

## **LACK OF REGULATION OF COMMERCIAL MOTORCYCLE SERVICES AND CRIME RATE IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA.**

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### **Abstract**

Commercial motorcycle services remain an important source of transportation and employment in the state; however, their largely informal and weakly regulated operations have raised serious security concerns. This study examined the relationship between lack of regulation of commercial motorcycle services and crime rate in Benue State, Nigeria, with emphasis on public perception and the challenges faced by government agencies in regulating the sector. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and data were collected from 400 respondents selected from members of the public, officials of commercial motorcyclists and police officers using structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistical tools such as frequency counts and percentages were used for data analysis. The findings revealed that the majority of respondents perceived a strong relationship between lack of regulation and control of commercial motorcycle services and increased crime rate. Key factors identified include anonymity of riders, absence of proper registration and identification, weak enforcement of operational guidelines, and poor monitoring, which enable the use of motorcycles in crimes such as robbery, theft, and kidnapping. The study also found that government agencies face significant challenges in regulating the sector, including inadequate manpower and logistics, corruption among enforcement officials, political interference, and resistance from motorcycle operators and unions, and high levels of unemployment and poverty. The study concludes that crime associated with commercial motorcycle services in Benue State is largely a consequence of weak regulatory and institutional frameworks rather than the transport system itself and recommends comprehensive regulation, compulsory registration and identification of operators, strengthened enforcement capacity, stakeholder collaboration, and socio-economic interventions to reduce youth unemployment.

**Keywords:** commercial motorcycle services, crime rate, regulation, public perception, Benue State

## Introduction

Across the globe, commercial motorcycle service commonly referred to as motorcycle taxis have become a prominent feature of urban and Peri-urban transportation systems, particularly in developing regions of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. These services have emerged largely as a response to rapid urbanization, unemployment, inadequate public transport, and poor road infrastructure. While commercial motorcycles play a vital role in enhancing mobility and providing livelihoods, their unregulated or weakly regulated operation has raised growing concerns about crime and insecurity worldwide (Olasupo, Adebayo & Solomon, 2025).

In Latin America, particularly in countries such as Brazil, Colombia, and Honduras, commercial motorcycles have also been implicated in criminal activities where regulation is weak. Motorcycles are often used by organized crime groups for hit-and-run attacks, drug distribution, and robbery. Research from these regions highlights that the problem is not the motorcycle transport system itself, but the absence of effective regulation, monitoring, and integration into formal transport and security frameworks (Inyang, 2021).

Similarly, in parts of South and Southeast Asia, including countries like India, Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines, motorcycle taxis are widespread and serve as a major means of transportation. Although some cities have introduced regulatory measures, areas with weak enforcement continue to experience security challenges linked to motorcycle use. Criminal gangs in certain Asian cities reportedly use motorcycles for quick escape after committing crimes, surveillance of potential victims, and delivery of illicit goods. The lack of comprehensive rider databases and monitoring systems in informal motorcycle operations further complicates crime prevention efforts (Yecho, 2024).

In many African countries such as Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Cameroon, commercial motorcycles operate largely within the informal sector. Weak regulatory frameworks, poor rider identification systems, and inconsistent enforcement have allowed criminal elements to exploit motorcycles for illegal activities. Studies from East and West Africa show that motorcycles are frequently used in crimes such as armed robbery, snatching of valuables, kidnapping, and targeted attacks due to their speed, maneuverability, and ability to navigate narrow routes and evade security checkpoints. As a result, public perception in many African cities increasingly associates unregulated motorcycle services with urban crime and insecurity. (Effah, 2020).

In Benue State, commercial motorcycle services constitute a major means of transportation, particularly within urban centres such as Makurdi, Gboko, Otukpo, and surrounding semi-urban and rural communities. The widespread use of motorcycles is largely driven by inadequate public transport systems, poor road conditions in some areas, rising unemployment, and the affordability and flexibility of motorcycle transport. For many youths in the state, commercial motorcycle operation serves as a primary source of livelihood Ayo, (2020).

However, the operation of commercial motorcycles in Benue State is largely unregulated or weakly regulated, creating growing public concern over their alleged involvement in crime. Unlike formal transport systems, many commercial motorcyclists operate without proper registration, rider identification, or standardized operating guidelines. The absence of comprehensive databases, inconsistent enforcement of traffic and security regulations, and limited monitoring mechanisms have made it difficult for security agencies to effectively track operators and distinguish legitimate riders from criminal elements (Gbadamosi, 2021).

Public perception in Benue State strongly links unregulated commercial motorcycle services to rising crime rates. Residents frequently report the use of motorcycles in crimes such as armed robbery, theft, kidnapping, cult-related violence, and reconnaissance activities. Motorcycles are

perceived as effective tools for criminals because they allow quick mobility, easy escape through narrow roads and footpaths, and reduced chances of identification or arrest. These perceptions are reinforced by recurring media reports and community experiences of motorcycle-assisted crimes across the state. The continued prevalence of unregulated commercial motorcycle services has contributed to a climate of insecurity and mistrust between operators and the general public. While commercial motorcycles remain indispensable for mobility and economic survival, their weak regulation has intensified fears that the sector provides cover for criminal activities. This situation highlights a critical governance dilemma: how to balance the socio-economic benefits of commercial motorcycle services with the need to enhance public safety and reduce crime (Ahokegh, 2023).

Government efforts to regulate and control commercial motorcycle services in Benue State have faced significant challenges. These include weak institutional capacity, inadequate manpower and logistics for enforcement agencies, corruption, political interference, and resistance from motorcycle operators and unions. In addition, high unemployment and poverty levels in the state have increased dependence on motorcycle operations, making strict regulation politically and socially sensitive. As a result, regulatory policies are often inconsistently implemented or poorly enforced. It is against this background that the study examined unregulated commercial motorcycle services and crime rate in Benue State, Nigeria with emphasis on; Public perceptions on the impact of lack of regulation of commercial motorcycle services and crime rate in Benue state, lack of regulation of commercial motorcycle services and crime rate in Benue state, and challenges faced by government agencies in regulating and controlling commercial motorcycle services in Benue State

### **Conceptual clarification**

#### **Commercial Motorcycle Services**

According to Umara (2020) commercial motorcycle services referred to the use of motorcycles for the transportation of passengers and goods for commercial purposes in exchange for payment. In Benue State, commercial motorcycle services operate largely within the informal sector and serve as a major means of mobility, especially in areas with inadequate public transportation.

#### **Regulation**

Regulation refers to the formal rules, laws, policies, and guidelines established by government or authorized agencies to govern the operation of commercial motorcycle services. This includes licensing of riders, registration of motorcycles, and issuance of plate numbers, operational time limits, route restrictions, and safety requirements (Igwe, 2022).

According to Gyong (2021), Control involves the practical enforcement and monitoring of regulatory measures by relevant authorities such as traffic agencies, local government officials, and security agencies. It includes supervision, inspection, sanctions, and compliance mechanisms to ensure adherence to established regulations.

Lack of regulation refers to the absence, weakness, or inadequacy of clear policies and legal frameworks guiding commercial motorcycle operations. It also includes situations where regulations exist but are outdated, poorly designed, or insufficient to address emerging security and safety challenges (Ahokegh, 2023).

#### **Crime Rate**

Crime rate refers to the frequency or incidence of criminal activities within a specific geographical area over a given period. In this study, crime rate includes crimes such as armed

robbery, kidnapping, rape, theft, and other violent or non-violent offenses associated with or facilitated by commercial motorcycle operations (Onoyo, 2021).

### **Public perceptions on the impact of lack of regulation of commercial motorcycle services and crime rate in Benue State.**

The public perception of the impact of unregulated commercial motorcycle services commonly referred to as okada in Nigeria on crime rates has been the subject of increasing scholarly and policy attention, particularly in urban and peri-urban settings. Although commercial motorcycles serve as important means of transportation and livelihood for many Nigerians, perceptions about their link to crime and insecurity have emerged as significant concerns among commuters, residents, and policymakers.

Studies conducted by Ahokegh (2023) indicate that commercial motorcycles are perceived as both facilitators and instruments of criminal activity in contexts where regulatory controls are weak or absent. According to Kamer (2022) public perception of commercial motorcycles across Nigeria shows that motorbikes are often exploited by unemployed youths with criminal inclinations as fast and accessible tools for escaping detection after committing crimes. Some of the criminal acts associated with unregulated motorcycle operations in urban and rural areas include petty thefts such as handbags and phones snatching, as well as more serious offenses such as armed robbery, kidnapping, and rape.

Ombati, (2021) reported that a noticeable proportion of respondents perceived a direct relationship between the proliferation of okada riders and an increase in crime, particularly crimes committed during night-time journeys or on less monitored roads. Some residents attributed cases of robbery in traffic, assaults, and other security breaches to the presence of motorcycle taxis operating outside formal regulatory oversight (Umara, 2020; Uwais, 2021).

According to a study conducted by Basse (2021) on commercial motorcycles underscores public concerns about the threats to safety and property posed by poorly regulated motorcycle operators, including reckless riding and involvement of operators in criminal acts. Okache (2021) emphasized that commercial motorcyclists are perceived by the members of the public as people that ignore traffic rules, ride recklessly and contribute to high rates of accidents and fatalities, these behavior feed a public sense that they are dangerous road users. Gyong (2021) argued that there is a wide perception that some riders are involved in criminal activities such as armed robbery, snatching valuable items and aiding criminals to escape. Gbadamosi (2021) argued that commercial motorcyclists are perceived as people that contribute to noise, congestion and also nuisance in city centers, reinforcing negative opinions about their role in modern urban life.

### **Relationship between lack of regulation of commercial motorcycle services and crime rate in Benue state**

In recent years, the operations of commercial motorcycles commonly referred to as okada have become a significant facet of urban and rural mobility in Benue State, providing flexible transport and employment for many youths. However, concerns over public security and criminality have increasingly shaped government and community responses to these services. A study conducted by Oladipo (2022) argued that 70% of crimes committed using motorcycles were carried out by the unregistered motorcyclists in various part of Nigeria. According to Nigeria Police Force (NPF) (2025), commercial cyclists use unregistered motorcycles to commit serious offences including armed robbery, snatching, and movement of drugs and stolen goods. The study argued that criminals use unregistered motorcycles as escape vehicles and are linked to a high rate of crimes such as armed robbery, cultism, kidnapping, bur-glary, and theft. In different part of Benue state commercial motorcycles have been impounded and crushed explicitly because authorities view

them as instruments used in committing crimes including one-chance robberies, snatching of valuables, kidnappings, and drug peddling (Yecho, 2024).

Monroy, (2021) argued that the absence of proper identification and registration of commercial motorcycles such as rider registration, standardized uniforms or ID cards and traceable number plates makes it difficult for law-enforcement agencies to identify, track, or apprehend offenders. Criminals easily disguise themselves as commercial riders, commit crimes, and disappear without being traced. Ofuomyeadi (2020) maintained that motorcycles have easy and quick escape ability, in situations where regulation is weak; these advantages are unchecked, making motorcycles attractive tools for crimes such as robbery, kidnapping, theft, and surveillance of victims.

Inyang (2021) maintained that without clear regulation of operating hours, motorcycles can be used to facilitate nocturnal crimes, including ambushes and armed attacks. Effah (2020) posits that commercial motorcycle riding is largely informal, poorly regulated, low-entry, poorly monitored thereby accommodating different elements into the Sector. As a result, individuals with criminal intent easily enter the sector without background checks or training thereby increasing the criminal activity in the enterprise.

### **Challenges faced by government agencies in regulating and controlling commercial motorcycle services in Benue State**

High level of unemployment and poverty has been widely reported by various scholars as challenges hindering various governments from controlling and regulating the activities of commercial motorcyclists. Commercial motorcycle riding serves as a survival strategy for many unemployed youths who lack formal education or vocational skills. Strict regulation or bans often face resistance because they threaten the livelihoods of a large population dependent on the sector. Consequently, governments are constrained in enforcing regulations for fear of worsening unemployment and social unrest (Ayo, 2020; Onoyo, 2021; Igwe, 2022; Uyi, 2021). Odumosu (2021) argued that commercial motorcycle operations largely belong to the informal economy, characterized by lack of official registration, absence of structured unions in some areas, weak record-keeping. This informality makes it difficult for authorities to monitor riders, enforce standards, and implement uniform policies. The absence of reliable data on the number of operators further complicates planning and regulation.

Oni, Fashina and Olagunji (2020) argue that Government agencies responsible for transport regulation, traffic control and security often suffer from inadequate manpower, poor funding, limited logistics and equipment. As a result, enforcement of existing laws such as licensing, use of helmets, and operational hours is inconsistent and sometimes ineffective. This weak enforcement contributes in undermining regulatory credibility and compliance within the enterprise. Ola (2023) posits that corruption among some regulatory and security officials poses a serious obstacle. Instead of enforcing laws, some officers collect bribes from riders, allow unregistered motorcycles to operate, ignore violations of regulations. This compromises regulatory efforts and encourages continued non-compliance among commercial motorcyclists.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Routine Activity Theory**

Routine Activity Theory was developed by Lawrence E. Cohen and Marcus Felson in 1979 to explain patterns of crime in modern societies. The theory emerged as a response to explanations of crime that focused primarily on offenders' motivations or individual pathologies. Instead, Cohen and Felson argued that crime is best understood by examining the routine patterns of everyday social activities that bring potential offenders and targets together in particular places and times.

The central argument of the theory is that crime is a normal and predictable outcome of everyday social organization, rather than an abnormal or pathological behavior. Changes in routine

activities such as work schedules, transportation patterns, or urban mobility can increase or decrease opportunities for crime without necessarily changing the number of motivated offenders in society.

According to them, criminal act occurs when three essential elements converge in time and space:

Motivated offender, suitable target, absence of a capable guardian. Crime is unlikely to occur if any one of these elements is missing.

#### Motivated Offender

A motivated offender refers to an individual who is willing and prepared to commit a crime. The theory does not focus on why individuals become motivated offenders; instead, it assumes that such individuals exist in society at all times. Factors such as poverty, unemployment, peer influence, and weak moral constraints may contribute to offender motivation, but these are considered background conditions rather than the central focus of the theory.

In the context of informal economic activities such as commercial motorcycle services, weak entry requirements and lack of background checks make it easier for motivated offenders to disguise themselves as legitimate operators, thereby increasing crime opportunities.

#### Suitable Target

A suitable target is any person or property that is attractive and accessible to a motivated offender. Suitability is determined by factors such as:

Value (economic or symbolic worth), visibility (how exposed the target is), accessibility (ease of approach or escape), inertia (physical resistance or protection) For example, passengers traveling at night, isolated commuters, or individuals carrying valuables are more suitable targets. In the case of commercial motorcycle services, passengers often travel alone, rely on unfamiliar riders, and traverse poorly monitored routes, increasing their vulnerability to criminal victimization.

#### Absence of a Capable Guardian.

A capable guardian refers to any person, institution, or mechanism that can prevent crime by deterring offenders or intervening during criminal acts. Guardians may include:

Police and security agencies, regulatory institutions, community members, surveillance systems, identification and registration mechanisms. The absence of effective guardianship significantly increases the likelihood of crime. Weak law enforcement, lack of rider identification, unregistered motorcycles, and ineffective regulatory oversight reduce accountability and facilitate criminal activities. When offenders believe they will not be identified or punished, they are more likely to commit crimes.

Routine Activities Theory is particularly relevant to studies on informal transport and crime because commercial motorcycle services influence: Mobility patterns (where and when people move), accessibility (reaching isolated areas), guardianship (level of monitoring and control).

Where regulation and control of commercial motorcycle services are weak, the absence of capable guardianship enables motivated offenders to exploit motorcycles for crimes such as robbery, kidnapping, rape, and targeted attacks. The ease of movement and anonymity associated with unregulated motorcycles increases crime opportunities, especially during night hours.

#### **Methodology**

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The method therefore employs questionnaire tool to elicit information from respondents. The choice of descriptive survey design in this study is in line with the objectives of this study which is concerned with obtaining opinion on attitude and practices of group of people concerning different variables so as to enable the researcher conveniently generalize the findings to the entire population. The setting of this study

is Benue State. The targeted population of this study comprise members of the public, divisional police officers and officials of commercial motorcyclists. Benue State has a population of 6,141,300 with a 2.3% annual population change based on population projection in 2022 (Brinkhoff, 2022). Since the Population is known, Taro Yamane formula (1967) was adopted to determine adequate sample size, the sample size used in this study is 400. A multistage sampling technique was used for the study. In each of the senatorial districts, three local governments were randomly selected for the study using simple random sampling technique (Fish Bowl method without replacement).

### **Instruments of Data Collection**

The study used questionnaires and key informant interviews (KII). The questionnaire was divided into four sections covering socio-demographic characteristics, public perceptions on the impact of lack of regulation of commercial motorcycle services and crime rate in Benue state, lack of regulation of commercial motorcycle services and crime rate in Benue state, and challenges faced by government agencies in regulating and controlling commercial motorcycle services in Benue State.

Key informant interviews were conducted with officials of the Benue State Motorcycle Association (BEMOA) and divisional police officers to obtain in-depth insights. Interviews were conducted face-to-face using structured guides, with probing questions to encourage detailed responses in an informal setting.

### **Method of Data Collection**

Data were collected by the researchers with the assistance of ten trained research assistants who held Bachelor's degrees in Sociology. They were trained on the study objectives and data collection procedures. Each assistant was assigned to a senatorial district and helped administer questionnaires to respondents. Data collection lasted two months, ensuring adequate coverage of the study area.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

Both quantitative and qualitative data were analysed. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive (frequency tables, percentages) and inferential statistics (Chi-square). Analysis was conducted at univariate and bivariate.

Qualitative data from interviews were analysed using manual content analysis, involving transcription, translation, and interpretation of responses to support and strengthen quantitative findings.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Consent was obtained before data collection, and confidentiality was ensured through anonymous questionnaire responses.

### **Findings**

#### **Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

A total of 400 respondents participated in the study, mostly within the age range of 18–36 years, indicating that young adults were more accessible and had greater exposure to crime-related experiences involving commercial motorcycles. Age distribution was fairly balanced across groups, with the highest proportion (27%) in the 24–29 age bracket, and a mean age of 29.4 years (SD = 6.7), showing no major age variation. In terms of religion, the majority (75%) were Christians, reflecting the dominant religious composition of Benue State, while 14% were Muslims and 11% were traditional worshippers. Regarding marital status, most respondents (54%) were single, followed by 31% married, 7% widowed, and 8% divorced. This further confirms the

youthful nature of the sample and suggests that unmarried individuals, being more mobile and socially active, are more likely to use commercial motorcycle services and encounter related crime. Educationally, 48% of respondents had tertiary education, 27% secondary education, 8% primary education, and 17% had no formal education. The high level of education among respondents implies that the data collected is informed, reliable, and based on a good understanding of social issues, thereby strengthening the credibility of the study's findings.

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Socio-Demographic Characteristics, N = 400**

Socio-demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age range</b>		
18-23	100	25.0
24-29	108	27.0
30-35	94	23.5
36 above	98	24.5
<b>Religion</b>		
Christianity	300	75.0
Islam	56	14.0
Traditional	44	11.0
Others	0	0.0
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	216	54.0
Married	124	31.0
Widow/Widower	28	7.0
Divorcee	32	8.0
<b>Level of Education</b>		
No formal	68	17.0
Primary	32	8.0
Secondary	108	27.0
Tertiary	192	48.0
<b>Occupation</b>		
Farming	136	34.0
Government work	71	17.7
Private establishment	88	22.0
Self employed	70	17.5
Student	35	8.8

**Source: Field Survey, 2026**

**Table 2: Public perceptions on the impact of lack of regulation of commercial motorcycle services and crime rate in Benue state.**

<b>Public Perceptions</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Unregulated commercial motorcyclists facilitate armed robbery and theft due to ease of escape	118	29.5
Lack of rider identification and registration encourages criminals to disguise as motorcyclists	92	23.0
Commercial motorcycles are used to monitor and trail victims before committing crimes	74	18.5
Nighttime operation of unregulated motorcycles contributes to increased crime and insecurity	66	16.5
Weak regulation allows criminal elements to infiltrate commercial motorcycle services	50	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Survey, 2026.

The data in table 2 showed that 29.5% (118) of the respondents perceived that unregulated commercial motorcyclists facilitate armed robbery and theft due to ease of escape, 23.0% (92) of the respondents perceived that lack of rider identification and registration encourages criminals to disguise as motorcyclists 18.5% (74) of the respondents perceived that commercial motorcycles are used to monitor and trail victims before committing crimes while 16.5% (66) of the respondents perceived that nighttime operation of unregulated motorcycles contributes to increased crime and insecurity. 12.5% (50) of the respondents perceived that weak regulation allows criminal elements to infiltrate commercial motorcycle services. The findings on the perception of the impact of unregulated commercial motorcycle services and crime rate in Benue State have agreed with the findings of Giwa, Olorunnimbe, and Fagbenro (2024) who argued that 70% of Nigerian residents perceived the activities of commercial motorcyclists as contributing to crime and insecurity. The findings of Kpae (2023) argued that residents who have fallen victim of criminal activities of commercial motorcyclists perceived them as criminals.

**Table 3: Relationship between lack of regulation of commercial motorcycle services and crime rate in Benue state**

<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly Agree	138	34.5
Agree	162	40.5
Disagree	64	16.0
Strongly Disagree	36	9.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Survey, 2026.

The data in table 3 showed 34.5% (138) of the respondents strongly agreed that there exist a relationship between lack of regulation and control of commercial motorcycle services and crime rate in Benue State. 40.5% (162) of the respondents agreed that they exist a relationship between lack of regulation and control of commercial motorcycle services and crime rate in Benue State. 16.0% (64) of the respondents Disagreed that they exist no relationship between lack of regulation and control of commercial motorcycle services and crime rate in Benue State, while 9.0% (36) of the respondents strongly Disagreed that they exist no relationship between lack of regulation and control of commercial motorcycle services and crime rate in Benue State. The findings on the perception of the impact of unregulated commercial motorcycle services and crime

rate in Benue State have agreed with the findings of Giwa, Olorunnimbe, and Fagbenro (2024) who found that 90% of Nigerian residents argued that they exist a strong relationship between lack of regulation and control of commercial motorcycle services and crime rate in Benue state.

**Table 4: Challenges faced by government agencies in regulating and controlling commercial motorcycle services in Benue State**

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
High unemployment and poverty pushing many youths into commercial motorcycle operations	104	26.0
Weak enforcement capacity and inadequate manpower of regulatory agencies	88	22.0
Corruption and compromise by some law enforcement and regulatory officials	74	18.5
Informal and unregistered nature of commercial motorcycle operations	70	17.5
Political interference and resistance from motorcycle operators and unions	64	16.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Survey, 2026.

The data in table 4 showed that 26.0% (104) of the respondents identified high unemployment and poverty as the challenges faced by government agencies in regulating and controlling commercial motorcycle services, while 22.0% (88) of the respondents identified weak enforcement capacity and inadequate manpower of regulatory officials, 18.5% (74) of the respondents identified corruption and compromise by some law enforcement and regulatory officials as the challenges affecting government from regulating and controlling commercial motorcycle services, while 17.5% (70) of the respondents identified informal and unregistered nature of commercial motorcycle operations as the challenges affecting government agencies in regulating and controlling commercial motorcycle services, while 16.0% (64) of the respondents identified political interference and resistance from motorcycle operators and unions as the challenges government agencies face in regulating and controlling commercial motorcycle activities. Findings on the challenges faced by government agencies in regulating and controlling commercial motorcycle services in Benue State have agreed with the findings of Adetunji and Aloba (2023) who found that government agencies struggle with enforcement capacity, often due to inadequate manpower, resources or unclear policy frameworks. Also, the findings of Olasupo, Adebayo and Solomon (2025) agreed with the findings of the study which argued that informality of motorcycle services makes it difficult to register, monitor and regulate operators

### Testing of Hypotheses

The hypotheses for this study were tested using the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) Goodness of Fit test, which is appropriate for categorical data presented in frequencies. The level of significance was set at 0.05.

#### Hypothesis One

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no relationship between lack of regulation of commercial motorcycle services has no significant impact on crime rate in Benue State.

#### Test Statistics

Response	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
Strongly Agree	138	100	14.44
Agree	162	100	38.44
Disagree	64	100	12.96
Strongly Disagree	36	100	40.96
Total	400	400	106.8

df = 3

Critical  $\chi^2 = 7.815$

Calculated  $\chi^2 = 106.8$

The calculated  $\chi^2$  (106.8) is greater than the critical value (7.815), therefore the null hypothesis (H<sub>01</sub>) is rejected. This indicates that there is relationship between lack of regulation of commercial motorcycle services has no significant impact on crime rate in Benue State. Quantitative data shows that 34.5% of respondents strongly agreed and 40.5% agreed that unregulated motorcycles facilitate criminal activities. Supporting this, a community leader in Makurdi noted during an interview: “Criminals often disguise themselves as commercial motorcyclists; they use motorcycles to escape quickly after robberies, and sometimes to track their victims before attacking.” This qualitative insight reinforces the quantitative finding, showing that poor regulation contributes directly to insecurity in the state.

#### Hypothesis Two

H<sub>02</sub>: Government agencies face no significant challenges in regulating and controlling commercial motorcycle services in Benue State.

#### Test Statistics

Category	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
High unemployment	104	80	7.20
Weak enforcement	88	80	0.80
Corruption	74	80	0.45
Informal operations	70	80	1.25
Political interference	64	80	3.20
Total	400	400	12.90

df = 4

Critical  $\chi^2 = 9.488$

Calculated  $\chi^2 = 12.90$

Decision:  $12.90 > 9.488 \rightarrow$  reject H<sub>02</sub>

The calculated  $\chi^2$  (12.90) exceeds the critical value (9.488), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis ( $H_{02}$ ). This shows that respondents perceive significant challenges faced by government agencies in regulating commercial motorcycle services. Quantitative findings reveal that high unemployment (26%) and weak enforcement (22%) were the top challenges. During interviews, a regulatory officer in Gboko explained: “We have too few officers, and political interference often prevents us from enforcing the rules. Some operators and their unions resist regulation, and resources are limited.” These qualitative insights align with the survey results, demonstrating that systemic issues hinder effective regulation and control of motorcycle services.

### **Discussion of Findings**

#### **Public Perceptions on the Impact of Lack of Regulation of Commercial Motorcycle Services and Crime Rate in Benue State**

The study revealed that the majority of respondents perceive unregulated commercial motorcycle services as significantly contributing to crime in Benue State. Most respondents indicated that poor regulation facilitates criminal activities, including armed robbery, theft, and victim monitoring. Qualitative data supported this, as a community leader in Makurdi explained: “Criminals often operate as motorcyclists, moving around unnoticed and escaping quickly after committing crimes.” These findings align with previous studies, which report that residents perceive commercial motorcycles as a major factor in insecurity where regulation is weak (Giwa, Olorunnimbe, & Fagbenro, 2024; Kpae, 2023). The convergence of quantitative perceptions and qualitative insights highlights the critical role of regulatory oversight in reducing crime risks.

#### **Lack of Regulation of Commercial Motorcycle Services and Crime Rate in Benue State**

The study further indicated a strong perceived relationship between lack of regulation and increased crime rates. A substantial majority of respondents recognised that poor regulation creates an enabling environment for criminal activities. Key informants corroborated this, noting that the absence of rider identification and weak enforcement allows criminals to exploit motorcycle services for illicit purposes. These results support the findings of Giwa, Olorunnimbe, and Fagbenro (2024), who reported that most residents associate criminal activities directly with poor regulatory oversight of commercial motorcycles. This suggests that addressing regulatory gaps is essential for crime prevention in areas with high motorcycle operations.

#### **Challenges Faced by Government Agencies in Regulating and Controlling Commercial Motorcycle Services in Benue State**

Respondents identified multiple challenges faced by government agencies, including high unemployment driving youth into motorcycle operations, weak enforcement capacity, corruption, informality of operations, and political interference. A regulatory officer in Gboko noted: “Limited manpower, inadequate resources, and pressure from unions make enforcement very difficult.” These findings are consistent with prior studies, which emphasise that institutional weaknesses and socio-economic pressures hinder effective regulation of commercial motorcycles (Adetunji & Aloba, 2023; Olasupo, Adebayo, & Solomon, 2025). The combination of these factors explains why regulatory efforts are often ineffective, leaving motorcycles as a vehicle for criminal activity.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study affirms that there is a strong relationship between lack of regulation and control of commercial motorcycle services and increased crime rate in Benue State. Addressing this challenge requires a balanced and comprehensive approach that combines effective regulation, improved enforcement capacity, proper registration and identification systems, job creation initiatives, and the development of alternative public transportation. Strengthening institutional

frameworks and reducing informality in the sector will not only enhance public safety but also promote orderly urban transport and sustainable development in Benue State.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations were advanced for the study:

1. Government should introduce compulsory registration of all commercial motorcyclists, including biometric data capture, numbered reflective jackets and identifiable motorcycle plates. This will reduce anonymity which the public perceives as a major factor enabling criminals to use motorcycle for committing crimes. Government agencies should organize regular sensitization programmes for motorcyclists and the general public on the dangers of unregulated operations and the legal consequences of aiding criminal activities. This will improve compliance and reshape negative public perceptions of the sector.
2. Transport regulatory agencies should collaborate with the police, civil defense and community security groups to share intelligence and jointly monitor motorcycle activities. Coordinated enforcement will disrupt criminal networks that rely on unregulated motorcycle services for mobility and escape. Based on the established relationship between unregulated operations and crime, enforcement efforts should be intensified in identified crime hotspots and during high-risk periods, particularly at night. This will directly reduce the use of motorcycles in criminal operations.
3. Government should recruit and train more personnel for transport and security agencies responsible for regulating commercial motorcycle services. Adequate manpower, logistics and modern monitoring tools will address the challenge of weak enforcement capacity identified in the study. To overcome the informal nature of the sector, government should implement compulsory registration of all motorcycles.

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