

## Nature of Crime and Crime Reporting of Victims in Lagos, Nigeria

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### Abstract

Though the various effects of crime constitute its nature, these have suffered great research neglect in Nigeria. This study examined the influence of the nature of crime on reporting among victims in Lagos, Nigeria. It used quantitative and qualitative methods. Covering the three senatorial districts in Lagos, it obtained data from 948 respondents selected through a multistage sampling procedure. Quantitative data were analyzed at three levels and qualitative data were content analyzed. Findings showed more crime (52.2%) was unreported than reported (47.8%). The nature of crime is not significantly related to reporting ( $\chi^2$  p value > 0.05). The nature of crime drives reporting and urges government to include reporting education in school curriculum for a more inclusive reporting regime.

### Introduction

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 victimisation. 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

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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%. Analysing 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 26058 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 believe 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. It is against this background that this study provided answers to the following questions: (i) What is the nature of crime that predicts victims' crime reporting practices? (ii) How does the nature of crime influence victims' crime reporting practices? (iii) How can the influences of nature of crime on victims' crime reporting practices be minimised in the study site?

## **Data and Methods**

The study was conducted in Lagos State in the South-West geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The study was based on quantitative and qualitative data. The survey method administered copies of a questionnaire on 948 respondents. These participants were selected through multi-stage sampling procedure. On the other hand, in-depth interviews were conducted with 3 traditional rulers and 3 religious leaders selected equally from each of the three Senatorial Districts. Moreover, 12 key informant interviews were conducted with 3 Divisional Crime Police Officers, 3 Chairmen of Landlord Associations and 6 Members of Victims' Family and 10 case studies were conducted with victims of serious crimes. All these provided complementary qualitative data for the study.

Multistage sampling technique was used to select respondents to quantitative questions and simple random for the local government areas in urban, semi-urban and rural communities of Lagos. In the first stage, simple random sampling technique was used to select one local government area from each of the three senatorial districts, giving a sum of three LGAs. In the second stage, based on prior research findings,

areas recognised as the “black spots” of crime in Lagos in each of the three selected local government areas were randomly selected. In stage three, all the thirteen wards in Mushin LGA were included, 10 of the wards from Lagos Island LGA were randomly selected and 5 wards were randomly selected from Ibeju Lekki LGA to reflect population differences in the randomly selected LGAs. In the final stage, from each of the 13 and 8 political wards that have been randomly selected from Mushin and Lagos Island LGAs, two streets were randomly selected. Also, from the 5 political wards that have been randomly selected from Ibeju Lekki LGA, two communities were randomly selected. Overall, 42 streets and 10 communities were randomly selected. One household was randomly selected from each of the selected 20 houses, making 520 houses from Mushin LGA, 320 houses from Lagos Island LGA and 200 houses from Ibeju Lekki LGA. The sum of these gives 1040 houses. However, in a case where more than one household occupied a house; lottery method (yes/no) was used to select the respondent interviewed in such a situation. Copies of a questionnaire were administered on each of the 1040 household heads. Ninety two were discarded leaving 91.2% response rate.

The method of data analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The univariate analysis used frequency counts and simple percentages to present data. Bivariate analysis involved cross tabulation and the use of inferential statistics such as chi square test to establish association between variables. Multivariate analysis involved regression. All these were processed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 20.0 Version). For qualitative data, raw data from in-depth interviews, key informant interviews and case studies were transcribed, sorted and labelled. However, verbatim quotations, ethnographic summaries and content analysis were used to enrich quantitative data. In all, both quantitative and qualitative analysis complemented each other.

## Results

The results consist of demographic variables and responses to the three research questions.

### *Characteristics of Respondents*

Table 1 provides the selected socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The sample included 66.1% male and 33.9% female respondents. The proportion of male to female has implications for the nature of crime that takes place in the study site and the kind of respondents' response to it by reporting. More commonly, male adults are more culturally assumed to qualify for crime reporting than females.

Along this direction, qualitative data corroborate the foregoing as a key informant respondent remarked:

*In most homes, male household heads will consider it an affront for their wives to report crimes for which they had not given their tacit prior approval to the police.*

**Female KII Lagos Island LGA/Member of Victim's Family  
(November 16, 2012)**

In some important ways, age affects exposure to, avoidance and report of victimisation. The age patterns of respondents indicated that only 1.9% of respondents were aged less than 20 years; 21 – 30 years (44.6%), 31-40 years (27.8%). Individuals within these age brackets are frequently more powerful than those younger and older. Their strength makes them more able to acquire easily stolen items. They also possess more vigorous power of expression; belong to diverse social networks and determination which may make these respondents pursue the reporting of crimes in the study area more passionately.

**Table 1 Socio Economic Characteristics of Respondents**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	627	66.1
Female	321	33.9
Total	948	100
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 20 years	18	1.9
21 – 30	423	33.2
31 – 40	264	27.8
41 – 50	135	14.2
51 and above	108	11.4
Total	948	100
<b>Education</b>		
No Formal Education	77	8.1
Primary Education	99	10.4
Secondary Education	192	20.3
Tertiary Education	580	61.2
Total	948	100
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	441	46.5
Married	423	44.6
Separated/Divorced/Widowed	84	8.9
Total	948	100
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Ibo	195	20.6
Yoruba	651	68.7
Others	102	10.8
Total	948	100
<b>Religion</b>		
Christianity	534	56.3
Islam	405	42.7
Traditional/Others	9	.9
Total	948	100
<b>Residence</b>		
Urban	366	38.6
Semi urban	516	54.4
Rural	66	7.0
Total	948	100
<b>Occupation</b>		
Civil Servant	105	11.1
Business Person	585	61.7
Students	186	19.6
Others	72	7.6
Total	948	100
<b>Annual Income In Naira</b>		
Less than N 2,000,000:00	219	23.1
N 2,000,001 – N 4,000,000:00	69	7.3
N 4,000,001 – N 6,000,000:00	30	3.2
N 6,000,001 – N 8,000,000:00	74	7.8
N 8,000,001 – N 10,000,000:00	54	5.7
N 10,000,001 and above	502	53.0
Total	948	100.0

The data indicate that only 8.1% of the respondents did not have the advantage of formal education at all while 61.2% had tertiary education. Data on the marital status of respondents revealed that 46.5% of respondents are single; married (44.6%), and separated, divorced or widowed (8.9%). Moreover, 68.7% of the respondents are Yoruba, Ibo (20.6%) and other ethnic groups (10.8%). Religious affiliation of the respondents showed that Christians constituted 56.3%, Muslims (42.7%) and traditional religion (0.9%). On the place of residence of respondents, 54.4% lived in the semi urban, urban (38.6%) and rural communities of Lagos (7.0%). The income distribution of the respondents showed that majority (53.0%) earned an annual income of N10, 000,001 and above and 23.1% earned less than N2, 000,000 per annum. The distribution of occupation showed that respondents engaged in various occupational activities such as businesses (61.7%), students (19.6%), civil servants (11.1%) and others (7.6%)

### ***Nature of Crime That Predicts Victims' Crime Reporting Practices***

This section reports the findings on the influence of nature of crime on crime reporting practices of respondents as shown in table 2. Findings show that the crime reporting practices of respondents are determined by the forms which crimes take in their occurrence. Findings confirm that the form which a crime takes often constitutes the nature of that crime as 47% of respondents observed that the nature of crime that had serious effects on victims were reported while about 53% of respondents noted that the nature of crime that had minor effects on victims were not reported. Similarly, 46.0% of respondents said that great loss and injury owing to crime is likely to have positive influence on their crime reporting. However, 48.9% of respondents contended that the way a crime occurs has no effect whatsoever on crime reporting; 48.2% concluded that residents in the study area do not report crimes because of an irresistible pressure from social network in the communities.

An in-depth interview participant insists that the nature of crime is neither here nor there adding:

*Nature of crime works either way. It could heighten crime reporting or discourage it. But from experience, the nature of crime causes the victim to be lenient or equally cruel to the offender. It may mitigate or worsen the punishment that the victim may want us to assign the offender. Most members of other religions report crimes to us. The fact that these people do not openly consult us does not, in practice, mean they do not patronize us. Our services to these crime reporters are essentially investigative and sometimes punitive for their victimisers. Our clients often want 'Irunmale' (native god) to expose criminals for shaming, if the effect of their crimes are mild. But if intense, harsher punishment such as swelling until the criminal finally explodes and dies is preferred. Our intervention is usually productive. Most crime reporters are more interested in the recovery of their stolen items than in the culprits' death.*

**Male IDI Ibeju Lekki LGA/Traditional Religious Leader  
(November 16, 2012)**

### ***How the Nature of Crime Influences Victims' Crime Reporting Practices***

On the number of offenders present at crime scenes, data in table 2 confirm that most of the respondents (60.3%) said that offenders who victimised them were 3. More respondents (65.4%) indicated that fearful weapons were used in their victimisation. It was found that 49.2% of the respondents claimed that guns were used in their victimisation. For 57.8% of the respondents, reported that there were no manifest weapons used.

A female respondent corroborates the foregoing quantitative data:

*The effects of the economy are too bitter to bear. If anybody victimizes me mildly, I will internalize the pain. I will not involve the police who will multiply my losses and increase my hopelessness.*

**Male KII Ibeju Lekki LGA.  
(November 15, 2012)**

As a result of different weapons used by offenders, 46.2% of the respondents sustained bodily injuries, 43.6% suffered financial injuries, 52.3% had emotional injuries and 45.5% suffered material losses while 48.6% said they sustained a combination of bodily, financial, emotional and material injuries. While 46.8% of respondents said the influence of injuries on crime reporting was positive, 49.5% said it was not. Thus, 47.3% said injuries had no influence on crime reporting, 46.8% said it influenced positively, 49.5% said it influenced negatively.

Qualitative data from the case study below demonstrate how the nature of crime can influence the crime reporting of victims in the study site.

### ***Case Study 1***

I am a 51 year old woman, a Muslim, west African school certificate holder, and trader from Yoruba part of Nigeria. It was on a November afternoon last year that the case of three million naira fraud almost rocked my life. The challenge did not end with that huge financial loss, I was also seriously injured. I had received a call informing me that a new product in which I intend to deal in will arrive in a full container and that I should pay a deposit of one point two million to be a district supplier. The ages of the criminals ranged between 32 and 35 years. They were both male and female. Prior to the incident, the criminals were my online friends. The crime was reported to the police to find a way of retrieving the money. Regrettably, the criminals escaped. The crime has effect on my health and business up to the present time. The police were reluctant to intervene because it was an online transaction which cannot be retrieved. Since I did not seek their advice before the online interaction, I think they made efforts to unravel the crime. The crime was not charged to court because the criminals were faceless. There was no support. Shame did not even give me the courage to solicit help from neighbours and even members of my family. Irrespective of my state of mind, some close family members and friends still assisted me. The kind of support that I seriously needed that I think would have provided me with the fullest opportunity was a complete investigation of the case through Interpol.

**Table 2: Nature of Crime and Crime Reporting**

Nature of Crime ( $\chi^2 p$ value > 0.05)	Respondents' Report of The Incident of Crime					
	Yes		No		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Serious	46.7	(360)	53.3	(411)	100	(771)
Minor	52.5	(93)	47.5	(84)	100	(177)
Total	47.8	(453)	52.2	(495)	100	(948)
<b>Influence of Nature of Crime</b> ( $\chi^2 p$ value > 0.05)						
Great Loss and Injury May Have Positive Effect	46.0	(144)	54.0	(169)	100	(313)
Little Loss and Injury May Have Negative Effect	49.0	(153)	51.0	(159)	100	(312)
No Effect	48.9	(22)	51.1	(23)	100	(45)
Social Network Pressure Prevents Reporting	48.2	(134)	51.8	(144)	100	(278)
Total	47.8	(453)	52.2	(495)	100	(948)
<b>Number of Criminals At Crime Scene</b> ( $\chi^2 p$ value < 0.05)						
One	48.2	(81)	51.8	(87)	100	(168)
Two	33.9	(63)	66.1	(123)	100	(186)
Three	60.3	(123)	39.7	(81)	100	(204)
Many	48.8	(140)	51.2	(147)	100	(287)
Too Afraid To Know	44.7	(46)	55.3	(57)	100	(103)
Others	47.8	(453)	52.2	(495)	100	(948)
<b>Kinds of weapons used</b>						
No Weapon	57.8	(134)	42.2	(98)	100	(232)
Fearful Weapons	65.4	(142)	34.6	(75)	100	(217)
Knives	45.6	(82)	54.4	(98)	100	(180)
Swords	52.6	(10)	47.4	(9)	100	(19)
Guns	49.2	(150)	50.8	(155)	100	(305)
Total	47.8	(453)	52.2	(495)	100	(948)
<b>Kind of Injury</b> ( $\chi^2 p$ value > 0.05)						
Bodily	46.2	(30)	53.8	(35)	100	(65)
Financial	43.6	(17)	56.4	(22)	100	(39)
Emotional	52.3	(23)	47.7	(21)	100	(44)
Material	45.5	(80)	54.5	(96)	100	(176)
All the Above	48.6	(303)	51.4	(321)	100	(624)
Total	47.8	(453)	52.2	(495)	100	(948)
<b>Seriousness Of Injury</b> ( $\chi^2 p$ value > 0.05)						
Very Serious	52.7	(39)	47.3	(35)	100	(74)
Serious	46.7	(141)	53.3	(161)	100	(302)
Mild	50.5	(104)	49.5	(102)	100	(206)
Very Mild	46.2	(169)	53.8	(197)	100	(366)
Total	47.8	(453)	52.2	(495)	100	(948)
<b>How Injury Influences Crime Reporting</b> ( $\chi^2 p$ value > 0.05)						
Positively	46.8	(227)	53.2	(258)	100	(485)
Negatively	49.5	(156)	50.5	(159)	100	(315)
No Influence	47.3	(70)	52.7	(78)	100	(148)
Total	47.8	(453)	52.2	(495)	100	(948)

In Lagos Island, a respondent said that the nature of crime only becomes applicable under specific conditions:

*Crimes having minor effects are generally not reported. But when a crime inflicts severe injuries on the victim, it is reported, if not by the victim, any witness will do that. This norm can be taken as given on Lagos Island because no hospital will treat any crime induced injury without a police report. Thus, if a criminal case becomes inevitable, there may be no evidence to tender in court.*

**Male IDI Lagos Island LGA  
(October 31, 2012)**

Data in the case study below show how the role a victim plays in his/her victimization can determine whether to report a crime event or not:

### **Case Study 2**

I am 32 years old, a Muslim, bachelor, West African school certificate holder, and driver from Yoruba part of Nigeria. It was on a Saturday afternoon when the police embarked on their undue arrest and torture. I cannot recall the exact amount on me which they collected but they inflicted serious injuries on me. The police arrested me for no just reason, detained and charged me to court. The criminals in this instance are the police. Who is empowered to arrest them? The crime was reported to a civil rights lawyer. The lawyer created for me a public awareness that I was being detained for a crime I did not commit. Subsequently, I was granted bail. The event affected my economic and psychological wellbeing. Since the crime was committed by the police, it further deepened my lack of trust in them. My previous experience of dealing with the police was worst. How the type of crime influenced my decision to report initially threw me into confusion. The relationship of the police with me as their victim was really agonizing. My experience with the police was negative. The quantum of information made available was insignificant. The level of sympathy which the police demonstrated in my case was very poor. As it were, these combined to further reduce my enthusiasm to develop any confidence in the police. To me, the police do not have the nerve to solve crime in my neighbourhood because the level of police operation is ridiculously low. The case got to court and I was present. The police were never punished. My court experiences were partially positive. My experience would have been fulfilling if the court had told the police its limitations and indicted its erring members. As a result of the performance of the formal criminal justice system in my case, I think public policy should consider the use of informal crime control alternatives to solve crime in future. I would have loved a system for getting support that did not involve the police in my community. I paid the lawyer myself. I learnt someone wanted to support me, but the divisional police officer declined.

An angry respondent examined the conduct of the police in the context of serious crimes and condemned their method:

*Whenever a serious crime occurs, especially that which has no immediately identifiable offender, the police seize that opportunity to raid and intimidate innocent community members indiscriminately. Granted that the police have a right to arrest suspects to provide clues to how the culprits of crimes could be*



*apprehended, they have no right to harass everybody and criminalise well behaved community members. This is why most victims avoid the police like a tax without relief.*

**Male KII Mushin LGA/Member of Victim’s Family  
(November 16, 2012)**

***Minimising the Influences of Nature of Crime on Victims’ Crime Reporting Practices***

Table 3 shows the percentage distribution of respondents by nature of crime and crime reporting. About 46.5% of respondents who were witnesses or victims of crimes having serious negative financial effects reported that the nature of their victimisations affected the pattern of their crime reporting practices. Meanwhile, majority 53.5% of respondents who were witnesses or victims of crimes having serious negative financial effects did not report their victimisation experiences. However, 43.9% of respondents who witnessed or were victims of crimes causing serious negative emotional effect reported less crime than victims whose victimisations had serious negative financial effects whereas, 56.1% of respondents who were witnesses or victims of crimes that elicited serious negative emotional effects did not report more crimes. The relationship is not significant ( $\chi^2$   $p$  value > 0.05)

**Table 3 Distribution of Respondents by Nature of Crime and Crime Reporting Practices**

Effect of Crime On Respondents	Report of Incident of Crime		Total
	Yes	No	
Serious Negative Financial Effect	46.5% (60)	53.5% (69)	100.0% (129)
Serious Negative Emotional Effect	43.9% (36)	56.1% (46)	100.0% (82)
Serious Negative Material Effect	49.2% (63)	50.8% (65)	100.0% (128)
Serious Negative Physical Effect	48.3% (292)	51.7% (312)	100.0% (604)
No Effect	40.0% (2)	60.0% (3)	100.0% (5)
<b>Total</b>	47.8% (453)	52.2% (495)	100.0% (948)
	$(\chi^2$ $p$ value > 0.05)		

A female key informant interview respondent on Lagos Island underscores this:

*Community people dread the police so much that even if they are victims of serious crimes involving injuries, most community people in this situation will prefer to get themselves treated in private hospitals instead of reporting such victimization to the police. It is common knowledge that some policemen know the criminals, their hideouts and even their schedules of operation. Otherwise, why does it not take the police protracted procedure to track down criminals when their colleagues fall victims of criminal victimization? For the nature of crime not to drive crime reporting, the police should improve their conduct and recognize community people as partners in the fight against criminality.*

**Female KII Ibeju Lekki LGA/Member of Victim’s Family  
(November 16, 2012)**

Data from another case study below show how the number of attackers in a crime event can intimidate a victim against reporting:

### **Case Study 3**

I am a thirty eight year old graduate, Christian and a bachelor. I hail from Cross Rivers. Late last year, on the fateful Tuesday, about 1:30am, my sister was watching late night movie while I was sleeping in the bedroom. There was power outage. Shortly after, dogs started barking. I peeped and saw two ladies pretending to be fighting. From their statures and voices, they were not from the neighbourhood. As the barking of the dog became more disturbing, hiding hoodlums then shot and killed the Alsatian dog. Since nobody responded to their baits, as they probably expected, they resorted to door breaking. The robbers were about 40 to 45 in number with only two ladies. These criminals spread themselves and gave commands in coded instructions. Every house on the Street, except one was raided. The excluded one was already being vandalised before an argument broke out among the criminals that residents of the building were poor. At my house, it took them about 40 minutes before they could enter. I had hidden my sister in the ceiling with my dog. The number of the robbers gave me the impression that if they saw my sister, they might want to rape her serially. When they came in, they took the fifteen thousand naira I had. They then pointed a gun at my mother's belly. I reacted and one of the robbers stabbed me on my left cheek. They left the dagger on me and removed it when they wanted to leave with a warning that if I shouted, they would kill me. Somehow, the police were notified but they did not arrive until after the criminals were done. Six streets away, the police blew their siren and started shooting. So, the criminals leisurely walked away. I did not report the crime because the police knew these hoodlums and their hideouts. If I go to report the hoodlums and the police reveal my identity to them, I might be more brutally re-victimised.

Moreover, 49.2% of respondents who witnessed or were victims of crimes that induced serious negative material effects acknowledged that the incidents of victimisation experiences they reported was less than those not reported by witnesses and victims that suffered material losses. In the same vein, 48.3% of respondents who were witnesses or victims of crimes that prompted serious negative effect reported while 51.7% of the respondents in that category did not report their victimisation experiences. However, 40.0% of the respondents who were witnesses of any or all of the crimes having the stated effects admitted that they reported their victimisation experiences. It is clear from table 3 that a pattern runs through the crime reporting practices of witnesses and victims of crime in the study setting. More crime incidents (52.2%) remain unreported than the reported incidents of 47.8%. Although the chi-square analysis was not significant, the table immediately indicates that crimes that induced serious negative material effects are more reported than crimes that have serious negative financial, emotional and physical effects. The hypothesis tested in this study indicated that the nature of crime is significantly associated with crime reporting. It was found that the nature of crime is not significantly associated with crime reporting. In other words, the nature of crime is not significantly associated with crime reporting in the study site.

### **Discussion**

Crime is an endemic global challenge. Therefore, no human settlement is insulated from it. More than half of the respondents that participated in the survey noted that the nature of crime that had minor effects on victims was not reported. Qualitative data also support quantitative submissions here. In the study site, as a tradition, crimes are not reported for the purpose of enriching crime statistics. If the value of loss is negligible, victims will ignore involving the police probably because of financial and social cost of reporting and the need to sustain fragile social network. Majority of the respondents indicated that fearful weapons

were used in their victimisation. The Nigerian factor also complicates the conceptualization of the nature of crime which “has come to mean unfortunately, corruption, nepotism, dishonesty, fraud and anything that is negative in our national life” (Jubril, 2003: 2, 8, 10), such that “equality before the law” appears to be honoured more in breach than in its observance (Aguda, 1986:31-2).

The foregoing are in tandem with crime data which indicate that a small number of offenders develop so powerful protective network to enjoy immunity in the event of their joining a few chronic career criminals who account for a disproportionate amount of crime in the communities of Lagos. Criminal activities have become so adorned in many Nigerian societies that citizens no longer recognize that economic and financial crimes are kindred offences with extremely thin line separating them and that all economic crimes are financial crimes but not all financial crimes are economic crimes (Ribadu, 2004). Findings of this study support earlier findings that crimes involving an armed offender compared to incidents involving an unarmed attacker are more likely to be reported to the police (Conaway & Lohr, 1994; Hart & Rennison, 2003; Williams, 1984). Due to educational status of respondents and the influence of culture on their crime reporting behaviour, majority of the respondents acknowledged that residents were ignorant of the gains of crime reporting.

Both quantitative and qualitative data agreed that victims without education reported more crimes than educated victims in the study site. The objective case in Nigeria is that citizens who are age 41 years and above are those who besiege the political terrain like a colossus. They are the ones that commit the most heinous crimes in the Nigerian society. The non crime reporting trend is not a corollary of illiteracy. At least, data show that a comfortable majority of the respondents of this study have tertiary education and are members of the two main religious bodies in the country. For the reason that border on the potency of imported trendy values to eclipse normative standards of residents in the study site, the domination of contemporary American society by the norms of minding one’s own business (Batson, Duncan, Ackerman, Buckley & Birch, 1981; Cialdini, Brown, Lewis, Luce, & Neuberg, 1997; Stürmer, Snyder, & Omoto, 2005) appears to have impacted negatively on the pattern of residents’ crime reporting practices. This normative explanation has been used to understand and explain actions related to a variety of crime contexts, such as bystander intervention (Hart & Miethe, 2008; Luckenbill, 1997; Miethe & Deibert, 2007; Miethe & Regoeczi, 2004).

Findings of this study reinforce those earlier found about the severity of a crime being important; that is, crimes that are more severe are generally more likely to be reported than non-serious offenses (Bachman, 1998; Birbeck et al., 1993; Goudriaan, Lynch, and Nieuwebeerta, 2004; Hart and Rennison, 2003; Kilpatrick, Saunders, Veronen, Best, and Von, 1987; Lizotte, 1985; Skogan, 1976, 1984). In the study, the nature of crime is not significantly associated with crime reporting. This finding is inconsistent with previous finding that serious crimes have a much greater likelihood of being reported to the police than less serious offences (Bennett & Wiegand, 1994; Gottfredson & Hindelang, 1979; Kury, Teske, & Würger, 1999; Pino & Meier, 1999; Skogan, 1976, 1984; Sparks, Genn, & Dodd, 1977). An exception to this is rape, considered by most to be the most severe non-fatal violence, is reported only about one-third of the time nationally (Rennison, 2002). Qualitative data emanating from this study maintained that rape is a rarely reported crime because of the implications for doing so on family dignity. A similar exception is noted in Illinois, where sex crimes were the least likely to come to the attention of the police (Hiselman, 2005). Thus supports mounting evidence that the degree of reporting appears contingent on the type of violence considered (Hart & Rennison, 2003; Rennison, 2007). Thus, individual perception about the seriousness of crime plays an important role in crime-reporting behaviour (Carcach, 1997; Bennett & Wiegand, 1994). Qualitative data from this study also show that a landlady refused police investigation of her victimization probably afraid she might be re-victimised if she volunteered information and the police later divulge these to the criminals.

The nature of crime in Nigeria is complex. In the time past, one notorious armed robber Anini confessed that his gang had George Iyamu, a Deputy Superintendent of Police as an insider within the police hierarchy who was their arrowhead. He shielded the robbers, would reveal police secrets to them and give them logistic supports such as arms, to carry out robbery operations. After each operation, Iyamu would join them in sharing the loot. As a result, he had choice buildings in Benin City; being how he invested the loots he obtained from men of the underworld (Anini, 1986). Rounding off the complexity of the nature of crime,

Omo-Agege (1987) in his judgment said Anini will forever be remembered in the history of crime in this country, but it would be of unblest memory. Few people if ever, would give the name to their children.

In some ways the Nigerian courts contributed to the complexity of the nature of crime. A typical case played out in the police pension scam case which involved John Yusuf, a Director at the Police Pension Office. The inadequate legal framework displayed by the Court in its decision handed down by Justice Abubakar Talba of an Abuja high court on January 28, 2013 seemed to encourage criminality. The suspect pleaded guilty to breach of trust and fraudulently converting N2bn of police pension funds to his private use. Upon conviction, the trial Judge sentenced him to two years imprisonment with an option of fine in the sum of N750,000 for the three offences to which he pleaded guilty even though, each of the three offenses attracted a maximum of two years jail term. Except conviction focuses on the nature of crime, Oladele (2014) cautions, we shall continue to witness this kind of inconsequential and unconscionable convictions. The law must be amended to provide for stiffer penalty and the criminal justice administration system must also be reviewed by the National Assembly.

It is surprising that more respondents did not report crimes having serious negative emotional, financial and physical effects. The reason for these could have been associated with the complex nature of judicial process and the roles played by networking against justice by the powerful. It is probably for this that the influence of nature of crime on crime reporting is not significant. In Nigeria, criminals operate in gangs to guarantee victim intimidation and ease of escape in case there is a formidable resistance. It is for this that the majority of respondents agreed that criminals often equip themselves with dangerous weapon to forestall any challenge. The complexity of nature of crime vis-à-vis reporting is so extraordinary that respondents conceded that they felt the kinds of injuries imaginable from their experiences of criminals.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The nature of crime has lots of practical implications for crime reporting practices of respondents in the study area. Though crimes that have severe effects on victims were reported less often than crimes that had minor effect, the pattern is largely contingent upon crime type. Therefore, policy makers should embark on policy designs and actions that can accelerate the changes in the social, economic and cultural substructure of society. Such goals may be achieved by consciously promoting gender balanced social, economic and cultural policies that can reduce the current ignorance and poverty levels of residents in the communities of Lagos. Although successive governments have been making what seemed as concerted efforts to reduce illiteracy, ignorance and poverty, these have not led to concrete and measurable improvement in household security.

It is therefore necessary to re-engineer, refocus and reposition these efforts to address social, economic and cultural conditions of community dwellers in the country. This can improve the perception of residents about the significance of crime reporting. As a result, victims can more capably respond to the desire to report crime whether they are mild, averagely serious or very serious, as a matter of civic duty. Finally, education is a powerful agent of social change; to that extent, the need to redesign education policy and implement same religiously should be rigorously pursued. It will be necessary to promote crime prevention and reduction education that addresses various aspects of crime reporting for public safety. Judging by the prevalent ignorance of community people about the gains of crime reporting, the values of reporting should be integrated into all levels of the nation's educational system and engage adult extension classes, justice and allied professionals and other service providers to promote learners' knowledge and skill that will make them freely report crimes in their adulthood for sustainable community safety.

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