

Perceived Causes of Street Robberies in the Nairobi Central Business District, Kenya

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Abstract

Empirical studies have studied different factors contributing to street robbery using the crime analysis triangle. The triangle organizes elements that influence robbery issues among other forms of crime. Though no particular feature entirely accounts for the street robbery issue, the interconnected dynamic forces among victims, locations, offenders, and habits all impact street robbery patterns. This has baffled law enforcement agencies, civil society and the public at large. This study sought to identify perceived causes of street robberies in the Nairobi Central Business District. The study was underpinned by the Strain theory by Robert Merton, Social Disorganization and Routine Activity Theory by Cohen & Felson. The study adopted a descriptive research design and targeted persons who had been victims of street robbery within Nairobi CBD in the course of the one year preceding the study. Simple random sampling was used to sample (30%) 107 respondents out of a target population of 356 victims as per the police records within Nairobi CBD. Questionnaires were employed to collect quantitative data from the primary sample while key informant interview guides were employed to collect qualitative data from Key informants. Data collection instruments were piloted before the actual data collection process. Validity and reliability of the study questionnaire were ascertained before commencement of the study. Findings revealed that unemployment was the main (91.5%) factor perceived to encourage street robberies within the CBD. Other factors that were established to encourage street robberies included; street congestion (88.3%), inadequate CCTV & street lights (70.2%), inadequate police visibility (58.5%), poor urban planning (44.7%), proliferation of illegal small arms and light weapons (40.4%), street children (24.5%). Corruption among police officers (19.1%) was reported the least factor contributing to street robbery. In light of the study findings, the study recommended that the government puts in place mechanisms and resources to ensure availability of employment opportunities to vulnerable groups especially the youths and offer rehabilitation services and training to street families to make them useful and productive. Sensitization of members of the public and police officers on the need to embrace community policing also needs to be given priority whereby the police and the community work together in order to ensure a safe, secure and crime free environment.

Keywords: Perceived Causes, Street Robberies, Nairobi Central Business District

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1.1 Background

The crime of street robbery affects society in many ways. Consequently, street robbery as noted is a subtype of robberies that involves the use or danger of violence and this can have far reaching negative ramifications on the victim. For example, exhibition of post-traumatic stress disorders, depression and aggressive behaviours, impulsive disorders, mistrust and difficulties in having interpersonal relationships among others are some of the psychological impact of street robbery on the victim (Carey, 2009). In addition, this type of crime causes a disturbance of social peace as individuals who live in street robbery prone areas are subjected to fear and economic loss because the perpetrators use violence on them in order to take their possessions (Deakin et al, 2007).

Misery and stress in families increases when one of their own is a victim of street robbery since property is lost hence bringing in financial stress (Hochstetler and Shover, 1997). A survey conducted by United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund 2005 within Nairobi on the impacts of violence on the youth established that young people are subjected to take care of themselves in violent prone communities. As a coping mechanism, the youths will often exhibit risky violent behaviours such as subscribing to gang groups, robberies, carjacking, general stealing, and drug abuse among other aggressive and violent actions against others.

According to Starvrou (2002), street crimes in Kenya's urban areas are not that unique from other African city countries like Tanzania and South Africa. Criminals portray same methods and processes of committing street robberies. Crime patterns and *modus operandi* in the capital cities of these countries are almost the same despite their geographical locations. Most urban areas within the country are also poorly planned and perpetrators take advantage of the poor environmental designs to commit this crime in these congested urban areas (Okere, 2012). Criminals are known to do a cost benefit analysis before committing street robberies since there are high chances of escaping from the scene undetected (Sherman, L., P. Gartin and M. Buerger, 1989).

Nairobi being an urban area is characterized by heterogeneity and this adds to the likelihood of an offender in the absenteeism of a capable caretaker and a suitable target to commit street robberies (Kyamana, 2015).

Efforts by both the county and national government cannot be overlooked in as far as addressing the problem of street robberies within the CBD is concerned. However, according to UN-Habitat report of 2015, crime contributing factors such as unemployment, inequitable distribution of resources, exclusion (social and political), proliferation of small arms and light weapons, poor urban development, and redundancy amongst the youth, high rates of poverty, drug and substance abuse, inadequate police presence, inadequate CCTV surveillance, poor and inadequate street lights among other variables, are still far from being addressed. The implication is that a lot of funds are being set aside by the Nairobi County and National government to prevent street crimes and ensure the city is free from crime (Okere, 2012)

The National Police Service has formed Anti-Mugging Unit which is a special unit to respond to incidents of mugging within the city (Kariuki, 2015). Private Security Agencies too cannot be ignored of their role in combating mugging by acting as guardian angels hence preventing a potential street robber from robbing his suitable target according to a report by private security regulatory authority 2014. Non-governmental organizations and the civil society also play a role in controlling this social illness. According to Okere (2012), there have also been tremendous efforts by the national government to install CCTVs in major streets of Nairobi City.

The rationale behind the selection of Nairobi City was based on the premise that the area has been experiencing overwhelming incidents of street robberies and therefore the assumption that respondents within the location would provide vital and accurate information on the crime of street robberies.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Within Nairobi CBD, robbery crimes are orchestrated even in broad daylight under watch by members of public who fear offering help as they may fall victims since the criminals are believed to be working in syndicates. The most disturbing actuality is that illegal activities have now suffused almost all aspects of society in Kenya. In December 2017, an American National in Nairobi was robbed off his property (including money, phones and camera worth kshs.3 million) and later assaulted by the robbers when he tried to resist (Mutuku, 2018). A larger percentage (62%) of crimes within Nairobi CBD are street robbery. However majority of these crimes are never reported to relevant authorities (Mutuku, 2018). Street robbery is one of the most popular crimes in Nairobi's Central Business District (CBD) and adjacent areas. It has continued to permeate the county despite every concerted effort made by the people, county and national government to combat it. According to Nairobi Region Security Research and Information Centre Report of 2014, youths, business entrepreneurs, investors, tourists, government officials, students and NGOs within the CBD have been victims to the crime of street robbery. Crime hinders development, instills fear which in turn limits freedom of movement. It is imperative to note that Nairobi is a capital city of Kenya and an economic hub not only in the country but to the international arena in extension. Tourism industry has also been negatively affected due to insecurity posed by these street robberies which have consequently had a negative impact on the economic and national security paradigms of Kenya (World Bank, 2015).

Therefore, the need to record, analyze and understand the unswerving and adjoining range of influences that reinforce this wickedness cannot be over-emphasized. Not much research has been done in the area of street robberies, the study seeks to gain insight into the perceived causes of street robbery in Nairobi Central Business.

1.3 Research Objectives

To analyse perceived causes of street robberies in the Nairobi CBD.

1.4 Research Question

What are the perceived causes of the crime of street robberies in the Nairobi's CBD?

1.5 Justification of the Study

The study on street robberies will be imperative to public and private security agencies that are mandated with the administration and management of crime within the criminal justice system including NPS. Other stakeholders like the County Government, Learning institutions will also get to benefit from it as far as policy planning and formulation and control strategies towards the vice are concerned. Scholars and research institutions have mostly dwelt much on criminal gangs, organized crimes, terrorism, carjacking, kidnappings, domestic violence among others. As an emerging vice within the CBD, this research will therefore add valuable information to the existing scanty literature that singly touches on mugging in Kenya. It will also aid as a reference material to future researchers in different schools of thought like criminology, policing and security studies, public administration, urban planning, political science, social work, among others. In a nutshell, Nairobi's CBD is a vital hub for reinforcing economic prospects for all Kenyans and even internationally and

therefore firming up measures to make the city a safe and serene place will lead to increased prospects for all.

1.6 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

1.6.1 Crime in Nairobi CBD

Social media reports in addition indicate looming and unprecedented crimes unleashed to unsuspecting members of public within the CBD. The reports through postings and comments from social media depict high number of young people as the major perpetrators of this vice and such ever increasing incidents have elicited fear among members of public hence deepening security threats if unchecked.

Armed robbery, murder, street robbery, carjacking, burglary, assault theft and many other violent crimes have been on the increase in Nairobi for the last twenty years. Other specific forms of crimes include crimes against property (UN global report on Human Settlements, 2012). A victimization survey carried out in Nairobi Central Business District and neighbouring areas by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (2012) concluded that crime is more predominant in Nairobi than in other metropolises.

Some of key findings from the report include;

Fifty one percent of the total respondents had been victims of various types of robbery. A larger percentage had also been physically assaulted by the assailants in the course of such robberies. Consequently, the CBD was identified as a hotspot of crimes as compared to other areas. The concentration was however higher in the lower side of the CBD. In addition, majority of the respondents opined that most criminalities occur in the open when residents are in transit to and from work or school. In most of the cases, the respondents were alone when the attack occurred. Weapons and physical strength were the common methods used by the perpetrators on the victims in order to intimidate and overcome resistance. The report also established that nearly 40% of all victims were injured as a result of violence used in the robbery and a total of 30% of the respondents in commercial enterprises revealed that they had been victims of burglary during the year preceding the survey.

1.6.2 Urban Planning and Street Crime

The new UN-Habitat report, *Enhancing Urban Safety and Security: Global Report on Human Settlements 2012* reflects on crime prevention approaches through environmental design.

The report demystified that for development to be manifest, relevant authorities must have the ability to meet the security requirements of an urban set up. Analysis of the relationship between crime and urbanisation in developing countries established that large cities provide lower chances for arresting a criminal due to low rates of community collaboration with the police since most urban set ups are characterized by heterogeneous populations whereby there are weak social bonds. In addition, lack of employment for the youths breeds crime-prone individuals as individuals can be easily recruited into criminal syndicates due to their economic vulnerability

The report concluded that poor urban planning, design and management play a crucial role in shaping urban crimes that put citizens and property in danger and appraisals that around 14 percent of crimes have environmental design and the board segments. Along these lines, successful urban planning, design and administration should look to control the manufactured condition in manners that are proposed to lessen or even dispose of the chance to carry out crimes. From a planning and open approach stance, where crimes happen and how puts are designed and oversight are in any event as imperative as whom the culprits are.

Getting the planning framework to see crime counteractive action as one of its real targets in the drive to verify economical improvement requires a "top-down" approach combined with compelling activity at the nearby dimension. Concentrating on the setting of crime, connecting crime anticipation and decrease to changes in physical design, is most exceptional in the created world (UN-Habitat 2012). "The UK has conveyed closed-circuit television cameras (CCTVs) broadly amid ongoing years, not simply in open places, for example, malls and vehicle leaves, yet in addition in some local locations. Despite the fact that their effect is as yet indistinct, CCTV cameras have now turned into a typical piece of activities against crime and violence in numerous pieces of the world. Proof recommends that the best arrangement reactions to forestall and lessen the occurrence and effects of crime and violence are those that take discernment of the nearby setting, as opposed to those dependent on the experience of different spots (UN- Habitat 2012). From the report, it can be deduced that street robberies are influenced by the poor urban planning that is experienced in the city.

1.6.3 The Nature of Street Robbery

Recent studies have led to the identification of three interrelated influences on the recent increase in young people's involvement in street crime. These are cultural, environmental and personal variables. In their exploration, the significance that youngsters set on picture, combined with financial and personal variables, was believed to be a key trigger for youngsters' association in street crime. Estrangement from standard instruction combined with an absence of proper good examples in young fellows' lives similarly contributed. As far as area, street crime was believed to be bound to happen in territories where offspring of 'the poor's come in close contact with the individuals who 'have', and in neighborhoods where social ties are weakest. Without suitable male good examples, youthful guys are effectively pulled in to street cultures, universes described by industrialism and

'lawless manliness' (Tilley et al, 2005).

1.6.4 Factors Contributing to Street Robbery

Khadija, Justin, and, John. (2009) evaluated different factors contributing to street robbery using analysis triangle. The triangle organizes elements that influence robbery issues. Though no particular feature entirely accounts for the street robbery issue, the interconnected dynamic forces among victims, locations, offenders, and habits all impact street robbery patterns. Street robberies are conducted when inspired offenders encounter fit victims in a setting that aids robbery (Khadija et al, 2009). The problem of street robbery will thus emerge when similar robbery incidents are witnessed in a particular area and this will be due to a combination of the factors shown in the figure above and not a single factor. According to Khadija *et al* (2009), solving any one component in the trio might decrease a problem, but addressing more than one side will lead to increased possibilities that the robbery issue will drop.

1.6.5 Characteristics of Street Robberies

1.6.5.1 Offenders

Street robberies are regularly insidious and happen in an increasingly open and less unsurprising condition when contrasted and business or different kinds of robberies. Street robbers do take part in basic leadership forms before committing engaging their preferred victim (Ford, 1990). Therefore there is the need to identify aspects that affect the decision making procedures of the offenders so as to implement the most suitable interventions at the most appropriate locations and times (Khadija *et al*, 2009).

1.6.5.2 Cash needs.

The quick requirement for cash is a noteworthy motivation behind why individuals loot victims in the streets. For example, 80 out of 81 St. Louis (Missouri) street robbers guaranteed their prompt requirement for cash was an essential purpose behind perpetrating the crime. Street theft is a snappy path for some to get the cash expected to buy things identified with progress or status in street societies (e.g., drugs, liquor, elegant attire, gems, and gadgets). On the off chance that victims don't have cash close by, robbers can take and pitch different things to meet cash needs.

1.6.5.3 Attack methods.

Khadija et al (2009) examined four attack methods that offenders use to rob their victims:

- a) **Confrontations:** The guilty party requests property or assets right now of contact with the victim. The wrongdoer will ordinarily utilize verbal commands to pick up consistence.
- b) **Blitzes:** The offender utilizes violence first to deal with the victim. The genuine burglary happens after the wrongdoer immobilizes the victim.
- c) **Cons:** The wrongdoer utilizes a diversion to find the victim napping. For instance, a guilty party may approach somebody for the time or headings before assaulting. Utilizing a real diversion empowers the looter to pick up contact with the victim without causing caution.
- d) **Snatch-thefts:** This strategy happens in all respects rapidly. No verbal correspondence happens between the wrongdoer and the victim before the theft. The wrongdoer commonly gets unmistakable property at that point get away.

1.6.5.4 Victims

Khadija et al (2009) gave a description of victim characteristics that make them suitable targets.

Offenders will choose marks they can easily threaten and subdue. For instance, senior citizens or those improbable to report their victimization to the police (e.g., medicate clients, whores and illicit outsiders) may show up especially defenseless. A few targets, be that as it may, may be less helpless than at first saw and ready to protect themselves from an assault.

Target engaging quality is in the eye of the looter. Thusly, allure isn't all inclusive. Some street robbers may be especially pulled in to individuals conveying a CRAVED thing.

Street robbers could see individuals who are occupied (e.g., utilizing a PDA, plastered, as well as new to their environment) as simpler to approach and overwhelm.

Offenders presumably think about the simplicity of moving toward targets. A potential target seen at a separation is likely less fascinating than one adjacent. How perplexing the burglar sees finishing the theft to rely upon the type of assault the looter typically employments.

Offenders most likely think about the simplicity of escaping from targets. Robbers may through and through keep away from targets they accept will pursue them or utilize barrages to impair them physically.

1.6.5.5 Locations

Most street robberies happen in urban regions. US burglary victimization rates are about twice as high for urban occupants than suburban inhabitants. This pattern is comparable in England and Wales. Practically half (44 %) of street robberies happen one mile or less from the victims' homes maybe in light of the fact that individuals are close home more often than not or offenders explicitly target them close to their homes (Khadija et al, 2009) . Other regular street robbery areas incorporate parking garages and carports, parks, fields, play areas, and zones close open transportation. Street robberies related with open transportation are progressively predominant in

zones like bigger urban areas, where its accessibility and use are normal.

Street theft is more spatially distributed than other property crime; these areas are little and very much recognized. Spots with convincing burglary openings structure hotspots as different offenders work inside them (Tompson, 2010). Street robbers incline toward explicit areas. Frequently, situational highlights make a few areas seem increasingly appealing or appropriate for submitting street burglary. Offenders should think about the sort of area and the attributes and schedules of the general population there. Thusly, some street robbers lean toward areas close places where they can rapidly exchange stolen property or purchase drugs.

An offender will therefore commit a street robbery in an area that: has escape routes, has no guardian, familiarity, and where there is a resale opportunities for stolen goods. (Khadija et al, 2009). In addition, (Tompson, 2010) additional areas they target include dreary streets, rear ways, metros and different territories not effectively noticeable to watchmen can be vulnerable to street theft.

1.6.5.6 The Property

Street robbers will in general take certain things amid a theft: cash, purses, wallets, credit cards, cell phones, MP3 players, jewelry, attire, and other little electronic gadgets (e.g., cameras and littler PCs). The expansion of little, compact, costly electronic things might be connected with street burglary in certain areas.

Generally, items with that have similar CRAVED characteristics are considered hot products to the perpetrators (Tompson, 2010). In this case, they target products that are easily concealable, removable, available, valuable, enjoyable, and disposable.

1.6.6 Effects of Street Robbery

Street burglary is a significant source of fear among the public because victims face an abrupt risk to life, loss of control, and an intrusion of individual space. Street burglary is a particularly dread initiating crime in view of the setting in which it is probably going to happen over the span of somebody's normal exercises (Khadija et al, 2009). For example, the 2005 National Crime Victimization Survey demonstrated that street robbers assaulted most victims on their approach to or from work, school, shopping, or running errands. The danger of damage and demise amid an assault further substantiates the open's dread of theft. Offenders physically assault around half of burglary victims, and around 20 percent require therapeutic consideration. In 2005, the FBI assessed that 6 percent of all killings were related to street robbery. A few assessments recommend events of theft murder are significantly more prominent. The sort of weapon utilized normally recognizes robbery from robbery-murder. About 66% of theft murders include weapons, yet offenders utilize firearms in under 33% of robberies. Moreover, firearm robberies are around multiple times bound to result in the victim's demise contrasted with blade robberies, and blade robberies are multiple times more probable than robberies including different sorts of weapons.

1.6.7 Implementing Responses

One of the characteristics of street robbery is that it is mobile and in most cases completed in a few or so minutes. This makes a bit hard for the law enforcement agencies to investigate such crimes due to the circumstances under which they happen. For example the victim fails to recognize the perpetrator and lack of reporting by the same victim. Despite the fact that some robberies are easily detectable than others, proof exists that high discernibility patrols are capable of helping to decrease street robbery occurrences (Tompson, 2010). However, some of these responses to counter the vice are usually too costly and in most cases are short term. Victims of such robberies ought to be supported in some way as this may also help increase the chance of apprehending the perpetrator. Awareness campaigns will also supplement law enforcement efforts. Hotspot places and times need to be mapped and right responses made. Protecting victims is enhanced when supplemented by strategies that target the offenders or places (Tompson, 2010).

Any exercises ought to likewise be done related to neighborhood policing groups as these frequently have the best comprehension of the nearby setting. A key issue for offenders is the capacity to discard the property they take locally and quickly in the event that they are to advance the prizes of their crime. Correspondingly, any wrongdoer hoping to change over their stolen merchandise into medications should be near their street pharmacist. For these two reasons it is regularly trusted that the areas where robbery happens are proximal to stolen products markets and medications markets. Market minimization strategies are therefore believed to potentially reduce robbery related offences. However, little has been documented about the effectiveness of this particular suite of tactics (Tompson, 2010).

1.6.8 Theoretical framework

The study was underpinned by the strain theory, social disorganization theory and the routine activities theory.

1.6.8.1 Strain Theory

Strain Theory was first developed by Robert Merton in 1940 to clarify the rising crime rates experienced in the USA around then. Merton (1960) contended that the cultural arrangement of the USA was based on the 'American Dream' which alludes to a lot of meritocratic standards which guaranteed the American public that fairness of chance was accessible to all, paying little mind to class, gender or ethnicity. The 'American Dream' urged people to seek after an objective of accomplishment which was to a great extent estimated regarding the

obtaining of riches and material belongings. Individuals were required to seek after this objective through real methods, for example, training and work. The predominant cultural message was on the off chance that you are driven, capable and buckle down, at that point pay and riches ought to be your prizes. In any case, Merton called attention to that these objectives were not achievable by all, that the auxiliary association of the USA implies that the way to jump on were not genuinely dispersed and it was troublesome, if certainly feasible for some to contend and make budgetary progress.

Merton contended that when people are faced with a gap between their objectives (typically funds/cash related) and their present status, strain happens. At the point when looked with strain, individuals have five different ways to adjust: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion: Conformists allude to the classification of individuals pressing together cultural objectives through socially affirmed methods: Innovators alludes to the classification of individuals who use socially unapproved or eccentric intends to acquire culturally endorsed objectives. For instance, stealing to accomplish financial security. Ritualists allude to those utilizing the equivalent socially endorsed intends to accomplish less slippery objectives. Retreatants are the individuals who dismiss both the cultural objectives and the way to get it, at that point figure out how to escape it and in conclusion, Rebels are the individuals who dismiss the cultural objectives and means, at that point work to supplant them.

Cloward and Ohlin (1960) further contributed to Merton's concept of conflict by amalgamating the perspectives of a Chicago ecologist Edwin Sutherland. They posited that most wrongdoing is performed by young men who look for development in their financial position and furthermore to expand their status. In this manner they are bound to respond against the white collar class or the blessed rich class esteems by taking part in reprobate conduct as a method for endeavoring to improve their financial circumstances. At the point when there are no equivalent and authentic open door for the adolescents to improve their financial position and ill-conceived openings are accessible, their disappointment and discontent will be expanded prompting the speculation that absence of chance is frequently an indication of an absence of social association in the network which implies there will be less control on the behaviour of individuals.

This theory is thus important in understanding the aspect of street robbery within the city of Nairobi by trying to elucidate and demystify some of the factors compelling individuals to engage in crime. There are problems of poverty and unemployment, and emphasis on material success by the middle class, being rich and famous. As a result, those who are disadvantaged by these societal values and expectations through legitimate means look for illegitimate opportunities like engaging in crime in order to get what society expects of them hence creating a condition of 'anomie' in the society. This theory also assists in expounding the idea that muggers are in some way hitting back at the society due to the existence of expectations for all members of society whose means or opportunities to achieve are differentially available.

1.6.8.2 The Social Disorganization Theory

Social disorganization theory was developed by Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay and is associated with the "Chicago School" of sociology. The hypothesis joins crime rates to neighborhood ecological qualities. A center guideline of social complication hypothesis is that place matters. In this manner, an individual's private area is a considerable factor forming the probability that that individual will end up engaged with crimes.

It limits its concentration to the advancement of high crime regions that are encountering deterioration of regular qualities brought about by urbanization. As indicated by Shaw and McKay (1942), crime is viewed as a result of uneven development in the public arena, with change and struggle which influences the conduct of those inside it. A social association exists when there is a high level of inner connection to individual and organizations in a network, a condition that is uncommon in urban setups. (Gaines and Miller, 1981) contend that crime is to a great extent a result of negative conditions in specific networks". As indicated by the social disorder hypothesis, there are ecological components that lead to high rates of crime in these networks, and these variables are connected to always raise dimensions of secondary school dropouts, joblessness, breaking down frameworks, and single-parent home.

This theory is important in looking at the aspect of street crimes in urban areas that are experiencing congestion problems due to poor urban planning and Nairobi city falls under this category. The influx of people in urban cities coupled with unemployment, drug abuse among other variables forces individuals to engage in street crimes. Therefore, if there is some form of social organization within the city, the rate of muggings is likely to reduce.

1.6.8.3 Routine Activities Theory

Created by Cohen & Felson (2009), routine activities hypothesis requires three components for a crime to happen: an inspired wrongdoer with criminal goals and the capacity to follow up on these tendencies, an appropriate victim or target, and the nonattendance of a fit gatekeeper who can prevent the crime from occurring. These three components must merge in reality for a crime to happen.

Routine activities hypothesis gives a large-scale viewpoint on crime in that it predicts how changes in social and economic conditions impact the general crime and victimization rate. Cohen & Felson (2009) propose that

crimes are a "fundamentally huge marvel," implying that infringement are neither irregular nor inconsequential occasions. In outcome, it is the routine of activities individuals share in through the span of their day and night experience that makes a few people progressively defenseless to being seen as reasonable focuses by an objectively calculating wrongdoer. Routine activities relate the example of culpable to the regular examples of social cooperation. Crime is in this manner ordinary and is reliant on accessible chances to affront. On the off chance that there is an unprotected target and there are adequate prizes, an inspired guilty party will perpetrate a crime.

As far as appropriate focuses on, the decision is impacted by the wrongdoer's view of the objective's vulnerability; the more reasonable and open the objective, the almost certain that a crime will happen. The quantity of persuaded culprits in the populace additionally influences crime levels. It is held that offenders are more averse to carry out crimes in the event that they can accomplish individual objectives through authentic methods. This infers criminal inspirations can be decreased if offenders see that there are options in contrast to crime.

The presence of proficient guardians is held to deter people from committing crimes. Guardianship can be the physical nearness of an individual who can act in a defensive way or as progressively inactive mechanical gadgets, for example, video observation or security frameworks. These physical safety efforts help limit a guilty party's entrance to reasonable targets. The basic part of routine activities hypothesis is the communication of inspiration, opportunity and targets. Along these lines, the nearness of guardians will dissuade most offenders, rendering even appealing focuses forbidden. In this way, the nearness of chance combined with an absence of guardianship expands criminal inspirations and the probability of an offense occurring.

This theory is significant in this study of street robberies and the dynamics behind it within the city of Nairobi since it tries to explain why some individuals fall victims of mugging while others are not largely because of their vulnerability. It also helps to gain insight into the features that must be existent in order for street crimes to occur. These elements as postulated earlier on include: a potential/motivated offender, apt target, and lack of a capable guardian. It is therefore easy to understand why there are increasing rates of muggings in Nairobi city by linking the three elements that make it favourable for criminals to engage in street robberies.

1.7 Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design which entails relating the behaviour of a subject devoid of manipulating it in any way. This design was chosen as it would help obtain pertinent information on the aspects of the crime of street robbery namely; the perceived causes of street robberies in Nairobi CBD. A triangulated methodological method involving amalgamating quantitative and qualitative approaches was used.

Quantitative information was obtained through social survey and qualitative information was provided by key informants. This was important as it provided for combination of strengths and weaknesses of each method so as to enhance data validity. Observation was also adopted to find out the nature of the environment where street robberies are rampant, strategies and their effectiveness within the CBD and also involved sampling views from business operators and the law enforcement officers within the area of study.

The primary population for this study were the male and female persons who had been victims of street robbery in the area under study. The victims were obtained from police stations within the area of study. Three sample techniques were adopted in this study; simple random sampling, systematic sampling and purposive sampling. A questionnaire was administered to persons who had been victims of street robbery within the CBD. The questionnaire was designed using closed and open-ended questions and had five sections. Key informant guide was used on key informants.

1.8 Findings of the study

Study findings revealed that unemployment was the main (91.5%) factor perceived to encourage street robberies within the CBD. Other factors that were established to encourage street robberies included; street congestion (88.3%), inadequate CCTV & street lights (70.2%), inadequate police visibility (58.5%), poor urban planning (44.7%), proliferation of illegal small arms and light weapons (40.4%), street children (24.5%). Corruption among police officers (19.1%) was reported the least factor contributing to street robbery.

1.8.1 Unemployment

According to respondents the majority (91.5%) perceived that unemployment was one of the main factors which encouraged the crime of street robberies in the CBD. The findings corroborated with information which disclosed that majority of those engaging in street robbery were mostly unemployed youths (Tilley, 2005). In addition, there is no doubt that unemployment, especially among young people, is a major factor which contributes significantly to increase in cases of crime (WHO, 2004a).

Key informants also echoed respondent's opinions. A male officer based at the National Crime and Research Centre had this to say,

"The major factor that is influencing street robbery in urban areas especially the CBD of

Nairobi is unemployment and poverty among the youths. Most of these destitute youths will at some point resort to rob victims their properties which they later resale to known clients for money to support their basic needs and drug abuse behaviors.”

From this finding, it is explicitly clear that in order to develop measures to effectively and efficiently deal with street robbery and other crimes within the CBD and other urban setups experiencing the same problem, the government and relevant stakeholders should come up with programmes that are directed towards youth empowerment and addressing increasing poverty levels within communities.

1.8.2 Street Congestion.

Congestion of streets within the CBD was cited by most (88.3%) of the respondents. As revealed by respondents, high traffic of the streets and bus stops (both human and vehicle) was mostly experienced during the morning hours (0600-0900) and evening hours (1800 hrs-2100) when majority of the people were travelling to the town or away from town. However most of the street robberies as reported by police and victims were orchestrated during the evening dark hours as criminals took advantage of the congestion and other factors like poor lighting to attack victims at hotspot areas. A female senior security officer who works within the area observed that,

“Many people who have been victims of street crimes happen to have been robbed at areas and streets that I am well versed with. This includes bus stages and some major streets. A common denominator on these places is that they are always busy and very congested almost all times of the day with people and vehicles. Criminals always take advantage of the situation by robbing victims their items and running away to nearby hideouts as the victim or persons nearby will not easily detect the real suspect and raise alarm.”

The findings imply that addressing the problem of congestion within the CBD will increase crime risks and reduce criminal opportunities that encourage street robberies and other crimes. This is coherent with Deakin et al (2007) who observed that implementing decongestion measure in urban areas would help reduce crimes.

1.8.3 Inadequate CCTV Coverage and Street Lights.

The findings reported by 70.2% of the respondents opined that inadequate CCTV and street lights also encouraged street robberies in the CBD. They noted the presence of security lights and CCTVs but lamented they were not enough to ensure full surveillance especially on areas that were identified as hotspots. Inadequate CCTVs and street lights mean that there are many blind spots and dark spots where robbers commit their crimes undetected. Key informants within the area also agreed to this as one aged male security officials observed that,

“The CBD mostly starting from Tom Mboya street downwards is inadequately covered by security cameras and street lights. Adding to the problem is that there are CCTV cameras and street lights that are installed but are not functioning as they have been tampered with. This means that there are many blind spots and criminals will commit their crimes in such areas without detected by the surveillance teams at the control observation rooms.”

Another female official from the county security department also noted that,

“Smart street criminals will always commit crimes in places that they are likely to remain undetected by CCTVs. There are areas within the CBD that are blind spots and attract street crimes due to lack and inadequate CCTVs and lights.”

1.8.4 Inadequate Police Visibility.

Slightly more than half (58.5%) of the respondents perceived that inadequate police visibility was among the factors that contributed to street robbery within the CBD this observation is in tandem with Cohen & Felson (2009) who demonstrated that a crime will occur in convergence of suitable target, potential offender and absence of guardian (police officer).

An official from the national crime research centre observed that,

“I think one of the reasons most people are robbed mostly at night is because most law enforcement officers in charge of the area are not conducting patrols at night as compared to during the day. This gives a prime opportunity for offenders to engage their victims as they are likely to rob and escape without getting caught.”

Another female victim aged between 55-65 years who works within the CBD said,

“I rarely see police on the streets at night except for their vehicles. I think lack of foot patrols by the police within the CBD especially at night has encouraged robbers to steal from victims as they are less likely to get caught.”

This means that inadequate police patrols by law enforcement officers from the county and national government more especially at night is likely to cause an escalation of street crimes as opportunities for committing crimes are high coupled with low risks and high rewards. Therefore there is need to address the problem of low police visibility so as to discourage street robbers by increasing their risk of engaging in crime.

1.8.5 Poor Urban Planning.

According to less than half (44.7%) of study participants, street robbery was attributed to poor planning and spacing of physical infrastructures like roads and buildings within the CBD. These provided avenues for street

robbery as the environment provided many unmanned hideouts and escape routes which provided street robbers with an opportunity to easily escape their scenes of robbery as also confirmed by key informants. A female security officer based at the CBD noted that,

“Sometimes these streets are hard to maneuver. Some lanes are inaccessible and the surrounding houses are closely spaced and congested. This offers little chances of arresting escaping criminals as the environment offers opportunistic hideouts and escape routes.”

This finding is affirmative with a study by Shikuku (2018) that looked into the influence of physical environment on crime in Nairobi County and the study established that housing plan encourages robbery and other crimes. This means that there is a close association between physical planning of urban environment and crime and thus, urban planning of physical infrastructures could influence criminal activities to occur.

1.8.6 Proliferation of Illegal Small Arms and Light Weapons.

The findings from 40.4% of the study participants showed that proliferation of illegal arms and light weapons among criminals encouraged street robberies. This is also confirmed by 28.7% and 34.1% of the respondents who were attacked by firearms and light weapons respectfully. A senior male officer from the National Crime Research Centre with vast experience said that,

“Street robbers have shown tendencies to commit their crimes by using weapons mostly pocket knives, and small firearms (toys and real) so as to intimidate and overpower victims who may show signs of retreating and fighting back. This is to facilitate fast commission of the crime and escape as the crime is highly risky and attract serious punishment.”

The findings are related to those of Wepundi *et al* (2012) who postulated that there are about 580,000-680,000 firearms in the hands of civilians nationally. In addition, urban settings like Nairobi, Eldoret, Mombasa, Thika and Kisumu have also suffered a lot from the illegal trade in small arms (Muchai, 2005, pp. 17-19).

This implies that weapons and firearms were preferred by street robbers to orchestrate street crimes so as to easily intimidate and manipulate their victims. Developing policies and measures to mitigate the challenge of small arms and light weapons will greatly help in curbing robberies and other violent crimes.

1.8.7 Street Children.

The problem of street children was perceived by 24.5% of the respondents as among the factors encouraging street robberies in the CBD. This finding is related to the study by Nzisa (2011) that looked into street children and insecurity in Nairobi CBD and the findings revealed that street families preferred committing robberies in certain streets namely Kirinyaga road and Tom Mboya street as these areas were perceived to be away from law enforcement agents. The findings were also complimented by a number of key informants. A middle-aged male officer from the Nairobi county security department stated that,

“Nowadays some of these robberies are committed by street families. Abandoned street children especially at the areas of National archives and behind Tom Mboya street pose a great security threat especially during the late evening hours. They demand for cash from pedestrians to sustain their lifestyle of drug abuse and if you refuse, they will either rob you in their gang groups or physically injure you”.

This implies that addressing the problem of street children within the CBD through rehabilitation programs and reuniting them with their families will help to reduce crime levels experienced in the area as revealed by some of the key informants.

1.8.8 Corruption among Security Officers.

A few sample respondents (19.1%) attested that street robbers may be encouraged to commit crimes when the law enforcement officers within the jurisdictions fail to effectively and efficiently respond to street robberies and other crimes. Key informants also opined that some rogue law enforcement officers collude with criminals for financial gains. The impact is that they get compromised and crimes are likely to escalate. One of the middle aged female victims who had been robbed at Haile Selassie- Ladhies road roundabout said that,

“I was robbed in the evening hours by a young man who ran and disappeared into the crowd. There were some traffic police officers around and I tried to raise an alarm but they seemed busy directing traffic. They did not do anything at all and some sympathizers who witnessed the incident told me that the police cannot help because they get paid by the same criminals.”

The findings therefore imply that corruption among law enforcement officers within the CBD is likely to cause an escalation of street crimes as it hinders efforts to fight crimes to a larger extent.

1.9 Conclusion

Street robbery is a serious crime due to its use of violence on the victims. It instills fear and limits the freedom of movement hence negatively interferes with the political social and economic aspects of the city and the country at large. The study established that street robbery is an opportunistic crime which occurs at specific locations/spaces and to particular types of persons. Developing policies to address street robbery therefore demands an insight into the factors encouraging the robberies, the location and crime patterns where the crime

happens, and the profiles of both the offenders and victims.

1.10 Recommendations

In view of the findings made during the study, the following recommendations if implemented would improve security of the city especially the affected streets;

- The government should put in place mechanisms and resources to ensure availability of employment opportunities to vulnerable groups especially the youths and offer rehabilitation services and training to street families to make them useful and productive.
- Sensitization of the public and the police on the need to embrace community policing whereby the police and the community work together in order to ensure a safe and secure environment.
- The government should put in place strict policies and measures to mitigate the challenge of small arms and light weapons like disarmament, raising awareness, arrest and prosecution, proper vetting of licensed gun owners, and establishment of specialized police units to deal with the problem of proliferation of small arms and light weapons which is posing a greater security threat to the residents of Nairobi.

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