



Research Paper

## Road Infrastructure Decay and Insecurity in Nigeria

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### Abstract

This study examined the effect of road infrastructure decay on insecurity in Nigeria. The study highlighted how road infrastructure decay influences the occurrence of kidnapping and highway robbery on Nigeria's Federal highways and inter-state roads. The study adopted exploratory research design while content analysis of publicly available archival documents was employed. Secondary data were generated via journals publication, the internet, library, and other documented materials relevant to the study. The study relied solely on secondary data. The literature was obtained through searches in publicly available material. The study revealed that road infrastructural decay is one of the factors responsible for highway robbery and kidnappings on the Federal and inter-state roads. The study concluded that road infrastructure decay have the potential to bring about increasing level of kidnapping and highway robbery on the Nigerian roads. The conditions of Federal and State roads across the country is horrible giving the level of bad roads across the length and breadth of the country. The study recommended for some conscious efforts on the part of governments at all levels in the country to allocate adequate funds for the improvement of roads in the country. Priority should be given to reconstruction of bad roads and reactivation and improvement of existing roads especially in areas where highway robbery and kidnapping is incessant.

**Keywords:** Crime and Insecurity, Highway Robbery, Kidnapping, Road Infrastructure Decay.

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### I. Introduction

The state of Nigeria's road infrastructure and its decay has remained a source of great concern, owing to the fact that road infrastructure is critical to the population's socioeconomic well-being and the economy's overall growth. Unfortunately, it appears to be common knowledge that Nigeria's road infrastructure is woefully inadequate to satisfy the needs of companies and the population (Federal Road Maintenance Agency, 2019).

The majority of developing countries have insufficient and poorly maintained road infrastructure. The state of Nigeria's rural areas is much worse, as they are severely lacking in road infrastructure, especially when contrasted to the country's urban districts (Akinola, 2007). According to Adesanya (2008), just around 5 per cent of Nigeria's rural roads are considered to be in good condition. He went on to say that the terrible condition of these roads is exacerbated by the appropriate government agencies' slow response to repairs and restoration. As a result, the country's poor road infrastructure not only leads to increased insecurity, but also to substantial increases in food prices.

According to Adesanya (2008), improving inter-settlement transportation connectivity ensures food security and decreases road security threats. He went on to say that the majority of rural roads should be repaired. A well-integrated rural and urban transportation infrastructure ensures the cost-effective, safe, and timely movement of people, agricultural inputs, food, and other materials throughout the country.

Insecurity is a hot topic in Nigeria right now. The loss of life and goods on Nigerian roads as a result of crime and criminality is on the rise, and is of concern to all well-meaning Nigerians. The prevalence of substandard roads and a lack of proper security on the country's highways has rendered them dangerous.

According to statistics from the Nigeria Police Force, criminality on Nigeria's roads is on the rise. The country has lost a significant number of productive citizens due to road traffic accidents.

Nigeria's security issues have made security a priority, resulting in the allocation of the country's limited resources to the protection of lives and property. It has also forced the government to redirect resources intended for development to security. As a result, it is apparent that Nigeria's current condition of insecurity is mostly a result of government incompetence and a callous attitude toward the poor. The government's incapacity to offer public services and supply fundamental requirements for the people, such as good roads, exemplifies this.

A high degree of criminality can have a variety of effects on road mobility. Highway robbery, for example, can be carried out by criminals attacking passengers in large buses and private cars on intercity or interstate transportation routes. While a few studies have looked into this phenomena in industrialized countries, there is little or no information available in developing countries. This study adds to the body of knowledge by examining the impact of deteriorating road infrastructure on insecurity in Nigeria.

As a result of the insecurity on Nigeria's roadways, vices including insurgency, theft, kidnapping, armed robbery, armed banditry, and abduction are treated with a tepid attitude in Nigeria, preventing transformation and structural development. This is because, when a country faces a security danger, funds intended for such developments are frequently shifted to combating such threats (Usman & Mathew, 2014). At the moment, no section of the country experiencing road decay is completely secure, as different parts of the country are experiencing one type of insecurity or another as a result of terrible roads (Ariya, Omale & Ezeala 2016).

In the entire transportation chain, road infrastructure is crucial. It connects other modes of transportation and pervades many facets of contemporary economic activity (Adesanya, 2008). The impact of road transportation infrastructure on economic growth and development, as well as social cohesion, is immense. Roads are everywhere, providing access to a variety of destinations and allowing for transportation across the country. Road transportation is expected to account for roughly 90 per cent of national passenger and freight services, and it gives access to rural areas, where the majority of the economically active population resides (Fagbemi, 2006). Despite the decay and deterioration of Nigerian roads, insecurity issues such as kidnapping, highway robbery, banditry, and road accidents have arisen.

The poor state of the country's road network has caused immeasurable suffering for the people. One of the biggest causes of instability and deadly incidents on Nigerian roadways is the deteriorating state of numerous roads across the country. Apart from road accidents, the poor state of Nigerian roads makes it difficult for vehicles to move quickly and safely, causing journeys to be not only delayed but also exceedingly expensive and dangerous.

In general, the state of road infrastructure has been deplorable. For many years, Nigerian roads have been in poor shape. The situation is so dire that some parts of the country are almost cut off from the rest of the country. Many settlements in rural areas are isolated, and many more have been isolated without access to the rest of the country. Furthermore, the various modes of transportation have not been properly linked.

On Nigeria's highways, there is a growing rate of criminality. Many people have died as a result of highway crime in the United States. The country is dealing with a road safety issue. Worse yet, the loss of life on the roadways is exacerbated by criminal activity aimed principally at stealing expensive objects from travellers. Some thieves seize vehicles and drive to the neighbouring bush to terrorize vulnerable victims, while others stop vehicles with stones, tyre rims, and timber. According to Idowu (2006), oranges and foam balls have been laced with nails and placed on roadways as traps to deflate the tyres that went over them at various times. In addition to direct attacks on the drivers and passengers, tyres have been shot while in motion. When buses have been assaulted on highways at various periods, many lives have been lost.

Studies on infrastructural decay and insecurity are not many; the few studies that are in existence are studies that are carried out in USA, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Ghana, such studies are (James, Greg, Lin, Jay & Bert, 2015; Wright & Ribbens, 2016; Sam & Abane, 2017; Andrews, Braimah & Vincent, 2018). However, the empirical studies on road infrastructural decay and insecurity in Nigeria are the works of Omidiji and Ibitoye (2010) and Onatere-Ubrurhe (2015). Omidiji and Ibitoye (2010) focused on Ekiti State express road that passes through Kogi State to Abuja, this present study focused on Nigeria as a whole. Likewise, the empirical work of Onatere-Ubrurhe (2015) focused mainly on how road infrastructural decay affects highway robbery with the use of secondary data. This current study employs secondary data also, and it captures some of the security concern of road users which includes highway robbery and kidnapping. These are some of the research gaps this current study filled.

The major objective of this study is to examine the effect of road infrastructure decay on insecurity in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to;

- i. Examine the effect of road infrastructure decay on kidnapping in Nigeria.
- ii. Determine the effect of road infrastructure decay on highway robbery in Nigeria.

This study focuses on the effect of road infrastructural decay on insecurity in Nigeria. The study adopts securities challenges variables such as kidnapping and highway robbery as the determinants of insecurity in Nigeria. The choice of these selected insecurity variables are drawn from empirical studies and have been found to be major determinants of what Road Infrastructural decay led to.

## **II. Literature Review**

### **Concept of Road Infrastructure Decay**

Infrastructure refers to the essential physical and organizational structures that enable a civilization to function, such as industries, buildings, roads, bridges, health care, and governance. It refers to the products, services, and facilities that are required for an economy to function (Sullivan & Sheffrin, 2003). Infrastructure can be defined as a collection of interconnected structural elements that create a framework for a development's complete structure. It is the means of reaching a goal or a series of goals, as well as the goals themselves. It is a critical phrase for assessing the progress and status of a country, region, or state, as well as an individual.

Any component of a road, highway, or building site that does not fulfill the criteria for a safe road is classified as road infrastructure deterioration. In Nigeria, inadequate road shoulders, uneven lanes, uneven pavement, incorrectly designated signs, faulty stop lights, construction incompetence, and municipal negligence are the most common flaws that cause injuries or vehicle damage.

### **Concept of Insecurity**

Insecurity has a wide range of meanings. It denotes risk, peril, and uncertainty, as well as a lack of protection and safety. Insecurity is defined as a state in which members of a society are unable to carry out their regular activities due to threats to and negative disruptions to their lives and possessions. Insecurity, according to Beland (2005), is a condition of worry or anxiety caused by a real or perceived absence of protection. It refers to a lack of or insufficient protection from danger. Insecurity is defined as the absence of peace, order, and security.

Apart from being a source of concern for all Nigerians, insecurity has become a phrase on everyone's lips and a topic of conversation whenever two or three Nigerians gather together. This is a condition in which you are in danger or injured. It's the anxiousness that comes with feeling vulnerable and insecure. In Nigeria, there are several illegal armed groups, ethnic militia groups, religious fundamentalists, and zealots. These have resulted in a sequence of bombings, assassinations, arson, armed robbery, corruption, and injustices that we hear about on a daily basis. These events are clearly having a severe impact on Nigeria's political, religious, and cultural landscape. Religious organizations and other humanitarian organizations have lost faith in police enforcement.

### **Kidnapping**

Kidnapping, according to Chidi (2015), can be considered false imprisonment since it entails the illegal confinement of someone against their will by another individual in a way that violates the confined individual's right to freedom of movement. Kidnapping is the act of kidnapping a person or a group of people in order to attain a specific goal. The act holds a victim captive in order to use the abducted person to achieve a goal.

Kidnapping, according to Asuquo (2009), is difficult to describe precisely because it differs from state to state and jurisdiction to jurisdiction. It is the unlawful custody, seizure, and removal of a person against his or her will. It is a common law offense, and the most important aspect is that it is an unwelcome act on the victim's side. It is a restriction of someone else's liberty that is in violation of the provision of freedom of movement entrenched in the Federal Republic of Nigeria's constitution, from which all other laws are derived.

Kidnapping, according to Nwaorah (2009), is the act of an enraged guy who wishes to kidnap somebody of worth who could be rescued by loved ones. The majority of the time, victims are released once a ransom is paid. Kidnapping, according to Ogabido (2009), is defined as the abduction, capture, transportation, removal, or theft of a person. Kidnapping, according to Dode (2007), is the process of forcibly abducting a person or group of people who are believed to be the cause of an injustice suffered by another group. "It's a low-cost, high-yield terror approach," says the author.

Kidnapping, according to Fage and Alabi (2017), is defined as the forcible or fraudulent abduction of an individual or a group of individuals for causes ranging from economic, political, and religious self-determination struggles. Kidnapping is defined by Muigai and Wanders (2017) as the unlawful seizure and carrying away of a person by force or deception, or the unlawful seizure and detention of a person against his or her will with the aim to bring that person away at a later time.

Kidnappers target wealthy locals, experts, business travellers, tourists, employees of high-profile firms, captains and sailors of oil-carrying vessels, relatives of top government officials, business moguls, top political party figures, and their family. Okoli (2013), on the other hand, pointed out that nowadays, everyone is a kidnapping target. Kidnapping, according to Uchenna (2014), is the unlawful and forcible removal of a person

or group of people without their consent to an unknown hostile environment in order to demand and obtain a ransom or settle a political score (political vengeance) before releasing them. According to Abdulkabir (2017), kidnapping is an illegal act in which a person is kidnapped and taken against their will to an unknown location by another person for reasons unknown to them.

### **Highway Robbery**

Robbery is defined as the act of taking or attempting to take something of value by use of force, threats of force, or instilling fear in the victim. Robbery is defined as the taking of another's property by force or fear with the intent to permanently deprive the individual of that property; it is a larceny or theft carried out by an assault. The precise definition of the offense may differ depending on the jurisdiction. Robbery differs from other types of theft including burglary, shoplifting, pickpocketing, and auto theft because it is intrinsically violent.

The word "rob" was derived from Common Germanic *raub* "stealing" via French from Late Latin words of Germanic provenance (e.g., *derubare*). Armed robbery, which involves the use of a weapon, and aggravated robbery, which occurs when someone brings a dangerous weapon or anything that appears to be a deadly weapon with them, are two types of robbery. Outside or in a public place such as a sidewalk, street, or parking lot, highway robbery or mugging occurs. The act of snatching an automobile from a victim by force is known as carjacking. Extortion is the threat of doing something criminal, or the offer not to do something illegal, if goods are not provided, primarily through the use of words rather than acts.

### **Empirical Review**

#### **Road Infrastructure Decay and Kidnapping**

Ugwuoke (2011) examined the origins and motivations of kidnapping in Nigeria. Although the primary function of the Nigeria police is to protect lives and property, as stated in section 214 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the effectiveness of this function has been hampered by a number of factors, including corruption, bad roads, repressive policing, and manpower shortages, according to this study. The obvious outcome is an increase in criminal activity, as evidenced by the recent spike in kidnapping rates in several sections of the country, particularly in the south east. This report proposed the use of capital penalty for convicted perpetrators and a modified type of community policing as a long-term solution to this endemic security problem. These measures, among others, are expected to give an effective solution to the country's dreadful kidnapping problem.

In Nigeria, Ojughana, Oba, and Maxwell (2018) did a study on minimizing road user kidnappings on hazardous road sections of highways. On a main roadway between Auchi, Edo State, and Okene, Kogi State, a distance of around 60 kilometers, ten problematic road portions were detected. 200 roadside residents, road safety officers, community vigilante members, and security officials on patrol were given questionnaires. Ten prominent newspaper reporters who had reported relevant incidents on this particular highway were interviewed. On the 60-kilometer stretch of road reviewed, five locations were located where at least three kidnappings had occurred in the previous six months. Failed road portions account for 80 per cent of the places investigated. Kidnapping has become a major traffic hazard for commuters, according to 98 per cent of respondents. The presence of bad roads is largely connected with kidnapping events, according to 88 per cent of respondents. Bad road parts are a big draw for criminality, according to 80 per cent of journalists polled. The cause of these criminal acts, according to 60 per cent of journalists polled, is growing youth unemployment, the state of the nation's economy, and a weak security environment.

To analyze passenger safety and security actions by public transportation operators in Ghana, Sam and Abane (2017) used a triangulation study design using routine activities theory. To collect data for analysis, the study used questionnaire administration and in-depth interviews. The study's findings revealed that there are insufficient security measures in public parks and on roads, putting travelers at risk of purposeful criminal and antisocial activities like robbery, assault, and baggage theft while using public transportation.

#### **Road Infrastructure Decay and Highway Robbery**

In Nigeria's public transportation system, Omidiji and Ibitoye (2010) researched crime and road crash prevention. Drivers from commercial transportation businesses and government-owned corporations were among the participants. Participants included passengers traveling from the states of Ekiti, Kogi, and Kwara to Abuja and Lagos. The passenger manifest form was also used in the research. The majority of drivers and passengers agreed that armed robbers routinely strike on their routes during journeys, resulting in road traffic crashes, according to the survey. As a result, the participants concluded that chaos follows, leading to drivers losing control of their vehicles and, eventually, road traffic collisions. Finally, respondents agreed that, in addition to generating road traffic crashes, mechanically weak vehicles, potholes, and other road conditions let hoodlums operate on roads.

Usman (2014) investigated the state of road transport in rural parts of Nigeria's Kwara State. Rural road transport was seen as a comprehensive complex of available roads, transportation services, and Intermediate Means of Transportation in this study. A total of 993 people were polled across the state's three senatorial districts. Frequency counts, percentages, mean rankings, and histograms were used to analyze the data. The road network connectivity in the studied LGAs was also determined using four topological parameters. In rural sections of the state, overall road network connection, quality of road accessibility, and transportation services are generally low and inadequate. However, geographical variances in the area were discovered. Among the studied LGAs, Kaiama LGA has the lowest level of road accessibility, road network connection, and transportation services. Poor road surface conditions, high transportation costs, overloading, and frequent highway robberies are among the transportation issues that rural communities in the area face.

At the county level in Georgia, USA, James, Greg, Lin, Jay, and Bert (2015) investigated the association between interstate highways and robbery. The study also looked into whether differences between urban and rural areas have an impact on this link. The study found that the number of interstate exits in a county had a significant impact on crime, specifically robbery.

Through a review of current trends in Highway Armed Robbery occurrences in Nigeria from 2009 to 2014, Onatere-Ubrurhe (2015) suggested a model for predicting future highway armed robbery episodes. Highway armed robbery incidences in Nigeria are on the rise, according to the study. In addition, regression analysis was performed, and the model with the highest R square value was chosen as the best match for the data and used as the prediction model. The study discovered that terrible roads are one of the factors that influence highway robbery.

In South Africa, Wright and Ribbens (2016) investigated the link between crime and road safety, as well as the influence of criminal activity on the road environment. The study found that illegal actions on the road go well beyond simply committing traffic violations, and that they can have a severe impact on the road network's and broader road environment's safety, as well as risking the lives of road users and innocent bystanders.

In the Gushegu District of Ghana's Northern Region, Andrews, Braimah, and Vincent (2018) investigated the consequences of substandard roads on the transportation system, as well as its maintenance and service costs. For the study, both primary and secondary data were gathered. The core data was collected primarily through questionnaires from 150 drivers, driver mates, and transport owners. The findings revealed that substandard roads had an impact on the transportation system, as they caused frequent vehicle breakdowns and raised maintenance costs.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Rational Choice Theory of Crime**

Gary Becker proposed the rational choice theory of crime in 1968. The economic study of criminal behaviour assumes that criminals are only interested in making a profit and avoiding detection. Becker's key contribution (1968) on the economic incentives of crime was later broadened by Ehrlich (1973). An individual decides to commit a crime if the expected gains from the crime outweigh the expected consequences from the crime, according to this rational choice paradigm. To put it another way, reasonable people consider the financial benefit from crime, the likelihood of being detected and convicted, the type of penalty, and the money they could earn doing legal labour instead. The model has primarily been used to study property crimes, although there is some evidence that it can also be used to study violent crimes.

Criminal behaviour, according to the Rational Choice Theory of Crime, is no different from non-criminal behaviour in that it is conduct that people intentionally choose to engage in, i.e., they are not compelled or forced to commit crime, and they choose to do so because they believe it will be more rewarding and less costly for them than non-criminal behaviour.

Becker's crime theory is more concerned with why criminals choose to commit crimes than with where they choose to conduct them, but the latter can also be understood through a rational decision-making process that considers the spatial context (Clarke & Cornish, 1985). According to criminology research, the location decision is the outcome of a multi-stage selection process in which the offender aims to maximize profit while reducing effort, while evaluating the costs and benefits of each potential place.

Criminal offenders and non-criminal offenders are similar under the Rational Choice Theory of Crime. Both pick their own behavior voluntarily, and both choose it based on a reasonable assessment of the costs and rewards of the intended conduct. The rational choice offender, on the other hand, is logical and self-interested, and chooses to commit crime because he believes it will be more lucrative, profitable, or satisfying than non-criminal behaviour. This theory underpins this study because criminals continue to engage in kidnapping and highway robbery because the right justice has not been served to those criminals who have been caught in the act of criminality, the criminals see crime as a profitable venture.

### **III. Methodology**

This study adopted exploratory research design while making use of secondary data generated via journal publications. The study seeks to analyse the effect of road infrastructure decay on insecurity in Nigeria utilizing content analysis of publicly available archival records from the internet, library, and other documented resources pertinent to the subject. The study is based on a review of literature on Nigerian road infrastructure decline, kidnapping, and highway robbery. The literature was found by searching publically available sources. Non-serial publications, official reports, and conferences that have been cited by other references in terms of road infrastructure deterioration and insecurity have been included.

### **IV. Discussion of Findings**

The review of literature on road infrastructure decay and kidnapping reveals that road infrastructure decay causes kidnapping on the road. Kidnappers carry out their activities on the road because the roads are in bad condition. While driving, there are various points that vehicles have to slow down; kidnappers take advantage of this to abduct people. These are some of the views held by Ugwuoke (2011); Ojughana, Oba and Maxwell (2018).

The result gotten from empirical literature is that road infrastructure decay cause highway robbery. Existence of bad roads is largely associated with the incidents of highway robbery on Nigerian roads. This is the submission of Omidiji and Ibitoye (2010); Usman (2014); James, Greg, Lin, Jay and Bert (2015); Onatere-Ubrurhe (2015); Wright and Ribbens (2016).

### **V. Conclusions and Recommendations**

The study concluded that road infrastructure decay has the potential to bring about increasing level of kidnapping and highway robbery on the Nigerian roads. The state of Federal and State roads across the country is horrible giving the level of bad roads across the length and breadth of the country. Bad roads are one of the factors responsible for the increasing wave of kidnappings and highway robbery across the country.

According to the report, administrations at all levels in the country should make intentional efforts to devote appropriate finances for road improvement. Reconstruction of substandard roads, as well as the reactivation and upgrading of existing highways, should be prioritized, particularly in areas where highway robbery and kidnapping are common.

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