



Public Transportation and Ritualism: The Involvement of Okada Riders in Ritual Killings in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Motorcycle (Okada) as a means of public transportation is described to be better and faster with the ability to manoeuvre bad roads and traffic standstill. While the preference for Okada attracts many people into the business, the use of Okada became suitable for criminals in the discharge of their operations. 'Okada riders' have been alleged of committing different kinds of violent crimes such as disappearing with commuters for ritualism. This study therefore examines the involvement of Okada riders in the recent issues of ritual killings in Ilorin. Holding to the institutional anomie theory, 12 respondents were sampled conveniently from Okeodo, tanke, Ilorin for an in-depth interview. Content analysis reveals the involvement of Okada riders in kidnapping for ritualism and trading in human parts and how they themselves become victims of their own crimes. Therefore, there should be government policy restricting the coverage of public motorcycle and the duration of their activities. The policy should also aim at providing alternative to Okada to reduce its preference as a means of public transportation. There should be records of every Okada operator for easy identification when there is issue of passenger disappearance.

Keywords: Crimes, Okada riders; Public transportation; Ritual killings; Victim

Introductions

The use of motorcycles popularly called "Okada" in Nigeria as a mode of public transportation began in the late 1980s to alleviate problems of transportation in some urban areas in Nigeria (Kraxberger, 2004). In the early 1980s, the use of motorcycles had existed in some areas of the country such as in Calabar, Uyo, Bauchiurdi (Ogunsanya and Galtima, 1993; Gbadamosi, 2006). Studies revealed that unconventional public transportation is pervasive and the use of motorcycles for transport is one of such modes of transportation in the country (Onwuchekwe, et al., 2017). In areas, especially the dispersed settlement of some eastern states where conventional public transportation is unavailable, 'okada' has served as the common mode of transportation (Ukwayi, Ogaboh and Michael, 2013). According to Nsa (2007) and Ugboma (2004), 'okada riders' took over the services of dropping passengers at their respective destinations.

The emergence of commercial motorcycle operation in Nigeria is a factor of the parlous state of the Nigerian economy, collapse of public transport systems, failure of available

commercial vehicles to meet the demands of urban population (Ogbuiji, 2001), growth in population and urbanization without a corresponding or proportionate development of the transportation system (Sule, 2007), traffic congestion and the dilapidated nature of the Nigerian roads (Onwuchekwe, et al., 2017). Owing to the above, 'okadas' are considered a better and faster mode of public transport because of their availability, fairly low cost and especially their capability to maneuver bad roads, traffic standstill, delay, as well as promptly getting to their commuters' desired destinations. They also serve as a means of creating job opportunities, generating incomes and alleviating poverty in Nigeria (Ogbuiji, 2001; Onwuchekwe, et al., 2017).

The growth in the business of 'okadariding' was a result of the high cost associated with doing other businesses accompanied with expensive astronomic rents, a heavy taxation, epileptic power supply, and low patronage. Accordingly, many humbly took up the occupation of 'okada riding' to escape poverty and unemployment. The prevalence of the occupation was also attributed to the efforts of selected politicians in empowering some residents of their constituency with 'okada' which generated incomes and alleviated poverty to some extent (Ogbuiji, 2001). Despite the scores of advantages associated with the prevalence of 'okada' in Nigeria, the problems associated with its operations are enormous (Ukwayi, Ogaboh and Michael, 2013; Onwuchekwe, et al., 2017). Majority of the 'okada riders' have been indicted with engagement in criminal acts (Akogun, 2008). This study therefore examines the involvement of Okada riders in the recent cases of ritual killings in Ilorin.

Crimes and Okada Riders

The presence of 'okada' in towns and cities is a misnomer (Bassey, 2008). Apart from the disregard for other road users, 'okada riders' have been alleged of committing crimes (Ukwayi, Ogaboh and Michael, 2013). Obeta (2015) described the use of 'okada' as suitable to criminals in the discharge of their operations. Ugboma (2004) also explained that while some of the 'okadariders' disappear with their commuters and/or goods, some others act as informants to criminals. Some also connive with some corrupt security personnel to aid their operations. Criminals have taken up the profession to commit crimes. Thus, violent crimes have contaminated the business of 'okada' (Ugboma, 2004). Ekpenyong (2006) argued that since we can't regard all robbers in police uniforms as officers, we also shouldn't label all persons engaging in crimes using 'okada' as 'okada riders' since only a significant number, and not all of them, are involved in crimes.

The excesses of 'okada riders' have assumed worrisome dimensions (Ugboma, 2004; Silas, 2006; and Okoye, 2009). Statistical records revealed that a significant number of 'okada riders' were arrested for engaging in several criminal activities such as snatching of phones and handbags, rape, murder, stealing of vehicle parts, electronic gadgets, etc. Almost every day, people are robbed of their belongings on 'okada', sometimes at gun point while others are often given indelible marks with cutlass (Silas, 2006). Apart from loss of lives, properties and the psychological trauma connected with the encounters, majority of victims also sustain injuries that hold them down for several months or years, resulting into loss of hours (Ayo, 2000; Onoyo, 2004; Igwe, 2008; Uyi, 2010).

By and large, since Nigerians admire frivolous acquisition of power and wealth in forms of material wealth, it should not sound astounding that property crimes are the most prevalent in the country. This category of crime, among other offences, includes burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, arson, shoplifting, theft, and vandalism. Property crimes involve taking of one's property by force or threat of force against the person's will (Igbo, 1999; Ugwuoke, 2010).

A careful observation of crimes in the country reveals that property crimes are the most common, and a number of 'okadariders' engage in many kinds of property crime generally resulting to loss of lives and property and physical injury. Thus, according to Ukwaiyi, Ogaboh and Michael (2013), investigation into the crimes perpetrated by 'okadariders' reveals that they fall under 3 broad categories; *'offences against persons, property and local authority'* as explained below:

Offences against persons - Offences against persons are the second most prevalent offences in the country. 'Okada riders' have been allegedly accused of engaging in different kinds of antisocial behaviours that constitute threats which commonly involve physical harm inflicted against other persons (Inyang, 2004). In urban regions, crimes involving 'okadariders' are often crimes against persons such as kidnapping, murder, armed robbery and unlawful possession of dangerous weapons (Pius, 2009). Effah (2005), in his analysis of crimes, highlighted murder, manslaughter, aggravated assault, trafficking, kidnapping, assassination and rape as some of the dominant offences against persons in Nigeria. Nwankwo et al., (2008) observed that some 'okada riders' kidnap innocent members, apart from their passengers for either political/economic motives. According to Effah (2005), some are even contracted by politicians and public officials to steal and hijack ballot boxes and other materials needed to rig election.

Offences against property - Statistical records show that offences against property are generally the most prevalent crimes in Nigeria then offences against persons (Ukwaiyi, Ogaboh and Michael, 2013). Similarly, Bassey (2009) argued that crime against property in Nigeria outstrips crime against persons. According to Siegel (2005), property crime occasionally occurs when there are opportunities to crimes. Offences against property include theft, snatching of phones, handbags and wallet, 419, receiving stolen property, robbery and cheating. Adler, et al. (1995) opined that larceny (theft/stealing) is the prime example of all property offences and the most prevalent in Nigeria. It includes snatching of purse, phones, and handbags, pick pocketing, vehicle theft, 419, and robbery. 419 is the most common among 'okada riders' and a major challenge in Nigeria. In some regions, it is common to see people armed with guns, rifles, pistols and weapons, robbing on 'okada' at night and even in broad day light (Akogun, 2008; Chawki, 2009).

Offences against lawful authority - These are offences that contravene the laws passed by States and Local Government Authorities with respect to public order, including the environment (Igbo, 2007). They include perjury, escape, or rescue from lawful custody, bribery, corruption and traffic offences. Violations of traffic laws are the most prevalent among okada riders (Ukwaiyi, Ogaboh and Michael, 2013). In almost all urban centres, 'okada riders' are known to violate traffic laws with impunity; they are also found to violate the State Government Regulation on a number of operations (Akwaowo, 2009).

Crimes connected with 'okadariding' in the country have been escalating (Okoro, 2004; Adeboye, 2008; Aborisade, 2010). There was no city in the country where 'okadariders' are operating without a record of their engagement in crimes (Silas, 2006). The frequency and intensity of these crimes have become a major source of concern to Nigerians as well as the government. The intensification of the crimes connected with the use of 'okada' has resulted in loss of thousands of lives and properties (Bassey, 2009). Apart from the disregards to traffic laws and regulations, 'okada riders' have been accused of committing crimes like murder, theft, handbag and phone snatching, rape, kidnapping and *ritual killings*. The growing increase in

crimes with the use of 'okada' have instilled fear in the hearts of commuters as it has become extremely challenging to distinguish the legitimate 'Okada Riders' from criminals (Ofuonyeadi, 2008; Pius, 2009; Okache, 2010).

According to Obineke (2008), Evelyn (2017) and Mcadioh (2017), ritual killers keep different covers to get their victims and perpetrate crimes. While some venture into kidnapping, others pose as motor operators luring unsuspecting passengers into their vehicles only to take a different route, leading to their kill zones during the course of their journey. A survey conducted by Ukwaiyi, Ogaboh and Michael (2013) revealed a significant fraction of the involvement of 'okadariders' in kidnapping people for ransoms and ritual killings. Ugboma (2004) also explained that separating 'okadariders' from crimes like murder, theft, kidnapping (for ransoms and money rituals) and armed robbery which has become regular crimes in almost every urban areas is a very complicated task.

In Anambra State, the restriction order on the operations of 'okadariders' was necessitated by the call for crime control in the state, and also a response to the security report on the involvement of Okada Riders in crimes (Obeta, 2015). The Borno State Government, in an effort to reduce the crimes committed by 'okada riders', also mandated all of 'okadariders' operating within and beyond Maiduguri Metropolis to wear reflective jackets as uniforms. The policy, which was an Act of Parliament, passed by the State's House of Assembly, provided that all 'okada riders' should obtain identification cards and wear uniform which would have serial numbers conspicuously written on them (Kwaru, 2009).

In some part of the F.C.T, Abuja, Federal Government, as reported, took gallant steps to stop the use of 'okada'. Nevertheless, the abolition attracted both positive and negative reactions from 'okada riders' and the public at large. But few years later, the government of some states like River, Abia, Imo and Cross River State banned the operations of 'okadas' in the state capital. On the contrary, in place of abolition, restrictions were placed on the operations of 'okada riders' in Lagos, Ebonyi and Oyo States as they were restricted from operating on major roads. On the whole, the policy was aimed at reducing and preventing both road accidents and atrocities committed by 'Okada Riders' (Idika, 2008; Pius, 2009).

However, the dangers posed by kidnapping for rituals remain at its climax unfettered. The police seem destabilized in their capability for quick situations operative enough to eliminate or counter the dangers of crimes. The dedication towards investigating incidents of ritual killings, searching and liberating victims or adopting a pre-emptive policing which involves the demolition of and the search for the dens of ritual killers and okada kidnapping syndicates has been lacking in Nigeria. Sadly, there have been strings of widely held allegations against them. They have been accused of releasing arrested suspects without trials and this was attributed to corruption and the involvement of prominent individuals at the topmost cadre of public institutions in the country. Even when suspects are charged to court, their criminal cases are often needlessly protracted with series of appeals. Moreover, cases that involve politicians and their affiliates often crease with instant death (Oyewole, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

Institutional Anomie Theory

The study adopts Institutional Anomie theory propounded by Steven Messner and Richard Rosenfeld (1994) to establish the use of motorcycle for ritual killings in the country. This is because; the rise in the use of okada for ritual killings was a result of the overstated

importance on the goals of material success and financial wealth in Nigeria as those with financial success are celebrated without institutional investigation (because of the institutional breakdown) for the legality of the success.

Steven Messner and Richard Rosenfeld (1994) viewed Anomie from the Merton's point of view of anomie and came up with their published literature titled 'Crime and the American Dream'. Messner and Richard Rosenfeld (1994) acknowledged that the goals of success infuse into the American culture has made anomie pervaded the whole culture of America. The structural version of anomie theory explains crimes and antisocial behaviours as a function of cultural and institutional influences in the U.S society (Messner and Rosenfeld, 1994; Siegel, 2007). According to them, anomie has become pervasive because cultural and social institutions that are established to control the overstated emphasis on financial success and wealth have been rendered obsolete, powerless and ineffective (Siegel, 2007) because of the following reasons:

- a) Non-economic roles, functions, and responsibilities have been devalued. Performance and involvement in the activities of other social institutional settings - such as schools, community and even family - is given a lesser significance and priority than the goals of success
- b) When conflicts and tensions arise, the non-economic roles become subordinate to and must acclimatize with the economic roles. The daily routines, schedules and demands of the home, schools, community and other social aspects of life become secondary to and are given a lesser priority over those of the workplaces and offices.
- c) Economic language, standards, and norms penetrate into the non-economic realms and establish a permanent foothold. Economic terms become part of the common vernacular and are used at homes, schools and the community (Siegel, 2007).

At these institutional levels, the dominance of economic concerns have reduced and weakened the informal social control exerted by family, schools, religious institutions and the community. Instead of supervising and regulating behaviours, the institutions have rather become one of the channels of financial success and material comfort (Bernburg, 2002) and have also encouraged wild competition for wealth and fame. Thus, in this 'culture of competition', self-centeredness prevails and generates immorality, acknowledges inequality and permits contempt for the underprivileged (Hagan et al., 1998). Accordingly, countries with high levels of income inequality and immorality experience an upsurge in the rates of crime and violence (Savolainen, 2000). Maybe the rates can be reduced and citizens may resist pressures of economic deprivation if they are provided with an economic safety net (Pickett, Mokherjee, and Wilkinson, 2005).

Exploratively, Messner and Rosenfeld Institutional Anomie theory was used to extend the explanations of the 'why' the raise in the use of okada for criminal activities like ritual killings in the country while still in the dominion of strain analyses. Reflecting the basic idea of the theory, the rise in the menace of ritual killings was a result of the overstated importance on the goals of material success and financial wealth in Nigeria and as such, the minds of every Nigerians have been glued towards the attainment of these goals whether with a sight of legitimacy or otherwise. Even students and youths no longer picture getting rich through good education in spite of the over-stressed significance placed on qualifications and certifications in the country. The goals of material success and financial progress have consumed the integrity of socio-cultural institutions, including homes, schools and even religious groups. Thus, the statement that '*the institutions established to regulate the overstated emphasis of the goals of success and wealth have been rendered obsolete, ineffective and powerless*' is correct.

Methods/Strategies

The research was a survey, an exploratory in nature conducted in Oke-odo community, Tanke, Ilorin, Kwara State. The study was conducted in Ilorin and Oke-odo in particular because of the prevalence of kidnapping and ritual killings involving 'okada men' in the locality. The target population was the residents of Oke-Odo community including students of University of Ilorin resident at Oke-odo Private Hostels. Twelve (12) respondents (male and female) were purposely selected for an In-depth interview. Tape, audio recorder and hand-written reports were used in recording data with the help of two (2) Research Assistants. Data generated were compiled, narrated, transcribed and interpreted in findings and discussions session, using 'Open Content Analysis'.

Findings and Discussions

Crimes, Okada Riders and Ritual Killings

Crimes committed by Okada Riders, including ritual killing have assumed worrisome dimension in almost all Nigerian communities and states. According to Akogun (2008) and Ukwayi, Okafor and Michael (2013), majority of commercial motorcyclists have been indicted with not just only recklessness in driving, disregards to traffic road users, or non-compliance with traffic laws and regulations, but many of them also commit various atrocities, perpetrate evils, and indulge in criminal activities. A respondent and resident of Oke-Odo argued that the crimes committed by 'Okada Riders', especially in Oke-Odo surpassed all other crimes recorded and witnessed in their areas. According to him, poverty has increased the population of Okada Riders and made them vulnerable to accept 'better offer' that would bring food to their table. He maintains:

...it is very true that okada riders are among the perpetrators of crimes, including ritual killings because it is usually very easy to carry out crimes with the use of bikes considering their rate of speed and mobility structure and plus the fact that motorbikes are accessible practically everywhere and anywhere. In most reported cases of kidnapping here in Ilorin, victims are kidnapped through the use of okada. The case of a male student that was kidnapped some months back is still very fresh in our mind. He was reported to have boarded an 'okada' to his destination but eventually got kidnapped. This group of criminals sometimes use a white handkerchief to clean their passenger seats which will make the person drowsy and sleepy until they get him/her to where they want to do their evil deeds (IDI/Male/Oke-Odo/2018).

Most respondents agreed to the opinion that Okada Riders are also one of the major perpetrators of crimes, including ritual killings. Among the few, a respondent presented his argument saying okada riders are not majorly the perpetrators of crimes. He argues:

...I won't say okada riders are the perpetrators of crimes per se but 'aides' or rather 'puppets' to most criminals. They are just been bought into the business of crimes and not the real perpetrators or criminals. Even with that, not all of them are 'aides' or 'puppets', there are still sincere hardworking Nigerians out there too which 'Okada Riding', as fondly called, is their main, sincere and only source of livelihood and sustenance. But when a kidnapper or let me just say criminals offer this innocent chap an amount he can't earn or make in 8 months, say N500,000, to abduct someone, you can imagine his response or reaction. Will he still be a legitimate, God-fearing and

sincere Okada Rider or will he ultimately become an aide and give up sincerity? (IDI/Male/Oke-Odo/2018).

In furtherance to the above submissions, a respondent submits that 'okada riders' commit crimes either as real motorcyclists, or as fake motorcyclists camouflaging as real motorcyclists. For the latter, crimes are seen as their major and primary profession but the real motorcyclists commit crimes as their secondary professions and execute them during their daily operations or probably later in the night. According to the respondents, 'okada riders are risk takers, especially the real motorcyclists, but the ones that disguise as real 'okada riders' are professionals in criminality. She argues:

...most people believe they are in the real Okada business and fall victims easily. Sometimes, most of the okada riders are like agents or middlemen to the real criminals. Some of them use their bikes solely for the business of crimes while some are real motorcyclists but commit crimes in the process of their Okada business. People that use okada riding for business sometimes serve as agents of criminal transactions. If okada riders are sent to commit crimes, they are the agent or middleman but if it is for their selfish purpose, they are the real criminals (IDI/Female/Oke-Odo/2018)

In line with the above argument, many respondents agree that okada riders are sometimes agents or middlemen of criminal transactions. For instance, a female respondent explains:

...mostly, okada riders are the middlemen in criminal cases and not the actual user of the spoils of crime. All they do is execute the commands of their criminal employers, make the delivery and get paid peanut for their efforts. They may kidnap their victims for those who will use them in exchange for money or several other favours. They sometimes conspire with criminals to commit crimes or assist them in their operations with the use of their bikes. They may carry passengers who rob people through the use of their bike considering its speed or may even borrow or lease their bikes out to criminals. Their actions and activities are most times deliberate with only few instances of compulsion, mistake, reluctance or lacking basic knowledge (IDI/Female/Oke-Odo/2018).

From the above, it is evident that Okada riders perpetrate various crimes, especially with the use of their bikes. Okada Riders use their motorcycles to commit crimes like theft, robbery, armed robbery, kidnapping, rape, assault, assassination, murder, ritual killing, etc. In fact, a respondent establish that there is no crimes that okada riders do not perpetrate. They snatch and steal phones, money, handbags, and other valuable items, disturb public peace, rob their passengers, kidnap people, commit violence and assist criminals. Conversely and in sharp contrast, few respondents argue against the above submissions. They believe that Okada Riders do not commit crimes, and as such, 'the business of okada and okada riding' should not be painted black just because some criminals use 'okada' to commit crimes. A respondent argues:

"Why must we keep on alleging crimes against 'Okada Riders' and their professions? Why must we be accusing them just because of a few bad apples amongst them? Don't you think it is practically the same as injustice to paint the whole okada riders 'evil' because of just few black sheep in the profession? So I say Okada riders do not commit crimes but criminals use the avenue of 'okada riding' to commit crimes such as assassination (point, shoot and run), theft, kidnapping, and so forth because of its mobility, speed and structure" (IDI/Male/Oke-Odo, 2018).

This result further strengthens the argument of Ekpenyong (2006) that we shouldn't label all persons participating in crimes using 'okada' as 'okada riders' just like we can't regard all armed robbers and robbers in police uniforms as police officers since only a significant number, and not all of them, are involved in criminality. Silas (2006)'s submission, that 'there was no city in the country where okada riders operates without a record of their engagement in crimes', is therefore a sharp contrast. Several studies such as Ugboma (2004), Ugwuoke (2010), Ukwaiyi, et al (2013), Obeta (2015) have also connected crimes with okada riders and their ridings. By and large, the proportion of respondents that supports the involvement of Okada Riders in crimes, including ritual killing is greater than the other way round.

Comparing the extent and degree of victimization and vulnerability to crimes between okada riders and their passengers including ritual killing, many respondents are of the estimation that okada riders are less likely to fall victims to crimes than their passengers. Although, some respondents believe that okada riders sometimes become the victims of crimes, the agreement is incomparable with the perception that 'their' passengers, in many instances, are victims of crime. A respondent maintains that passengers are the most vulnerable to crimes even though Okada riders sometimes become victims themselves. However, pertaining to the victims of ritual killing and who mostly fall victims between okada riders and their passengers, a respondent argues:

"I am not saying that okada passengers do not fall victims to ritual killers and kidnappers in Okada uniform but okada riders are the victims in most circumstances. An 'okadaman' cannot know what is going on behind him when he carries a passenger and will not know what the passenger is doing or will want to do behind his back. Yet, he has to concentrate on his riding to avoid accident on these bad roads. In fact, almost on daily basis, it is with fear that okada riders do their business considering the increasing rate of crimes in the country. If a passenger that boards an okada for instance has a charm, cutlass, gun, or any dangerous weapon, how would an 'okadaman' know? So, in my own opinion, okada riders are more vulnerable to being victims of ritual killings than their passengers. In some cases, a passenger may board a bike and says he is going to an unknown place but will give the 'okadaman' the direction to his place, but on getting to the place, the 'okadaman' may be robbed, beaten, hypnotized, kidnapped, killed and may eventually be used for rituals. It is only in rare instances that you will see an okadaman robbing, assaulting, or kidnapping their passengers or using them for rituals" (IDI/Male/Oke-Odo, 2018).

Contrary to the above, another respondent reports that the passengers are more vulnerable than the okada riders because they are, majorly if not always, the victim in cases of kidnapping and ritual killing. Accordingly, a female respondent argues:

okada as a public means of transportation is dangerous, specifically to the passengers. Okada passengers are mostly victims to some ritual killers and kidnappers that pose as 'okada riders' because they are most times unaware that okada riders have clean their seats with charms that may make them unconscious and ultimately become prey to ritual killers and kidnappers. Sometimes, the passengers become victims because they do not know the way to their destinations and expect that 'okada riders' take them there. Okada riders may then use the opportunity to carry out their dastardly acts. It may be that the passenger has reached his/her destination and was at the point of paying or leaving but then was beaten with charms, or robbed, raped, kidnapped, assaulted, etc. In fact, passengers fall victims to okada riders in so many ways

especially when it comes to kidnapping and ritual killings (IDI/Female/Oke-Odo, 2018).

Another respondent was of different opinion to the face-off of most okada riders. To this respondent, some men are rich and celebrated by their communities. These men during the day hours are law abiding and philanthropist, but during the night hours, they are instrument of killings, they only ride to kidnap for rituals. Accordingly a respondent argues:

.....madam! Let me tell you what is trending now in our society that only few people know, you see some of these rich men that you're seeing during the day that people celebrated, they are 'Night Okada Riders'. They ride okadas in the night to pick their victims for rituals. They disguise at night, they use helmet to cover their face posing as law abiders that obey the law of 'do not ride motorcycle without helmet and without extra helmet for the passenger' Once you stop them, they either give you helmet to use or clean the seat with white handkerchief and you disappear immediately to their ritualist on sitting on the bike or on use of the helmet. These people I'm telling you only ride at night. During the day, they stay indoor and spend lavishly and people instead of investigating the source of their money, they join in celebrating them because of poverty and institutional breakdown (IDI/Female/Oke-Odo, 2018).

The excesses of okada riders have assumed worrisome dimensions (Ugboma, 2004; Silas, 2006; and Okoye, 2009). The intensification of evils and crimes connected with the use of 'okada' has resulted in loss of several lives and properties (Bassey, 2009). In some states, like River, Abia, Imo, Cross River, and some part of Abuja and Lagos, reports revealed that the use of okada has been banned as an effort to tackling the rate of crimes in the states. On the contrary, in place of abolition, restrictions were placed on the operations of 'okada riding' in Lagos, Ebonyi and Oyo States (Idika, 2008; Pius, 2009). To most respondents, banning the use of 'okada' will only fuel the rate of crimes in the country, unless there are alternative and better jobs for them. A male respondent explains that banning the use of 'okada' and the operations of 'okada riders' would affect a whole lot of positive things bikes can be used for. According to this respondent:

Wow!!!...banning the use of 'okadas' and their operations will so much suffice ... **but** what will happen to the 'common man' whose business of okada and his ridings are his only and major means of sustenance and livelihood to cater for himself, his wife and '8' kids. So I say you take away their bikes and you indirectly give them a gun and expose them to crimes, only more and more. And for others who commit crimes once in a while, the banning will just increase his skills, potentials and drives, as well as breed more embryos of serious crimes (IDI/Male/Oke-Odo, 2018).

From the above, we can easily conclude that the banning of the use of motorcycles may not a good approach to combating and solving the menace of crimes, including ritual killings in the country. One female respondent argues that since 'okada' is just one of the means or instruments adopted by criminals to commit crimes, so it is very possible that they find other means to perpetrate their evils. She explains:

...banning the use of okada does not mean kidnapping and ritual killing would not still thrive in the country. This is because another mechanism will definitely be introduced as time goes on since different tools and methods are used by criminals to commit crime. In fact, restrictions on their operations are even better off than a total

ban on the use of motorcycles. Let the government look for another means to solve the menace (IDI/Female/Oke-Odo, 2018).

By and large, the Federal and State Government should look for other means to combat the menace of ritual killings as well as other crimes in the country rather than banning the use and ownership of 'Okada'.

Discussion of Findings

Okada is not only use as a means of transportation in Nigeria, it is also used by criminals to perpetrate their crime because of it easiness to manoeuver even when there is vehicular traffic. According to Akogun (2008) and Ukwaiyi, Okafor and Michael (2013), majority of commercial motorcyclists have been indicted with different types of criminal activities ranging from recklessness driving, theft, armed robbery, rape, assault, assassination to ritual killings. While some Okada riders are the crime perpetrators, some are puppets to most criminals; even though some Okada riders are victims of their crime, most of them are miscreant. Mostly, Okada riders kidnap their victims for those who will use them in exchange for money or several other favours; sometimes, they conspire with criminals to commit crimes or assist them in their operations with the use of their bikes. Contrarily, some Okada users against the general stigmatization that majority of the Okada riders are either criminals or agents of criminal activities, as a result the business of Okada riding should not be stigmatized just because some criminals use 'Okada' to commit crimes. Similarly, Ekpenyong (2006) argued that people shouldn't label all persons participating in crimes using 'okada' as 'okada riders' just like we can't regard all armed robbers and robbers in police uniforms as police officers since only a significant number, and not all of them, are involved in criminality. While Silas (2006)'s submitted that 'there was no city in the country where okada riders operates without a record of their engagement in crimes', Ugboma (2004), Ugwuoke (2010), Ukwaiyi, et al (2013), Obeta (2015) have also connected crimes with okada riders and their ridings.

Talking about victimization and vulnerability to crimes perpetrated by Okada riders, Okada riders are less likely to fall victims of their crime, passengers, in many instances are the victims of crime. For instance, some rich men disguise during the night to riding Okada for kidnapping for rituals using different tactics like cleaning the seat with handkerchief or putting a charm under the helmet that would magnet the passengers and disappear to their shrine. These excesses from okada riders (Ugboma, 2004; Silas, 2006; and Okoye, 2009) have led to the adoption of different measures like banning the Okada (Idika, 2008; Pius, 2009). However, banning the Okada riders may not really be the solution to the problem, at the same time, it is not with its economic effects. Banning of Okada riding may affect the common man whose legitimate income and daily survival depends on the Okada riding. Therefore, other means should be develop to combat the menace of ritual killings and other criminal activities in the country. Banning the use and ownership of 'Okada' would rather result to a decrease in the rate of youth employment and engagement, leading the unengaged youth to devising and innovating new techniques of crimes and criminality in the country.

Conclusions and recommendation

Okoda is not only use as a means of public transportation in Nigeria; it is a means to perpetrating different kinds of crimes, such crimes as kidnapping for ritualism and trading in human parts. No city in Nigeria where Okada riders operate without a record of their engagement in criminality. Even though, okada riders are sometimes victims of their crimes, their passengers

are more vulnerable to kidnapping for rituals. The study therefore recommends a government policy restricting the coverage of motorcycle and the duration of their activities per day, there should be no night Okada men (riding). Every Oka operator should have a record with the community vigilante where he operates and a copy of the information must be kept with the area command of the Police Force in the state. Government policies on poverty alleviation should be targeted at youth engagement and involvement in the processes of production of goods and services. The engagement would ensure commitment and self control for youth and reduce their vulnerability to any anti social act.

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