



**Factors and consequences of kidnapping as a threat to national security:
A situational analysis of Nasarawa State - Nigeria**

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Abstract

One of the most pressing issues confronting contemporary nation-state is guaranteeing national security in the face of numerous and increasing security threats. Kidnapping occurs throughout Nigeria, it is a national problem that has infiltrated the country's fabric with major effects for the victims and their families, as well as the state as a whole. This necessitates a thorough investigation of the problem in order to pinpoint its underlying causes and catastrophic implications. The Descriptive design was adopted for this study in which 400 respondents were selected by random sampling technique. A questionnaire comprising of 30 items was used to collect data. Data was analysed using Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation while hypothesis was tested using linear regression at 0.05 alpha level. The findings of the study revealed factors responsible for increase in kidnapping in Nasarawa State, Nigeria which include poverty, inequality, obtaining a ransom, and forcing the government or the enemy to succumb to some demands. Factors responsible for the increase of kidnapping have positive and significant influence on the consequences of kidnapping on national security $\beta = .537$, t statistic of 12.68. Consequent upon the findings, it is suggested that both individuals and government should be more proactive in creating jobs for the teeming youth population. Gainful employment within the law will reduce the drive to crime as a means of survival.

Keywords: kidnapping, factors, consequences, threat, national security

1. Introduction

Criminal behaviour such as kidnapping is not new globally. This phenomenon only varies in criteria and scenarios. According to Tzanelli in Ibrahim and Mukhtar (2017), the term 'kidnapping' could be traced to 17th-century Britain, when newborns ('kid') of rich families were 'napped' and held for ransom. Kidnapping in Nigeria before 1990s, was not pronounced and are rarely mentioned in trends of crime (Obarisiagbon & Aderinto, 2018). However, the current trend of kidnapping in Nigeria could be traced to February 25, 2006, with the abduction of oil company employees in the Niger Delta region, to express their grievances to the world for the region's long history of marginalization, injustice, exploitation, and underdevelopment

(Akpan in Yusuf & Abdullahi, 2020). From that particular incident, several cases of kidnapping have increased at an aggressive rate and pervasive all over the nation. Kidnapping is no longer restricted to foreign victims in Nigeria but now locals cutting across socio-economic boundaries. Asuquo in Inyang and Abraham (2015) observed that the term "kidnapping" is fluid and difficult to define, because it is relative to society. It varies in scenarios and criteria from one geographical location to another. Hostages have been seized for two basic reasons, according to Hazen and Horner in Ibrahim and Mukhtar (2017): political negotiation and economic gain. However, criminals kidnap and abduct people for a variety of motives and goals, including adoption, rape, marriage, ransom, get back



at perceived enemies, to settle scores, commercial purpose, rituals, cheap labour, murder, and other causes (National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), 2014).

National security which is also referred to as national defense, can be refer to as the security adopted by a state or nation in defending its citizenry. It could also refer to as the defense of a nation state against any form of threat which covers its citizens, economy, and institutions, as a primary responsibility of government (Chalmers, 2015). Holmes (2015) opined that national security is the safekeeping of the nation as a whole.

One of the most pressing issues confronting contemporary nation-state is guaranteeing national security in the face of numerous and increasing security threats. The threat of organized crime is one of the most serious of these dangers (Okoli & Orinya, 2013). Organized crime refers to high-profile crimes committed through transnational syndication and racketeering. There are numerous evidences that organized crime is not only becoming more ubiquitous, but also becoming more sophisticated and centralized over the world. They are, in effect, becoming increasingly established both locally and worldwide. According to Action on Armed Violence, there are about 887 cases recorded by the Police cutting across the country. Kidnapping occurs throughout Nigeria, it is a national problem that has infiltrated the country's fabric (Dodo, 2010). It is more common during times of terrorism, insurrection, and other forms of political violence. Kidnapping has major effects for the victims and their families, as well as the state as a whole, beyond making money. This necessitates a thorough investigation of the problem in order to pinpoint its underlying causes and catastrophic implications, as well as policy solutions for addressing the issue in Nigeria. The following research questions were set to guide the study:

- i. How can we account for the increasing cases of kidnapping in Nasarawa state, Nigeria?
- ii. What are the consequences of kidnapping on social order/national security in Nasarawa state, Nigeria?

1.1 The Nasarawa State Situation

Nasarawa is a Nigerian agrarian state that is centrally positioned in the Middle Belt region. The state is located between latitudes 7 45 and 9 25 degrees north of the equator, and longitudes 7 and 9 37 degrees east of the Greenwich meridian. The state shares borders with Kaduna in the north, Plateau in the east, Taraba and Benue in the south, and Kogi and the Federal Capital Territory in the west. It covers a total of 26,875.59, square kilometers of land. No specific criteria were used to define poverty, nor are data available to support poverty levels. However, insufficient money supply, inadequate educational opportunities, and the unemployment are used as a measure of poverty. The adoption of domestic standards implies that the assumption of a national minimum wage of 30,000.00, naira would apply.

Though globally, developing and even developed economies of the world yearn for better wages to meet with the economic reality of the day. The level of poverty and unemployment is too alarming with job losses associated with the global economic meltdown, insecurity and poor operation of companies, multiple taxation, corruption, reforms in the banking sector etc.

Moreover, unemployment rate in Nigeria has been a major problem with millions of graduates and school leavers without gainful employment. The national bureau of statistics (NBS 2017) shows that 54 percent of Nigerian youths are unemployed in 2012 (World Bank Database). In Nasarawa State, youth's unemployment in 2011 is 36.5 percent (Aiyedogbon, 2012). This trend is getting worse even as the federal and state governments failed to create jobs to absorb



the unemployed population which result in a vicious cycle of poverty in the state which contributed significantly to the alarming rate of social problems such as the development of ethnic militia (Ombatse, armed herdsmen among others), armed robbery, kidnapping, political thugs and other criminal tendencies. Acts of terrorism and kidnapping have become synonymous with the Nasarawa state youths because of unemployment which they see as the alternative means of livelihood and a route out of the poverty syndrome.

2. Review of Literature

The ramifications of kidnapping on Nigerian national security will be the focus of this examination. The related literature is organized and reviewed under the following outlines; the concept of security, the concept of kidnapping, causes of kidnapping in Nigeria, effects of kidnapping in Nigeria, challenges of kidnapping, theoretical framework and empirical studies related to the study.

2.1 Concept of Security and the National Security

Every day we wake up to the news of petty crimes, armed robberies, ethnic/religious killings, armed insurgency, the Niger Delta problem, which appears to have died down after the hullabaloo of amnesty, terrorism, Boko Haram massacres and bombings in Abuja, Maiduguri and other Northern cities. Gunmen attacks, and of recent banditry in northern cities heighten security concerns. Indeed, insecurity has become pervasive throughout the country. The government's casual approach has been blamed for this unease, which has become sophisticated and seemingly unsolvable. According to Wikipedia (2021), security is known as the degree of resilience or protection against damage. It covers all valued and endangered assets, including a person, a home, a community, a country, or an

organization. National security, according to Ngwama (2014), encompasses “a state where unity, well-being, values, and beliefs, the democratic process, the mechanism of governance and welfare of the nation and her people are perpetually improved and secured through military, political and economic resources. Held and McGrew in Iregbenu and Uzowanne (2015) traditionally understood national security as the acquisition, deployment and use of military force to achieve national goals.

2.2 Concept of Kidnapping

Throughout the world, criminal phenomenon and behaviors such as kidnapping are not new. It is a global phenomenon with different criteria and scenarios. In the Nigerian context, kidnapping was rare prior to the 1990s and was highlighted in a Survey on Crime Trends, however, In 2002, there are lots of crime (Obarisiagbon & Aderinto, 2018). On February 25, 2006, the newest round of kidnappings in Nigeria began with the abduction of foreign workers from oil companies in the Niger Delta region, to express their grievances against marginalization. (Akpan, in Yusuf & Ahmad, 2020). Since then, the threat has been turned to business in various regions of the country. Considering the state-to-state situation as well as jurisdiction criteria, the term "kidnapping" is complex and transitory, according to Asuquo in Yusuf et al (2020).

People who have been kidnapped forcibly or fraudulently are being held in captivity for ransom. This means that, while people are kidnapped for political reasons, the predisposing factor seemed to be more economical. Recent kidnapping typologies, whether they come from the social sciences or the business world, emphasize on criminal motive. Two claims are crucial here: (a) every kidnapping involves some sort of economics, and (b) the status of the



captive plays a role in the ransom payment. There are three types of kidnappings according to Nwanunobi (2017). These include express kidnapping, miracle fishing, and tiger disappearances.

Express kidnapping: This is a kind of kidnapping that involves the abduction of a person to coerce him/her into emptying his/her bank account from any available ATM machine and handed the money to the kidnapers. Later he/she may be released unhurt in a desolate place.

Miracle fishing: This form is common along the highway through rural areas where illegal roadblocks are erected and kidnapers are in fake police or military uniforms disguising to be law enforcement agents stopping vehicles and asking drivers to come down for identification, and thereby taking passengers based on their appearance and likelihood to mobilize for ransom. **Tiger kidnappings:** It is another form of kidnapping that appears like blackmailing. A situation where a family member is abducted and kept hostage to force other member/members of the family to do something contrary to law in favour of the kidnapers.

Kidnappings are becoming more common in Nigeria. Nigerian statistics show that over 1,000 kidnappings occur each year, with many more likely going undetected (Catlin Group, 2012).

2.3 Causes of Kidnapping in Nigeria

Kidnapping seen as a social problem is quite complex in orientation. This crime occurs in different contexts for different reasons. It varies in causes and consequences. Hazen et al. state in Ibrahim (2017) states that kidnapping occurs for various reasons: principal among them is for political negotiation and also for economic gain. Going by this rough classification, it is very important to understand the factors underlying the problem, particularly kidnappings for ransom. Aside the categories indicated

above, people are kidnapped by criminals for various reasons and intentions, including killings for rituals (NCRB, 2014).

Political factors, poverty, and a lack of legal/available economic opportunities among youths are all contributing to the development of abduction in Nigeria and many other developing African and Asian countries. According to Tepperman, as reported by Ibrahim & Mukhtar (2016), many Nigeria adolescents are living on the streets and scramble for survival. This has economic considerations as well as risk exposure in general.

In disadvantaged communities, economic distress and the state of deprivation have created impetus for kidnapping as a means of obtaining money and getting back at inequality in the society. Nwakaji (2018) identified some of the reasons for kidnapping. These includes forcing the government or individuals to succumb to some demands; causing a strain in the relationship between countries, getting classified information from the victims, taking ransoms and exposing a particular case.

2.4 Consequences of Kidnapping in Nigeria

Regardless of the type of kidnapping and the factors contributing to its occurrence, the psychological and economic effects of the problem can be quite devastating, first for the victims and their significant others. Victims of kidnapping differ in age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, the level of education, and the country of origin. Although anyone can be a victim of crime, certain groups are especially vulnerable to this form of victimisation (Kaylor, 2015). Kidnapping exposes children to sexual abuse as well as the chance of developing sexually transmitted illnesses. Another pretense for sexual assault of kidnapped children is the forced marriage of underage victims to older men. Aside from the psychological and physiological effects on

the victim and his or her family, kidnapping also has significant economic and financial consequences. In certain interviews, Freeman said in Ibrahim (2017) that some left-behind parents revealed that they had thoughts of severe violence at the time and found peace via religious. Others spoke of their difficulty to settle while their children were away, as well as feeling unhappy and ill all of the time. These parents described losing their hair, becoming physically ill, and becoming addicted to medications.

At the government level, it has created a toll on government expenditure, substantial part of the budget is allocated to security every year thereby affecting other sectors. Similarly, between 2006 and 2009 according to Kyrian in Ubong, (2013), about 15 billion was paid to kidnappers. Large amounts of money spent on ransom payments can have a significant effect on the state economy, as it can be used for substantial socio-economic development. Also, on several occasions due to fear of being kidnapped, workers (expatriates and nationals) stopped work on various sites which have dire consequences on the economy. Some folks went as far as to borrow money to secure freedom for relatives from kidnappers. The victims' workplace will likewise be negatively impacted. If the casualty is an entrepreneur, business will suffer a setback while waiting for him or her to return. Many people are held hostage in their houses from nightfall until dawn for fear of being kidnapped, which has an impact on their social lives and relationships. Night travel has become a high-risk activity as a result of kidnappings. For fear of kidnappers, many people are hesitant to purchase or operate new vehicles. People known to be wealthy are now travelling with ordinary people using taxis and okadas to keep an eye on hostage takers (Soyombo in Ubong 2013).

Kidnapping has led to a high level of mistrust when it comes to interpersonal

relationships. Only a few people still extend strangers typical African hospitality. Some people do not accept or reply strangers' greetings, nor do they oblige strangers seeking directions. Most people are afraid of being kidnapped, thus they refuse to help persons in difficulty. Few people would risk stopping to aid persons on the expressway who were in need.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

It is pertinent to note that this study hinges on Queer Ladder Theory (QLT) and anomie theory. QLT was developed to explain the causes of organized crime as a response to economic empowerment and social climbing. A perspective credited to an American sociologist, Daniel Bell (1919-2011), since then, it has become a popular framework in understanding contemporary crime. The basic assumptions are identified as follows:

- i. Organized crime can be described as a disposition to achieve an end.
- ii. An avenue of climbing the social ladder and improving ones status
- ii. A process of accumulating wealth and build power (Okoli & Orinya, 2013).

The theory indicates the idea that organized crime will continue to increase in contexts where the government fails or lacks capacity to direct, punish or sanction crime, and also in the environment of public corruption and where opportunities to live decent lives is limited or not equal (Okoli & Orinya, 2013). In applying the theory to this study, it would enable one to understand the prevalence of organized crime and sundry acts of criminality, particularly kidnapping in Nigeria. The idea of 'ladder' in QLT denotes the untoward pattern of social mobility. Therefore, those who engaged in crime, such as kidnapping, do so in order to climb the social ladder to enhance their status. The theory is adopted for this study because of its analytical utility in understanding socio-political foundations

of organized crime, particularly kidnapping in developing nations. Originating in the classical tradition of sociology (Durkheim, 1951; Merton, 1968), anomie theory addresses the intermediate conditions linking social (dis)organization with individual distress and deviant behaviour. The theory thus cuts across the levels of social analysis, having implications for both macro and micro-level crime research (Baumer, 2007; Messner, 1988). On the one hand, anomie theory argues how certain disruptive features of industrialized society can generate widespread normlessness; that is, they undermine the commitment of many individuals to the shared values that are needed to regulate their behaviours and aspirations. These macro-level propositions have implications for research on crime rate differences between large social units, such as countries or states.

3. Methodology

This study adopted the cross-sectional survey research design. The study area was Nasarawa State. The target population for this study comprised of male and female aged 18 to 60 in Nasarawa State. The decision to use this age bracket was based on the fact that individuals within the age bracket were best suited to give relevant information on the subject matter of this study. The study is dependent on 2006 National population census which put the population figure of Nasarawa State at 961, 134 of ages between 15 – 64 years.

The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane Formula.

$$n = \frac{N}{K + N(e)^2}$$

Where N = Population of study, K = Constant (1), e = degree of error expected, n= sample size

$$n = \frac{N}{K + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{961, 134}{1 + 961, 134 (0.05)^2} = 399.8 = 400$$

(Sample Size)

The study used a multi-stage sampling approach. At the first stage, the researcher used proportionate stratified random sampling to select the sample from the 13 local government areas in Nasarawa State. At the last stage, the respondents were selected using the simple random sampling technique. Both primary and secondary sources of data was used for this study, the primary data include the collection of original information on the topic under study at the source or study area by the researchers. The secondary source of data includes books, journals, reports, internet and information. These sources of data collection not only guide the researchers in remaining focus but also enabled her to cross-validate with what was obtained in the field, thereby facilitating one to draw logical conclusion based on observed pattern. The development of instrument for this study is guided by the research questions, the objectives and the theories adopted for this study. In order to ensure validation, experts in the field vetted and made corrections. To determine the reliability of the instruments, the researchers distributed (40) copies of the instruments to forty respondents representing 10% of the sample size in Lafia local government area of Nasarawa state, who are not part of the main study for trial testing. The sampled respondents have the same characteristics of the respondents as those under study. Cronbach alpha method was used to determine internal consistency of the instruments items and a coefficient was obtained. The reliability coefficient yielded 0.843 which shows high level reliability.

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The instrument has three clusters (A-C). Cluster A was used to collect information on the demographic data of the respondents.



Cluster B was used to collect information on the factors that led to the increase of kidnapping in Nigeria. Cluster C was used to elicit information from the respondents on the consequences of kidnapping on national security in Nigeria. The response option of cluster B and C of the questionnaire was on a continuum of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The scoring of response options is thus: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The completed instruments were coded and the responses were also keyed into a computer data file using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Both descriptive and inferential statistics was used in data analyses. The descriptive

statistics used in this study includes; frequencies, percentages for bio-data, mean, and standard deviation to answer the research questions while the hypothesis was tested using regression analysis. The use of Linear regression to test the hypotheses is in order to determine the relationship that exists since data that was obtained provided estimates of values of dependent variable from the knowledge of independent variable.

4. Results and Discussion

Personal Characteristics of Respondents

In this section, the results of data collected; their analyses and interpretations are presented as well as the various hypotheses tested.

Table1: Demographic Data of the respondents

Details	N	%
Sex	N	%
Male	191	47.8
Female	209	52.3
Age		
15 – 25	77	19.25
26 – 36	18	35.5
37 – 47	118	29.5
48 – 58	62	15.5
59 and above	1	0.25
Marital status		
Single	56	14.0
Married	318	79.5
Divorced/Separated	13	3.3
Widowed	13	3.3
Level of Education		
Non-formal	4	1.0
Primary	55	13.8
Secondary	233	58.3
Tertiary	108	27.0
Religion		
Christianity	20	44.4
Islam	23	51.1
Traditional	2	4.4



Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 2: Factors Responsible for the Increase of Kidnapping

Factors Responsible for the Increase of Kidnapping	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D	Decision
Obtaining important information from the detainees	337 (84.3%)	48 (12%)	15 (3.8%)	-	3.81	0.48	Accepted
Putting the government in a difficult situation that will create a political embarrassment between the government and the countries of the detainees.	296 (74%)	71 (17.8%)	17 (4.3%)	16 (4%)	3.62	0.75	Accepted
Poverty	301 (75.3%)	42 (10.5%)	45 (11.3%)	12 (3%)	3.58	0.81	Accepted
Bringing a specific case to light.	284 (71%)	48 (12%)	15 (3.8%)	-	3.54	0.77	Accepted
Obtaining ransom	274 (68.5%)	53 (13.3%)	43 (10.8%)	30 (7.5%)	3.43	0.96	Accepted
forcing the government or the enemy to succumb to some demands	199 (49.8%)	51 (12.8%)	59 (14.8%)	91 (22.8%)	2.90	1.24	Accepted
Revenge	56 (14%)	95 (23.8%)	187 (46.8%)	62 (15.5%)	2.36	0.91	Rejected
Clustered Mean					3.32	0.84	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 3: The Consequences of Kidnapping on National Security

Consequences of Kidnapping on National Security	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D	Decision
Psychological trauma to the individual and family	336 (84%)	59 (14.8%)	3 (0.8%)	2 (0.5%)	3.82	0.44	Accepted
Thoughts of violence as well as having faith in God	338 (84.5%)	52 (13%)	5 (1.3%)	5 (1.3%)	3.81	0.51	Accepted



Huge economic or financial implications	279 (69.8%)	116 (29%)	2 (0.5%)	3 (0.8%)	3.68	0.52	Accepted
Abducted under-aged victims are forced to marry older men	238 (59.5)	134 (33.5%)	25 (6.3%)	3 (0.8%)	3.52	0.65	Accepted
Exposure to HIV AIDs	195 (48.8%)	161 (40.3%)	44 (11%)	-	3.38	0.68	Accepted
Clustered Mean					3.64	0.56	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Testing of Hypothesis

This section deals with the hypothesis that was stated and tested to find out the position of the premises made and how far they could stand.

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between factors responsible for the increase of kidnapping in Nigeria and consequences on national security in Nigeria.

Table 5: Relationship between factors responsible for the increase in kidnapping in Nigeria and consequences of kidnapping on national security in Nigeria
Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.435	.175		8.201	.000
	Consequences	.621	.049	.537	12.688	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Factors Responsible

The result on the table reveals that factors responsible for the increase of kidnapping have positive and significant influence on the consequences of kidnapping on national security $\beta = .537$, the t statistic of 12.68 and computed p-value of 0.000. The unit change in factors responsible for the increase of kidnapping leads to an increase in consequences of kidnapping on national security in Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis which affirms no significant relationship between factors responsible for the increase in kidnapping in Nigeria and consequences of kidnapping on national security in Nigeria is hereby rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed the factors responsible for increase in

kidnapping in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. This includes obtaining important information from the detainees, poverty, inequality, bringing a specific case to light, obtaining a ransom, and forcing the government or the enemy to succumb to some demands.

This finding corroborate with that of Hazen et al., in Ibrahim (2017) whose findings observed that kidnapping is undertaken for two principal reasons which include to bargain politically and for economic gain. It also agreed with that of Nwakaji (2018), who identified some of the reasons for kidnapping. These includes making government to agree to some demands; creating political embarrassment for

government making it difficult to take certain decisions; getting sensitive information from detainees; collecting ransoms; and drawing attention to a specific case. The findings of the study also identified the consequences of kidnapping on national security in Nigeria. This includes psychological trauma to the individual and family; Huge economic or financial implications; subjecting under-aged victims to forced marriage with older men; and exposure to HIV/ AIDS as consequences of kidnapping. This finding agrees with that of Kyrian in Ubong (2013) whose finding reveals that kidnapping affects the economy drastically. It also corroborates that of Dodo in Ubong (2013) whose findings reveal that family members of kidnapped victims has to borrow to secure the release of their relations.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the results of the findings, it was concluded that kidnapping has taken a new dimension and has become source of income for many in the area with attendant consequences on national security. It has increasingly put the government in a difficult situation that is creating political embarrassment. The consequences of kidnapping includes psychological trauma to the individual and family, huge economic or financial implications, and exposure to HIV/AIDS; Challenges encountered in addressing the problem of kidnapping includes poor communication network; management of security and security agencies; political instability; corruption; and expenditure on preventive measures.

5.2 Recommendation

From the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- i. It is recommended that both individuals and government should be more proactive in creating jobs for the teeming youth population. Gainful

employment within the law will reduce the drive to crime as a means of survival.

- ii. Schools, parents, teachers, social media, television stations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should sensitize the children on security tips. This will go a long way in securing the children from tricks of kidnappers.
- iii. Military and paramilitary personnel should be provided with adequate tools. This will enable them combat the issue of kidnapping.
- iv. Individuals should maintain a low profile, this will reduce exposure to the risk of being a target of kidnapping.

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