

## The Causes of Kidnapping and its Implications on Nigeria

Yusuf Kamaluddeen Ibrahim\* and Abdullahi Ayoade Ahmad

Faculty of Law and International Relations, University Sultan Zainal Abidin, Terengganu, Malaysia.

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### Abstract

The incessant incidences of kidnapping in Nigeria have grown into a severe National threat to its society and is ravaging the country's socioeconomic wellbeing. The study aims to explore the national security and socioeconomic implications of this menace. The study applied the functionalism theoretical assumptions and employed Qualitative Document Analysis (QDA) based on the previous studies review conducted on kidnapping such as current literature, media reports, and newspaper to figure out the gap and come up with new findings on the causes of this menace. The study found that the government's reluctance to address such challenges is the force igniting heinous crimes in the country. It is due to the negligence of the Nigerian government to address the root-causes of the phenomenon such as; youth unemployment, quick-money syndrome, hard-drug influence, and others. The study suggests some measures such as public awareness programs, a synergic approach between the security forces and community police, appropriate sanctions, phone sim-card registration, quit ransom payment, and job creation.

**Keywords:** Kidnapping, National Security, Socio-Economic Impacts, Nigeria.

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### 1. Introduction

Globally, the criminal phenomenon and behaviour such as kidnapping, is not new. It's a worldwide phenomenon with differences in criteria and scenarios. In the Nigerian context, prior to 1990s, the issue of abduction was rare, and it was not reported in the Eighth United Nations Survey on Crime Trends and Operation of Criminal Justice System conducted in 2002 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (Obarisiagbon & Aderinto, 2018). The recent kidnapping wave in Nigeria started on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2006 by the abduction of expatriate oil company employees in the Niger Delta region, which was displayed as an open message to the world for many years of marginalization, injustice, exploitation, and underdevelopment of the region (Akpan, 2010). Since then, the menace became boldly commercialized in several parts of the country. In contemporary Nigeria, the implications of kidnapping are not only on the foreigners; sadly, it now includes locals, such as; the poor and the rich, the aged, and children.

The Qualitative Document Analysis (QDA) has been adopted based on the previous studies review conducted on kidnappings such as current literature, media reports, and Newspapers. This method was chosen because preceding studies assist the researcher in figuring out the strength and weaknesses of other related studies, which provide a way for addressing the gap as well as to come-up with new findings on the particular phenomena. The study found that the negligence of the Nigerian government to address the root-causes of kidnapping such as; youth

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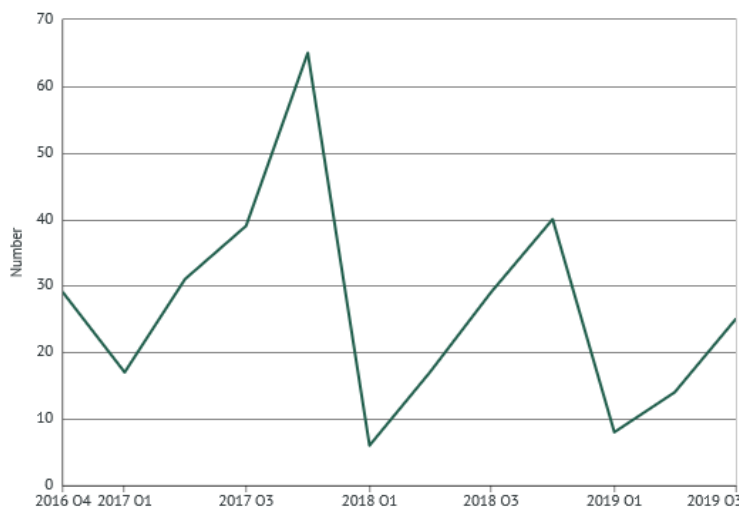
unemployment, corrupt politicians, quick-rich syndrome, hard-drugs influence is the reason why heinous crimes including kidnapping keeps prevailing in the country.

The study aims to explore the socio economic and National security implications of kidnapping, which is persistently destabilizing the wellbeing of the society. The study adds to the previous knowledge literature on kidnapping by elaborating on the socioeconomic and National security dimensions concerning kidnapping, its root-causes and its deteriorated challenges on the socioeconomic and National security demesnes of the Nigerian society. It also reflects as a corrective tool to the policymakers, community, and academics in stemming the tide of kidnapping and other heinous crimes.

According to Okoli & Agada, (2014); Imhonopi & Urim, (2016); Ihe, (2018); Samuel, (2019); Ibrahim & Ahmad, (2020), the incessant incidences of kidnapping have incurred immense threat to the government, the security agencies, and all related stakeholders. Therefore, the present study focus on the socioeconomic impact of the phenomenon. The Nigerian senate president urges the need for reforming and restructuring Nigerian security architecture as a result of the deadly insecurity terrorizing the country (Umoru 2019). Imposed Nigeria into the United States visa ban countries (Olaniyi 2020). The Senate President warned that the current insecurity situation in the country was crippling the socioeconomic activities and scared away investors, which left the development of Nigeria in stagnation. Thus, he called for a concerted effort from all arms of government to tackle the problem (Umoru 2019).

According to Asuquo, (2009), the term "kidnapping" is complex and transitional due to its state-to-state scenario as well as jurisdictional criteria. Ugwuoke, (2011) and Walsh & Poole, (2019) has described the phenomenon as ‘abducting or capturing away of a person intentionally to deprive them of personal freedom. Generally, kidnapping comprises capturing and detaining an individual against his or her will, usually in an extension of other criminal intentions. Abraham, (2010) has further illustrated that kidnapping is of two kinds: simple and aggravated. The latter is rampant in Nigeria and is more unsafe because it contains both physical and psychological suffering and deprivations, it really might be difficult for most Nigerians to utter which of aggravated kidnapping and armed robbery is the most dreaded and feared crime in the country.

Reported Kidnapping Cases in Nigeria

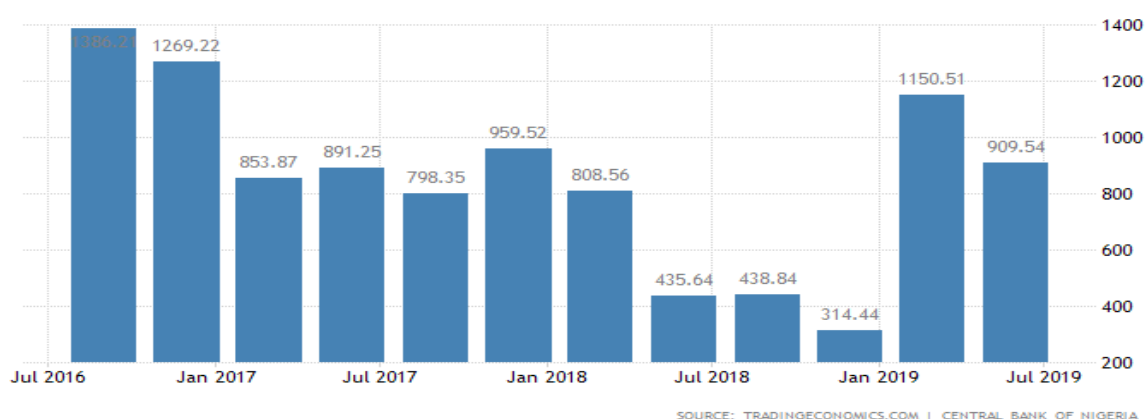


Date	Value	Change, %
2019Q3	25.00	78.57 %
2019Q2	14.00	75.00 %
2019Q1	8.00	-80.00 %
2018Q4	40.00	37.93 %
2018Q3	29.00	70.59 %
2018Q2	17.00	183.33 %
2018Q1	6.00	-90.77 %
2017Q4	65.00	66.67 %
2017Q3	39.00	25.81 %
2017Q2	31.00	82.35 %
2017Q1	17.00	-41.38 %
2016Q4	29.00	

Source: (Knoema, 2019).

The wave of the kidnapping phenomenon has become so absurd and terrible. The diary of the recent major kidnaps in Nigeria has however revealed that the deteriorative rate of kidnapping at National level is 0.001 per 100,000 populations in 2013, it also escalated from 29 in 2016 to 40 in 2018, evolving at an average annual rate of 42.84%, even though the incidents are fluctuating substantially, from 2017 to 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2019 it tends to decline to 25 and changed at 78.57% (Knoema, 2019). Nigeria was 3<sup>rd</sup> in Africa and the top 14<sup>th</sup> in the world according to crime index report mid-year (2019). The most unfortunate victims of these menace of kidnapping in Nigeria often die in the process while the luckier ones are released after severe torture and payment of huge ransom.

Nigerian Foreign Direct Investment Chart



Source: Trading Economic/Central Bank of Nigeria, 2020.

According to Trading Economics and Central Bank of Nigeria 2020, the FDI in 2017 was 1269.22, which drop to 959.52 in 2018 and also declined to 909.54 in 2019, due to incessant insecurity incidences such as kidnapping, Banditry, Boko haram, and others. Based on the IMF report; World Economic Outlook (WEO), the GDP of Nigeria in 2011 is 414.10 billion USD, also \$568.50 in the year 2014, but lean to \$376.36 in 2017, and \$398.19 billion in 2018 due to the heated kidnapping incidences (Knoema, 2019).

Parsons, (1985), Merton, (1996), Durkheim, (2013) described structural functionalism theory as each civilization becomes obsessed with collective object build-up with component and fragments, that the entire society regulates upon for their survival. Hence, if any part fails to provide equal service that delivers equity between each component source, the comeback responses are often dysfunctional consequences destabilizing the safety of the entire society (Hustedde & Ganowicz, 2002). In the context of kidnapping, the theory explores the socio economic implications of kidnapping in Nigeria, precisely from the socio-economical viewpoint, and it's transparent that structural functionalism faults the Nigerian economy of being dysfunctional, which led to vicious comebacks and aggression. Also, the theory aims to scrutinize the inability of the Nigerian economic system to provide the essential resources necessary to sustain and re-centralized a productive economy. The implications of the dysfunctions such as unemployment, abject poverty, marginalization, and deprivation often disastrously affected the vulnerable masses via insecurity, terrorism, and heinous crimes, including kidnapping.

According to Samuel (2019), and Ibrahim & Ahmad (2020), the lucrative act of kidnapping has been recognized as a business to the criminals, and it becomes attractive for its profitable

nature. Kidnapping is viewed in some parts of Nigeria by politicians as an instrument to use against their political rivals. The ransom is extracted to distract the opposition, and to force them off the track concerning their election. Also, the abduction of expatriates in Niger delta captured the attention of the government and international bodies over the economic deprivation of the region. This has been viewed under the administration of President Good-Luck Jonathan post-amnesty program initiated in 2012, to restore peace and harmony in the region and the Nigeria at large, so as to ensure the influx of socio economic activities without any hesitation.

## **2. The Causes of Kidnapping**

This study argued with previous studies such as Okoli & Agada, (2014); Imhonopi & Urim, (2016); Ihe, (2018); Samuel, (2019); Ibrahim & Ahmad, (2020) on the issues triggering kidnapping in Nigeria. The present study found that the negligence of the government to address the root-causes of kidnapping such as youth unemployment, corrupt politicians, quick-money syndrome, and hard-drug influence is the vital forces igniting heinous crimes including kidnapping in the country.

### **2.1. Youth Unemployment and kidnapping**

To Inyang, (2009) unemployment problem is one of the driving factors deteriorating kidnapping, as always the wise saying "an idle mind is the devil's workshop." In Nigeria, many youths search for non-existing jobs out of frustration. Inyang acknowledges that negative alternatives often develop on the mind of the individuals affected with such threat, which also couple with mounting responsibilities to tackle, they are also poverty afflicted and usually find comfort in heinous crimes such as kidnapping in the sense that numerous non-disabled individuals, school drop-out and graduates roam around the streets both unemployed (Ugwuoke & Ph, 2011).

### **2.2. Corrupt Politicians and kidnapping**

Ibeanu, (1997) affirmed that the politicians hired idlest persons for political-thuggery and left them with unfulfilled promises. Affectedly, the used and dumped frustrated armed youths will have to figure out how to survive by abducting the relatives of their masters and vulnerable peoples as revenge (Ugwuoke & Ph, 2011). Relatively, the evolvement of oil in the 1970s ignites heinous crimes incidences in Nigeria, between the political office holders astonishing the resources and others who are excluded from the juicy government contracts, engage in kidnapping as an alternate illicit share of the "national cake" (Ene, 2018).

### **2.3. Quick-Money Syndrome on kidnapping**

Dodo, (2010) scrutinize that the syndrome of "get-rich-quick" and "moral decadence" had been identified as a causative factor of kidnapping. Also, Inyang, (2009) claimed that nobody investigates how people acquire their wealth in Nigeria, a poor person today might show up rich the next day, and unquestionably free in the society that was craving for quick-fortune. Boldly enough, such people get rewarded with chieftaincy titles in their communities, thereby instilling immoral decisions as transparent to the Nigerian youths, and such image triggered the youths to think that one can elevate respect from illegal earnings. Hence, they embark on heinous crimes such as kidnapping to portrayed and reflect the government officials that boldly

looted the country's treasure. They can also perpetrate above the law and kidnap and secure ransom without fear, which had turn disastrous that foreigners, businessmen, and successful people shadowing under the government umbrella suffers the menace (Ene, 2018).

#### **2.4. Influence of Hard Drugs on Kidnapping**

Excessive consumption and trafficking of hard drugs also ignite the menace of kidnapping in Nigeria (Okoli, 2009). Okoli also illustrates that Abia State contributed significantly to the Nigerian economy due to its commerce and flourishing entrepreneurs. Besides, the state emerges as a notorious drug zone in eastern Nigeria in trafficking and consuming. The drug lords ensured ready served drug supply in Abia and its neighbouring states, The extensive illegal drug usage especially between teenagers, ignite heinous crimes such as armed robbery and kidnapping within Abia and the rest of the country, through Numerous sales joint where the criminal act is planned, perfected and executed (Ene, 2018).

### **3. Implications of Kidnapping**

The study found that there are economic and psychological as well as socioeconomic impacts of the kidnapping in Nigeria.

#### **3.1. The Economic Implications of Kidnapping**

From the economic point of view, the implications of kidnapping perpetrate with direct as well as indirect effects. From the individual perspective, it causes damages including huge economic resources lost as ransom. Also, on the indirect viewpoint, the preventive and expending steps approach of hiring private security experts, and the increment it often incurs on budget expenditure. For instance, the federal government budget for 2019 on national security is N109.8 billion, which covers the expenses on security and its agencies. The Lagos state government publicized that it spent over three billion Naira on ransom, also Sir Mike Okiro a former inspector general of police publicized that between 2006 and 2009, the amount of ransom paid is over 15 billion, which could have been used for meaningful development (Kyrian, 2009). Dode (2012) stated that in 2006, when the perpetrators kidnaped six foreigners on the premises of Shell Petroleum Corporation, the company was forced to evacuate its employees, and it cripples its production, thus caused Nigeria an economic decay and deterred the foreign investment.

#### **3.2. Psychological Effects of Kidnapping**

Soyombo (2016) claims that kidnapping barricades so many people's social relations and social life by keeping them indoors day and night. It resulted in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder due to horrifying incidences of the menace. Most devastatingly, traveling in the night has become risky and overrated; successful people disguise in a taxi because they are afraid to buy a new vehicle. Also, house owners are forced to present an unfurnished view of their homes, displaying poverty notion by leaving their front wall unpainted, no inter-personal relationship because kidnapping installs a high level of mistrust among the people of Nigeria. Soyombo also noted that due to heated kidnap incidences, public officials demand more police escorts, thereby led to insufficient police forces that could be positioned at some crime-spot areas in order to eliminate heinous crimes in the country.

### **3.3. Socio-Economic Effects of Kidnapping**

As frequently noted, insufficient security budget and expenditure to tackle criminal activities, as well as corruption among law enforcement agencies, often paralyzed the efforts for crime prevention. For instance, Philippines ' senate president Blas Ople observed that 52% of Philippine kidnapers involved retired military and police officers (Ene, 2018). Also, (Nwaorah, 2009) noted that perpetrators are people that are so desperate in their social and economic needs, in which the inequality among the poor and the rich is escalating, and the only possible means to acquire legal money is often difficult to attain; heinous crime's such as kidnapping appeared as the alternative venture to draw the government attention over the unbearable conditions.

## **4. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study identified the fundamental influences fuelling kidnapping, which are; youth unemployment, corrupt politicians, quick-money syndrome, as well as consumption of hard drugs among youths and adverse socioeconomic situations caused by youth unemployment and poverty. It is transparent that heinous crimes have had a long-reaching socioeconomic and psychological consequence's in the societies of Nigeria. As a result of that, this study's submission is to ensure that government has significantly played a major role in stemming the tide of kidnapping, and to also reposition the constitutional strength in flattening the curve of the menace of kidnapping through adaptation and implementing of public awareness programs, synergic approach between the security agencies and community police, appropriate sanctions, sim-cards registration, quit ransom payment, job creation. With such, the federal and state government will be able to over-power and eliminate the menace and stem the tide of kidnapping in Nigeria. According to the submissions and conclusion of this study, it recommended the panacea as follows:

### **4.1. Public Awareness Programs**

There is a need to educate people by encouraging the media to orchestrate public awareness programs against kidnapping. By providing some specific measures to tackle the menace, which will display as a threat to the kidnapers and persuade them to change and reform from the evil act. Henceforth, the government should set-up a well-equipped/Effective anti-kidnapping agencies in order to over-power the perpetrators of kidnapping. It is believed that this would assist in stemming the tide of kidnapping in Nigeria.

### **4.2. Synergic Approach between the Security Agencies and Community Police**

Security personnel needs to be well-equipped, such as the police and other law enforcement agencies, with all required operational facilities as well as intelligence gathering on kidnapping in order to properly function and over-power the ugly threat of kidnapping in Nigeria. Also, the new security outfits formed to police the community deserves to be proactive in reporting any suspicious movement about kidnapper's hideouts. They should be provided with vehicles and communication gadgets as well as good relations with security agencies in order to attain their required operations. Additionally, it is mandatory to declare a restrict law on any government official, public office holder, and politician, against inside-relations with the kidnapers. Any of such persons if caught associating with the perpetrators should be banned from vying and contesting of any governmental position. It will rest assured discourage to the

others not to part-take in the criminal act.

#### **4.3. Appropriate Sanctions**

Tackling this social vice required re-constitutive strength while suggesting that the traitors be arrested and dealt with appropriately. Relatively, government officials must avoid corruption and flashy wealth display. The focus must be to re-energized on good leadership with transparency, responsibility, and equality. By applying this, hostage-taking will be eliminated and replace with patriotism, nation-building, and sustainable development.

#### **4.4. Phone Sim-cards Registration**

The service providers have to re-check their policy effectively to ensure every line is registered before it starts working, that will enable them to fast-track in-and-out going call by every customer in the Network, as well as track their location using GPS network, in order to traced and intercede every call from the kidnappers especially when negotiating for a ransom, as it is detectable by the network provider.

#### **4.5. Quit Ransom Payment**

The kidnappee's family should refrain from the desperation of paying ransom and delays a little longer or quit the ransom payment to the kidnappers because it often serves as a motivational element for the perpetrators to keep exploring in the ugly criminal act.

#### **4.6. Job Creation**

The issue of the death penalty as a panacea to the menace of kidnapping in the country is yet to be implemented. This is because the capital punishment would not be the only solution to the abduction. Some criminals may be willing to change their behaviours, such as those that embarked into the kidnapping act as the only means of survival for earning and living. Therefore, the government and other relevant agencies need to come up with jobs for idle minded graduates and the rest of the criminal-minded youths in order to restructure and re-configure safety for a better productive society.

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