (Anderson, 1999).

In everyday language people talk about reporting to the police regardless of whether an official report has been made by the Police and signed by the person who reported (in most cases the victim or a witness), or whether the Police have only been informed and no report has been signed. However, if no report has been signed, formally no aangifte but a melding (notification) has taken place.

It is not about what the Police do after they have been notified (e.g. whether they register the crime or not, or whether they take any action after the notification), but about whether they have been informed of the crime. Thus, the focus is on whether victims contact the Police or not (Wittebrood, 2004).

Statistics of Crimes in Nigeria

Nigeria has one of the highest crime rates in the world. Murder often accompanies minor burglaries. Rich Nigerians live in high security compounds. Police in some states are empowered to "shoot on sight" violent criminals (Financial Times, 2009). In the 1980s, serious crime grew to nearly epidemic proportions, particularly in Lagos and other urbanized areas characterized by rapid growth and change, by stark economic inequality and deprivation, by social disorganization, and by inadequate government service and law enforcement capabilities (Nigeria, 1991). Annual crime rates fluctuated at around 200 per 100,000 populations until the early 1960s and then steadily increased to more than 300 per 100,000 by the mid-1970s. Available data from the 1980s indicated a continuing increase. Total reported crime rose from almost 211,000 in 1981 to between 330,000 and 355,000 during 1984 – 85. The British High Commission in Lagos cited more than 3000 cases of forgeries annually (Nigeria, 1991). In the early 1990s, there was growing number of robberies from 1,937 in 1990 to 2,419 in 1996, and later the figure declined to 2,291 in 1999. Throughout the 1990s, assault and theft constituted the larger category of the crime. Generally, the crime data grow from 244,354 in 1991 to 289,156 in 1993 (Cleen, 1993) and continued to decline from 241,091 in 1994 to 167,492 in 1999 (Cleen, 2003). The number of crime slightly declined to 162,039 in 2006, a reduction of 8 percent from 2005 (Cleen, 2006).

Most alarming and terrifying is the present escalation of violent crimes and the barbarity, lethality and trauma the perpetrators unleash on the hapless citizenry across the country. Notable in this regard are the rising incidents of armed robbery, assassination and ransom-driven kidnapping which are now ravaging the polity. So far, the prevalent increasing waves of violent crimes in Nigeria have questioned the political will on the part of the leaders and the capability of the law enforcement agencies in containing the challenges. In the past, armed robbers used to operate only in the night. But today, they operate both night and day, attacking homes, offices, banks, shops, restaurants and churches to rob rape, maim and kill. They attack banks with dynamites, strike at filling stations and swoop on victims at traffic jams (Emeh, 2012; Ugwuoke, 2010; Igbo, 2007). Similarly, rape, sea piracy, cultism has taken sharp and increasing dimension in recent times.

Crimes committed in States by Number of Incidents and Fatalities

State	Crime	Number of occurrence	Number of Fatalities
	2016		
Lagos	Rape	2	2
	Drug Trafficking	1	
	Cultism/ Murder	3	
Plateau	Drug Trafficking	1	
Ondo	Rape, kidnapping, murder	3	1
	Bank Robbery		
	Currency counterfeiting		
Edo	Robbery	1	5
Bauchi	Robbery, Ritual murder, kidnapping	1	
Kwara	Homicide	1	1
Taraba	Homicide	1	
Abia	Homicide	2	1
	2015		
Lagos	Rape, murder, drug trafficking	7	7
Kaduna	Murder	1	1
Ogun	Rape, ritual	4	19
Bayelsa	Kidnapping	2	1
Oyo	Robbery	1	2
Imo	Assassination, Arms	1	2
Zamfara	Proliferation	1	1
Osun	Murder	1	1
Plateau	Assassination	2	9
Ekiti	Murder , rape	1	1
Bauchi	Rape	1	1
Kogi	Rape	1	1
Abuja -	Fake UN recruitment	1	
Total		**42 Event**	**56 Fatalities**

Data Source: Trent Online Dataset

Nature of Crime and Crime Reporting

Nature of crime is the form which any criminal activity that has the potential to cause significant physical, financial and material losses to victim takes. Thus, the impact of the nature of crime is probably best determined by the perceived seriousness or intensity of its effects in addition to the duration of its pains essentially from the victim's own perspective. Almost always, the nature of a crime assumes a meaning only in the context of a manifestly subjective assessment by the victim of the consequences of his/her victimization. In other

words, the extent of victims' losses determines the seriousness of crime. In Nigeria, as it is everywhere else, crime is not a new phenomenon, its form, rhythm, technique and effects are prone to rapid changes. If Omisakin (1998) found in Lagos, more than other parts of Nigeria, that crime particularly armed robbery, kidnapping, drug trafficking, fraud, traffic offence, rape, murder and theft have become more serious to tackle as they have manifested with new methods and techniques, the new methods and techniques have the capacity to change the nature of crimes in Lagos.

As it is in contemporary times, delinquency and criminal behaviours are common phenomena in Nigeria. The high rate of occurrence in recent time is of greater concern to the citizens and their governments than it ever had been. Crime statistics spread sheet on offences against persons, property and lawful authority and local acts, 2009 in all state commands show that in 2008, there were 35,109 offences against persons while in 2009 it was 38, 955 (an increase of 3,846 cases), offences against property in 2008 was 47,626 and in 2009 it was 64, 286 (an increase of 16,660 cases), offences against authority in 2008 was 5,938 and in 2009 it was 7,878 (an increase of 1,940 cases), offences against local acts in 2008 was 90,156 and in 2009 it was 1,378 (a decrease of 88,778 cases) (Nigeria Police Watch, nd). The actual experience of crime in Nigeria revealed by the report of 2013 National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) by CLEEN Foundation confirmed that as much as a quarter of respondents (25.0%) said that they had been victims of crime during 2012. The survey also indicated that the number of victims of crime was highest in Enugu state with 70.0%, followed by Ekiti and Ebonyi States (both 65.0%). The national average was 25.0%. Katsina State had 9.0%, while Ogun State had the lowest score of 5.0%. Analyzing experience of crime by regions in Nigeria, the south east recorded highest with 44.0% while the North West recorded lowest score of 18.0%. Lagos state also recorded 18.0%.

In this context, Lagos was second state most vulnerable site to kidnapping (4.0%), twentieth to robbery, seventh in physical assault (35.0%), fourth in theft of mobile phones (55.0%), third in car theft (5.0%) in Nigeria (CLEEN Foundation, 2013). Besides, the Lagos police command foiled 462 and 418 cases of robbery in 2012 and 2013 respectively. Out of the 1448 and 1263 vehicles stolen in Lagos in 2012 and 2013 respectively, 1187 vehicles were recovered in 2012 and only 954 vehicles have been recovered in 2013.

In all, the police recovered 371 arms and 2605 ammunition in 2013 while 328 arms and 3553 ammunition were recovered in 2012. The police arrested 569 robbery suspects between November 2011 and October 2012 as against 522 recorded in the previous year. Moreover, 270 people were murdered in different parts of Lagos while a total of 32 policemen died in gun exchanges with armed robbers leading to the police killing 140 robbers (Manko, 2012).

Despite a Lagos law that has led to the disappearance of commercial motorcycle operators from the major streets of the city following claims that they are responsible for most criminal activities, the state of Lagos still ranks high as one of the states with the highest crime rates in Nigeria according to a new survey released by the CLEEN Foundation. In the survey, 67% of Lagos residents have fear of becoming victims of crimes; the general public believes that crime rate in Lagos actually increased from 12% to 21% between 2011 and 2012 making robbery (28%) and theft of property (17%) the more prevalent crimes in the state.

The survey also shows that unlike its counterparts in the southwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria, which have seen reduction in assault-related crimes, assault cases in Lagos state skyrocketed from 27% to 38% in 2012 from 11% in 2011 (Ogundipe, 2013). The increase in crime, judging by available statistics appears to continue every year. Frightening as the data seem, they do not make the nature of the crime that produced them manifest. If 67.0% of

Lagos residents have fear of becoming victims of crimes, 23.0% claimed to have experienced crime, the general public believed that crime rate in Lagos increased from 12.0% to 21.0% between 2011 and 2012 with robbery at 28.0% and theft of property at 17.0% as the more prevalent offences in the state (CLEEN Foundation, 2013), then crime rate in Lagos is high enough to justify this inquiry. The influence of nature of crime on the crime reporting practices of victims in the study site has not been well studied.

Factors that Influence Public Reporting of Crime to Police
Several factors have been identified to influence crime reporting to the police, one of such factors is victim perception of the probable cost and benefit of notifying the police. For example, if your property is stolen, say a motor car, you may report to the police so that in case it is recovered, it will be returned to you. Other people may not report stolen property if the value is not high. Some people may not report cases to police because of the unnecessary bottleneck associated with dealing with the police in Nigeria (Idoko, 2010).

Another factor is Victims perception of the seriousness of the offence. Igbo, (2008) opined that Victims are more likely to report offences that are very serious. For example, if you witness the murder of a close relative; you are likely to report to the police because of the gravity of the crime. On the other hand, you may witness a case of people fighting in your compound, but you may not report it because you don't consider it serious enough.

The victim's sense of moral or patriotism is also another factor. A patriotic victim who feels that as a citizen he is morally obliged to report to the police, whether minor or serious. This group of people doesn't mind the cost or benefit. This civic responsibility may be used to help the police to compile their statistics. It can also help the police to free the neighbourhood of crime through close monitoring of people in and out of that environment.

The victim's attitude to the law, police or to the system of social control is equally another factor, people have different opinion. If you think the law, as well as police are favourable, then you are likely to report the crime incidence known to you. If you perceive the law in a negative light, you are less likely to report crime incidence to police.

The availability of other options opened to victims in terms of reparation (compensation). Reparation is where an offender tries to compensate you for the property lost. For example, Insurance Company can compensate you if you registered. This can help alleviate or reduce the effect of crime on individual. So in this case, such a person compensated will not report to police. Also, in case of aggravated assault, the person involved may take up the responsibility to pay the cost of hospital bill with regard to reporting of crime in developing countries. According to Balley (1972) the reluctance on the part of the public to report crime to the Police due to the fact that the offence may be too trivial, the distance to the police station may be too long, time expectation of productive outcome may be too meagre, and that reporting may expose the individual to harassment from the criminals or his friends, and individual victim, his family or group, may not welcome the involvement of outsiders, and may prefer to handle the matter themselves. And even in some cases, the offence may be too embarrassing to the victim such as rape.

Severity of Crime and the Impact of the Reporting Process
According to Van Dijk and Steinmetz, (1979) an important offence characteristic influencing the decision to report is the severity of the crime experienced measured as the amount of violence or the material losses. Property crimes are more often reported than violent offences, and severe crimes are more often reported than less severe crimes, presumably

because perceived benefits (like retribution or financial gains) are higher. When victims are determined to report to the police, they may no longer take into account the reporting context in their cost–benefit evaluation because the decision to report has already been made. Moreover, if a victim is (very) likely to report incident, additional factors of the reporting context that we expect to increase the willingness to report are no longer able to have a very substantial positive impact due to ceiling effects. From both these rationales we expect that: factors of the reporting process that increase the willingness to report will have a smaller positive impact on the willingness to report for severe crimes than for less severe crimes, and likewise for property crimes than for violent offences.

Evaluations of the Police and the Impact of the Reporting Process

During the decision-making process, victims balance expected costs and benefits, not actual costs and benefits, since these are (partially) unknown. Some victims may believe the police to be very effective and efficient, whereas others evaluate the police less favorably. Sunshine and Tyler (2003) show that alongside instrumental factors, perceived procedural justice (i.e. fair treatment by the police) shapes views on police legitimacy, and consequently, one's willingness to cooperate with the police. In sum, people with less favorable evaluations of the police whether these evaluations are based on instrumental factors or perceived procedural fairness are expected to have a lower willingness to report (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003).

But to what extent does the impact of the reporting process depend on victims' evaluations of the police? If a victim's evaluations of the police are very negative, s/he may decide not to report—whatever the reporting context—because the decision not to report has already been made. Moreover, if a victim is (very) likely not to report an incident, additional factors of the reporting context which we expect to decrease the willingness to report are no longer able to have a very substantial impact due to floor effects. Again, following both rationales both of which copy the rationale behind the conditional impact of type of crime we expect that: factors of the reporting process decreasing the willingness to report will have a smaller negative impact on the willingness to report for victims with less favorable evaluations of the police.

Theoretical Framework

Three classic theoretical models in studies on crime victims' reporting behavior will review for the purpose of tailoring this work. However, the socio-Ecological model will be used as theoretical framework because of the important point highlighted in its assumption.

In empirical literature, often an economic model is used. In this theory it is assumed that the decision to report a crime to the police is based on a cost-benefit calculation by the victim to determine whether it is worth the effort (Skogan, 1984). According to this model, incidents that result in little or no material and physical damage are reported to the police less often, as doing so always involves transaction costs (it takes time), while the expected benefits are low or even absent. This reasoning is supported by empirical research: serious crimes have a much greater likelihood of being reported to the police than less serious offences (Bennett & Wiegand, 1994; Felson, Messner, Hoskin, & Deane, 2002). This model provides a fairly limited view, as factors not related to the seriousness of the offence are usually ignored.

Again there are researchers who take a psychological model as a starting point (Greenberg & Ruback, 1992 Greenberg, & Westcott, 1984). This model assumes that other factors including the immediate social network of the victim – also play a part in the decision-making. These scholars suppose that victims not only make a cost-benefit calculation to decide what to do,

but that they also sometimes are too emotional or too afraid to make a rational decision. Furthermore, they assume that there are different behavioral options after victimization. Reporting to the police is one option, trying to find a private solution is another.

The third model used is a (macro-) sociological model, which states that the probability of an incident being reported to the police is determined by the social structures in the society in which both victim and offender live (e.g. Black, 1976). For example, it is assumed that reporting to the police (asking for formal social control) is negatively related to other forms of social control. This sociological explanation differs strongly from the previous two models as it focuses on the influence of contextual variables (e.g. Lessan & Sheley, 1992) and studies reporting behavior mostly at an aggregated level.

The Socio- Ecological Theory

Goudriaan (2006) developed the socio-ecological model in order to explain crime reporting. In this model, it is assumed that, as long as the expected benefits of reporting crime outweigh the expected costs, people are likely to report crime. The socio-ecological model states that characteristics of the offence, the victims, the offender(s), and the crime context (e.g., where the crime took place) all influence this cost–benefit evaluation. In the present contribution, we will build on this socio-ecological model by assuming that the characteristics of the reporting process itself also affect the decision whether or not to report.

One of the possible benefits of reporting crime is retribution. By reporting, a victim increases the likelihood that a perpetrator will be apprehended and punished. In Nigeria, a crime report is an official request to start a legal investigation by the police (this in contrast to a mere notification). A victim's report may provide clues about the perpetrator(s) and may be used as evidence in a lawsuit. If an offender is punished, victims may experience a decrease in feelings of revenge and start coping with feelings of fear and anger. An incapacitated offender is of no danger, either for the victim reporting the crime or for society at large, and the example set by the punishment may deter others from committing crime. Reporting crime may thus enhance feelings of personal safety and contribute to public safety. Moreover, fear of crime may also be reduced by the support which is only offered to victims by the police after an official crime report.

Besides these emotional benefits, victims can have material reasons to report crimes; most insurance companies demand an official police report before they reimburse victims for damages suffered.

Reporting crime may have emotional and financial benefits, but there are also costs involved. For instance, reporting crime takes time, not only because one has to travel to a police station but also because the actual act of reporting takes time.

Reporting crime, or the sheer intention to report, can also lead to feelings of fear and emotional stress caused by re-enacting the offence. Furthermore, a reported crime may motivate acts of revenge by the offender, his/her friends or his/her relatives. If the victim is uncertain whether the offender will be incapacitated, not reporting may be very rational in the light of possible reprisal. Also, reconciliation with a known perpetrator may become more difficult when the crime has been officially reported to the police. In sum, victims of crime may decide not report to the police if benefits do not outweigh the costs. Below, we deduce from a cost–benefit framework expectations on how several factors of the reporting process affect reporting intention. Following the socio-ecological model, we take into account that the impact of characteristics of the reporting process may be conditional on offence and victim characteristics.

Methodology

The central objective of this study is to examine the impact of crime reporting in combating crime in Gwagwalada Area council.

Other specific objective of the is as follows;

1. To understand the meaning of crime reporting
2. To find out the actual level of crime against reported crimes in Gwagwalada Area council
3. To find out if reporting crime reduce criminal activities in Gwagwalada area council
4. To identify the factors that hinder victims or witness of crime to report crime in Gwagwalada Area council
5. To understand why reporting percentage is higher for certain types of crime under certain circumstances than for other types of crime under other circumstances

Data was obtained through descriptive survey research design (by means of the Questionnaire) and In-depth Interviews.

The target populations for this research work were the police officers serving in Area Command Gwagwalada police division and the people of Gwagwalada Area.

250 was the sample size of the study, using confidence level of 95% and a tolerable error unit of 5%, the sample size was determined by W.G Cochran's equation 1963, for populations that are large. Cochran (1963:75) developed the equation to yield a representative sample for proportions.

For the sampling technique a multi-stage cluster method and systematic random sampling was used to enable the researcher select the area/ward and respondents respectively.

The Council is composed of 10 wards namely: Zuba, Ibwa, Dobi, Kutunku, Tunga Maje, Gwako, Paikon-kore, Ikwa, Quarters and Central which for the purpose of this study shall be regarded as clusters.

From these clusters, simple random sampling was applied to select five Wards for distribution of the questionnaire. This was followed by application of another simple random sampling technique to select five Towns/Villages from each Ward making a total of Twenty-five (25) Town/Villages. From each of these 5 Towns/Villages 10 respondents was selected randomly using balloting (5 x 5 x 10 = 250) making a total of two hundred and fifty.

For the in depth interview 10 police officers serving in Area Command Gwagwalada were purposively selected in the study.

Findings

The major task of this study was to investigate the Impact of Crime Reporting in Combating Crime in Gwagwalada Area Council Abuja and Nigeria as a whole.

Analysis of data collected reveals that there is low crime reportage in Gwagwalada Area Council as a high percentage (86%) of the respondents have never reported any case of crime to law enforcement agents. Only 9% of the respondents said that they have done so, while 5% didn't respond. Similarly, during interview schedule with police officers in the area they confirm that the citizens hardly report criminal cases to the police except when it involves violence crimes such as murder.

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Another significant finding from the study is that violent crimes are mostly reported crimes to the police and other law enforcement agents in Gwagwalada Area Council. While Car theft is most reported property crimes. This finding corroborate with the finding of Diyoke, (2013) were 80% of the respondents reported only property crimes in Igbo-Etiti Local government area of Enugu State.

In the same Dijk and Steinmetz, (2009) opined that an important characteristic influencing the decision to report is the severity of the crime experienced measured as the amount of violence or the material losses Property crimes are more often reported than violent offences, and severe crimes are more often reported than less severe crimes, presumably because perceived benefits (like retribution or financial gains) are higher.

Furthermore, the finding from the study reveals that crime reportage is very low. Only 14% of the respondents claimed that crime reportage is normal.

Similarly, during the interview schedule the police officers affirmed that the level of crime reporting in Gwagwalada area council very low from the public

According to one of the participant "the public are not helping the police to tame crime problem in the area, people hardly report, and that opined that actual criminal activities are under reported.

Another important aim of this study was to identify the factors that hinder crime reporting, results from the study indicate that lack of trust on the law enforcement agents, fear of victimization and cost of reporting are some of the major reason that hinders crime reporting. In addition, others suggested that cultural stereotype like demotic abuse and which are mostly reported by women because of the cultural connotations. It also reveals that reporting crimes will reduce criminal activities in the area.

Equally significant from the findings was that the consequences of not reporting are that it shields the offenders from police action. While 18% maintains that it will limit the law enforcement agents, others argue that it leads to misallocation of resources and reduces the accuracy of inferences drawn from crime.

This finding is agreement with the submission of Diyoke, (2013) that under reporting limit the deterrent capabilities of the criminal justice's system.

In the same the officers during the Interview schedule affirmed that when the citizen fails to report crime assures their perpetrators immunity from the attention of the police.

Conclusion

The main focus of this research has been to examine the impact of crime reporting in crime control in Gwagwalada Area Council Abuja and Nigeria as a whole. The data generated from the field presented useful insights about the nexus/links between crime reporting and crime combatting,

Based on the results from the data collected and analyzed, the study concludes as follows;

That there is low crime reportage in Gwagwalada Area Council Abuja that violent crime is the mostly reported crime in the study area.

That lack of trust on the law enforcement agents, fear of victimization and cost of reporting are some of the major reason that hinders crime reporting in Gwagwalada Area Council Abuja. The study also concludes that reporting crimes will reduce criminal activities in the area, further, that the consequences of not reporting included but not limited to that it shields the offenders from police action, limit the law enforcement agents, misallocation of resources and reduces the accuracy of inferences drawn from crime.

Recommendations

Sequel to the findings from this study the following recommendations are made;

1. The government particularly the law enforcement agents should constantly carry out enlightenment campaign to the citizens on importance of crime reporting

2. The police and other criminal justice system should endeavor to build a healthy relationship between them and the public so eliminate mistrust which hinder crime reporting

3. Government should strengthen the police force with adequate art of equipment, welfare and capacity building to enhance their performance and builds citizen's confidence on them

4. The avenue for crime reporting should made easy and flexible this is to enable the public report crime with easy, they should be assured of adequate protection to avoid victimization.

5. Governments should direct effort at dealing with the cause of crime, that is, correction of the conditions that make crime a valuable alternative to law abiding behaviour. Government should also ensure jobs are made available for the teeming population of school leavers of all categories to forestall the probability of some of these joining criminal gangs.

6. The police management should appeal to the citizens on the need to always cooperate and work together with the police in term of provision of adequate and timely information on the activities of suspected person in their neighborhood. This will help to reduce crime problems in Nigeria in general and Gwagwalada in particular.

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