MIKAILALSYS
Journal of Multidisciplinary Sciences

e-ISSN : 2987-2286
p-ISSN : 2987-3924

Index : Dimensions, Scilit, Crossref, Garuda, Semantic, Lens,Google Scholar,Base, etc

https://doi.org/10.58578/mikailalsys.v3i2.5310

A Study of Selected Crimes Committed in Nigeria

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Article Info:

Submitted:	Revised:	Accepted:	Published:
Mar 4, 2025	Mar 20, 2025	Apr 1, 2025	Apr 6, 2025

Abstract

This study conducts a detailed statistical analysis of criminal offenses across Nigeria's 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), using data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). Focusing on four primary crime categories, the research highlights significant regional disparities in crime frequency and nature. Lagos State is identified as the most affected area, with nearly 50,000 reported cases, attributed to its dense population and economic significance. The Federal Capital Territory and Cross River State also show high crime rates, though notably lower than Lagos. In contrast, states like Kebbi, Jigawa, and Zamfara report minimal criminal activity. Regionally, the South West zone records the highest crime frequencies, particularly in offenses against property and persons, while the North Central zone is predominantly affected by property crimes. Chi-Square analysis ($\chi^2 = 8171.757$, $p < 0.001$) confirms a significant association between crime types and geographical zones. Correlation analysis reveals strong positive relationships between certain crime types, such as offenses against persons and property ($r = 0.783$). These findings underscore the complex and regionally varied nature of crime in Nigeria, highlighting the need for tailored, location-specific law enforcement and crime prevention strategies. The study provides crucial insights for policymakers and law enforcement agencies, emphasizing the importance of

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considering regional socio-economic and demographic factors in crime reduction efforts.

Keywords: Criminal offenses, Regional disparities, Crime frequency, Geographical zones, Crime prevention strategies

INTRODUCTION

Crime presents a formidable challenge to Nigeria's socio-economic development, national security, and the overall well-being of its citizens. As the most populous country in Africa and its largest economy, Nigeria confronts a complex array of criminal activities that demand a comprehensive understanding and strategic interventions. The nation's criminal landscape is shaped by various factors, including rapid urbanization, economic disparities, unemployment, political instability, and weak institutional frameworks (Adeleke, 2017). This study delves into a detailed statistical analysis of selected crimes in Nigeria, categorized into four primary groups: offences against persons, offences against property, offences against lawful authority, and offences against local acts.

Offences against persons encompass a broad spectrum of crimes, such as murder, manslaughter, assault, and kidnapping. In recent years, these crimes have escalated alarmingly, with kidnapping for ransom becoming a particularly pervasive issue (Badiora, 2020). The impacts of these crimes extend far beyond the immediate victims, creating psychological trauma and social disruption that reverberate through communities and the nation at large. The prevalence of these offences underscores the urgency of understanding their underlying causes and developing targeted interventions to curb their rise. Offences against property, including theft, burglary, and fraud, constitute a substantial portion of the reported crimes in Nigeria. These crimes are often economically motivated, with roots in poverty and income inequality (Ayodele, 2015). The economic challenges faced by many Nigerians contribute to the high incidence of property crimes, which not only result in material losses but also erode the sense of security within communities. As such, addressing the socio-economic factors that fuel these crimes is essential for reducing their occurrence and mitigating their impact on society.

Crimes against lawful authority, such as corruption, bribery, and obstruction of justice, significantly undermine the credibility of government institutions and impede effective governance. Nigeria's struggle with corruption is well-documented, with the country consistently ranking poorly on global corruption indices (Transparency International, 2023). The pervasive nature of these crimes has far-reaching implications, stalling economic development, eroding public trust in institutions, and weakening the rule of law. Tackling these offences requires not only robust legal frameworks but also a commitment to transparency and accountability at all levels of governance. Offences against local acts involve violations of specific laws and regulations enacted by state or local governments, including environmental offences, traffic violations, and breaches of public health regulations. While these offences may be perceived as less severe compared to other categories, they can significantly affect the quality of life and the effectiveness of local governance. For instance, environmental violations can lead to long-term public health crises, while frequent traffic violations can exacerbate urban congestion and increase accident rates (Nwankwo *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, understanding and addressing these offences is crucial for enhancing the living conditions within local communities.

The statistical analysis of these crime categories is indispensable for several reasons: it facilitates the identification of trends, the efficient allocation of resources, the formulation of policies, the evaluation of interventions, and the comparison of crime patterns on an international scale. By detecting patterns and trends in criminal activities over time, law enforcement agencies can develop proactive strategies to address emerging threats. Additionally, understanding the prevalence and distribution of different types of crime allows for the strategic allocation of limited resources, ensuring that law enforcement efforts are directed where they are most needed. Moreover, data-driven insights can inform evidence-based policymaking and legislative reforms aimed at crime prevention and control.

Nigeria's diverse ethnic and religious composition adds another layer of complexity to the patterns and causes of crime (Otu and Nnam, 2018). The rapid growth of cybercrime, a relatively new category of property offences, further complicates the landscape, posing significant challenges to law enforcement agencies and the financial sector (Akinbode *et al.*, 2019). While offences against local acts may not receive as much attention as other categories, their impact on the quality of life and the functioning of local governance

cannot be overlooked. Addressing these offences is critical for maintaining social order and ensuring the effective administration of local communities.

This study aims to make a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge on crime in Nigeria by providing a comprehensive statistical analysis of selected crimes. By examining the patterns, trends, and interrelationships among different crime categories, the research seeks to offer valuable insights for policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and researchers in the field of criminology and criminal justice. The findings of this study will be crucial in developing effective strategies to combat crime, enhance public safety, and promote sustainable development in Nigeria

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research utilized secondary data sourced from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) website. This pre-existing dataset, compiled and made available by the NBS, formed the basis for the study's analysis.

Variables

i. **States:** The 36 states and Federal Capital Territory (FCT)

ii. **Offense Categories:** offences which include: offence against persons, offence against properties, offences against lawful and authority local acts

iii. **Frequency of Offenses:** Number of reported incidents for each category in each state.

iv. **Geopolitical Zone:** North Central, North East, North West, South East, South South, and South West**.**

Method of Data Collection

The data were systematically organized into rows and columns on the NBS website. Relevant information necessary for the research was extracted from this well-documented dataset.

Population Size

The scope of this research covered the four categories of offences committed across Nigeria's 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), as documented on the National

Bureau of Statistics (NBS) website. This population size includes comprehensive data on crime incidents across all states and the FCT for the specified year.

Methods of Data Analysis

Chi Square Test

The Chi-square test of independence assesses whether the distribution of sample categorical data matches an expected distribution based on the assumption that the variables are independent. The test compares the observed frequencies in each category of a contingency table to the frequencies expected if the variables were independent.

Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis (H_0): The two categorical variables are independent i.e. Categories of criminal offences are independence of Geo Political zone in Nigeria

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): The two categorical variables are dependent i.e. Categories of criminal offences are dependence of Geo Political zone in Nigeria

Procedure

i. Collect data for the two categorical variables in rows and columns in a suitable format for analysis (e.g., a contingency table).

ii. Calculate Expected Frequencies $E_{ij} = \frac{Row\ Total \times Column\ Total}{Grand\ Total}$

iii. Compute the Chi-Square Statistic

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^{r}\sum_{j=1}^{c}\frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i} \qquad (1)$$

.

iv. Determine Degrees of Freedom d.f = $(r-1)(c-1)$

v. Find the Critical Value and Compare

vi. Determine the critical value from the Chi-Square distribution table using the degrees of freedom and significance level (typically $\alpha = 0.05$).

vii. Compare the calculated Chi-Square statistic to the critical value.

viii. Decision Making

If the Chi-Square statistic is greater than the critical value, reject the null hypothesis.

If the Chi-Square statistic is less than or equal to the critical value, fail to reject the null hypothesis.

RESULTS

Table 1: *Distribution of Reported Criminal Offenses by Category across Geopolitical Zones*

Geopolitical Zone	Offence Against Persons	Offence Against Property	Offence Against Lawful Authority	Offence Against Local Act
North Central	5555	14687	1093	359
North East	3664	6477	269	699
North West	3999	4884	544	479
South East	3540	4088	434	81
South South	8877	6030	1896	437
South West	19938	29231	7908	640

Visualization and Descriptive Analysis of the Distribution of Selected Crimes

To meet the research objectives, both visual presentation and descriptive analysis are rigorously employed. The visual presentation utilizes graphs and charts to clearly convey data patterns and trends, enhancing interpretability. Simultaneously, the descriptive analysis summarizes key statistical measures, providing a thorough understanding of the data's underlying characteristics.

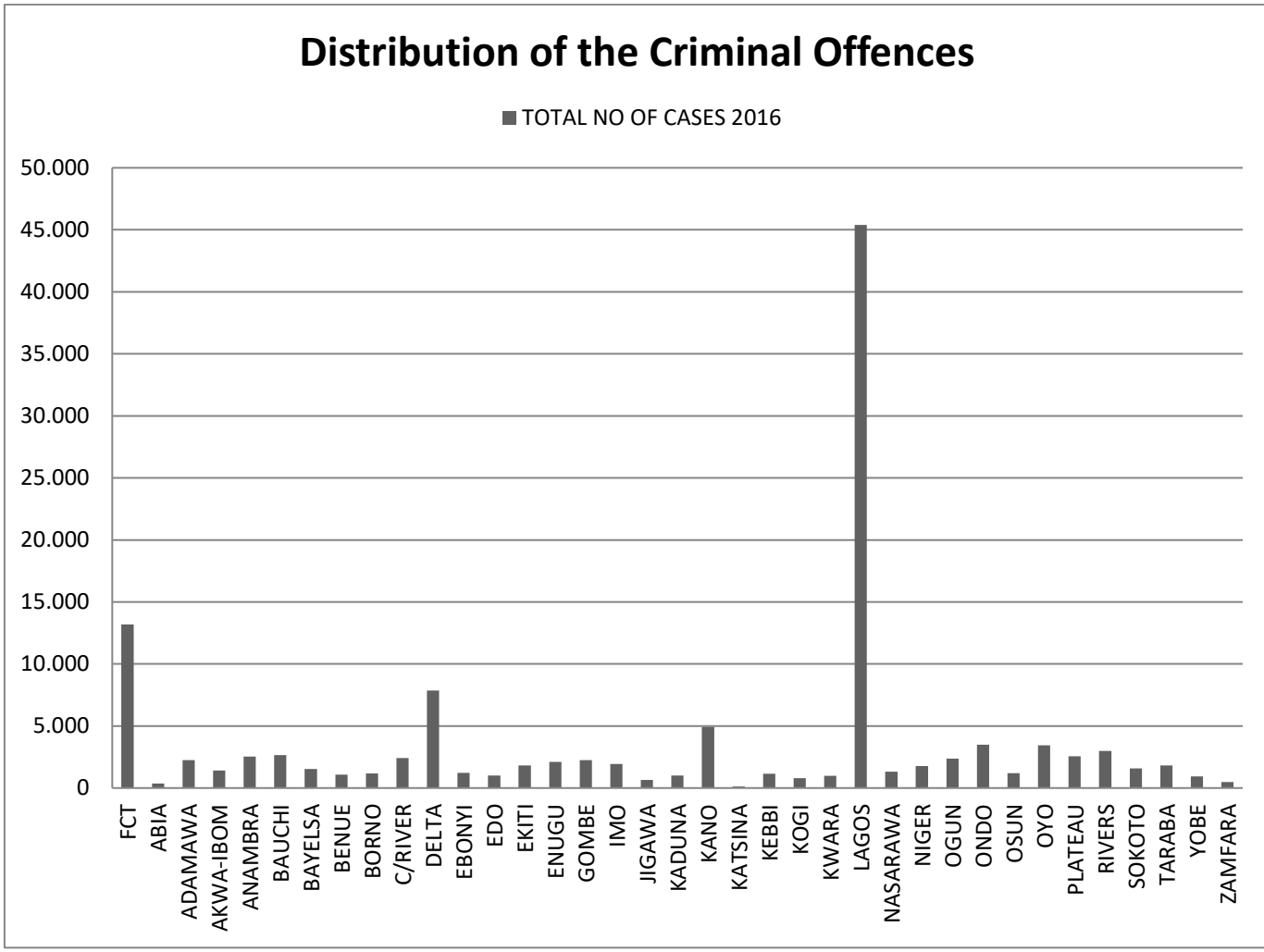


Fig. 1*: Bar Chart Distribution of Criminal offences*

The chart above shows that Lagos State recorded the highest frequency of criminal offences, with nearly 50,000 cases reported. This figure is overwhelmingly higher than any other state, suggesting that Lagos, due to its dense population and economic importance, faces unique challenges that contribute to this elevated crime rate. The frequency of criminal offences in Lagos underscores the need for targeted interventions and robust law enforcement strategies to address these issues effectively.

In the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), the frequency of criminal offences was also relatively high, though considerably lower than in Lagos, with approximately 10,000 cases. The FCT's status as the nation's capital likely contributes to its higher crime frequency, driven by factors such as urbanization and a concentrated population. Cross River State, with a recorded frequency of about 7,000 cases, also stands out, indicating a need for similar but region-specific crime prevention measures.

Conversely, several states, including Kebbi, Jigawa, and Zamfara, reported very low frequencies of criminal offences, with fewer than 2,000 cases each. These states display minimal bars on the graph, suggesting that they experience much lower levels of criminal activity. The reduced frequency in these states may be attributed to factors such as lower population density, effective law enforcement, or cultural deterrents to crime.

The graph further reveals significant regional disparities in crime frequency. The Southern and Central regions, particularly Lagos, FCT, and Cross River, exhibit higher frequencies of criminal offences, while many Northern states, such as Kebbi and Zamfara, show much lower frequencies. These disparities likely reflect differences in economic conditions, the effectiveness of law enforcement, and possibly variations in how crimes are reported and documented across regions.

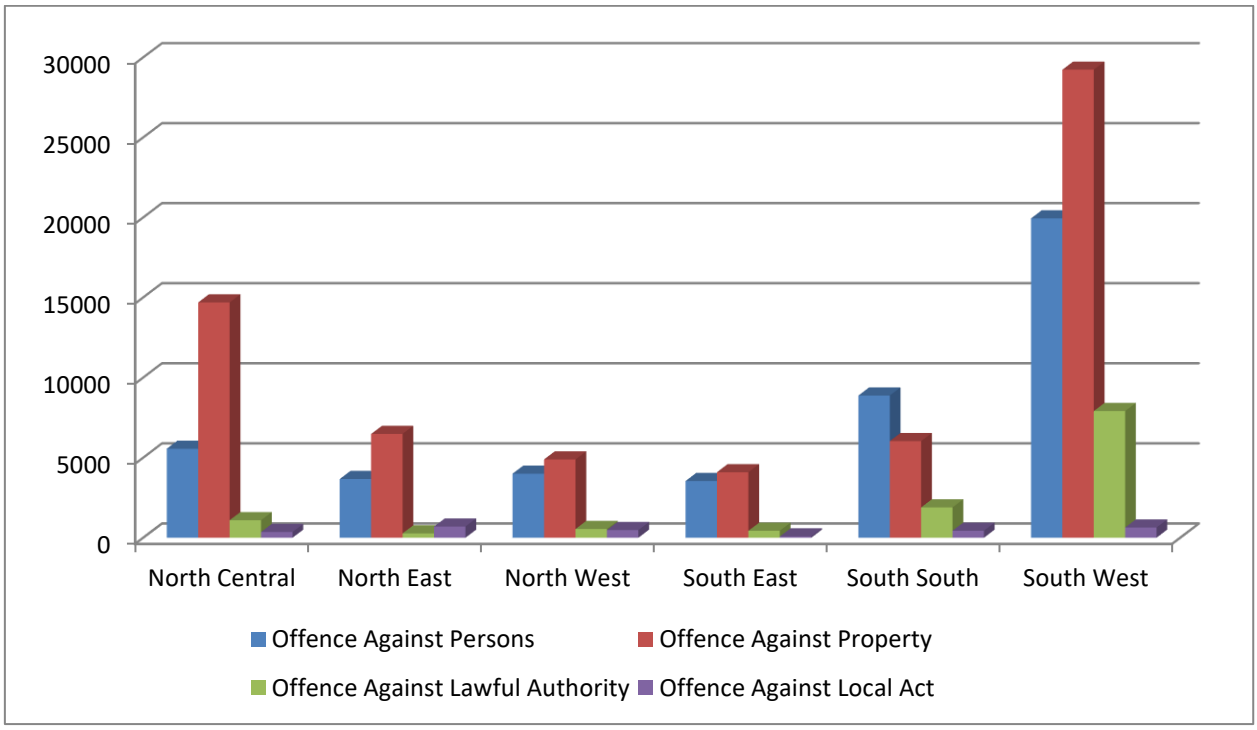


Fig. 2: *Comparative Analysis of Four Categories of Criminal Offences across Nigeria's Six Geopolitical Zones*

From Fig.2 above, the South West zone exhibits the highest crime frequencies across all categories, particularly in Offences Against Property, with a striking frequency of around 30,000 cases. This category dominates the crime landscape in the South West, followed by Offences Against Persons, which also have a high frequency of approximately 20,000 cases.

The elevated frequencies in these categories may be linked to the region's high population density and economic vibrancy, factors that typically contribute to higher crime rates.

In the North Central zone, the frequency of Offences Against Property stands out at approximately 15,000 cases, indicating that property crimes are a major issue in this region. The frequency of Offences Against Persons is significantly lower, suggesting a more focused challenge in property-related criminal activities.

The North East and North West zones show moderate crime frequencies compared to other regions, with Offences Against Persons and Offences Against Property being the most prevalent. In the North East, the frequency of Offences Against Persons is slightly higher, indicating a regional concern with interpersonal crimes, while the North West shows a more balanced distribution between the two categories. However, the overall frequencies in these zones remain lower, reflecting different socio-economic conditions or lower population densities.

The South East and South South zones report the lowest frequencies across all categories, with no single category exceeding 10,000 cases. In these regions, Offences Against Persons and Offences Against Property have somewhat balanced frequencies, indicating a less concentrated but still significant presence of these crimes. The lower frequencies suggest that these zones experience relatively fewer criminal activities compared to other regions.

Across all zones, Offences Against Lawful Authority and Offences Against Local Acts consistently show the lowest frequencies, often not exceeding a few thousand cases. This uniformity in low frequencies suggests that such crimes are less common or less likely to be reported, possibly due to their nature or the legal framework within which they are classified.

Assessing the Independence of Crime Categories across Geopolitical Zones in Nigeria.

To evaluate the independence of criminal categories across the geopolitical zones in Nigeria, a Chi-square test of independence was employed. The data was analyzed using minitab.

Hypothesis

$\boldsymbol{H_0}$**:** The selected crimes are independent of the Geo-Political Zone in Nigeria.

$\boldsymbol{H_1}$**:** The selected crimes are dependent of the Geo-Political Zone in Nigeria

Table 3: *Observed and expected counts of four categories of Criminal offences*

	Offence Against Persons	Offence Against Properties	Offence Against Lawful Authority	Offence Against Local Acts
North Central	5555	14687	1093	359
	7858	11277	2094	465
North East	3664	6477	269	699
	4024	5775	1072	238
North West	3999	4884	544	479
	3588	5149	956	212
South East	3540	4088	434	81
	2950	4233	786	174
South South	8877	6030	1896	437
	6245	8962	1664	369
South West	19938	29231	7908	640
	20907	30002	5571	1236

Chi-Square Test

	Chi-Square	DF	P-Value
Pearson	8171.757	15	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	8135.319	15	0.000

The Chi-Square statistic obtained is 8171.757, with a p-value of 0.000. This exceptionally low p-value, which is substantially below the conventional threshold of 0.05, provides compelling evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, the data demonstrate a statistically significant association between crime types and Geo-Political Zones in Nigeria. This suggests that the distribution of crime categories is not independent of geographical

regions, reflecting a significant dependency between the types of crimes and their respective locations.

Investigation of Interrelationships among Crime Categories

This analysis utilizes Pearson's correlation coefficient to assess the strength and direction of linear relationships among crime categories.

Table 4: *Intercorrelation among Crime Categories*

	Offence Against Persons	**Offence Against Property**	**Offence Against Lawful Authority**	**Offence Against Local Act**
Offence Against Persons	1.000	0.783	0.493	0.242
Offence Against Property	0.783	1.000	0.627	0.228
Offence Against Lawful Authority	0.493	0.627	1.000	0.232
Offence Against Local Act	0.242	0.228	0.232	1.000

1. **Offence Against Persons and Offence Against Property**: With a correlation coefficient of 0.783, there is a strong positive association between these categories. This suggests that increases in crimes against persons are strongly linked with higher occurrences of property-related offenses, indicating that environments or circumstances conducive to one type of crime often foster the other.
2. **Offence Against Persons and Offence Against Lawful Authority**: The correlation coefficient of 0.493 indicates a moderate positive relationship. This implies that while there is a discernible connection between offenses against persons and lawful authority, the relationship is less pronounced. This suggests that while these crime categories are related, they may be influenced by different underlying factors or contexts.
3. **Offence Against Persons and Offence Against Local Acts**: The weak positive correlation of 0.242 between these categories suggests a minimal association. This indicates that offenses against local acts are relatively independent of offenses against persons, with the relationship being weak and not strongly indicative of shared factors.

4. **Offence Against Property and Offence Against Lawful Authority**: A moderate to strong positive correlation coefficient of 0.627 reflects a notable association. This suggests that as offenses against property increase, there is a moderate rise in offenses against lawful authority, potentially pointing to overlapping factors or shared contexts influencing both crime types.
5. **Offence Against Property and Offence Against Local Acts**: The weak correlation of 0.228 indicates that there is only a slight association between these categories. This suggests that property crimes occur largely independently of offenses related to local regulations or acts.
6. **Offence Against Lawful Authority and Offence Against Local Acts**: With a correlation coefficient of 0.232, the weak positive relationship suggests only a slight association. This minimal correlation implies that offenses against lawful authority and local acts are not strongly related, indicating distinct patterns or influences affecting these crime categories.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal significant regional disparities in the distribution and categorization of criminal offenses across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones. Notably, the South West zone, particularly Lagos State, exhibited a disproportionately high rate of criminal activity, especially in offenses against property and persons. These elevated rates are likely influenced by factors such as urban density, economic inequality, and heightened mobility, all of which are known contributors to urban crime. Conversely, states such as Kebbi, Jigawa, and Zamfara reported significantly lower crime rates, which may be attributed to rural demographics, lower urbanization levels, and potentially more cohesive community structures that deter crime. The Chi-square test further reinforces the regional uniqueness of crime distribution, as the significant p-value (0.000) supports the assertion that crime categories are not independent of geopolitical zones, highlighting the influence of localized socio-economic and cultural contexts.

These results align with findings from previous studies that emphasize spatial disparities in crime distribution in Nigeria. For instance, Okunola *et al.* (2021) observed that metropolitan regions with high commercial activities are more susceptible to property-related crimes due to increased opportunities and social tensions. Similarly, Ibrahim and

Afolabi (2023) found a strong regional correlation between socio-economic challenges and criminal patterns, especially in high-density urban areas like Lagos and Abuja. Moreover, the correlation analysis in this study underscores the interrelated nature of offenses—particularly between offenses against persons and property ($r = 0.783$)—which echoes the findings of Musa and Yakubu (2020), who reported that regions with higher physical confrontations also tend to experience elevated property crimes, likely due to shared underlying drivers such as poverty, unemployment, and inadequate policing. These cross-referenced insights highlight the necessity for region-specific crime prevention policies that address both the shared and unique crime dynamics across Nigeria's geopolitical zones.

CONCLUSION

This study provides critical insights into the geographical distribution and interrelationships of various categories of criminal offenses across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones. The analysis revealed that crime patterns are not randomly distributed but are significantly influenced by regional factors such as urbanization, economic activity, population density, and law enforcement effectiveness. The South West, particularly Lagos State, emerged as the most crime-prone region, especially in offenses against property and persons, while the North West and parts of the North East showed relatively lower crime frequencies. The statistically significant results of the Chi-square test affirm that the prevalence of specific crime categories is dependent on geopolitical location, emphasizing the importance of regional context in understanding and addressing crime in Nigeria.

Also, the correlation analysis demonstrated that certain crime categories are interrelated, particularly offenses against persons and property, suggesting common underlying socio-economic drivers. The weak correlations between offenses against lawful authority and local acts with other categories imply that these crimes may be influenced by distinct or more localized factors. These findings underscore the necessity for policymakers to adopt tailored crime prevention and intervention strategies that reflect the unique crime profiles of each region. Addressing Nigeria's crime challenges requires a multidimensional approach—one that considers regional disparities, enhances law enforcement capacities, and promotes socio-economic development to mitigate the root causes of criminal behaviour.

Recommendations

Based on this research, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Develop tailored crime prevention strategies that address the unique socio-economic factors of each region, focusing on high-crime areas like Lagos.
2. Increase law enforcement resources and specialized units in regions with high crime rates, particularly in Lagos and the South West zone.
3. Implement socio-economic development programs in high-crime areas to address underlying causes of criminal activity, such as poverty and unemployment.
4. Focus on specific interventions in regions like the FCT and Cross River State to prevent crime escalation and address local challenges.
5. Establish continuous, detailed crime data collection and analysis to identify trends and evaluate the effectiveness of crime prevention strategies.

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