



Polytechnic Education as a Panacea to Social Vices: A Study of Phone Snatching in Kano Metropolis

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Abstract

Original Research Article

This study examines polytechnic education as a strategic response to social vices, focusing specifically on phone snatching in Kano metropolis. It investigates the extent in which polytechnic education can serve as preventive mechanism against youth involvement in phone snatching, while also analyzing the socio-economic factors, operational patterns, and consequences associated with the crime. A mixed method research design was adopted integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Multi-stage cluster sampling was used to select 320 members of the public for questionnaire administration, while purposive sampling was employed to select 7 key informants, including a polytechnic lecturer, a police officer, victims of phone snatching, suspected/convicted phone snatching offenders, and a community leader for Key Informants Interview totaling 327 respondents. Findings reveal that phone snatching is predominantly perpetrated by youths, largely motivated by unemployment, poverty, and peer influence. The criminal patterns are characterized by nocturnal operations, specifically around public transport hubs and market. The study establishes that victims suffer significant physical injuries and psychological trauma. It also revealed that polytechnic education contributes to crime prevention by promoting skill acquisition, entrepreneurship development, and moral orientation, thereby enhancing self-reliance and reducing socio-economic frustration. The study recommends that polytechnic institutions should reform curriculum to incorporate mandatory civic and crime awareness education, increased funding for entrepreneurship hubs, and stronger collaboration between polytechnic institutions and security agencies. Strengthening these measures will enhance the transformative capacity of polytechnic education to function as a sustainable crime prevention strategy in Kano Metropolis.

Keywords: Polytechnic Education, Phone Snatching, Social Vices, Crime Prevention.

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Introduction

Globally, societies are characterized by certain social vices that serve as impediments to their socio-economic and political development. In Nigeria, there are various social vices that violate a variety of cultural and legal norms of the society which pose

threats to people in various communities, some of which include phone snatching, illicit sex, drug addiction, political thuggery, sexual harassment, prostitution, cultism, kidnapping and murder. However, phone snatching is identified to be an emerging life threatening among the contemporary crimes in some communities particularly in the urban



societies (Briscoe, 2020). Phone snatching is an act of forceful taking of another person's mobile phone with the use of dangerous weapons, mostly knives. In Kano Metropolis, phone snatching has become the order of the day, in which the perpetrators are mostly teenagers, with a few of them in their early twenties who operate in the morning, afternoon, and night (Ibrahim, 2021). Phone snatchers mostly use commercial tricycles known as *Adaidaita Sahu* to move round the city or even take a walk in groups from one place to another to make the operation. The increase of phone snatching in Kano Metropolis is alarming which has serious impact on society and creates a sense of anxiety, fear and panic which jeopardizes the safety of people (Muhammad & Idowu, 2021). In addition, the spate of phone snatching in Kano Metropolis has multiple personal and national implications which include financial loss suffered by the victims, loss of sensitive information, accessing and exploiting of personal information of the victim, infliction of bodily harm, injuries and in some cases death of the victim(s). Some of the factors responsible for phone snatching include lack of education, unemployment, poverty, poor upbringing, drug abuse, peer group influence among others.

Accordingly, Mayhem & Harrington (2021) argue that, phone snatching is mostly perpetrated by young people who are mostly uneducated. The lack of education often increases the likelihood of an individual's involvement in crime and other anti-social behavior. Education is a process in which individuals are equipped with knowledge, values, skills and capacity to initiate and innovate legitimate ways of earning a living and ensuring a developed society through proper direction and guidance. This leads to the establishment of polytechnic education to serve as a vital tool for assisting youth and even adults to acquire desired skills, knowledge, abilities and capacities to be self-reliant or self-employed, and also to transform our youths from being job seekers to job givers or job creators.

Polytechnic education has great potential for launching societies into a techno-economic dreamland, and also producing nationally relevant and globally competitive manpower of different cadres, ranging from craftsmen and technologists to

engineers and scientists especially in their mandate areas (Owodolu, 2013). He further maintains that, polytechnics produce graduates that are not only job creators, but transformers or reformers of their society, and ones that can be active and confident players in the global and competitive economy. This makes polytechnic education a great tool for economic independence for individuals and groups, which may reduce poverty and unemployment that are seen as factors predisposing the emergence and proliferation of crimes such as phone snatching in our societies.

Statement of the Problem

Contemporary societies are bedeviled with various crimes that undermine their socio-economic and political well-being. In Nigeria, prominent among such crimes is phone snatching which has been emerged as a growing concern for citizens, law enforcement agencies and the government. The menace of phone snatching is worsening in Nigeria with increased cases in Kano State which has become the biggest threat to indigenes and visitors. The consequences of this trend are multifaceted, ranging from loss of phones, sensitive information, financial loss, injuries and death as reported in the daily newspapers, articles and videos which are being uploaded on the internet. Consequently, the city of Kano is gradually becoming the headquarters of fear, grief and sorrow to the inhabitants and visitors due to rampant heinous activities of phone snatchers which continue to wreak havoc on innocent people (Ya'u, 2023).

Data from Kano State police command revealed that 1,220 suspected phone snatchers have been arrested from February, 2021 to November, 2021 and most of whom were arrested severally and almost every time they are arrested their bails are often facilitated by politicians and community leaders (Olayede, 2023). The data further revealed that 600 suspects of phone snatchers were charged to court. Accordingly, In July, 2023 Kano state commissioner of police stated that over 500 phone snatchers have been prosecuted and jailed at various correctional centres within the state (Nigerian Tribune Newspaper, 2023).

Olayede (2022) opines that, the situation of phone snatching in the past months, has grown to the level that the snatchers operate in the daytime and invade houses in various communities, a departure from their usual *modus operandi* of snatching phones on the main roads in the night. He further maintains that, the perpetrators have also devised a new way of attacking people, which is block main roads, flyovers and underpass in large numbers to launch their attacks without fear of security personnel. More so, most of the criminals, who reportedly operate under the influence of drugs, leave their victims with injuries, a situation that has led to a couple of deaths. For instance, from February, 2021 to February, 2022, five people were reported to have died following wounds inflicted on them by these young daredevils. Phone snatching has given a huge impact to the society and creates sense of anxiety, fear and panic which jeopardize the safety of people in Kano Metropolis. Snatchers appear to do their preparation well before any function as they know well where to attack and whom to pounce upon for expensive preys (Manzoor, 2018). In view of the above, the study examined the role of polytechnic education in preventing the menace of phone snatching with reference to patterns, and consequences of phone snatching in Kano Metropolis.

Objective of the Study

1. To identify the patterns of phone snatching in Kano metropolis
2. To find out the consequences of phone snatching in Kano metropolis.
3. To find out the roles of polytechnic education in addressing the menace of phone snatching in Kano metropolis.

Literature Review

Concept of Polytechnic Education

According to Ebele (2014), a polytechnic is a tertiary institution that focuses on hands-on experience and technology-related courses that produces technological manpower for technological advancement of a country. Polytechnic education is

defined as the learning of proper social conduct and/or the absorption of technical competency which involves one's ability to "know" something and their ability to then "do" something with this gained information (Gordon, 2009). Polytechnic education in Nigeria is aimed to train technologists, technicians, and management skills in courses leading to the awards of certificates, National Diploma (ND), Higher National Diploma (HND) and Advanced Professional Diploma which are relevant to the needs, aspirations and the development of the nation's diverse economy and industries (Jahun, 2017). Polytechnic education serve as an indispensable tool for crime prevention and control in societies through providing the technical knowledge and vocational skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant (Thomas 2020).

Social Vices

Social vices are actions that transgress accepted cultural norms and codes of conduct in a particular community, under particular conditions, or in a particular location (Omonijo, 2013). He further maintains that, social vices escalating in the society recently has to do with high level of illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, indiscipline, and incomplete socialisation, which touches on economic, political, social, cultural, technological, and environmental facets of human life. Accordingly, Gomez (2020) argue that, social vices are abhorrent, damaging behaviors that the entire community disapproves and also that stray from accepted moral norms; prostitution, phone snatching, indecent dressing, robbery, cultism, pocket-picking, drug addiction, exam fraud, hooliganism, thuggery, gambling, smoking, premarital sexual activity, and rape are vices that are common in the society.

Conceptualizing Phone Snatching

Phone snatching is define as a criminal act of taking the possession of phone(s) from lawful owners by engaging rob-and-run plan (Yew, 2012). It also be described as the illegal taking away of another

person's mobile phone through the use of force and intimidation which involve a threat of injury or death from the phone snatchers (Muhammad & Idowu, 2021). In view of Abdullahi (2022), phone snatching is a form of robbery where criminals take away mobile phones from individuals often through the acts of physical confrontation, intimidation, or force.

Patterns of Phone Snatching

Snatchers appear to do their preparation well before any function as they know well where to attack and whom to pounce upon for expensive preys (Manzoor, 2018). Phone snatchers operate in broad daylight and night in roads and even move into nooks and crannies to prey on unsuspecting victims with. They make use of tricycles known locally as *Adaidaita sahu* in the operation and they disguise themselves as commercial operators. If they take passengers to an area where there are no people, they threaten them with knives and even threatening to stab them if they did not hand over their phone. Countless people who refused to hand over their belongings were stabbed or killed. Another recognized method is that, phone snatchers move in tens sometimes more than that with weapons approaching the victims in close area, attacking them, and taking their phone and other valuable items.

According to Muhammad & Idowu (2021), phone snatching is a common crime committed by all categories of people and the victims are not limited to a particular category. He further maintains that, phone snatching can be committed at any time and place, including religious houses, where worshipers are expected to conduct themselves in a conforming manner, and also public places, such as sidewalks, parks, and markets. The perpetrators sold the phone base on the merit of the phone, for instance if the phone belongs to a well-known and popular company in the market, it is sold as '*Maiyi Ce*' at 10% of its market price. Phone snatchers sell the SIM cards from stolen phones to internet hackers, who in turn get access into the victims' bank account linked to the SIM cards and steal from their savings. Some phone snatchers, who are kind sometimes offer to sell the SIM cards to their victims before bolting with

the phones which they called it "swapping". They sell the phones in Bata, Farm center, Beirut, and Jawalla phone markets in Kano Metropolitan (Daily Trust Newspaper, 2021).

Effects of Phone Snatching

The social menace of phone snatching is a social problem perpetrated by few, but it has social and psychological implications for society at large, and for the individual in particular (Shehu, 2023). The spate of phone snatching has multiple personal and national implications. In addition, phone snatching led to the financial loss being suffered by victims and loss of sensitive information, which may lead to other crimes such as fraud, identity theft, and cybercrime, to mention but a few. Perpetrators leave their victims with injuries and sometime the situation may led to a couple of deaths. These losses may lead to post-traumatic stress-disorder and, by implication, undermine the performance of victims in the family, workplace, and society at large.

Role of Polytechnic Education in Addressing the Menace of Phone Snatching

Mayhem & Harrington (2021) argue that, incidences of social vices especially phone snatching is perpetrated mostly by young people who are mostly uneducated. The lack of education one has very often increases the likelihood of his/her involvement in crime and other anti-social behaviours. Polytechnic education is potentially an important element to prevent individuals from engaging in criminal behaviour. For instance in Nigeria, polytechnic education have the potentials for producing all cadres of manpower ranging from craftsmen and technologist to engineers and scientists especially in their mandate areas. Polytechnics produce graduates that are not only job creators, transformers or reformers of their society, but ones that can be active and confident players in the global and competitive economy. This makes polytechnic education a great tool of economic independence for individuals and groups, which may reduce poverty and unemployment that are seen as factors predisposing the emergence and

proliferation of crimes such as phone snatching in our societies.

Ossai (2012), maintains that, unemployment leads to frustration and disillusionment of the minds of the youths which may result to crimes such as phone snatching, theft, armed robbery, tribal and religious crises, kidnapping, and drug abuse. He further posits that, with the increased levels of knowledge, skills, capacities, innovative, and motivation these may generally lead to many other aspects which are viewed as positive correlates to lessening one's criminal or anti-social behavior. As such, polytechnic education serve as a vital tool for assisting youths and even adults to acquire the desired skills, knowledge, abilities and capacities to be self-reliant or self-employed, to transform our youths who are the hope of Nigeria's future from being job seekers to job givers or job creators.

More so, Lochner (2004), emphasizes the role of polytechnic education as a human capital investment that increases future legitimate work opportunities, which discourages participation in crime especially phone snatching, and also change the behaviour pattern of individuals toward desired directions by providing requisite knowledge and skills for survival and social progress. Similarly, Danjuma (2019) observes that, polytechnic education is a way of acquiring knowledge, skills, ideas, and technical know-how which lead to more acquisition of greater factors of production thereby leading to reduce the menace of social vices especially phone snatching as well as to increase income, self-sufficiency, self-dependency and standard of living.

Polytechnic education serve as a panacea to social vices especially phone snatching through training of technically oriented personnel who are to be initiators, facilitators, implementers, literates, and to be self-reliance (Kalu, 2022). He further maintains that, polytechnic education is aim at training individual various technical skills acquisition such as crafts, building, engineering, technology, business administration, management, and services in solving their practical problems. Similarly, Nwaoke (2017) opines that, polytechnic education is an educational system which involves the acquisition of skills, ideas, innovations and

management abilities necessary for job creation and self-employment in the society. He further assert that, polytechnic education could be used as a tool for fighting the war against social vices especially phone snatching in Nigeria, because an idle mind is a devil workshop but when people are self-employed there will be no room for idleness and social vices like phone snatching will reduce in the society.

Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-methods survey research design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The target population comprised male and female residents of Kano Metropolis. A total sample size of 327 respondents was utilised, consisting of 320 individuals for the quantitative survey and 7 participants for qualitative interviews. A multi-stage cluster sampling technique was employed to select the survey respondents. At stage one, four (4) Local Government Areas (LGAs) were selected from the eight (8) Local Government using simple random sampling via simple lottery technique. At stage two, from each of the four selected LGAs, five (5) wards were chosen using the same random sampling method, totaling 20 wards. At stage three, same method was applied in selecting two (2) locations from each of the five wards, resulting in 10 locations per LGA (40 locations total). At stage four, availability sampling was used to administer questionnaires to eight (8) respondents from each of the ten (10) locations, resulted in eighty (80) respondents per LGA, culminating in a total quantitative sample of 320. For the qualitative component, data were elicited via Key Informant interview (KII). A purposive sampling technique was used to select seven (7) respondents with specialised knowledge of the subject matter. The interview cohort included one (1) polytechnic lecturer, one (1) police personnel, two (2) victims of phone snatching, two (2) suspected/convicted phone snatching offenders and one (1) community leader.

The primary instruments for data collection consisted of structured questionnaires for quantitative data and Key Informant Interview (KII) for qualitative insights. The data were analysed using

triangulation to establish a supportive relationship between the quantitative and qualitative findings.

Research Findings

The Patterns of Phone Snatching in Kano Metropolis

Table 1: The time of Day Phone Snatching Incidents most commonly occur

Time of Day Phone Snatching Incidents Occur	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Morning (06:00–11:59)	43	13.4
Afternoon (12:00–17:59)	55	17.2
Evening (18:00–21:59)	89	27.8
Night (22:00–05:59)	133	41.6
Total	320	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 1 reveals that phone snatching incidents are most prevalent during the night hours (22:00–05:59), accounting for 41.6% of the total responses. This suggests that offenders take advantage of the darkness and reduced security presence to carry out their activities. The evening period (18:00–21:59) follows with 27.8%, indicating that as night approaches, and visibility declines, the risk of phone snatching increases. Incidents are less common in the afternoon (17.2%) and least frequent in the morning

(13.4%), likely due to greater public activity, visibility, and law enforcement patrols during daytime hours. From the findings, it can be deduced that phone snatching in Kano Metropolis is largely a nighttime crime, thriving under conditions of low visibility, minimal security surveillance, and reduced public movement. This suggests that poor street lighting, inadequate night patrols, and limited security presence may contribute significantly to the prevalence of phone snatching after dark.

Table 2: Respondents’ view on Place where Incident Occur

Places	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
Public transport (bus/mini-bus/taxi)	218 (68.1)	102 (31.9)	320 (100.0)
Market/shopping area	188 (58.8)	132 (41.2)	320 (100.0)
Main street/roadside	93 (29.1)	227 (70.9)	320 (100.0)
Residential area/near home	169 (52.8)	151 (47.2)	320 (100.0)

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 2 above reveals that public transport areas (68.1%) are the most common locations where phone snatching occurs in Kano Metropolis. This suggests that crowded vehicles, bus stops, and terminals

provide opportunities for thieves to act quickly and escape unnoticed. The market or shopping areas (58.8%) also record a high rate of incidents, showing that busy, congested environments facilitate theft due

to distractions and limited personal vigilance. Residential or near-home areas (52.8%) represent another significant location, implying that phone snatching also happens in familiar or seemingly safe neighborhoods, often by local offenders or opportunistic youths. In contrast, main streets or roadsides (29.1%) record the lowest occurrence, likely due to higher visibility, movement of vehicles, and occasional security patrols in such open spaces.

From the data, it can be deduced that phone snatching is most common in crowded or mobile settings—particularly in public transport systems and markets where people are less alert, and offenders can blend into the crowd. The study therefore concludes that public transport and market environments are the primary hotspots for phone snatching in Kano Metropolis, followed by residential neighborhoods.

Table 3: Type of Phone Frequently Targeted by Snatchers

Type of Phone Frequently Targeted by Snatchers	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
Smart phones (Android/iPhone)	289 (90.3)	31 (9.7)	320 (100.0)
Button phones	95 (29.7)	225 (70.3)	320 (100.0)
Both equally	179 (56.0)	141 (44.0)	320 (100.0)

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 3 above shows that smartphones (Android/iPhone) are by far the most frequently targeted phones by snatchers, with 90.3% of respondents confirming this. This reflects the high market value, easy resale potential, and advanced features (such as internet access and camera quality) that make smartphones highly desirable among criminals. In contrast, only 29.7% of respondents believe that button phones are frequently targeted, indicating that such devices hold low resale value and limited attraction for offenders. A moderate 56.0% indicated that both types of phones are targeted equally, suggesting that while smartphones remain the primary target, opportunistic theft of any accessible phone still occurs. It can be deduced that phone snatchers primarily aim for smartphones due to their monetary worth, demand in black markets, and ease of unlocking or reselling. The high rate (90.3%) implies that economic motivation is a major driver snatchers focus on devices that provide immediate financial gain. The low rate for button phones (29.7%) shows that low-end phones are

rarely targeted, except perhaps by petty criminals or when other opportunities are unavailable. The response that “both are targeted” (56.0%) indicates that some offenders act indiscriminately, especially when driven by desperation or substance addiction. The study shows that smartphones are the primary targets of phone snatchers in Kano Metropolis, driven by high resale value and technological desirability.

An interview with victim of phone snatching, he revealed that:

I was coming from school when two young men on a motorbike grabbed my phone and rode off. I didn’t even have time to react. I realized later that the phone was being sold in the local market. I avoid using my phone outside now, especially near crowded areas (KII with Phone Snatched Victim, Male, 33 years, 2025).

Also, suspected/convicted offender revealed that:

We usually target people who are busy on their phones, especially students and workers in the city. We work in pairs on bikes. The busy streets and crowded areas give us easy chances. After snatching, we sell the phones quickly to avoid being caught (KII with Suspect Phone Snatcher, Male, 24 years, 2025).

Another victim opined that:

They came in a group, snatched my phone, and threatened me. It was near a bus stop. The police were slow to respond, and I think this is why these people keep doing it. Many students in my school have had similar experiences (KII with Phone Snatch Victim, Female, 26 years, 2025).

In contrast, lecturers posited that:

Phone snatching has become very common in certain parts of Kano, especially near bus stops and busy streets. Most students are aware of it but still get distracted while using their phones in public, making them easy targets. Some students also report cases among themselves, and it seems like younger people are the most active in this crime. The pattern I have observed is that these criminals usually work in groups, often in pairs or trios. They target students, strangers and workers who are using their phones openly, sometimes following them from schools or markets. It mostly happens during peak traffic hours and

crowded areas. (KII with Lecturer, Male, 48 years, 2025).

Police Personnel revealed that:

Phone snatching in Kano is mostly opportunistic but increasingly organized. Thieves operate in groups, sometimes using motorbikes to snatch phones quickly and escape. Most snatched phones are sold in nearby markets or to known buyers. We also notice that the victims are often young people using their phones in public, especially students, strangers and office workers. There are hotspots, like crowded bus parks and shopping areas, where this crime occurs repeatedly (KII with Police Officer, Male, 39 years, 2025).

Another suspect posited that:

Some areas are safer for us because the police don't patrol them much. Most of our operations happen during the day, when people are distracted. Phones are easy to sell, and buyers always come looking. The crime pays better than other things, so many youths get involved (KII with Suspect Phone Snatcher, Male, 27 years, 2025).

Community leader narrated that phone snatching is a growing concern in our community. Young people are mostly involved, and it creates fear, especially among students and strangers. They have tried sensitizing them about the law and consequences, but poverty and peer pressure drive many into this crime. Local vigilante groups sometimes help, but more coordinated action is needed from the police and community leaders.

Consequences of Phone Snatching in Kano Metropolis

Table 4: The Consequences of Phone Snatching in Kano Metropolis

Consequences	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
Loss of valuable property	268 (83.8)	52 (16.2)	320 (100.0)
Loss of important personal data	177 (55.3)	143 (44.7)	320 (100.0)

Financial loss	194 (60.6)	126 (39.4)	320 (100.0)
Physical injury	246 (76.9)	74 (23.1)	320 (100.0)
Emotional and psychological trauma	205 (64.1)	115 (35.9)	320 (100.0)
Social instability	201 (62.8)	119 (37.2)	320 (100.0)

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 4 reveals that phone snatching in Kano Metropolis has wide-ranging negative effects, affecting victims economically, physically, psychologically, and socially. The most common consequence (83.8%) is the loss of valuable property, showing that victims not only lose their phones but also other belongings during such attacks. A significant 76.9% reported physical injuries, indicating that many incidents involve violence or physical confrontation, sometimes leaving victims harmed. Emotional and psychological trauma (64.1%) and social instability (62.8%) show that the problem extends beyond material loss, contributing to fear, anxiety, and insecurity in the community. Financial loss (60.6%) also ranks high, reflecting the economic hardship victims experience when replacing stolen phones or losing business-related data. Lastly, loss of personal data (55.3%) reveals that many victims suffer information theft, which may lead to identity fraud or misuse of personal details. From the findings, it can be deduced that phone snatching in Kano Metropolis is not just a petty theft issue but a serious social and security concern. The high levels of physical injury (76.9%) and emotional trauma (64.1%) suggest that the crime has become increasingly violent and traumatic. The study implies that phone snatching has severe personal and societal consequences, affecting victims materially, emotionally, and physically, while also undermining social stability in Kano Metropolis. This aligned with an interview with lecturer, he revealed that:

The primary consequence is the destruction of academic labour. Students lose years of project data and research stored on their devices. This leads to academic setbacks and psychological trauma that impairs learning. We are seeing a campus culture where students

are afraid to stay late for library studies. It's an economic barrier. In a digital economy, a phone is a tool for survival. When a student's phone is snatched, they are effectively 'digitally disenfranchised'. Many cannot afford a replacement, leading to a decline in their ability to participate in online coursework or technical assignments (KII with Lecturer, Male, 48 years, 2025).

Similarly, phone snatch victim posited that:

I was stabbed in the arm near Kofar Nassarawa. The scar reminds me of it every day. I lost my phone, but the biggest consequence is my loss of freedom. I no longer go out after 6:00 PM, and I feel like a prisoner in my own city (KII with Phone Snatch Victim, Female, 26 years, 2025).

Also, police personnel revealed that:

The trend has shifted from petty theft to violent robbery. We are seeing more cases involving knives and serious physical injury. The consequence is a strained relationship between the police and the public; people are frustrated and sometimes resort to jungle justice, which complicates our work and leads to more loss of life (KII with Police Officer, Male, 39 years, 2025).

Also, victims of phone snatching revealed that:

They took my phone at Sabon Gari market. My entire business was in that phone my customers' contacts and my banking app. Before I could block my

SIM, they withdrew ₦200,000. I am starting from zero now. I am always looking over my shoulder (KII with Phone Snatched Victim, Male, 33 years, 2025).

In contrast, suspected/convicted offender revealed that:

I did it because I had no job, but now my life is ruined. The consequence for me is a criminal record and being disowned by my family. In prison, you learn more bad things. I realized too late that the ₦20,000 I got for a stolen iPhone wasn't worth five years of my life (KII with Suspect Phone Snatcher, Male, 24 years, 2025).

Also, community leader revealed that:

Phone snatching has destroyed the peace of our neighborhoods. Parents are afraid

to send children on errands. It has forced us to create local vigilante groups, which costs the community money. Our youth are being wasted either as victims or as criminals. It is staining the reputation of Kano as a center of commerce (KII with Community Leader, Male, 55 years, 2025).

Another suspected/convicted offender posited that:

Most of us do it under the influence of drugs. The consequence is that we lose our senses. I didn't mean to hurt anyone, but now someone is in the hospital, and I am behind bars. The 'black market' dealers are the ones making the real money, while we bear the risk (KII with Suspect Phone Snatcher, Male, 27 years, 2025).

The Roles of Polytechnic Education in Addressing the Menace of Phone Snatching in Kano Metropolis

Table 5: Respondents Views' on whether Polytechnic Education Equips Students with Enough Vocational Skills to Reduce Youth Involvement in Phone Snatching

Polytechnic Education Equips Students with Enough Vocational Skills to Reduce Youth Involvement in Phone Snatching	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	122	38.0
No	111	34.7
Not sure	87	27.3
Total	320	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 5 above shows a mixed perception among respondents regarding the effectiveness of polytechnic education in equipping students with the vocational skills necessary to reduce youth involvement in phone snatching. A plurality of respondents (38%) believe that polytechnic education provides adequate vocational skills, suggesting confidence in the practical and technical orientation of polytechnic institutions. However, a close 34.7% disagree, indicating skepticism about

the relevance or quality of vocational training offered. The remaining 27.3% are uncertain, possibly due to limited awareness or lack of exposure to polytechnic programs and their outcomes. The nearly even split between “Yes” and “No” responses highlights diverse opinions on the capacity of polytechnic education to address social problems like youth crime. From the findings, it can be deduced that while many respondents recognize the potential of polytechnic education in providing

vocational skills that can curb crime, a significant proportion question its practical impact. The divided responses suggest that although polytechnics are designed to promote technical and vocational competence, implementation gaps, outdated curricula, and limited employment opportunities may reduce their effectiveness. The 27.3% who are unsure also point to poor public awareness or weak linkage between polytechnic education and job

creation. Generally, the data implies that polytechnic education has potential but requires enhancement to serve as a stronger preventive tool against youth criminality such as phone snatching. The study shows that while polytechnic education can play a vital role in reducing youth involvement in phone snatching through vocational empowerment, its current impact appears limited due to structural and policy challenges.

Table 6: The Extent to which Unemployment among Youths Contributes to the menace of Phone Snatching

Unemployment among youths contributes to the menace of phone snatching	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	76	23.7
Agree	124	38.7
Disagree	71	22.3
Strongly disagree	49	15.3
Total	320	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 6 shows that a majority of respondents (62.4%) combining those who strongly agree (23.7%) and agree (38.7%) believe that youth unemployment significantly contributes to phone snatching in Kano Metropolis. This indicates a strong perception that economic hardship and lack of job opportunities push young people into criminal activities as a means of survival or quick income. On the other hand, 22.3% disagree and 15.3% strongly disagree, totaling

37.6% who do not see unemployment as a major factor. From the findings, it can be deduced that unemployment among youths is widely recognized as a major driver of phone snatching. The study indicates that youth unemployment plays a major role in fueling phone snatching in Kano Metropolis, as many young people without sustainable livelihoods resort to illegal means of survival.

Table 7: Respondent View' on Whether Polytechnic Education can Serve as a Tool for Moral and Civic Reorientation among Students

Polytechnic Education can Serve as a Tool for moral and civic reorientation among Students	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	273	85.3
No	47	14.7
Total	320	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 7 above reveals that a vast majority of respondents (85.3%) believe that polytechnic education can serve as an effective tool for moral and civic reorientation among students. This indicates that most participants recognize the potential of polytechnic institutions not only in skill development but also in character formation, ethical conduct, and civic responsibility. A smaller proportion (14.7%) do not share this view, suggesting that while they acknowledge the educational role of polytechnics, they may perceive moral and civic development as

primarily the responsibility of families, religious institutions, or society at large rather than the schools themselves. From the findings, it can be deduced that polytechnic education is widely regarded as an important mechanism for instilling moral values and civic responsibility in students. Generally, strengthening moral and civic education within polytechnics can help reduce youth involvement in social vices, including phone snatching, and foster a more disciplined and responsible generation.

Table 8: The Effectiveness of Polytechnic Skill Acquisition Programs in Providing Alternatives to Phone Snatching

Effectiveness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very effective	65	20.3
Effective	157	49.0
Not effective	58	18.0
Not sure	40	12.7
Total	320	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 8 above shows that a significant majority of respondents (69.3%, combining “very effective” and “effective”) believe that polytechnic skill acquisition programs are effective in providing viable alternatives to phone snatching among youths. This indicates that most participants recognize the positive role of vocational and technical training in reducing youth involvement in criminal behaviour by offering employable and income-generating skills. However, 18.0% of respondents view these

programs as not effective, possibly reflecting concerns about the quality, accessibility, or implementation of skill acquisition initiatives. Meanwhile, 12.7% of respondents were not sure, suggesting a lack of awareness or limited exposure to such programs. From the findings, it can be deduced that polytechnic skill acquisition programs are widely perceived as an effective strategy for curbing youth participation in phone snatching and related crimes.

Table 9: Respondents View on Whether Integrating Crime Prevention Education into the Polytechnic Curriculum can Help Reduce Phone Snatching

Integrating Crime Prevention Education into the Polytechnic Curriculum can Help Reduce Phone Snatching	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	132	41.3
Agree	77	24.0
Disagree	60	18.7

Strongly disagree	51	16.0
Total	320	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 9 above shows that a majority of respondents (65.3%), combining strongly agree (41.3%) and agree (24.0%), believe that integrating crime prevention education into the polytechnic curriculum can help reduce phone snatching. This suggests that many respondents recognize the educational system as a vital platform for promoting moral awareness, civic responsibility, and crime deterrence among youths. On the other hand, a smaller proportion (34.7%, combining disagree and strongly disagree) do not support this view, possibly due to skepticism about the effectiveness of classroom-based

interventions or a belief that external socio-economic factors—such as unemployment and poverty are more decisive in influencing youth crime. The study shows that integrating crime prevention education into the polytechnic curriculum is widely viewed as an effective strategy for reducing phone snatching and similar crimes. Also, the findings affirm that education, when properly structured and value-oriented, can serve as a strong preventive tool against phone snatching and other youth-related crimes in Kano Metropolis.

Table 10: Whether Access to Quality Technical and Vocational Education Reduce the likelihood of Youths Engaging in Phone Snatching

Access to Quality Technical and Vocational Education Reduce the likelihood of Youths Engaging in Phone Snatching	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	125	39.0
Agree	93	29.0
Disagree	36	11.3
Strongly disagree	66	20.7
Total	320	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

From the above table, a majority of respondents (68%) combining Strongly Agree (39%) and Agree (29%) believe that access to quality technical and vocational education can significantly reduce the tendency of youths to engage in phone snatching. In contrast, 31.9% (11.3% Disagree and 20.7% Strongly Disagree) do not believe that such education has a meaningful impact on reducing youth involvement in phone snatching. The findings indicate that most respondents recognize technical and vocational education as a preventive measure

against youth crime, particularly phone snatching. This suggests that when young people acquire employable skills and access livelihood opportunities, they are less likely to engage in criminal behaviour for survival or material gain. The data strongly supports the notion that improving access to quality technical and vocational education can significantly reduce youth involvement in phone snatching by providing alternative means of income and self-reliance. An interview with polytechnic lecturers, he revealed that:

Polytechnic education plays a significant role in equipping students with knowledge, skills, and ethical awareness that can deter them from engaging in criminal activities such as phone snatching. Through courses in civic education, ethics, and entrepreneurship, students are taught the importance of lawful means of earning a living. This knowledge can reduce the allure of quick gains from crimes like phone snatching. Also, when students are provided with vocational and entrepreneurial skills, they are more likely to engage in productive work rather than resorting to crime. Education empowers them to contribute positively to society (KII with Lecturer, Male, 48 years, 2025).

Furthermore, police personnel narrated that phone snatching in Kano Metropolis is largely driven by unemployment and the lack of productive engagement for youths. He stated:

Many young people, especially school dropouts or unemployed youths, turn to phone snatching as a quick way to make money. Polytechnics can help by providing skills, awareness, and moral guidance to reduce these offences (KII with Police Officer, Male, 39 years, 2025).

Again, victims of phone snatching revealed that:

I was walking home from school when my phone was snatched. It left me afraid to go out at certain times. If young people were better educated and had jobs, maybe they wouldn't engage in this crime (KII with Phone Snatch Victim, Female, 26 years, 2025).

Similarly, phone snatched victims shared personal experiences of trauma and loss due to phone snatching incidents, he posited that:

It is not only the loss of my phone, but the fear it brings. Education that teaches

values and responsibility could prevent young people from hurting others like this (KII with Phone Snatched Victim, Male, 33 years, 2025).

Furthermore, suspected/convicted phone snatcher admitted that socio-economic challenges and peer influence contributed to their engagement in phone snatching. One confessed:

Most of us do it because we have no other way to get money quickly. Many of us dropped out of school or cannot find work, so it becomes easy to follow others into crime (KII with Suspect Phone Snatcher, Male, 27 years, 2025).

Another suspected/convicted phone snatcher revealed that:

If we had learned skills or had jobs, we might not have gotten involved. Education and vocational training could help youths like us to earn honestly (KII with Suspect Phone Snatcher, Male, 27 years, 2025).

Community leader emphasized the importance of education and community programs in curbing phone snatching. He stated:

Polytechnics and community initiatives have a role in teaching youths skills, discipline, and civic responsibility. When young people are educated and engaged in positive activities, crimes like phone snatching reduce (KII with Community Leader, Male, 55 years, 2025).

Discussion of Findings

The findings indicate that phone snatching in Kano Metropolis is widespread, organized, and rarely results in recovery of stolen devices. This aligns with the study of Alemika and Chukwuma, 2006; Okeshola and Mudiare (2013) which differently opined that criminals often operate in groups and use motorcycles and crowded environments to facilitate

quick escapes, a pattern commonly reported in urban robbery across Nigerian cities. Students, strangers and young workers are the primary targets due to frequent phone use in public spaces, confirming studies that link risky phone-use behaviour to victimization (Abdullahi & Suleiman, 2019). Bus stops, markets, and peak traffic periods constitute major hotspots, reflecting routine activity theory which emphasizes the convergence of motivated offenders, suitable targets, and absence of capable guardians (Cohen & Felson, 1979). The rapid resale of stolen phones sustains the crime and reduces the likelihood of tracing offenders, as informal markets for second-hand devices remain weakly regulated (Nnam & Inyang, 2020). Weak police patrol coverage and slow response times further encourage offenders to operate freely, reinforcing perceptions of low arrest probability (Onyeozili, 2005). Poverty, peer pressure, and the profitability of the crime continue to motivate youth involvement (Adebayo, 2013). Therefore, ineffective enforcement and risky phone-use behaviours significantly contribute to the persistence of phone snatching in the metropolis.

The findings indicate that phone snatching in Kano Metropolis has evolved into a highly violent and traumatic crime with severe physical and emotional consequences for victims. High levels of injury, fear, and psychological distress demonstrate that the impact extends beyond material loss to long-term mental health challenges, as documented in victimization studies across urban Africa (UNODC, 2019). Academic disruption and digital exclusion among students reveal that the crime undermines education and participation in the digital economy (Omoniyi & Fatile, 2018). Economic losses, including stolen business data and unauthorized withdrawals, push many victims into financial instability, reinforcing cycles of poverty (World Bank, 2021). Growing fear has restricted mobility and reduced public confidence in safety, particularly during evening hours, thereby weakening social cohesion (UN-Habitat, 2016). The shift toward violent methods has strained police–community relations and increased the risk of vigilante justice (Onyeozili, 2005). Perpetrators also suffer lasting consequences, including imprisonment, family rejection, and deeper criminal socialization, which

further entrenches criminal careers (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2006). Hence, phone snatching erodes social stability, damages livelihoods, and weakens trust in Kano Metropolis, making it a critical public safety and development concern.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concluded that offenders operate mainly in groups, using tricycles (a dai-daita sahu) and crowded areas to escape easily after attacks. Students and young workers remain the most frequent victims due to regular phone use in public spaces. Victims suffer serious physical injuries, psychological trauma, academic disruption, and financial losses. Fear and insecurity restrict movement and reduce public confidence in safety within the metropolis. Perpetrators also face long-term consequences, including imprisonment, family rejection, and deeper criminal involvement. Therefore, phone snatching threatens social stability, livelihoods, and development in Kano Metropolis. Effective control requires integrated strategies involving job creation, youth empowerment, drug rehabilitation, moral reorientation, improved security, and strengthened community policing. The findings clearly show that technical and vocational education plays a crucial preventive role in reducing youth involvement in phone snatching. Acquisition of employable skills provides youths with legitimate income opportunities, reducing reliance on criminal activities.

The study recommended that relevant authorities should strengthen drug abuse prevention and rehabilitation services, particularly targeting at-risk youths in high-crime areas. Schools, religious institutions, and community organizations should intensify moral reorientation programmes that promote discipline, responsibility, and respect for lawful conduct. Parents and guardians should be supported through counselling and family-strengthening initiatives to improve supervision and guidance, thereby restoring informal social control mechanisms that can deter youth involvement in phone snatching.

Security agencies should intensify patrol coverage in identified hotspots such as markets, bus stops, and peak traffic areas, while strengthening rapid response units and intelligence-led policing. Community policing structures should be expanded to enhance collaboration between residents and law enforcement. In addition, regulatory authorities should monitor and formalize second-hand phone markets, enforce mandatory phone registration, and strengthen device-tracking mechanisms to disrupt the resale of stolen phones and reduce the profitability and continuity of the crime.

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