

**CONSEQUENCES OF KAURANCI-RELATED GANG
VICTIMIZATION IN KATSINA CENTRAL, NIGERIA (2013–2023)**

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ABSTRACT: This study, titled "Consequences of Victimization from Gangster (Kauranci) Crime in Katsina Central (2013-2023)," is extracted from my ongoing MSc. Sociology Dissertation (Nababa, 2025). Kauranci, a phenomenon characterized by the competition of gang warfare, has a complex history in Northern Nigeria. The study aims to examine the consequences, prevalence, and prevention strategies of Kauranci crime in Katsina Central. Using a mixed-methods approach that combines survey questionnaires (n=663) and in-depth interviews (n=8), the study reveals that Kauranci attacks are driven by internal conflicts, substance abuse, and territorialism. Additionally, the results show a high prevalence of victimization, with a significant proportion of residents falling victim to Kauranci attacks, particularly at midnight and in the evening. The study employed binary logistic regression analysis and identified ten consequences of Kauranci crime, with the most significant being managing to stay strong, seeking medical treatment, prayers, anxiety, being treated by a medical professional, praying, still feeling anxious, and others. The devastating consequences of Kauranci victimization in Katsina Central resonate far beyond the initial incident, leaving survivors with physical, emotional, psychological, and socioeconomic aftermaths. The study highlights the importance of addressing the trauma experienced by victims of Kauranci crimes and the need for community-based rehabilitation programs to promote social cohesion and support victims. It contributes to our understanding of the complex dynamics of Kauranci-related criminal victimization and also emphasises the need for improved police-community engagement and transparency through regular community outreach programs, transparent communication, and training law enforcement officials in trauma-informed practices.

Keywords: Kauranci, Gangster, Victimization, Trauma Theory, Community-Based Initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

Research on crime, crime reporting, and victims of crime have long fascinated criminologists and sociologists. In fact, victims of crime are a crucial aspect of criminology, encompassing individuals or organizations directly or indirectly affected by criminal activities. Notably, the study on the victims of crime originated from Benjamin Mendelsohn's 1956 essay, "A New Branch of Bio-Psycho-Social Science-Victimology," earning him the title "Father of Victimology." Moreover, victimology is the scientific study of crime victims, whereas victimization, as defined by Gyong (2010), is a pervasive phenomenon impacting various aspects of human and organizational life. Consequently, the African continent, particularly Nigeria, faces numerous security challenges, including youth violence, terrorism, kidnapping, and armed robbery, driven by poverty, corruption, and instability, resulting in widespread violence and insecurity, with Katsina

Central being severely affected by kidnapping and *Kauranci*-related crimes (Babajide and Abdulkareem, 2020). Thus, the consequences of victimization by *Kauranci* crime in Katsina Central are far-reaching and devastating. Specifically, victims of this crime suffer physical, emotional, and psychological harm, which can lead to long-term trauma and vulnerability (Karmen, 2001). Additionally, the impact of *Kauranci* victimization extends beyond primary victims, affecting secondary and tertiary victims, including family members, community members, and society as a whole.

In this context, the *Kauranci* phenomenon in Northern Nigeria has a rich and complex history, in terms of victimizing the community. Originally, the term *Kauraye*, plural of "*Kaura*," refers to a group of youngsters engaging in uncontrolled behaviors and illegal activities, often from poor or broken households, suffering familial neglect. While *Kauranci* is an unwanted act characterized by competition and gang warfare activities (Kankara, 2015). Historically, in ancient Katsina, *Kauraye* were revered as bold and gallant army generals protecting emirs and officials and as hunters clashing over resources in Kano and Zaria (Kankara, 2016). A significant shift occurred during the Third Republic, which was established in 1992 and marked by democratically elected state governors and state assemblies, as well as federal legislatures. During this period, politicians exploited *Kauraye* groups for party interests, transforming them into party vanguards and thugs. This led to several consequences, including: Infiltration by drug addicts and non-hunter groups, fragmentation into rival factions, basically *Kura* and *Yadakwari* (Katsina State CID of the NPF, 2023), affiliation with political parties (NPN, PRP, GNPP, and NPP), and urbanization of conflicts. Moreover, the urbanization of conflicts has resulted in the spread of violence and insecurity to urban areas, affecting city dwellers.

Eventually, the victimization and trauma caused by *Kauranci* activities affect individuals, families, and society as a whole, leading to a breakdown in social cohesion and trust in institutions. According to Kankara (2015), the phenomenon of *Kauranci* has evolved over time and has been influenced by factors such as poverty, unemployment, and political instability. Kankara proposes establishing rehabilitation centres as a solution. Therefore, this paper aims to examine the consequences of *Kauranci* victimization in Katsina Central by investigating its physical, emotional, and psychological impact on individuals, families, and communities and the long-term effects on victims, including trauma and vulnerability.

Statement of the Research Problem

The consequences of *Kauranci* crime are severe and far-reaching, resulting in loss of life, bodily harm, and societal unrest (Kankara, 2016). As a result, victims of *Kauranci* crime face significant challenges in disclosing their victimization to authorities and recovering from the associated trauma. This trauma can have long-lasting effects on the victims' well-being, perpetuating a cycle of fear and insecurity. Furthermore, the surge in *Kauranci* criminal activities has led to widespread victimization, affecting members of society at large and causing emotional, psychological, and physical harm to the victims (Karmen, 2001). Victims of this crime experience various forms of victimization, including physical harm, emotional trauma, loss of property and body parts, murder, intimidation and threats, stigma and social exclusion, economic hardship, and psychological distress. Physical harm is a common consequence of *Kauranci* crime, with victims suffering cuts,

bruises, and broken bones as a result of violent attacks (NPF, 2022). Emotional trauma is also prevalent, with victims experiencing anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) due to the physical and psychological harm inflicted upon them (Gyong, 2010). In addition to physical and emotional harm, victims of *Kauranci* crime also experience loss of property, including valuables such as phones and money (Kankara, 2016).

According to police records, the Katsina State CID reported 25 to 50 incidents of *Kauranci* crimes annually, resulting in emotional, psychological, and physical victimization of society (NPF, 2013c, 2015c, 2019c, 2020c, 2022). These records also revealed that *Kauranci* crimes are prevalent in areas such as Tudun Wada, Tudun Yan-lihidda, Tudun Matawalle, Filin Samji, Kofar Durbi, Kofar Yandaka, Inwala, Shararrar-pipe, Saulawa, and Sabuwar Unguwa (NPF, 2022). For instance; in October 2022, members of the *Kauranci* gang brutally murdered a young man from Sabuwar Unguwa who was about to marry a girl of their interest, similarly, in 2013, *Kauraye* members attacked a street at night in the Sabuwar Unguwa neighbourhood of Katsina Central and began murdering innocent people in retaliation for the assassination of one of their comrades by *Kauraye* members in the Sabuwar Unguwa region (NPF, 2013c), other incidents of *Kauranci* crime include the brutal killing of a teenage boy in 2015, the victimization of a young girl by a *Kauraye* member in October 2022, and the assault on residences in the Dutsin-Amare region in November 2022, resulting in injuries to seven innocent people and the theft of motorbikes (NPF, 2015c, 2022).

Moreover, the cultural impact of *Kauranci* crimes is evident in the imitation of criminal behaviors from a Hausa movie named 'A *Duniya Ne*, contributing to an atmosphere of fear and insecurity (Kankara, 2016). This perpetuates a cycle of violence and victimization, undermining efforts to promote economic development and social progress. Furthermore, the perpetuation of *Kauranci* crime reinforces negative social norms and values, undermining respect for human rights and the rule of law. To address this, it is essential to address the root causes of *Kauranci* crime, such as poverty and unemployment, and improve access to education and job opportunities. Strengthening law enforcement and justice systems is also crucial to holding perpetrators accountable. Raising awareness about the consequences of *Kauranci* crime can help change social norms and attitudes, while encouraging community-led initiatives can prevent crime and promote social cohesion.

In summary, the concentrated occurrence of *Kauranci*-related criminal activities, the alteration of the cultural landscape, the recurring patterns of victimization, and the high-profile incidents necessitate a closer examination of the Katsina central as a distinctive and critical focal point for this sociological study. This selection is in alignment with the overarching goal of comprehending the consequences of *Kauranci* victimization while proposing effective solutions to address this pressing societal issue. This research aimed to bridge literature and theoretical gaps by conducting a sociological study of the victims of *Kauranci* criminal activities in the Katsina Central.

Objectives of the Study

This study achieved the following objectives;

1. Examined the consequences of victimization from *Kauranci* crime in Katsina Central.
2. Investigated the prevalence of victimization from *Kauranci* crime in Katsina Central.

3. Developed strategies for the prevention and intervention of victimization from *Kauranci* crime in Katsina Central.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Drivers of Gang Violence

Research highlights various factors contributing to gang formation and violence. Ewaoda, Moshood, and Bala (2017) identify poverty, unemployment, peer influence, moral decadence, and inadequate law enforcement as key drivers of gang activity in Nasarawa, Nigeria. These factors are consistent with social disorganization theory, which suggests that communities with weak social structures are more prone to gang violence.

Impacts of Victimization

The consequences of victimization can be severe and long-lasting. Etuk and Macpherson's (2018) mixed-methods study on armed robbery victimization reveals that victims often suffer physical injuries, property damage, and emotional distress, including fear, nervousness, and heightened vigilance. Heleen, Dietrich, and Goeran's (2020) longitudinal study highlights the impact of victimization on well-being, including increased fear of crime, avoidance behaviour, and decreased generalised trust.

Recovery and Intervention Models

Research emphasizes the need for comprehensive interventions and support systems for victims. Anzaku's (2021) study highlights the cyclical nature of victimization and the importance of addressing systemic victimization by law enforcement and the criminal justice system. Yecho's (2010) quantitative analysis underscores the economic implications of violent crime, emphasizing the need for support systems to facilitate recovery.

Research Gaps

The literature review reveals several gaps, including: limited research on the consequences of *Kauranci* victimization, insufficient research on long-term support systems for victims, lack of intersectional analysis of victimization, and limited understanding of the unique consequences of victimization in rural and semi-rural areas

Contribution to Existing Literature

This study aims to address these gaps by exploring the consequences of *Kauranci*-related gang victimization in Katsina Central, Nigeria. By examining the drivers of gang violence, impacts of victimization, and recovery and intervention models, this research provides insights into the complex nature of victimization and informs strategies for prevention and intervention.

Theoretical Framework: Trauma Theory

Trauma Theory examines the psychological and emotional consequences of *Kauranci* victimization in Katsina Central. This involves analyzing the long-term consequences of trauma on victims, including the development of PTSD, anxiety, depression, and dissociation. Moreover, the theory can inform the development of trauma-informed interventions and support services to aid victims' recovery. This includes identifying surviving mechanisms and barriers to seeking support, as well as proposing effective interventions to address the psychological and emotional toll of *Kauranci*. The application of Trauma Theory will provide a nuanced understanding of the consequences of *Kauranci* victimization. While the theory focuses on the psychological and emotional impacts of traumatic experiences.

By employing this theory, this research provided a comprehensive understanding of *Kauranci* victimization, addressing both the root causes and consequences of this phenomenon. Eventually, this approach informed the development of effective interventions and support services to aid victims' recovery and promote social justice. Therefore, this study aims to provide valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge on victimization within the unique cultural and criminal context of *Kauranci*. The findings are intended to inform policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and community leaders in the development of informed strategies to alleviate the consequences of victimization and foster a safer environment within the Katsina Central.

METHODOLOGY

This work was extracted from my ongoing MSc. Sociology Dissertation (Nababa, 2025). The location of the study is Katsina Central, Katsina State, Nigeria. According to the National Population Commission (NPC), the projected population of Katsina State as of 2022 was 10,368,483, consisting of 5,165,079 males and 5,203,404 females (NPC, 2022). The Central zone had a population of 568,600, with 300,950 males and 265,882 females. The Nigeria Police Force reported that there were over 10 gang leaders of the *Kauranci* in 2022, each with more than 20 followers and sub-followers. From 2013 to 2023, approximately 20-50 incidents of victimization by *Kauranci* criminal activities were documented annually.

Study Design

This study employed a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (in-depth interviews) methods to investigate the consequences of *Kauranci*-related gang victimization in Katsina central, Nigeria (2013–2023)

Sampling Procedure

The study used a multi-stage sampling approach, combining cluster, stratified, and simple random sampling techniques to select participants from Katsina Central, with a focus on high-crime neighbourhoods and *Kauraye* hotspots. This decision was prompted by the substantial study population, amounting to 566,832. The implementation of the multistage cluster sampling technique facilitated the reduction of the population size under investigation to a more manageable

scale. Furthermore, a non-probabilistic sampling technique was used to select 15 *Kauraye* criminal hotspots, which are geographic areas with high crime rates. The sampling frame consisted of victims of crime and various stakeholders, including community leaders, religious leaders, political leaders, vigilante group members, and police officers.

The inclusion criteria for participants were: Victims of *Kauranci* crime, stakeholders with knowledge or experience related to *Kauranci* crime. However, the exclusion criteria were: Individuals without experience or knowledge of *Kauranci* crime.

Data Collection Methods

Quantitative data were collected using (663) questionnaires, while qualitative data were collected through (8) in-depth interviews (IDIs).

Data Analysis

Binary logistic regression was used to analyze the quantitative data. The assumptions of logistic regression, including linearity and independence of observations, were checked and met. Model diagnostics, such as Hosmer-Lemeshow tests, were conducted to ensure the model's goodness-of-fit. Furthermore, the qualitative data were analyzed and interpreted in a narrative form to supplement the quantitative data. Reliability and validity checks were conducted to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings.

Ethics Clearance and Informed Consent

This study obtained ethics clearance from the Sociology Department, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria-Nigeria. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

PRESENTATION OF STUDY FINDINGS

Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of the data on the socio-demographic attributes of the respondents.

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	480	72.4
Female	183	27.6
Total	663	100.0
Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
15-25	211	31.8
26-35	221	33.3

36-45	174	26.2
46-55	50	7.5
56 and above	7	1.1
Total	663	100.0
Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
Informal Edu	32	4.8
Primary Edu	67	10.1
Secondary Edu	157	23.7
Tertiary Edu	495	59.2
Master's Degree	13	2.0
PhD	1	0.2
Total	663	100.0
Mode of Income	Frequency	Percentage
Civil servant	169	25.5
Self-employed	273	41.2
Unemployed	221	33.3
Total	663	100.0
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	293	44.2
Single	195	29.4
Divorce/Widow	175	26.4
Total	663	100.0

Results on the Consequences of Victimization from *Kauranci* Crime in Katsina Central

Table 2: Binary Logistic Regression on the Consequences of *Kauranci* Victimization

Model	Variables or outcome	B	Std. Error	%R ²
1	I am still in pain	-0.015	0.022	0.989
2	I manage to stay strong	-0.014	0.006	0.979
3	I was treated by a medical professional	-0.015	0.019	0.988
4	I was taken cared by therapist group/NGO	0.943	0.011	0.995
5	Others? (specify)	0.057	0.010	0.989
6	I used to feel bad	0.971	0.008	0.989
7	I feel nothing	0.029	0.007	0.989
8	By the help of family members	0.996	0.015	0.978
9	Prayers	-0.013	0.019	0.978
10	I am still anxious	-0.013	0.014	0.989

Thematic Analysis of IDI Data

To gain a deeper understanding of the consequences of victimization from *Kauranci* crime, the study collected qualitative data through in-depth interviews (IDI) with various stakeholders. The thematic analysis revealed three emergent themes: (1) experiences of trauma, (2) socioeconomic impact, and (3) coping mechanisms. Example quotations:

- "I recall a harrowing experience along the central market in Katsina, where I had gone to purchase supplies for my kiosk. Unaware of the tensions brewing between the *Kauraye* from my area and those from the market area, known as Kobran Dorowa, I accidentally found myself caught in the crossfire. The attackers, fueled by their dispute, turned on me, slashing my right hand with a blade. Just as all hope seemed lost, one of them recognized me as his primary school mate and stopped the attack. Moved by this unexpected connection, he intervened, putting an end to the brutal assault. His timely intervention saved me from further harm, leaving me shaken but grateful for this narrow escape. The severity of the assault has resulted in a severely injured hand, a constant reminder of the trauma I endured. The emotional scars run deep, leaving me with a shattered sense of security and trust. Everyday tasks have become a challenge, as my injured hand struggles to perform even the simplest actions. Despite the overwhelming challenges, I have found solace in rebuilding my life through my mini-shop. The familiar routine and sense of purpose have helped me to slowly rebuild my confidence and sense of self. As I strive to create a better future, I am determined to not let the consequences of the attack define me." (Male victim)
- "*Kaura's* history of violence towards my suitors has left a trail of fear and intimidation. I have seen men who were interested in me brutally attacked, leaving them injured and shaken. One incident still haunts me to this day. The *Kauranci* attackers brutally stabbed one of my suitors, stole his phone, and injured many others who were with him. I'm grateful for the police intervention that has established a protective barrier between me and the *Kauraye* group. However, the emotional scars still linger, and I struggle to break free from the shackles of my past. I feel desperate and overwhelmed by depression, haunted by memories of what happened. Men still fear me, and I feel tainted by the experience. Every time I try to form a connection with someone, I can sense the fear and apprehension emanating from them. It is isolating, and the loneliness is suffocating. I am trapped in this never-ending cycle of pain and fear, and I do not know how to escape. Sometimes, I wonder if I will ever be able to find some semblance of peace." (24-year-old female victim)
- "I recall the incident like it was yesterday. It was around 8:30 pm, and my son had stepped out to retrieve my lunch from home. Tragically, he and his friend were attacked by *Kauraye* members right in front of my house. The attackers demanded their phones, but the boys refused to hand them over. In a senseless act of violence, the *Kauraye* members stabbed my son in the throat and his friend in the back. The pain and grief that I felt in that moment are indescribable. My son was rushed to the hospital, but despite the efforts of the medical team, he succumbed to his injuries. The loss of my son was like a gaping hole that can never be filled. As I continue to grapple with the loss of my son, I'm reminded of the importance of faith and community. I have found comfort in my prayers, and I have found strength in the support of my loved ones. But I know that I am not alone in my grief, and I

hope that by sharing my story, I can help bring about change and ensure that no other family has to endure the same suffering.” (Religious leader)

DISCUSSION

The survey participants were predominantly male, with 72.4% identifying as male and 27.6% as female. Additionally, the majority of respondents fell within the age range of 15 to 45 years, constituting 91.3% of the sample. Specifically, 31.8% were between 15-25 years, 33.3% between 26-35 years, and 26.2% between 36-45 years, while those between the ages of 56 years and above accounted for the lowest percentage, at 1.1%. Furthermore, the educational background of the respondents revealed that the majority of respondents had tertiary education, at 59.2%, followed by those with secondary education, at 23.7%. A small percentage had a Master's Degree, at 2.0%, and PhD, at 0.2%. In terms of the respondents' mode of income, 41.2% were self-employed, 25.5% were civil servants, and 33.3% were unemployed. Lastly, regarding marital status, 44.2% of respondents were married, 29.4% were single, and 26.4% were divorced or widowed.

The binary logistic regression analysis showed that *Kauranci* crime had severe negative impacts on affected communities, with all 10 models yielding R² values greater than 0.05. Notably, five outcomes were identified as having the most significant negative consequences. These included: managing to stay strong (SE = 0.022), being treated by a medical professional (SE = 0.019), prayers (SE = 0.019), and being anxious (SE = 0.014).

Moreover, personal narratives from victims further highlighted the devastating effects of *Kauranci* victimization. A male victim narrated experiencing physical and psychological harm during an incident of *Kauranci* victimization. Specifically, he recalled a harrowing experience along the central market in Katsina, where he had gone to purchase supplies for his kiosk. Meanwhile, a 24-year-old female victim shared that *Kauranci* victimization had affected her marriage prospects. In her account, she stated that the *Kauranci* attackers brutally stabbed one of her suitors, stole his phone, and injured many others who were with him. Additionally, a religious leader shared a narrative of losing a son to *Kauranci* violence. He vividly recalled the incident, stating that it was around 8:30 pm, and his son had stepped out to retrieve his lunch from home. Tragically, the attackers demanded their phones, but the boys refused to hand them over, leading to a senseless act of violence where the *Kauraye* members stabbed his son in the throat and his friend in the back.

The findings reveal profound and lasting effects, resulting in physical, emotional, psychological, and socioeconomic consequences. This is consistent with trauma theory, which suggests that victims of violent crimes may experience complex trauma, characterized by feelings of fear, anxiety, and hyper-vigilance (Herman, 2015). Consequently, almost half of the respondents (48.4%) reported surviving with the incident through resilience, while 31.5% continued to struggle with trauma and depression. These findings align with previous research on the aftermath of armed robbery victimization (Etuk & Macpherson, 2018) and the consequences of victimization on individuals' well-being (Heleen, Dietrich, & Goeran, 2020; Anzaku, 2021).

Notably, over half of the respondents (55.6%) reported having a family member involved in *Kauranci* activity. This has significant implications for community safety and the need for targeted

interventions. The consequences of Kauranci victimization extend to both individuals and society, encompassing adverse effects such as financial losses, physical injuries, heightened fear, and increased reliance on health and victim services (Office for National Statistics, 2021). The narratives from the IDIs underscore the profound and lasting impact of Kauraye violence on victims' sense of safety, trust, and identity, highlighting the critical need for supportive resources to facilitate recovery.

Recommendations

According to these findings, the following recommendations are proposed by the study in an effort to provide solutions to the problems under study in Katsina Central.

- i. Establish Community-Based Rehabilitation Programs: Establish community-based rehabilitation programs within the next 6-12 months for the victims of *Kauranci* crime and perpetrators, providing counseling, trauma therapy, and family support, and focusing on promoting social cohesion, encouraging reporting, and providing support services to victims, to reduce victimization and promote community-led solutions.
- ii. Implement Socioeconomic Empowerment Initiatives: Implement socioeconomic empowerment initiatives, such as job creation, skill acquisition, and social welfare programs, to address the root causes of *Kauranci* victimization.
- iii. Improve Police-Community Engagement and Transparency: Improve police-community engagement and transparency through regular community outreach programs, transparent communication, and training law enforcement officials in trauma-informed practices.
- iv. Establish Trauma-Informed Care and Support Services: To address the trauma experienced by victims of *Kauranci* crimes, government agencies and NGOs should establish trauma-informed care and support services. These services should include counselling, psychological support, and medical care to help victims recover from their traumatic experiences.

Conclusion

By integrating trauma-informed interventions tailored to the complex needs of the victims of *Kauranci* crime, policymakers and practitioners can develop targeted support services that address the multifaceted consequences of victimization, including physical harm, emotional distress, psychological trauma, and socioeconomic instability, ultimately promoting healing, empowerment, and resilience among survivors, and advancing trauma-informed practice in gang-related settings.

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