



The Rise of Crimes in Urban Kano: An Empirical Analysis

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Abstract

Crime as global phenomenon occurs in every society and has negatively affects the wellbeing of people and subject them to vulnerabilities and dangers of different degrees. It is obvious that there is no crime free society on earth, only that the nature, pattern and rate vary in time and space, making it a multidimensional phenomenon that requires thorough examination and analysis. The nature and the rate at which crime occurs is alarming as new crimes are emerging and proliferating across societies, leading to serious consequences on lives and properties of people in the society. Today, the dimension of crimes in urban areas has changed from minor to grievous victimization that resulted to serious injuries, vandalization of properties, loss of lives and distortion of business activities. Accordingly, the study investigates the rise of crimes in urban cities with Kano being a point of reference. In view of this, factors such as poverty, unemployment, peer group influence, corruption, drug and substance abuse, broken home and illiteracy among many others were identified as factors responsible for the rise of crimes in Kano and other urban cities in Nigeria. These factors were said to have provide a fertile ground and encourage the perpetration of various crimes in contemporary Nigeria which continue to sabotage the social, economic and political development of the country and its good image in the eyes of other countries across the globe. The study empirically x-rayed the rise of urban crimes in Kano with a view of examining their underlying causes, effects and the existing measures of addressing the menace of such crimes. Routine activity theory was used in providing a theoretical framework for the study. The study finally, proffer some recommendations in line with its findings to provoke new policy formulation and the review of the existing ones to facilitate effective crime prevention and control in urban cities.

Keywords: Analysis, Crime, Empirical, Rise, Urban,

Introduction

Crime has always been a hot subject of discussion in most societies across the globe. The problem of crime has been recognized as a growing and serious challenge in urban cities across the globe.

In recent time, crimes with varying degrees of effects engulfed Nigeria and has made the country unconducive for its citizens and others coming for economic and political activities. Some of these crimes include insurgency, armed banditry, kidnapping, mobile phone snatching, rape, online advance fee fraud, assassination, political thuggery, and armed robbery among others. Today, urban crimes are becoming the major source of worry, societal decadence and a threat to community and national security. This is certainly why several sociological literatures have established a link between urbanization and the increasing level of criminality in cities (Galbraith, 1958 in Illah & Douglas, 2015). Such instances are drawing global attention on policing the growing sophistication of urban crimes since crime breeds the destruction of lives and property as well as intensifying the fear of insecurity.

It believed that urbanization is an indicator of industrial development in the economy which is characterized by labour market pooling, trade of goods and services, knowledge spill over, high level of income and economic relations. This facilitates job creation and poverty reduction in the urban areas. However, other face of urbanization may be the encouragement of crimes due high population in the area (Malik, 2016). Accordingly, Galvin (2002) argued that increase in crime usually reflect the increase in urbanization. In another words, as urban areas become larger, the rate of crime in these areas increases.

Urban crime is a serious challenge in many societies especially developing nations. Thus, several factors account for the emergence and proliferation of such crimes. For instance, Sohail et al., (2014) maintained that the rise in population is linked with increase in crimes rate as people endure in pathetic state of existing even in urban areas, due to shortage of resources. This implies that population increase propels crime occurrence due the complex nature of the society that is cause by socio-cultural diversities of the people. Political factors such as bad governance, weak law or problem in implementation of law and justice system is another reason for the rise of crimes in urban areas (Simon, 2017). This can be attested considering the fact that there are crime related laws meant to be implemented and enforced by the various law enforcement agencies established for that purpose, but yet crime continue to increase especially in urban areas. In the same opinion, Soh (2012) also argue that urban crimes are influenced by poverty, unstable jobs, the high cost of living and financial difficulties, limited educational opportunities, inadequate health and sanitation, and inadequate housing. He added that weaknesses in law enforcement or crime-control bodies encourage more criminal groups to take advantages to commit crimes. In line with the foregoing, the study investigates the rise of crimes in urban Kano through a survey conducted within Kano Metropolis where the opinion of various stakeholders was gathered to have a valid analysis of the phenomenon investigated.

Statement of the Research Problem

Crime is an inevitable phenomenon in every human society that serve as an impediment to the social, economic and political wellbeing its victims. Increase in crime has become a serious security challenge bedeviling many developed and developing countries across the globe. This has prompted the governments, researchers, public organizations, criminal justice system as well as the residents to proffer various measures of combating the menace of crime bedeviling the country. Various law enforcement agencies have been making series of effort best to address the menace of criminality but the problem is persisting because the agencies responsible for maintaining law and order in Nigeria are handicapped or incapable of coping with the dynamics as well as sophistication of crime and criminals.

Increasing population in cities and their surrounding areas coupled with inadequate planning to improve the living condition of the teeming masses and provide amenities and essential services has been considered as a leading factor responsible for the occurrence and rise of crime (Ige et al, 2009). While measures were taken to address the problem of crimes through different governmental initiatives and policies, crime continues to be on increase which signal the need for proper investigation and analysis of where the various crimes occur with a view to providing the mechanism for controlling and managing them. In view of the forgoing, this study attempt to investigate the rise of crime in urban Kano through examining the types of crimes, its level of increase, causal factors for the rise in crime and its effects in the study area.

Objectives of the Study

The study intends to investigate the rise of crimes in urban Kano. The specific objectives set for the study were to:

1. Examine the types of crimes perpetrated in urban Kano.
2. Find out level of the rise in crime in urban Kano.
3. Identify factors responsible for the rise of crimes in urban Kano.
4. Determine the effects of crimes perpetrated in urban Kano.
5. Examine the existing measures of addressing the rise of crimes in urban Kano.

Theoretical Framework

Routine Activity Theory

Routine Activity Theory (RAT) was developed by Lawrence E. Cohen and Marcus Felson (1979). According to the theory, crimes are committed by people who have the opportunity, in other words, it focuses on situations of crime. Routine activity theory postulates that structural changes in routine activity patterns influence crime rates by affecting the convergent in time and space of three elements of direct contact predatory crimes namely: motivated offender (potential offender), suitable target (person or property) and absence of capable guardianship (any person(s) or measure(s) that can deter the offender from committing the offence). Thus, the convergence of these three basic elements provides an opportunity for a crime to occur without any hindrance.

In this regard, the criminals are the motivated offenders capable of victimizing people and taking or destroying their properties (suitable target). This becomes possible in the absence of any deterrent measure(s) patrol operations, surveillance system or the presence of law enforcements such as Police, NSCDC, NDLEA among others. This implies that criminals perpetrate their heinous activities when they have the belief that there is no enough capable guardian (deterrent measures) to counter them. Thus, failure of the individuals and security agencies to employ effective proactive and reactive measures against the criminals may pave way for the rise of crime in the society particularly urban areas where the population is increasing due to inflow of people into the cities.

The theory suffered from some criticisms such as its emphasis on three factors responsible for the occurrence of crime (i.e presence of motivated offender, suitable target and absence of capable guardians) and neglect to address social aspects of committing crime, such as personal education, socio economic status and so on (Jeffery, 1993). It also failed to look at other factors such as

relative deprivation and social strain that push people particularly youth to rebel and engage in violent crimes. Another criticism of the theory is on its emphasis on potential targets and capable guardian as the condition favorable for crime to occur and ignored the fact that capable guardian may not necessarily stop the commission of a crime. This is because in spite of the fact that agencies like police and other security agencies are fighting against crime, that may not be adequate enough to effectively combat crime as individuals involved has different reasons that contribute to their involvements in such crimes which may not be resolve through the use of force. For instance, people who engaged in crime due to poverty and unemployment may be adequately deterred through job creation.

Research Site, Population and Methodology

The study was conducted in Kano Metropolis being the urban city that comprises of Municipal, Gwale, Dala, Nasarawa, Tarauni, Fagge and Kumbotso Local Governments areas. The study intends to investigate the rise of crimes in urban Kano, hence the selection of these local governments areas that form the urban city of Kano. The study population comprises of the Police and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corp (NSCDC) personnel, Members of the Vigilante, Community Leaders and Youths residing in urban Kano. Thus, a total of 20 participants were selected for the study (i.e. 4 from each of the categories of the population listed above). For the data collection, In-depth interview was used as instrument for eliciting information from the participants.

Findings of the Study

Section One: Types of Crime Perpetrated in Urban Kano

Although crime occurs in every part of the country and the world at large, in relation to urban Kano, the study identifies different types of crime perpetrated in the area through in-depth interview with various stakeholders. In an IDI with a youth in the Urban Kano, he mentioned that:

Yes, many crimes are perpetrated in my community which becoming on increase every day. Some of these crimes include, theft, drug abuse, street robbery, kidnapping, political violence and cybercrimes. This issue requires urgent attention of those in authority so that serious measures be taken to address this menace in this town (**IDI with Youth in Urban Kano, 2025**).

Another youth from the city has also added the following response regarding the types of crime perpetrated in Urban Kano:

Political thuggery is one among many other crimes bedeviling urban city of Kano. There is need for security agencies and the government to take decisive action that will address this problem and ensure peaceful atmosphere in the town (**IDI with Youth in Urban Kano, 2025**).

Another IDI respondent, a community leader in Urban Kano, made the following remark:

Crime like phone snatching, Car battery stealing, street robber, thuggery and youth involvement in drug abuse has become order of the day which

serve as a push factor for other crimes such as stealing, robbery and other deadly crimes like **(IDI with Community Leader in Urban Kano, 2025)**.

In line with the above qualitative response, a Police officer in Urban Kano stated that:

The crimes perpetrated are drug and substance abuse, thuggery and phone snatching. These crimes occur daily like other conventional activities and it is an indication that something is wrong and hands must be on deck to find a lasting solution to this problem **(IDI with Police personnel in Urban Kano, 2025)**.

In another IDI with NSCDC personnel in Urban Kano he revealed that:

Various forms of crimes are being perpetrated in urban Kano such as phone snatching and drug trafficking. However, the most disturbing crime today is mobile phone snatching that occurs on daily and left many people suffering from its serious consequences such as injury and sometimes death **(IDI with NSCDC personnel in Urban Kano, 2025)**.

The foregoing responses revealed that crimes perpetrated in the Urban Kano are many. They include, property theft like phone theft and snatching, drug and substance abuse, street robbery, kidnapping, political thuggery and violence and cybercrimes. Other crimes perpetrated in the urban Kano are car battery and other automobile accessories stealing, street robbery and burglary among other heinous crimes.

Section Two: Level of the Rise in Crime in Urban Kano

The rate at which crime occurs differs in time and space making it high or low depending on its frequency, and seriousness of the effects it has on victims and the society. Accordingly, the study determines the level of the rise in crimes perpetrated in urban Kano through in-depth interview with various stakeholders:

As it is, crime is increasing in the metropolitan city of Kano especially in recent years that came with economic hardship. This can be attested from the frequent occurrence of crime that are reported to police and posted on social media platforms. Therefore, we can rate the level of crime as high when compared to the previous time **(IDI with Youth in Urban Kano, 2025)**.

In a contrary opinion, another youth in urban Kano revealed that:

The partnership between security personnel and community leaders has helped in reducing the level of crime in the urban Kano and this has shown the importance of collaborative effort in combating crime in our society **(IDI with Youth in Urban Kano, 2025)**.

Other respondents in urban Kano further revealed that:

The rate of crime now is on and off, except that of phone snatching and drug abuse by some of the youths around the city of Kano. Therefore, one can only talk of phone snatching and drug abuse as crimes that are on increase while many of the crimes in urban Kano are not so frequent as these two **(IDI with Community Leader in Urban Kano, 2025)**.

Yes, crime is on increase in urban Kano because the number of crimes detected or reported to police is alarming especially issues of thuggery (*Daba*) and mobile phone snatching and street robbery. So, to sum it up, the rate of crime in urban Kano is becoming high and requires collaborative effort to be adequately address **(IDI with Police personnel in Urban Kano, 2025)**.

Crime is increasing and the perpetrators are committing these illegal acts in the night or early morning especially in places where with less visibility of people and law security personnel. Sometimes when perpetrators of crime are apprehended and kept in our custody, they are being freed by some influential people in the town and thus, crimes continue to increase to a higher level **(IDI with NSCDC personnel in Urban Kano, 2025)**.

Drawing from the foregoing responses, it implies that people have different views regarding the level of the rise of crimes in urban Kano. Some people rate the level of the rise in crime as high, others see pointed out only few crimes that appears to be on increase which include phone snatching, drug abuse, thuggery and street robbery while other crimes are less frequent compared to those identified as high. It further highlighted that these crimes that are on increase are usually committed in the night and early morning when most people are less visible and deterrent measures are less. On the contrary, some people acknowledge crime reduction due to collaborative effort of the security personnel and community leaders.

Section Three: Factors Responsible for the Rise of Crimes in Urban Kano

Every crime is surrounded either by pull or push factor(s) capable of altering the positive mind of individual(s). In line with this, the study identifies the factors responsible for the rise in crime in urban Kano through an in-depth interview with relevant stakeholders as presented below:

Several factors are responsible for the rise of crime in urban Kano. Some of these include unemployment, poverty, drug abuse and weak security system. **(IDI with Youth in Urban Kano, 2025)**.

The rise of crime in is caused by multiple factors such as unemployment, poverty and lack of opportunities for youths. Drug abuse and peer influence also play a role alongside weak enforcement of law and political corruption. Moreover, rapid urbanization, overpopulation and rural-urban migration add pressure while decline in moral values and poor quality of education further worsen the situation **(IDI with Youth in Urban Kano, 2025)**.

Of course, there are many factors that gave rise to the worsening crime situation in Kano but the major ones comprise of joblessness, illiteracy and lack of proactive mechanisms of crime prevention by government **(IDI with Youth in Urban Kano, 2025)**.

Many factors account for the rise of crime in urban Kano. The prominent among them include unemployment, drug abuse, peer influence and parental negligence. These factors are very clear and has contributed a lot to the rising cases of crime in Kano **(IDI with Police personnel in Urban Kano, 2025)**.

There are several factors responsible for the rise of crimes in our communities but I should to speak on the major ones today, one must mention poverty and illiteracy. These are the causative agents believed to have worsen crimes in Kano (**IDI with NSCDC personnel in Urban Kano, 2025**).

The rise of urban crime in Kano is attributed to poverty which resulted to hardship among people and push them into many crimes. Government failure in providing youths with employment opportunities couple with parental negligence has predispose many people especially youths into crimes. This has made crime to be on increase on daily basis which become a sorry to many in this town (**IDI with Community Leader in Urban Kano, 2025**).

Many factors contributed to the rise of crime in urban Kano, the major ones comprised of drug abuse which push individuals to engage in many illicit activities under the influence of the drugs they take. Poverty also triggers individuals to commit crimes especially when they could not have some basic necessities of life such as food, shelter, clothing etc. Others include social inequality, child neglect and lack of access basic amenities. Therefore, crime will continue to rise until these factors are adequately address (**IDI with Community Leader in Urban Kano, 2025**).

The above responses indicates that the rise of crime is associated with multiple factors such as unemployment, poverty, drug abuse, illiteracy, weak security system, peer influence and poor enforcement of law. Others include social inequality, child neglect, lack of access basic amenities, rapid urbanization, overpopulation and rural-urban migration, decline in moral values and poor quality of education.

Section Four: Effects of Crimes Perpetrated in Urban Kano

Crime is an illicit act associated with many effects on individual(s) (including the perpetrator), community, society or the state. In an interview with relevant stakeholders from Kano, multiple effects of the rise in crime in urban Kano were identified as presented below:

Urban crime has multidimensional effects on the society. Economically, it causes losses and decline in investment. Socially, it makes people live in fear, family break apart and youth become restless. Health wise, it leads to injuries and even death. In other words, it weakens the security system and give rise to more criminal gangs. Politically, people lose trust in government and security agencies while educationally, it undermines the peaceful atmosphere of learning environment. Therefore, it distorts the overall development of the society (**IDI with youth in Urban Kano, 2025**).

The rise in crime has negative consequences as it tempers with peace, harmony and cooperation creating havoc among societal members. It also threatens the economic development of the society as it scares away both local and foreign investors crippling down commercial activities that have been in the city for decades. This has made some people to change their places of residence to a more peaceful areas in the city (**IDI with youth in Urban Kano, 2025**).

The effect of the rise in crimes cut across individuals and society. To individuals, it can cause physical harm such as injury, loss of property or life and emotional trauma as well. To society, it leads to fear inducement and anxiety. This makes it a serious issue that requires adequate measures to address it **(IDI with police personnel in Urban Kano, 2025)**.

The effect of crimes in is immeasurable, looking at how people are losing their lives and properties. At it is, many lives were lost while properties worth millions were also lost due to many crimes perpetrated in this town. People are now forced to stay indoor especially in the evening and night even if they have important things to attend to. Many people are afraid of coming to Kano for fear of being attacked especially by phone snatchers **(IDI with NSCDC personnel in Urban Kano, 2025)**.

It clear that the rise in crime in Kano has generate tension and escalate insecurity in the state leading to youth radicalization. This made some youth to drop out from school which increase the level of illiteracy among our youths. In other words, the rise in crime has led to the disregard for constituted authority and break down of many laws and order in the society **(IDI with Community Leader in Urban Kano, 2025)**.

The effects of the rise in crime in urban Kano are many but some them include destabilizing the safety of people and their property through the disruption of order that led to chaos and violence which undermine the peaceful and harmonious existence among. It also has economic effect as it reduces productivity of individuals and industries especially in crime prone areas which undermine the steady growth of the country's economy **(IDI with Community Leader in Urban Kano, 2025)**.

Drawing from the foregoing responses, it implies that the rise of crime has some negative consequences on social, economic and political wellbeing and development of the society. It cripples the commercial activities through the losses incurred from collapsed businesses, decline in both local and foreign investments. It also led to fear inducement, proliferation of criminal gangs, youth radicalization, disregard for constituted authority, breakdown of law-and-order injuries and loss of lives. These have significantly undermined the overall development of urban Kano, the state and the country at large.

Section Five: Existing Measures of Addressing the Rise of Crimes in Urban Kano

In addressing the menace of crime, various proactive and reactive measures are employed at individual, societal and governmental levels with a view to mitigate the evil plans or control the crimes already perpetrated. In the light of this, the existing measures put in place to address the rise in urban Kano were examine through an interview with relevant stakeholders as presented below:

Of course, there are measures taken by both security personnel and members of the society to curtail the problem of crime. The security personnel have intensified their patrol operations; communities enhance the work of their vigilante group and ensure collaboration with the police and other law enforcement agents. There are also interventions from government, community and religious leaders who provide support to the vigilante and give vital information to police and other security agents so

that they can mitigate the crimes in the society (**IDI with Youth in Urban Kano, 2025**).

As law enforcement agents, we work with our sister agencies like NDLEA and Hisbah to combat crimes in the society through enhanced patrol, rescue operations, surveillance and arrest of suspected criminal for proper investigation and prosecution. These are part of our mandate in safeguarding the lives and properties of people and we will not relent effort in accomplishing the task assigned to us (**IDI with Police personnel in Urban Kano, 2025**).

Some communities put heads together to protect themselves from miscreants by providing gates around their residences to avoid infiltration of the community or crossing their walls of the houses to commit various illegal activities such as theft, burglary, robbery and kidnapping. Some communities also form a security committee that work side by side with security agencies like police in the area of information sharing to enable the police and other security agencies deliver their work effectively (**IDI with Community Leader in Urban Kano, 2025**).

There are measures put in place by the security agencies and the community as well. They monitor the movement and activities of people through patrol and surveillance. However, there is need for the community to have an enhance neighborhood watch system that will ensure adequate monitoring of people and their activities so that crimes can be easily detected and measures employed to address them. Moreover, adequate training of security personnel is paramount in having an effective crime prevention in the society. Thus, security agencies should as a matter of urgency trained their personnel to equip them with all the necessary modern skills used in crime prevention and control (**IDI with Community Leader in Urban Kano, 2025**).

The foregoing responses indicated that government, security personnel, community members and religious leaders are up and doing in trying to fight crimes in urban Kano. The government has introduced some interventions related to security logistics and other supports. The security agents have intensified their patrol operations. The various law enforcement agencies are also working in synergy like Police, Department of State Security and NDLEA to address drug and illicit substance use and trafficking. The security agencies are also collaborating with Hisbah to combat immoral activities within the city. This collaboration helps in fighting crimes in the city through enhanced patrol, rescue operations, surveillance and arrest of suspected criminal for proper investigation and prosecution.

The communities are enhancing the work of their vigilante group and are collaborating with the police and other law enforcement agents. They provide support to the vigilante and give vital information to police and other security agents so that they can mitigate the crimes in the society. The community members also volunteer by providing gates around their residences to avoid infiltration of the community or crossing their walls of the houses to commit various illegal activities such as theft, burglary, robbery and kidnapping. The religious leaders are creating

awareness and preaching on daily basis and Friday sermons for community members to become law abiding.

Conclusion

The study has empirically examined the rise of urban crimes in urban Kano with a view to identify their underlying motivating factors, consequences and the appropriate measures of addressing the menace of such crimes. Today, crime has become a common and major threat to the security of lives and properties of people in Nigeria. As evidenced from the findings in the urban Kano, the study also showed that city areas are the hubs for the rise of criminality in the country. The dimension of crimes in urban areas has changed from minor to grievous victimization that resulted to serious injuries, vandalization of properties, loss of lives and distortion of business activities. Factors, such as poverty, unemployment, peer group influence, corruption, drug and substance abuse, broken home and illiteracy among many others were identified as factors responsible for the rise of crimes in Kano and other urban cities in Nigeria. These factors have made the urban Kano a ground for the perpetration of various crimes in contemporary Nigeria. The rise in criminality in the urban Kano led to many socio-economic, political and security challenges to the city and the country at large. In other words, the crime problem continued to sabotage the social, economic and political development of the country and its good image in the eyes of other countries across the globe. This is why the next section will provide some workable measures for curbing the rise in urban crimes in Nigerian cities, Kano city in particular.

Recommendations

The study proffers some recommendations in line with its findings to provoke new policy formulation to facilitate effective crime prevention and control in urban cities in the following points:

1. The government should initiate youth development programmes alongside urban development policies, because most of the factors responsible for youth urban gang formations are related to youth neglect.
2. There should be comprehensive youth empowerment schemes in form of poverty alleviation and employment opportunities for urban youths in Nigerian cities.
3. Rather than focus on crime control in the urban areas, security agencies should be up to expectation by adopting crime prevention strategies to translate the submissions of broken windows and routine activity theories.
4. The harmony between law enforcement agencies and the Kano State Police, otherwise known as Hisbah Board, should be deepened and there should be inter-agency intelligence-sharing on the happenings within the city.
5. Community leaders should bring back the old Hausa land tradition of being vigilant in the conducts of people around them so that people will be nervous of violating the existing norms of the urban communities.
6. Families residing in the urban areas should emphasize on instilling the appropriate socialization to the youth, determining their friends and watch their moves until they become matured. This is because of the delinquents and first/early offenders in urban centers are instigated by parental neglect and bad companies.

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