

Travel Without Fear: A Proposed Strategic Action Plan For Monitoring Road Transport Security in Nigeria

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Abstract

The alarming level of insecurity in Nigeria has fuelled the crime rate, which has made insecurity a topical issue in Nigeria today. Loss of lives and valuables on Nigerian roads induced by crime and criminalities is on the increase and worrisome. The robbery incidents which occurred between 2009-2014 were presented in a table and ranked alongside the highways where they occurred and the Lagos-Ore-Benin highway ranked first, meaning there has been more robbery incidents along that route than the others. The main aim of this paper is to propose a strategic action plan that will assist in monitoring security of road transport in Nigeria. The analysis of the current trend of Highway Armed Robbery incidents (HARIs) in Nigeria from 2009-2014 was done using the Microsoft excel statistical package which shows an increase in the trend of HARIs. The linear regression equation was used in predicting future incidents 2015-2030. The Future trend shows a continuous increase in HARIs in Nigeria if proactive measures are not put in place hence the proposal of the strategic action plan. The proposed strategic action plan will assist Policy makers and Security Personnel in taking proactive measures against Road Transport Insecurity in Nigeria.

Keywords: Security, Highway robbery, Transportation, Strategic Action plan, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

There is no arguing the fact that Nigeria is under siege of criminal elements on the highways. Apart from frequent armed robbery incidents, passengers are sometimes kidnapped during trips. The country has lost a good number of her productive populations to the incidences of crime on-board public transportation, which most times result to road crashes. Frequent announcements of various types of criminal activities in Nigeria public transport over the years have become a disturbing issue to users, non-users and particularly the policy makers. This have gone beyond local or national discourse, as International communities keep given warning notifications about the insecurity of Nigerian public transport services. For instance, the Times International of London, (1985) commented on the alarming rate of criminal activities in Nigeria. While, the Travel Warning United States Department of Bureau of Consular Affairs also gives warning statements about the insecurity of public transport in the country, particularly for the foreigners. For example, travelers were warned to avoid night travel, and about poor modes of public transport and infrastructure and driving conditions (Onatere-Ubrurhe, 2015; Olukayode and Urhie, 2014; Okunola, 2009).

More disheartening is the fact that the international communities ascertained the fact that Nigerian public transport services poses risks simply because of the possibility of criminal activities to effectively take place when using public transport service. Threats to live while using public transport have become a disturbing issue to most Nigerians. These issues in recent time have dominated an array of debates involving policy makers and city managers. Presently, the situation has taken different dimension with the use of emerging public transport modes to perpetuate criminal activities. Experience has it that some criminals board vehicles as passengers and along the way rob people of their valuables while some hijack vehicles and drive to nearby bushes to unleash terror on the helpless victims, and in some cases stones, tyre rims and woods are used to stop vehicles (Onatere-Ubrurhe, 2015; Iweze, 2011; Omidiji and Ibitoye, 2010; Okunola, 2009)

Documentation of these incidents is however scanty and limited to some reports at different Police posts/offices along the highways. However, newspaper reports of victims are numerous. Whenever the number of deaths from armed robbery attacks is being mentioned, fifty percent (50%) of the incidents that occur on daily basis have no record because relatives at times will not have money to spend at the Police station. It is difficult to get any statistics on the extent of highway crime in Nigeria but the high rates of crime and violence keep the highways bloody and boiling. These attack usually occur at some dark spots such as the Lagos-Ore-Benin highway, Lagos-Ibadan highway, Lokoja-Okene highway, Abuja-Lokoja highway, Enugu-Port Harcourt highway, Abuja-Kaduna highway, Benin-Onitsha highway, Lagos-Seme Highway, Kaduna-Keffi highway, Asaba-Benin highway and a host of other highways. The Lagos-Ore-Benin highway has been tagged the devils highway and a nightmare by commuters (Onatere-Ubrurhe, 2015).

The regular and similar patterns of these robbery occurrences had remained a cause of concern to many motorists especially as one could easily see police patrol vans and personnel very close to the scenes of such robberies. From Lagos to Benin, Lokoja to Abuja, Enugu to Port Harcourt to mention but a few, these tracks of problems are replicated in increasing magnitude. Yet the need to make the highways serene and comfortable for drivers and passengers cannot be overstretched. This is a huge task facing government and security agencies in Nigeria (Onatere-Ubrurhe, 2015; Ojinma et al, 2014; Okunola, 2009).

The Luxury Bus Operators Association of Nigeria has raised the alarm at the high rate of armed robbery attacks on their vehicles and passengers, especially during night trips. Obviously, this ugly trend cannot be allowed to continue hence this paper is focused on proposing a strategic action plan that will assist Policy makers and Security Personnel in taking proactive measures against Road Transport Insecurity in Nigeria.

2. Methods

Since it is difficult to get any statistics on the extent of highway crime in Nigeria, the data used for this study were gathered mostly from published newspaper reports of the robbery occurrences and victims' stories, which were compiled and analysed with Microsoft Excel. Linear regression was done and the equation was used in predicting future incidents.

2.1. Results and discussion

The results gotten from the analysis have been presented in the following tables and figures in this section.

Year	Number of Highway armed robbery Incidents
2009	3
2010	5
2011	10
2012	28
2013	18
2014	35

Table 1. Highway robbery incidents: 2009-2014

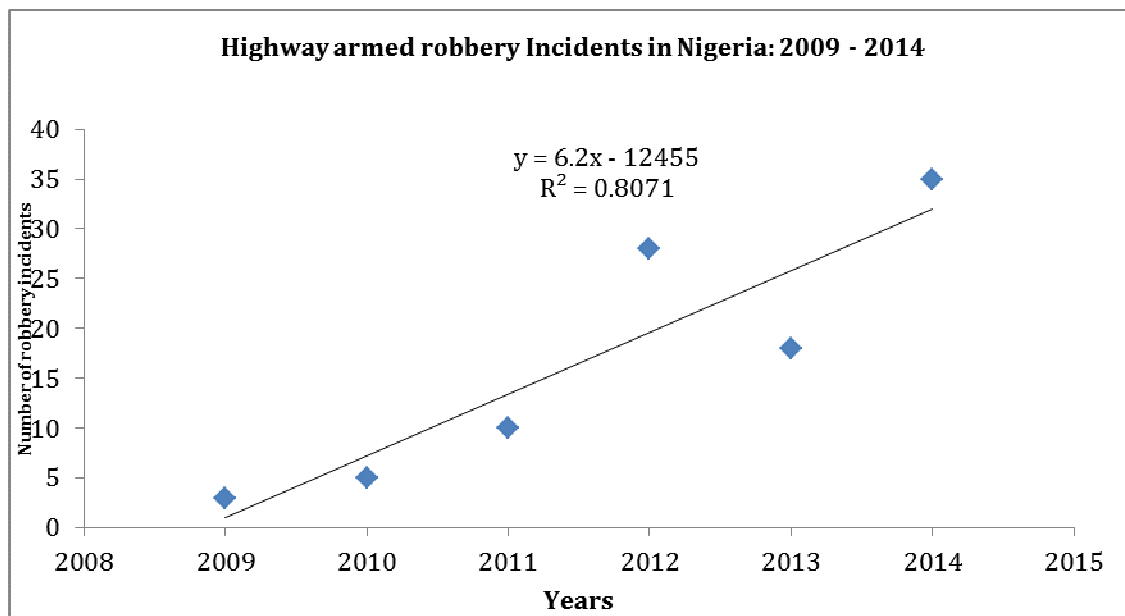


Figure 1. Linear regression model

The regression equation was used to predict future robbery incidents: 2015 – 2030

$$y = 6.2x - 12455$$

Where

y = Number of incidents

x = Year

$R^2 = 0.80708$, this shows that the model is a good fit and that Highway robbery incidents are being explained by the independent variable with at least 80%

Year	Predicted Number of Highway Armed Robbery Incidents
2015	38
2016	44
2017	50
2018	57
2019	63
2020	69
2021	75
2022	81
2023	88
2024	94
2025	100
2026	106
2027	112
2028	119
2029	125
2030	131

Table 2. Predicted number of highway armed robbery incidents: 2015-2030

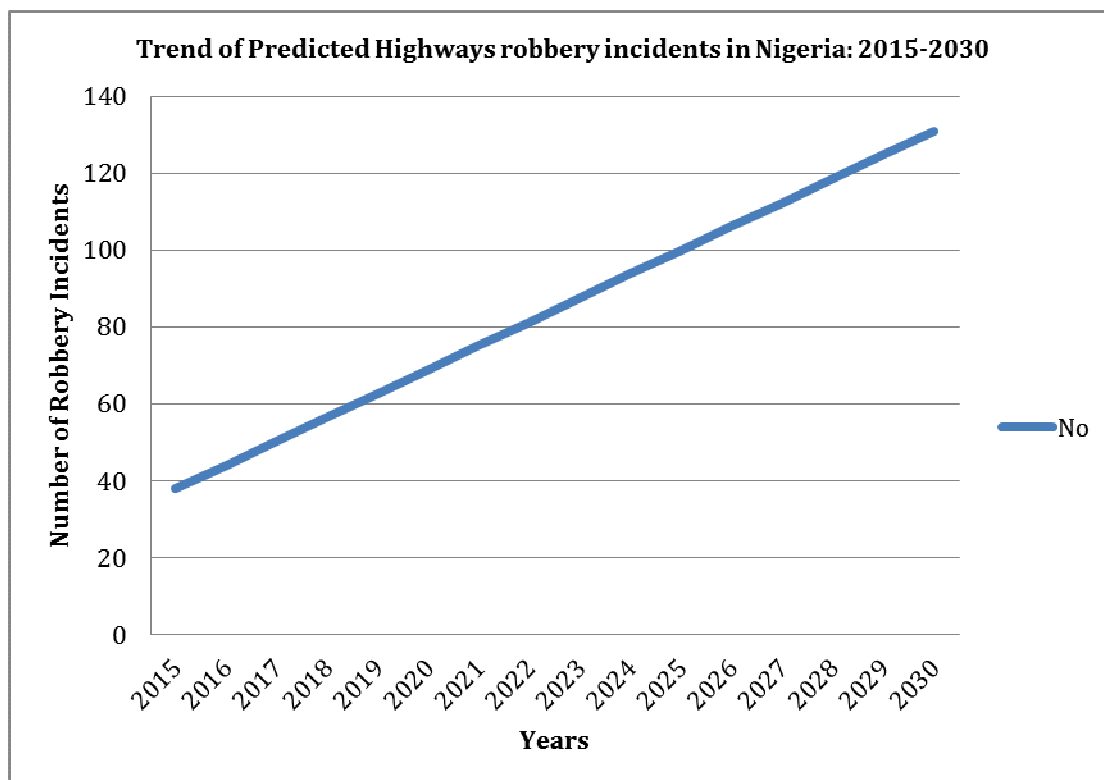


Figure 2. Trend of predicted highway robbery incidents

From the prediction trend, it can be seen that there will be a continuous increase in highways armed robbery incidents in Nigeria if proactive security measures are not put in place.

No.	Highways	Number of Armed Robbery Incidents 2009 - 2014	Rank
1	Lagos-Ore-Benin expressway	29	1
2	Okene-Lokoja-Abuja highway	19	2
3	Lagos-Ibadan expressway	9	3
4	Abuja-Kaduna highway	6	4
5	Benin-Asaba Expressway	4	5
6	Enugu-Port Harcourt expressway	3	6
7	Lagos-Seme Highway	3	6
8	Abeokuta-Lagos Road	2	7
9	Benin-Auchi road	2	7
10	Orhia-Abraka-Eku Road	2	7
11	Kaduna-Keffi high way	2	7
12	Oronigbe-Umutu road, Delta state	1	8
13	Summit Express Road, Asaba	1	8
14	Aladja road, Delta state	1	8
15	Ewohimi-Ubiaja road, Edo state	1	8
16	Kigo road, Sabon Gari Kaduna	1	8
17	Sabongida Ora-Iruekpen Road Edo state	1	8
18	Mile2-Badagry Expressway	1	8
19	Enugu-Nsukka Road	1	8
20	Idofian- Koko highway on Ajase-Ipo road in Kwara State	1	8
21	Ughelli-Patani highway	1	8
22	Keffi-Masaka Highway	1	8
23	Benin-Onitsha Expressway	1	8
24	Orhokpokpor-Agbarho and Uwiamughe-Agbarho on the East-West road	1	8
25	Lagos-Abuja Expressway	1	8
26	Ososa Junction, Ijebu Ode	1	8
27	Apapa-Oshodi expressway	1	8
28	Osogbo-Ibadan road	1	8
29	Omagwa-Ozuoha Road, Port Harcourt, Rivers State	1	8
	TOTAL	99	

Table 3. Number of Armed Robbery Incidents and the list of Highways where the robberies occurred

The robbery incidents of 2009 – 2014 occurred on the highways presented in table 3. It can be seen that Lagos-Ore-Benin expressway ranked first as it has the highest number of armed robbery incidents, which makes the route a dangerous one and has been tagged the “devils highway” by commuters who ply the route often.

3. The Proposed Strategic Action Plan

In order to achieve peaceful commutes and to put commuters’ mind at ease, a strategic action plan has been proposed to assist Policy makers and Security Personnel in taking proactive measures against Road Transport Insecurity in Nigeria. The proposed strategic action plan is presented in table 4.

NO.	NECESSARY ACTIONS	HOW IT WORKS
1	Increase the presence of well equipped security personnel along highways (especially the Lagos-Ore-Benin expressway which has been tagged the “devil’s highway” by travellers because of the frequent robbery incidents on that route), busy motor parks/bus stations, areas where there is traffic congestion, busy street junctions, roundabouts, ring roads because these are the likely spots targeted by robbers who block the road with tyre rims and logs of wood to rob and harm passengers	(1) The presence of security personnel may deter some offenders/robbers
		(2) Extra security personnel may be able to intervene in situations that result in crime/robbery
		(3) Extra security personnel may be able to apprehend offenders/robbers
2	Introduce undercover security officers to apprehend offenders/robbers operating onboard vehicles and at facilities as some criminals board vehicles as passengers and along the way rob people of their valuables	(1) Undercover security officers may be more likely to observe offences and subsequently apprehend offenders/robbers
		(2) Well-publicised operations may deter some offenders/robbers
3	Increase natural surveillance through design (design measures should be introduced in areas where incidents concentrated)	(1) Increased natural surveillance may deter some offenders
		(2) Increased natural surveillance may assist in the response to incidents
4	Install Closed-circuit television (CCTV) camera in motor parks/bus stations and vehicles	(1) The presence of CCTV camera may deter some crimes
		(2) CCTV camera may assist staff to identify situations to which personnel can be deployed
		(3) CCTV camera may assist to identify offenders
		(4) The presence of CCTV camera may motivate passengers to protect their valuables
5	Install passenger alarms, emergency phones and intercoms at motor parks/bus stations and on vehicles	(1) Assists passengers to summon assistance in dangerous situations or notify personnel following incidents
		(2) Their existence may deter some offenders/robbers
6	Reduce overcrowding in motor parks/bus stations	(1) Makes thefts more difficult to commit
		(2) May prevent some disputes due to crowding or jostling
7	Separate waiting passengers from other members of the public e.g. installing shelters or barriers	Makes it more difficult for offenders to obtain physical proximity to passengers without detection

Table 4. Proposed strategic action plan

4. Conclusion

Documentation of Highway Armed Robbery Incidents (HARIs) in Nigeria is scanty and limited. The rising trend of HARIs in Nigeria requires the attention of adequate security measures to be put in place. The ranking of the armed robbery incidents alongside the highways where they occurred is an eye opener in the sense that it has given information on the darkest spots where the armed robbers operate most. The proposed strategic action plan will assist Policy makers and Security Personnel in taking proactive measures against Road Transport Insecurity in Nigeria.

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