

PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS INFLUENCING PUPILS KIDNAPPING AS PERCEIVED BY PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria currently has more than 10 million children out of school and the school attacks and kidnappings have only made the situation worse. The study investigated psychosocial factors influencing pupil kidnapping as perceived by primary school teachers. The study adopted a descriptive research design of survey type. The study population comprised all primary school teachers in the study area. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to choose one hundred and thirty-five respondents who participated in the study. A researcher-structured questionnaire which was validated and tested for reliability was adopted for the study. A coefficient of 0.87r was obtained using the test-retest method. The instrument was administered by the researchers and three trained research assistants. Inferential statistics of chi-square used to analyse the hypotheses postulated for this study at 0.05 alpha level. The findings of this study revealed that youth unemployment influenced pupils' kidnapping because the calculated chi-square value of 61.23 was greater than the table value of 16.92 @ 0.05 alpha level, and religious fanaticism influenced pupils' kidnapping because the calculated chi-square value of 57.34 was greater than the table value of 16.92 @ 0.05 alpha level. The study concluded that the high rate of youth unemployment in our society influences pupils' kidnapping and misinterpretation of statements in holy books mislead some people to engage in kidnapping activity. The researchers recommend among others that the government at all levels should create more job opportunities for the youths graduating from school to reduce the number of young people engage in kidnapping activities due to their inability to secure employment.

Keywords: Psychosocial, Influencing, Pupils, Kidnapping, Teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Globally, the criminal phenomenon and behavior such as kidnapping, is not new. It is a worldwide phenomenon with criteria differences and scenarios. In the Nigerian context, prior to 1990s, the issue of abduction was rare, and it has not been 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 current wave of kidnapping in Nigeria started on 25th February 2006 by the abduction of expatriates working for the oil companies in the Niger Delta area. Kidnapping displayed as an open message to the world for many years of injustice, marginalization, alienated, and underdevelopment of the area (Akpan, 2010). Since then, the menace becomes 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; adult females and males, the poor and the rich, the aged, and children.

Kidnapping is the forcible seizure, taking away and unlawful detention of a person against his/her will. It is a common law offence and the key part is that it is unwanted act on the part of the victim (Inyang & Abraham, 2013). It is the act of seizing and detaining or carrying away a person by unlawful force or by fraud, and often with a demand for ransom (Uzorma & Nwanegbo-Ben, 2014). It involves taking a person from their family forcefully

without their consent with the motive of holding the person as a hostage and earning a profit from their family. From the foregoing, the definition of kidnapping has no one best way to describe it, but it is clear that for an act to be deemed kidnapping, it shall involve coercive movement of a victim from one place to another, detention or seizure of that person be it a child or an adult. That is why it is legally regarded as a restriction of someone else's liberty which violates the provision of freedom of movement as enshrined in the constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria, where every other law takes its cue from (Inyang & Abraham, 2013).

Kidnapping is one of the social vices that Nigeria is currently faced with and from all indications, due to the poor security system in the country, it seems conspicuous that the kidnapers have the upper hand against the law enforcement agencies who have the responsibility to ensure safety, peace and tranquility in the country (Ukandu, 2011). The act of kidnapping violates the fundamental rights to freedom of movement and association according to the Nigerian Constitution, and it is punishable under the Nigerian criminal codes and statutes. However, this has not deterred kidnapers (Ofo, 2010). Both national and local media houses print and electronically provide devastating kidnapping news on a daily basis of how innocent people have been kidnapped and also report on how the government and the law enforcement agencies are incapable of combating the crime (Ukandu, 2011).

The wave of 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 is fluctuating substantially, from 2017 to 3rd quarter of 2019 it tends to decline to 25 and changed at 78.57% (Knoema, 2019). Nigeria was 3rd in Africa and the top 14th in the world according to crime index report mid-year (2019). The most unfortunate victims of these menaces of kidnapping in Nigeria often die in the process while the luckier ones are released after severe torture and payment of huge ransom.

The first known abduction of school children in Nigeria took place in 2014, when 276 girls were taken from the Government Secondary School in Chibok, Borno State, north-east Nigeria. Since then, attacks on schools and abductions of students have grown in number and spread across the northern part of the country. "These horrific abductions often result in the immediate closure of all schools in the affected states - putting an abrupt halt to the education of affected students," "Even when schools re-open, it discourages parents from sending their children to school and leaves children traumatized and fearful of going to classrooms to learn." UNICEF is working with government and other partners, including the Education Above All (EAA) Foundation, to ensure learning continues despite these attacks. The EAA's Educate A Child (EAC) programme ensures child education is ongoing in the states of Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara, despite the serious security challenges in north-west Nigeria (UNICEF, 2021).

At least 1409 students have been kidnapped from their schools in Nigeria since the first incident in the country's latest school abduction epidemic which started in March 2020. In the 19 incidents up until the latest kidnap in Zamfara state, 17 teachers have also been kidnapped alongside their students, and at least ₦220 million has been paid out as ransoms. Unfortunately, 16 of the victims have died in these incidents (Reliefweb, 2021).

Nigerian and international policymaking on Nigeria may need to acknowledge deeper and broader damage to the country from the 12-year-old Boko Haram insurgency. The United

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Nations Development Program reported last month that the war's damage to agriculture, health care and other basics of life has killed perhaps 350,000 people — 10 times more than the estimate of those killed directly by the violence. Education is one of the domains where the conflict's damage has been severe — not least because secular education has been a primary Boko Haram target. The organization's very name, in the Hausa language, asserts that western or secular ways (of education or culture) are forbidden. Boko Haram's ideological pillars are opposition to Nigeria's constitutional democracy and what it sees as insufficiently Islamic schooling — a “focus on education unique among peer jihadist movements,” according to a 2020 Brookings Institution study of the group. In its first nine years, relief agencies and others estimate, the insurgency destroyed 1,400 to 2,000 schools — three to four every week. At least 2,295 teachers were killed, and more than 19,000 teachers and 950,000 school-age children fled for safety, according to Human Rights Watch research. This denial of schooling crimps the lives and futures of all children, but especially girls. Global experience and research show that education is a powerful protector of girls, especially in poorer communities, against the hazards of child marriage, including abuse, injury or death from early childbirth, and impoverishment. UNICEF counted 22 million child brides in Nigeria in 2018, and women's rights workers in the north report that girls' exclusion from school has increased early marriages and pregnancies. Further, hundreds of kidnapped children who have been abused or raped by their abductors face acute trauma and stigma upon return. The violence also impedes the progress of Nigeria's most ambitious effort to protect children's rights — the Nigerian Child Rights Act, which still is not fully implemented 18 years after its passage (Iwara, 2021).

Africa news (2021) pointed out that gunmen abducted 73 students in yet another school attack in northwestern Nigeria on which prompting authorities to close all primary and secondary schools across Zamfara State. The new kidnappings came just days after three other groups of hostages were freed when large ransom payments were reportedly made, raising hopes that other captives might soon be freed, too. Attackers descended upon the Government Day Secondary School in the remote village of Kaya around noon, local residents said the kidnappers then began shooting into the air before taking the students. More than 1,000 students have been kidnapped from schools in northern Nigeria since December. While most pupils ultimately have been released, some have died or been killed in captivity and about 200 remained hostages before the last attacked, Government officials haven't commented on whether they played any role in the hostage releases announced, but it appears parents from at least one of those schools did pay a large ransom. The head teacher at one of the schools in Niger state told AP that many parents sold most of what they owned in an effort to raise funds totaling more than 30 million naira (about \$72,900). The Salihu Tanko Islamiya School also sold off a piece of land where they had planned an expansion project, he added. Those 90 pupils freed were the youngest hostages ever taken from a school in Nigeria, with children as young as 4 taken into the remote forests by gunmen and held for three months without their parents. One child, who hasn't been identified, died during the ordeal. It remains unclear whether the kidnappers of the three separate hostage groups last week are connected or if the simultaneous releases were merely coincidental. Each took place in a different state and they involved students of varying ages. Authorities so far have blamed this year's spate of kidnappings on “bandits,” or criminals operating out of remote, forested areas of northern Nigeria. Most of the gunmen are believed to be young men from the Fulani ethnic group who had traditionally worked as nomadic cattle herders before turning to the profitable crime of abducting children for ransom. Some fear the gunmen in the northwest are linked in some way to the Islamic militants' long active in the northeast, who drew international condemnation in 2014 when they abducted 276 schoolgirls in Chibok in 2014, prompting the

“Bring Back Our Girls campaign”. More than 100 of those girls are still missing, though two recently turned up years later, both of whom had had children with the militants they were forced to marry.

Iwara (2021) opined that the mass kidnapping of Nigerian schoolchildren underscores that the crumbling of human security in Africa’s most populous nation is worsening a deeper impairment, hollowing out Nigeria’s education system to create a “lost generation” of youth across much of the country. Alarmingly, one in five of the world’s out-of-school children is Nigerian. As Nigerian and international policymakers focus on the immediate crises — of kidnappings, Boko Haram’s extremist violence, and conflict between farming and herding communities — they must urgently rescue and buttress the country’s damaged education system. Reducing violence and achieving development in Africa will depend on an effective strategy for doing so. Nigeria’s breakdown in security is particularly attacking education, notably in the country’s north. The 12-year-old Boko Haram insurgency and the more recent rise in armed banditry have combined to displace more than 2 million people and forced the closures of an estimated 600 schools as of early this year. Families also have withheld their children from classes with this year’s wave of kidnappings of students. One must recall that Boko Haram stunned Nigerians and the world in 2014 by kidnapping 276 girls from their school dormitory in the northeastern town of Chibok. (Seven years later, more than 100 of the girls remain missing and a recent book estimates that 40 have died.). Since December 2020, criminal gangs have emulated Boko Haram’s tactic — committing over 10 mass abductions, totaling more than 1,000 schoolchildren, to extort ransoms across northern Nigeria. Many smaller attacks go unreported. Bandits for years have committed small-scale kidnappings of highway travelers, but now use the public horror and political pressures from school kidnappings to force more lucrative payoffs. Gangs of armed men in convoys of motorcycles and trucks have made midnight assaults on government and religious boarding schools, killing staff who resist and even executing children to enforce their demands.

Guardian (2021) pointed out that about 1,000 students and pupils have been abducted in Nigeria since December. Most have been released after negotiations with local officials, although some are still being held. Gunmen have kidnapped 140 children from a boarding school in north-western Nigeria, a school official has said, in the latest in a wave of mass abductions targeting schoolchildren and students. Heavily armed criminal gangs in north-west and central Nigeria often attack villages to loot, steal cattle and abduct people for ransom, but since the start of the year have increasingly targeted schools and colleges. The attackers opened fire and overpowered security guards after storming the Bethel Baptist high school in Kaduna state in the early hours of Monday, abducting most of the 165 pupils boarding there overnight. “The kidnappers took away 140 students, only 25 students escaped. We still have no idea where the students were taken,” Parents and local people waited for news of the missing children outside the school, which hosts 185 pupils during the day. Often, gangs target rural schools and colleges where students stay in dormitories and security is light, allowing them to easily transport large numbers of victims to forest hideouts to negotiate ransoms. The kidnapping of Nigerian schoolchildren first made major international headlines in 2014 when the Islamist group Boko Haram snatched nearly 300 schoolgirls from a rural school in Chibok in the north-eastern Borno state, sparking the online ‘Bring Back Our Girls campaign’. Recent abductions by gunmen have prompted six northern states to shut public schools to prevent such attacks. The criminal gangs, known locally as “bandits”, operate from camps in the vast Rugu forest, which cuts across Zamfara, Katsina, and Kaduna states in Nigeria, as well as neighbouring Niger.

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The increasing rate of kidnapping is becoming a source of concern as it is one among the current major social problems that are negatively affecting the free movement of people and the socio-economic development of the country. It is a national problem that has eaten so deep into the tissues of the nation. Kidnapping of students has generated a great deal of public concern, not to mention confusion and controversy. Armed men, known locally as bandits, have made an industry of kidnapping students for ransom. The gravity of these kidnapping is so intense that it has virtually affected quite a number of students in their academics. It is not everyone that can handle the aftermath of kidnapping well, some students that are kidnap victims suffer for a long period of time because of the traumatic experience. With the spate of recent students kidnapping, community and parental trust in the education system could shrink significantly, and the problem of access to quality and equitable education could become severely amplified.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

1. Youth unemployment will not significantly influencing pupils kidnapping as perceived by primary school teachers
2. Religion fanaticism will not significantly influencing pupils kidnapping as perceived by primary school teachers

RESEARCH METHOD

The research design that was used for this study was the descriptive research of the survey method. The population of the study comprised all the primary school teachers in Patigi LGA, Kwara State, Nigeria. A multi-stage sampling technique was used for the study. At stage one, cluster sampling technique was used to divide the primary school in the study area to three political senatorial districts which are, Patigi district, Lade district and Kpada district. At stage two, purposive sampling technique was used to select three primary schools that have highest numbers of pupils' enrolment in each of the three districts. The name of the schools selected were : Patigi district; Sudan Interior Mission Primary School Patigi, Apostolic Church Nursery and Primary School Patigi and Central LGEA Primary School Patigi, Lade district; Central LGEA Primary School Lade, Goshin Primry School Lade and Tuba Primary School Lade, Kpada district, Central LGEA Primry School Kpada, Rogun LGEA Primary School and Zhitsu Yissa Primary School Tankpafu. At stage three, convenience sampling technique was used to select all the primary school teachers met in each of the selected school during the time of the instrument administration and the number selected were; twenty one teachers selected from Sudan Interior primary school Patigi, twelve respondents selected from Apostolic Church primary school Patigi and twenty-five teachers were selected from Central LGEA primary school Patigi, seventeen respondents selected from Central LGEA primary school Lade, fifteen selected from Goshin primary school Lade and eleven chosen from Tuba primary school Lade, fourteen selected from Central LGEA primary school Kpada, twelve chosen from Rogun primary school and eight chosen from Zhistu Yissa primary school Tankpafu. One hundred and thirty-five respondents formed the sample used for the study.

The research instrument used for the study was a researcher's developed questionnaire validated by experts in the related field. The reliability of the instrument established through test-retest and result of 0.87r obtained. The researchers administered the

instrument with the aid of three trained research assistants. The outcome of data collected analysed with the use of chi-square statistics at 0.05 alpha level.

RESULTS

Test of Hypotheses

H₀₁: Youth unemployment will not significantly influencing pupils kidnapping as perceived by primary school teachers

Table 1: Chi-square Analysis Showing the Result of Youth Unemployment and pupils Kidnapping

S/N	STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD	Row Total	Df	Cal. Value	Table Value	Remarks
1	Youth unemployment can lead to pupils kidnapping	40 (29.6%)	37 (27.4%)	38 (28.1%)	20 (14.8%)	135				
2	Unemployment will pour into the minds of its victim, negative thoughts like kidnapping to make money	44 (32.6%)	29 (21.5%)	32 (23.7%)	30 (22.2%)	135				
3	Godfathers employ mostly idle youths to work for them in kidnapping pupils	50 (37.0%)	40 (29.6%)	21 (15.6%)	24 (17.8%)	135	9	61.23	16.92	Ho1 rejected
4	Graduates from tertiary institutions can embark on kidnapping pupils due to inability to secure employment	39 (28.8%)	44 (32.6%)	30 (22.2%)	22 (16.3%)	135				
	Column Total	173	150	121	96	540				

@ 0.05 alpha level of significance

Table 1 shows that the critical value of 61.23 is greater than the table value of 16.92 @ 0.05 alpha level at the degree of freedom of 9. Thereby the null hypothesis (H₀₁) was rejected. Hence, youth unemployment influencing pupils kidnapping as perceived by primary school teachers'

H₀₂: Religion fanaticisms will not significantly influencing pupils kidnapping as perceived by primary school teachers

Table 2: Chi-square Analysis Showing the Result of Religion Fanaticism and Pupils Kidnapping

S/N	STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD	Row Total	Df	Cal. Value	Table Value	Remarks
1	Religion fanaticism contributes to pupils kidnapping	39 (28.8%)	49 (36.3%)	22 (16.3%)	25 (18.5%)	135				
2	Improper religious education make people engage in kidnapping	38 (28.1%)	32 (23.7%)	33 (24.4%)	32 (23.7%)	135	9	57.34	16.92	Ho2 rejected

	activity					
3	Misinterpretation of statements in holy books mislead worshippers to engage in kidnapping activity	40 (29.6%)	37 (27.4%)	30 (22.2%)	28 (20.7%)	135
4	Religion leaders mislead worshippers to kidnap pupils for their own personal interest	39 (28.8%)	42 (31.1%)	30 (22.2%)	24 (17.8%)	135
	Column Total	156	160	115	109	540

@ 0.05 alpha level of significance

Table 2 shows that the critical value of 57.34 is greater than the table value of 16.92 @ 0.05 alpha level at the degree of freedom of 9. Thereby the null hypothesis (H₀) was rejected. Hence, religion fanaticism influencing pupils kidnapping as perceived by primary school teachers’

DISCUSSION

The result of the first hypothesis tested for the study showed that youth unemployment influencing pupils kidnapping as perceived by primary school teachers in Patigi LGA, Kwara State, Nigeria. The result of the finding agreed with the view of Inyang (2009) who related the problem of unemployment as one of such reasons why kidnapping in Nigeria is often associated with youth unemployment. Also, Fage and Alabi (2017) conceived kidnapping as “forceful or fraudulent abduction of an individual or a group of individuals for reasons ranging from economic, political, and religious to [struggle for] self-determination”. However, the authors later admitted that the forcefully or fraudulently abducted individuals are carried off as hostages for ransom purposes. This implies that while political and economic factors can instigate kidnapping, the economic reason is the most common predisposing factor of the phenomenon.

The result of the second hypothesis tested for the study showed that religion fanaticism influencing pupils kidnapping as perceived by primary school teachers in Patigi LGA, Kwara State, Nigeria. The finding is in line with opinion of Victor (2020) who reported that Nigeria today is faced with the problem of religious fanaticism. This has given rise to different security challenges in the country which includes pupils kidnapping.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

The study concluded that high rate of youth’s unemployment contributing to pupils kidnapping in our primary schools, godfathers employing mostly idle youths to work for them in kidnapping pupils and misinterpretation of statements in holy books mislead some people to engage in kidnapping activity and some people engage in the activity due to message received from their religious leaders. All the identified psychosocial factors influenced pupils kidnapping as perceived by primary school teachers in the study area.

Recommendations

In line with the findings in this study, the following recommendations were made: The government at all levels should create more job opportunity for the youth graduating from school to reduce the number of young people engage in kidnapping activities due to their inability to secure employment.

The State Government should carry out enlightenment programme through mass media on the need for religious leaders to intensify preaching for their followers on God annoyance for people cause discomfort for their fellow human beings through kidnapping activity and those repent from the act will begin to receive God favour on their life programme.

The State government should organize seminars for stakeholders on security issues which should involve the chief security officer of the state, traditional leaders and representative of various tribes present in the state to look for ways to curb problem of kidnapping affecting pupils and staff in the primary school environment.

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