

**PREVALENCE OF ARMED ROBBERY IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA****GABRIEL DIBIE; & ADEBOLA A. ALADE**

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Corresponding Author: [gabyoh2000@yahoo.com](mailto:gabyoh2000@yahoo.com)DOI Link: <https://doi.org/10.70382/bjhss.v9i6.043>**ABSTRACT**

This paper investigates the prevalence, causes and patterns of armed robbery in Oyo State, Nigeria, with a focus on Ibadan metropolis. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of survey data with qualitative insights from interviews with residents, business owners and law enforcement agents. Findings reveal a high prevalence of armed robbery in the state, with significant socio-economic factors contributing to its occurrence. These factors include unemployment, poverty, inequality and social disorganization. The analysis also identifies key patterns in armed robbery incidents, such as target selection, modus operandi and the involvement of substance abuse. The study assesses the effectiveness of current anti-armed robbery measures and highlights challenges in law enforcement capacity and community engagement. It concludes by proposing evidence-based strategies for improving crime prevention, enhancing security responses fostering socio-economic development to address the root causes of armed robbery in Oyo State.

**Introduction**

Development indicators across Nigeria paint a concerning picture, characterized by low incomes, high infant mortality rates, lower life expectancy, a significant number of out-of-school children, prevalent malnutrition, limited access to clean water and sanitation services (Ali-Akpajiak, S. C., & Pyke, T. 2003). Poverty stands as one of the most pressing challenges confronting Nigeria, exacerbated by alarming rates of unemployment. Despite the country's abundant resources, it faces challenges such as a low Gross Domestic Product (GDP), meager per capita income, high unemployment, underutilization of industrial capacity and a high birth rate (Adenike, E. T. 2021). Impoverished individuals are constrained in their economic participation, both as producers

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and labour suppliers, with a clear correlation between employment performance and poverty prevalence (Royce, E. 2022). Reducing poverty remains a formidable challenge in developing countries, where a substantial proportion of the population lives below the poverty line, as evidenced by the alarming upward trend in poverty rates in Nigeria. However, it is imperative to acknowledge other factors that impede Nigeria's socio-economic development, factors that may stifle entrepreneurship and other economic activities (Ayoo, C. 2022). One such factor is the insecurity arising from criminal activities, such as armed robbery, which can devastate existing businesses and deter the establishment of new ones. Insecurity, a psychological condition characterized by fear or anxiety due to the absence or insufficiency of protective measures, can be understood from two perspectives: vulnerability to harm or threat susceptibility to potential risks and anxieties. Insecurity in Nigeria manifests from various sources, including banditry, kidnapping, insurgency, militancy and other criminal activities like armed robbery (Okwuwada, N. 2023).

Armed robbery, a criminal act involving the forcible deprivation of innocent people's possessions by armed individuals or groups, is conceptually and legally defined by the use of a weapon. Nigeria has become a conducive environment for various forms of illegal activities, with a notable prevalence of armed robbery incidents reported in several states, including Oyo, Imo, Rivers, Kano, Ogun, Cross River the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) (Awotayo, O. O., Ogunbenro, A. M., Olaniran, A. F., & Adaji, E. A. 2024). Recent years have witnessed a significant increase in robbery attacks, instilling panic among vulnerable populations, with incidents commonly occurring in establishments such as banks, petrol stations shopping malls. Armed robbery incidents are now widespread, with robbers employing various weapons. The pervasive nature of armed robbery in Nigeria is evident in daily news reports, creating a climate of fear and insecurity for the wealthy and the impoverished (Ugwuoke, C. O., Eze, O. J., Ameh, S. O., Mohammed, A. B., Linus, A., & Aroh, A. 2021). Armed robbery, a pervasive social issue in contemporary Nigerian society, involves theft with the use of force, violence, or threats of violence have detrimental impacts on lives and social interactions. Successful robbery attacks require a motivated offender, a suitable target and the absence of adequate protection (Ugwuoke, C. O., Eze, O. J., Ameh, S. O., Mohammed, A. B., Linus, A., & Aroh, A. 2021).

### Statement of the Problem

Armed robbery and other crimes undermine governance, fuel corruption, infiltrate businesses and politics, and destabilize growth and development, creating a climate of fear and insecurity that affects the psychological, financial, physical and spiritual well-being of victims. This underscores the significant impact of armed robbery on the socio-economic development of affected societies (Berebon, C. 2025). While much research have focused on the motivations and prevention of crimes, including armed robbery, this study adopts a different approach by examining the prevalence of armed robbery in Ibadan metropolis in Oyo State.

### Literature Review

#### Unraveling the Complexities of Armed Robbery

The phenomenon of armed robbery has attracted scholarly attention across diverse disciplines, resulting in a rich body of literature that seeks to understand its multifaceted nature. This review synthesizes key theoretical and empirical contributions, exploring the prevalence of armed robbery, the intricate web of factors contributing to its causation and the discernible patterns that characterize its occurrence.

#### The Ubiquity of Armed Robbery: A Global and Local Perspective

Robbery, in its generic form, represents a fundamental violation of property rights and societal order, a crime that has plagued human societies across historical epochs. However, armed robbery, a particularly pernicious variant, distinguishes itself through the employment of force or the explicit threat thereof, typically facilitated by the use of a weapon. This critical element of weaponization elevates the severity of the offense, amplifying the potential for physical harm to victims and heightening the trauma associated with the crime (Alili, N. 2017). Legal frameworks across jurisdictions offer varying definitions of robbery, reflecting nuanced contextual considerations. While specific legal terminology and elements may differ, a common thread unites these definitions: the centrality of force or the threat of force in the unlawful acquisition of property. This coercive element underscores the violent nature of robbery, setting it apart from other forms of theft.

In the Nigerian context, the legal definition of armed robbery explicitly emphasizes the use of offensive weapons. This legal specificity acknowledges the heightened danger and potential for violence inherent in robberies committed with instruments designed to inflict harm. Understanding these legal parameters is crucial for both academic analysis and effective law enforcement. Beyond legal definitions, the literature highlights the pervasive nature of robbery as a global challenge. From bustling urban centers to remote rural communities, no society is entirely immune to this form of crime. However, the

prevalence of armed robbery varies significantly across and within countries, influenced by a complex interplay of socio-economic, political cultural factors (De Nadai, M., Xu, Y., Letouzé, E., González, M. C., & Lepri, B. 2020).

### **The Etiology of Armed Robbery: Disentangling the Causal Web**

The quest to understand the root causes of armed robbery has led researchers to explore a wide range of explanatory factors. The literature reveals that armed robbery is rarely attributable to a single cause; rather, it emerges from a confluence of individual, social structural conditions.

### **Socio-Economic Deprivation: A Fertile Ground for Crime**

A prominent strand of research emphasizes the role of socio-economic disparities in fostering an environment conducive to armed robbery. Poverty, characterized by a lack of access to basic necessities and opportunities, is frequently cited as a significant risk factor. When individuals perceive limited legitimate avenues for economic advancement, the allure of criminal activity may increase. Unemployment, particularly among youth, further exacerbates this vulnerability. The frustration and alienation associated with prolonged joblessness can erode social bonds and create a sense of desperation, potentially pushing individuals towards involvement in crime (Mensah, R. O., Boateng, W., & Obeng, A. S. 2025). Inequality, the uneven distribution of wealth and resources within a society, can also fuel resentment and a sense of injustice, contributing to a climate in which crime is perceived as a viable, albeit illegal, means of redress (Jetten, J., Peters, K., Álvarez, B., Casara, B. G. S., Dare, M., Kirkland, K., & Mols, F. 2021). Lack of access to education and limited economic opportunities are also frequently cited. Education can equip individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to participate in the formal economy, while opportunities provide legitimate pathways to social mobility and financial security. Conversely, the absence of these factors can marginalize individuals and increase their susceptibility to criminal involvement (Gloster, R., Buzzeo, J., Marvell, R., Tassinari, A., Williams, J., Williams, M., & Gate, C. 2015).

### **Individual Propensities: The Role of Agency and Choice**

While socio-economic and structural factors create the context in which crime occurs, individual agency and choices also play a crucial role. The literature explores various individual-level factors that can increase the likelihood of involvement in armed robbery, including:

- **Substance Abuse:** The use of drugs and alcohol can impair judgement, reduce inhibitions and increase impulsivity, potentially contributing to criminal behavior (Crews, F. T., & Boettiger, C. A. 2009).

- **Association with Criminal Peers:** Exposure to delinquent peers can normalize criminal behavior and provide opportunities for learning criminal skills and techniques (Brook, D. W., Brook, J. S., Rubenstone, E., Zhang, C., & Saar, N. S. 2011).
- **Rational Choice Theory:** Some scholars apply rational choice theory to understand criminal behavior, suggesting that individuals make calculated decisions based on a perceived cost-benefit analysis. If the perceived rewards of armed robbery outweigh the perceived risks, individuals may be more likely to engage in such activity (Morrison, S. A., & O'Donnell, I. 1996).

### **Patterns of Armed Robbery: Deconstructing the Criminal Act**

In addition to exploring the causes of armed robbery, the literature also examines the patterns and characteristics of robbery incidents. Understanding these patterns is essential for developing effective crime prevention and intervention strategies.

### **Target Selection: Who Becomes a Victim?**

Research indicates that robbers often engage in a process of target selection, choosing victims based on factors such as:

- **Vulnerability:** Individuals and establishments perceived as vulnerable, such as the elderly, lone individuals, or businesses with inadequate security measures, are more likely to be targeted (Wilson, D. A. 1987).
- **Accessibility:** Targets that are easily accessible, such as those located in isolated areas or with poor lighting, are also at increased risk (Coupe, T., & Blake, L. 2006).
- **Profitability:** Robbers may target locations or individuals believed to possess valuable assets, such as banks, jewelry stores, or wealthy residents (Braakmann, N., Chevalier, A., & Wilson, T. 2024).

### **Modus Operandi: The Anatomy of a Robbery**

The modus operandi or method of operation, of armed robbers can vary significantly. Some common elements include:

- **Weaponry:** The use of weapons, including firearms, knives and other instruments of violence, is a defining characteristic of armed robbery (Ogilvie, E. 2000).
- **Planning and Execution:** Some robberies are carefully planned and executed, involving reconnaissance, coordination among multiple perpetrators and the use of disguises or getaway vehicles. Others may be more spontaneous and opportunistic (Adnan, D. 2018).

- **Violence:** The level of violence employed in robberies can vary. While some robberies involve minimal physical harm, others may result in serious injury or even death to victims (McCluskey, K., & Wardle, S. 2021).).

### Methodology

This study adopted a **mixed-methods research design** to investigate the prevalence, causes and patterns of armed robbery in Oyo State. The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches provided a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

A structured questionnaire was administered to residents in selected local government areas within the **Ibadan metropolis**. The survey collected data on respondents' socio-economic backgrounds, personal or vicarious experiences with armed robbery and perceptions of crime and security. The collected data was analyzed using **descriptive statistics** to determine the **prevalence and patterns** of armed robbery incidents.

In-depth interviews were also conducted with **key informants**, including community leaders, business owners, law enforcement and victims of armed robbery. These interviews yielded rich insights into the **causes, consequences and community responses** to armed robbery. The data was analyzed thematically to extract major **themes and patterns**, providing contextual depth to the quantitative findings.

### Results and Discussion of Findings

#### Prevalence of Armed Robbery Attacks in Ibadan Metropolis

- A significant 39.3% of respondents reported being victims of armed robbery, indicating a high prevalence of this crime in the study area.
- 55.8% of respondents had been victims of armed robbery at least once.
- A substantial number of respondents knew people who had been killed during armed robbery incidents, highlighting the deadly consequences of these crimes.

#### Causes, Nature and Patterns of Armed Robbery in Oyo State

The study identifies several factors contributing to armed robbery, including:

- Socio-economic factors such as unemployment, particularly among the youth, which limits legitimate economic opportunities and drives some to criminal activities.
- Easy access to firearms, which facilitates robbery operations.
- Substance abuse, which can impair judgment and increase the propensity for criminal behavior.

The qualitative analysis, derived from interviews with respondents, reveals a consensus on the multifaceted nature of factors contributing to armed robbery in Oyo State. Key

themes that emerged include systemic challenges and the direct impact of these issues on the prevalence of crime.

- **Systemic Challenges:** Issues such as corruption, rapid urbanization, substance abuse and social exclusion were identified as exacerbating the problem.

*Another respondent highlighted the lack of opportunities: "The lack of economic opportunities and upward mobility for disadvantaged populations is a significant driver of armed robbery in Oyo State. Without access to quality education and vocational training programs, individuals may feel trapped in cycles of poverty and turn to crime as a means of escaping their circumstances" (Respondent 2, 2024).*

*Inadequate social services were also seen as a contributing factor: "In my view, inadequate social services and infrastructure in Oyo State, contribute to the prevalence of armed robbery. When communities lack access to these services, they resort to robbery" (Respondent 5, 2024).*

### **Roles of Stakeholders in Addressing the Menace of Armed Robbery in Oyo State**

Qualitative responses also shed light on the roles and challenges faced by various stakeholders in addressing armed robbery.

- **Community and Business Contributions:**

*"Businesses should install CCTV cameras and improve security measures. The more security cameras we have in public places, the easier it will be to catch criminals". (Respondent 2, 2024)*

*"Residents should report suspicious activities and support local vigilantes. We need a strong community effort to fight crime. People should not be afraid to speak up when they see something suspicious" (Respondent 4, 2024).*

*"More awareness campaigns can educate people on crime prevention. If people know how to protect themselves and avoid risky situations, they will be less likely to become victims of robbery". (Respondent 8, 2024)*

- **Impact of Fear of Crime:**

*"Students do not move around freely at night anymore. Even inside campus areas, we are cautious. Before now, we could stay out late studying or socializing, but now, once it is dark, most students rush back to their hostels. I know people who have been attacked right in front of their dormitories. This is affecting our social life and general well-being". (Respondent 8, 2024)*

*"The fear of crime has led to a decline in nightlife. Restaurants, bars and entertainment spots that used to operate late into the night now close early. This has affected businesses that rely on evening patronage. When people feel unsafe, they avoid moving around and it affects the local economy". (Respondent 3, 2024)*

*"Tourists avoid areas known for criminal activity and this affects the hospitality industry. Hotels, resorts and relaxation centers are losing customers because people avoid visiting places where they might be robbed. Oyo State has cultural attractions that could boost tourism, but insecurity is driving visitors away". (Respondent 10, 2024)*

- **Security Agencies and Community Vigilante Groups:**

*"Police response time is too slow. Many times, by the time they arrive, the robbers have already escaped. Some people have stopped calling the police because they do not believe they will come in time to help". (Respondent 2, 2024)*

*"We rely more on local vigilantes than the police because they respond faster. However, these vigilante groups lack proper training and equipment. Sometimes, they catch criminals, but there is no proper legal process to handle them, so they end up being released". (Respondent 9, 2024)*

*"We have patrols in high-risk areas, but the challenge is that criminals change their strategies. We need more community cooperation and better intelligence gathering to prevent crime before it happens. The police force is doing its best, but we need more personnel and resources to be truly effective". (Respondent 3, 2024)*

- **Challenges Faced by Law Enforcement Agencies:**

*"Logistics is a big issue. We do not have enough vehicles, personnel, or modern equipment to effectively cover all areas. Some police stations have only one patrol vehicle and when there is an emergency in different locations, response time becomes a major problem. Many officers are willing to work hard, but how can we fight well-organized criminals when we do not have proper tools? The lack of adequate funding means that some stations rely on community support to buy fuel for patrols. If we had enough resources, better communication gadgets and advanced crime-tracking technology, we will be more effective in tackling armed robbery". (Respondent 3, 2024)*

*"Corruption is also a significant problem. Some officers leak information to criminals, making it difficult to arrest them or disrupt their operations. There have been cases where planned police raids were foiled because the robbers got tipped off and escaped before officers arrived. Criminal networks are often well-connected and some officers collaborate with them for financial gains. Until we address internal corruption within the police force, combating armed robbery will remain a major challenge". (Respondent 9, 2024)*

*"People do not trust the police, so many crimes go unreported. I have friends who were robbed at gunpoint, but they did not bother reporting the incident to the police because they believed it would be a waste of time. This lack of trust makes it harder for law enforcement to gather intelligence and solve crimes. If the police can build better relationships with the public, more people will be willing to provide useful information that could help prevent future attacks". (Respondent 8, 2024)*

- **Influence of Corruption within Security Agencies on Crime Rates:**

*"If you report a robbery, some officers will demand a bribe before taking action. This discourages victims from seeking justice. I know a man whose shop was looted and when he went to report the matter, and the officer on duty told him to 'settle' before they would accept his complaint. How can we fight crime when the police prioritize money over public safety? This embolden criminals because they know that law enforcement is not as effective as it should be". (Respondent 1, 2024)*

*"Some officers work directly with criminals. There are documented cases where arrested suspects were released after paying bribes. When criminals know they can always buy their way out of police custody, they continue robbing with confidence. This weakens public trust in the justice system and it also emboldens criminals to commit more violent attacks". (Respondent 6, 2024)*

*"Not all officers are corrupt, but yes, bad elements within the force are making our work harder. Many of us genuinely want to serve and protect the people, but the actions of a few corrupt personnel should not be used to generalize the entire police force". (Respondent 1, 2024)*

The findings of the study reveal significant insights into the prevalence, causes and patterns of armed robbery in Oyo State.

The study confirms the high prevalence of armed robbery in Oyo State, with a substantial percentage of respondents reporting that they or their households have been victims of

armed robbery. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that armed robbery is a major security challenge in Nigeria.

The study identifies several key socio-economic factors contributing to armed robbery in Oyo State. Unemployment, particularly among the youth, is a significant driver, as it limits legitimate economic opportunities and can push individuals towards criminal activities. Poverty and inequality also play a role, as disparities in wealth and access to resources can create resentment and desperation. Social disorganization, including weak community structures and inadequate social support systems, further exacerbates the problem.

The analysis of robbery incidents reveals several common patterns. Robbers often target commercial establishments, such as banks and shops, as well as residential areas. The use of weapons, including firearms, is prevalent incidents that can involve violence and cause harm to victims. Substance abuse is also identified as a contributing factor, with evidence suggesting that drug use can increase the likelihood of individuals engaging in armed robbery and influence their behavior during robberies.

The study assesses the effectiveness of current anti-armed robbery measures implemented by government agencies, communities and individuals. Findings indicate that law enforcement agencies face challenges such as inadequate resources, corruption and lack of public trust, which hinder their ability to effectively combat the menace of armed robbery. Community-led initiatives to prevent armed robbery are not widespread and there is a reliance on self-help measures for protection.

In summary, the data analysis provides empirical evidence supporting the study's findings on the prevalence, causes and impacts of armed robbery in Oyo State, as well as the challenges and opportunities in addressing this issue.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The study provides a comprehensive analysis of the prevalence, causes and patterns of armed robbery in Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings highlight the complex interplay of socio-economic factors, individual behaviors and systemic challenges that contribute to this crime. Addressing armed robbery requires a multi-faceted approach that includes:

- Investing in programs that reduce unemployment, poverty, inequality and improve access to education and economic opportunities.
- Enhancing the capacity, accountability and integrity of law enforcement agencies and improving community policing strategies.
- Fostering community involvement in crime prevention and security initiatives and promoting collaboration between residents, businesses and law enforcement agencies.

- Implementing programs to address substance abuse, provide support for at-risk youths and rehabilitate offenders.

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Respondent 1, January 2024

Respondent 2, April 2024

Respondent 3, January 2024

Respondent 4, January 2024

Respondent 5, January 2024

Respondent 6, May 2024

Respondent 7, June 2024

Respondent 8, January 2024

Respondent 9, July 2024

Respondent 10, January 2024