ASSESSING THE MENACE OF KIDNAPPING IN CHIKUN, IGABI AND ZANGO KATAF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Kidnapping has escalated into significant security threats, with profound socio-economic and psychological effect on the victims of kidnapping in Chikun, Igabi and Zango Kataf Local Government areas of Kaduna State. The problem of kidnapping has taken a very dangerous dimension resulting to scores of deaths and destruction of properties worth hundreds of millions of naira. Scores of victims of kidnapping have suffered a great deal of bizarre phenomena including payment of millions of naira ransoms for their freedom from captivity. Many have sold their houses, properties and assets while others collected bank loans leading to financial bankruptcy. The study aimed to explore the underlying effects of kidnapping in vulnerable local government areas of Kaduna State. The study adopted structural functionalism theory which opines that societies develop social structures or institutions which perform specific functions and failure of one means failure of all. The quantitative method was adopted for the collection of data while the analysis was done using descriptive statistics. The findings from the effect of kidnapping showed that victims of kidnapping suffer from severe psychological trauma associated with rape of victims leading to spread of sexually transmitted diseases. Not only that, but also kidnapping results to force and early under- aged marriages and loss of lives of victims. The paper recommended that adequate victim support services, encompassing counselling, rehabilitation, and reintegration programs should be initiated by the government and non-governmental organizations to address the psychological, emotional, and physical trauma experienced by kidnapped victims and their families.

Keywords: kidnapped Victim, Kidnapping, Ransom, Kidnappers, bandits, and captivity

1. Introduction

Kidnapping has become ubiquitous and devastating criminal act globally, with Mexico reporting over 100,000 missing persons between 2020 and 2022, many of whom are victims of organized (National Institute of Statistics and Geography, 2020)

In Africa, Nigeria bears the brunt of this menace, accounting for over 30% of kidnapping on the continent (Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, 2020). The study seeks to contribute to the understanding of the kidnapping phenomenon in Nigeria, particularly in Kaduna State, where the scourge has become increasingly prevalent.

The North Eastern part of Nigeria has been ravaged by Boko-Haram conflict, resulting in the killing of at least 2,295 teachers and destruction of over 1,400 schools (UNICEF,2022). This has created a conducive environment for kidnapping to thrive. According to the SBM Intelligence report (2024), between July 2023 and June 2024, at least 7,568 people were abducted in 1,130 incidents across Nigeria with kidnappers demanding approximately N10,995,090,000 (around $6,871,931) as ransom. This staggering figure emphasizes the severity of the kidnapping crises in Nigeria.

Kaduna State has emerged as a hotspot, for kidnapping incidents with Chikun Local Government Area being particularly vulnerable. Approximately 18.01 people per 1000 in Chikun Local Government Area have been kidnapped. Between 2021 and 2024 approximately 20,000 people have been kidnapped in Kaduna State (Human Right Watch, 2022). This study aims to investigate the multifaceted effects of kidnapping on victims in Kaduna State, with focus on the vulnerable local government areas.

The scourge of kidnapping for instance in Chikun, Zango and Igabi Local Government Areas has devastating consequences on various aspects of life, particularly health, educational, and economic activities. These local government areas have witnessed numerous incidents of kidnapping, resulting in disruption of educational activities such as curricular and extra-curricular, reduction in school enrolments, and low academic performance. Kidnapping has also impacted negatively on the economic activities through closure of markets, low distribution of goods and services and low agricultural production leading to scarcity of food and high cost of living affecting the sources of income for victims and their families (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020).

Through a comprehensive examination of existing literature and empirical evidence, this paper seeks to illuminate the multifaceted effect of kidnapping on victims in Kaduna State.

In a study conducted by Chinonye & Atafo (2022) titled 'Prevalent Incidences of Kidnapping in Kaduna State' reported that 120 Bethel Baptist students were kidnapped and held captive for 189 days in 2021.Similarly in 2021, 20 students and 2 staff of Greenfield University and students of college of forestry Afaka in Chikun Local Government Area and students of Nuhu Bamali Polytechnic Zaria were also kidnapped. These students were physically and psychologically molested and tortured by the ruthless kidnappers. Two of the Greenfield university students were killed and their corpses dumped by the entrance of the university and consequently, the schools were closed down for a complete session.

There are several communities such as Chikun, Igabi and Zango Kataf in Kaduna State that are being bedevilled with the prevailing incidences of kidnapping. Kidnapping has made people no longer feel secured, and social activities within such communities are usually in fright, hence individuals always would look over their shoulders thereby truncating most social activities (Yahaya 2020).

This Day Newspaper (2023) reported that residents of Kaduna State have been living in perpetual fear as kidnapping continues to prevail over all security measures put in place by the government. The Kaduna State Government reported that a total number of 3,384 people across Kaduna State have been kidnapped for ransom while 1,192 killed by bandits in 2021. According to Human Rights Report (2022) more than 287 people were killed while 356 people were kidnapped within the first quarter of 2022 in 12 local government Areas of Kaduna State.

Similarly, within three months bandits killed 214 people and kidnapped 746 victims in Chikun Local Government Area from January to March, 2023.This fear has led many residents to have deserted their homes and their farms and resettled in areas they considered safe havens. Most highways are dangerous and deadly for travellers cannot longer travel to their destinations without being attacked by kidnappers or bandits. Kidnapping has affected the economic

activities of the state as some major rural markets have been closed down due to fear of kidnappers.

According to Human Right Watch (2022) more than 500 000 people have been kidnapped in Kaduna State from 2015 to 2024. Banditry and kidnapping activities have continued to prevail as more and more rural dwellers have been displaced from their ancestral communities. Majority of rural farmers have deserted their farming activities as kidnappers and bandits intensified attacks on vulnerable communities. Bandits invade and destroy crops in the farms and not only that but also go into these vulnerable victims and either cart away foodstuffs or set them ablaze. Passengers and traders on transits have been kidnapped on daily basis on the highways. This has also affected distribution of goods and services which led to high costs of living in the state while the government does nothing about all these problems.

The psychological trauma linked to kidnapping is enormous as victims suffer prolong post-traumatic stress disorder due to the physical brutalities and sexual assaults they experienced in the hands of the kidnappers. The general health status of the victims generally is deteriorated as many victims get infected with various sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDs, Gonorrhoea, and Syphilis and among others. The main purpose of this study is to examine how kidnapping affects the well-being of victims.

This study will contribute to the existing knowledge on kidnapping in Nigeria, particularly in Kaduna State, by providing a comprehensive examination of its effects on victims. The findings of this study will inform policymakers and stakeholders on the development of effective strategies to prevent and respond to kidnapping incidents and among others in Kaduna State.

2. Literature Review

Kidnapping can have severe and prolonged effects on the well-being of victims encompassing physical injuries, psychological trauma, emotional distress, insomnia,

nutritional deficiencies, health complications, suicidal thoughts, substance abuse and among others. These effects can have lasting impacts on the victims' physical and mental health, demanding prompt medical attention and support. Building on this, in a study conducted by Jibrin (2021) titled: Long-term Psychological Effects of Kidnapping on Children in Kaduna State to examine the long-term psychological effects of kidnapping on child victims' longitudinal study with psychological assessments of child victims over five years.

The study revealed that Persistent anxiety, behavioural issues, and learning difficulties in child victims could be attributed as severe effects of kidnapping among victims. The study concluded that, kidnapping has profound and lasting psychological effects on children and therefore, recommended that there should be Long-term psychological care and educational support for child victims.

Similarly, Eze (2020) conducted a study titled: Long-term Health Consequences of Kidnapping in Kaduna State to examine the long-term health consequences of kidnapping using longitudinal health assessments and interviews with victims. The finding of the study showed that chronic health issues, including hypertension and psychological disorders. The study concluded that kidnapping has lasting health impacts on victims and recommended long-term healthcare support and monitoring for victims in Kaduna State.

This study is in consonance with the study conducted by Ojo (2022) titled: Kidnapping and Its Impact on Mental Health in Kaduna State with the aim to investigate the mental health consequences of kidnapping on victims of kidnapping using psychological evaluations and interviews with 30 victims. The study revealed that high prevalence of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) were among the

effect experienced by some of the victims of kidnapping. The study concludes that kidnapping severely affects mental health of victims of kidnapping and therefore, recommended comprehensive mental health services and awareness programs for all victims of kidnapping in Kaduna State.

Kazeem (2021) conducted a study titled: The Psychological Impact of Kidnapping on Law Enforcement Officers in Kaduna State to investigate the psychological impact of kidnapping on law enforcement officers using Surveys and interviews methods with 30 law enforcement officers. The finding shows that high levels of stress, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The finding concluded that kidnapping significantly affects the mental health of law enforcement officers and recommended psychological support and stress management programs for law enforcement officers.

Furthermore, the study of Nnamdi (2020) titled: The Impact of Kidnapping on Mental Health Services in Kaduna State, to study the effect of kidnapping on the availability and effectiveness of mental health services. The study used surveys and interviews with mental health professionals. The finding revealed that there is increased demand for mental health services, strain on existing resources. The study concluded that kidnapping exacerbates the burden on mental health services and therefore recommended expansion and enhancement of mental health infrastructure for all victims' accessibility.

In a similar study by Taiwo (2021) titled: Kidnapping and Its Impact on Women's Health in Kaduna State to investigate the impact of kidnapping on women's health using interviews and health assessments of female victims. It was gathered that increased physical and psychological health issues among women were the major effect of kidnapping on women's health status in Kaduna State. The study concluded that

kidnapping severely affects women's health status in Kaduna State. The study recommends Gender-specific health support and counselling services for all women victims of kidnapping.

3. Methodology

Research Design and Methodology

The study adopted the quantitative approach with purposive sampling technique. Data were collected from three local government areas encompassing Chikun, Igabi and Zango Kataf Local Government Areas. The study population include victims of kidnapping, family members of kidnapped victims, community leaders, healthcare professionals. The adopted sample size for the study was 395 and was purposively sampled as follows based on the vulnerability of the kidnapping incidents: Chikun LGA had 200 respondents; Igabi LGA had 117 while Zango Kataf LGA had 78. Structured questionnaires were used and analyzed using descriptive statistics.

4. Results and Discussions

The data for this study are analyzed and presented in tables as follows:

Table 1 shows the distribution of responses between the respondents on the effects of kidnapping on health status of victims of kidnapping. In Chikun LGA, it was revealed that majority of the respondents representing 98% identified high blood pressure as health effect of kidnapping in victims while few (2%) disagreed. Based on this finding, it can be deduced that majority of victims of kidnapping experienced high blood pressure. In Igabi LGA majority of the respondents representing 95% said victims of kidnapping experienced mental disorder. On the hand, few respondents (5%) disagreed.

The implication of this finding is likely due to the immense stress and trauma associated with being kidnapped, which can pose dicey physical health consequences. This finding emphasizes the need for medical and psychological support for kidnapping victims to address both their mental and physical health needs. Similarly, in Zango Kataf LGA, it was revealed that majority of the

representing 64% affirmed kidnapping is associated to high blood pressure while few (36%) disagreed. Based on this finding, it implies that majority (64%) of kidnapped victims often experienced high blood pressure which could be linked to traumatic stress they encountered in the hands of the kidnappers while in their captivity.

Table 1: Kidnapping Affects the Well-being of Victims

Variables	Chikun LGA				Igabi LGA				Zango Kataf LGA			
	Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disgree	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
High Blood Pressure	195	98	5	2	87	74	30	26	50	64	28	36
Loss of Sleep	120	60	80	40	88	75	29	25	56	72	22	28
Unwanted Pregnancies	147	74	53	26	101	86	16	14	58	74	20	26
Sexually trans. Diseases.	130	65	70	35	95	81	22	19	70	90	8	10
Rape of Victims	145	73	55	28	95	81	22	19	66	85	12	15
Death of Victims	178	89	22	11	77	66	40	34	68	87	10	13
Psychological Trauma	166	83	34	17	92	79	25	21	72	92	6	8
Mental Disorder	180	90	20	10	111	95	6	5	75	96	3	4
Post traumatic stress	150	75	50	25	99	85	18	15	69	88	9	12
Total Frequency and Percentage per Row:												

Source: Field Work 2024

Table 2 shows the responses between the respondents on the number of people kidnapped in each of the selected local government areas in Kaduna State. In Chikun LGA majority (90%) of the

respondents revealed that between 251 people and above were kidnapped while few (10%) respondents disagreed. Similarly, in Igabi LGA majority of the respondents constituting 95% agreed that between 51 -100 people were kidnapped while few (5%) disagreed. On the other hand, 96% representing majority of the respondents in Zango Kataf LGA said between 51– 100 people were kidnapped while few (4%) disagreed. Based on these findings, it implies that more people were kidnapped in Chikun LGA than in Igabi and Zango Kataf LGA.

Table 2 Number of People Kidnapped in Victim's Local Government Area

Variables	Chikun LGA				Igabi LGA				Zango Kataf LGA			
	Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disgree	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1 - 50	145	73	55	28	95	81	22	19	66	85	12	15
51 - 100	178	89	22	11	111	95	6	5	75	96	3	4
101 - 150	147	74	53	26	101	86	16	14	58	74	20	26
151 - 200	130	65	70	35	95	81	22	19	70	90	8	10
201 - 250	150	75	50	25	99	85	18	15	69	88	9	12
251 and above	180	90	20	10	77	66	40	34	68	87	10	13
No one was kidnapped	166	83	34	17	92	79	25	21	72	92	6	8
Total Frequency and Percentage per Row:												

Source: Field Work 2024

Table 3 shows the distribution of responses between the respondents on the amount of ransom paid before victims were released from kidnappers' captivity. It was gathered that majority of the respondents representing 98% in Chikun LGA agreed that victims of kidnapping paid between 20 million naira and above while few (2%) disagreed. Similarly, in Igabi LGA

majority of the respondents representing 85% said they paid no ransom while few representing 15% disagreed.

Furthermore, in Zango Kataf LGA 92% representing majority of the respondents said they paid between 100000- 1000000 million naira before they were released from kidnappers' captivity while few (8%) disagreed. Based on these findings, the highest ransom paid by majority of victims of kidnapping in Chikun, Igabi and Zango Kataf LGAs is 20 million naira and above. The implication of majority of victims of kidnapping paying between 20 million naira above in Chikun and Zango Kataf LGAs shows that most victims hailed from Christians predominantly dominated areas of the metropolitan local government area. This tells more about the type of kidnapping occurring in Chikun LGA which is religious type of kidnapping.

On the other hand those who paid no ransom might not be unconnected to the fact that a significant number of victims were either rescued, unable to pay, or managed to secure their freedom through other means such as escaping from captivity. This highlights the complexity of kidnapping scenarios and the dichotomous responses of victims and their families. In addition, it has severe effects on the well-being of victims.

Table 3 Amount of Money Paid for Ransom before Being Released

Variables	**Chikun LGA**				**Igabi LGA**				**Zango Kataf LGA**			
	Agree		**Disagree**		**Agree**		**Disagree**		**Agree**		**Disgree**	
	Freq	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**
N100000 – N1000000	166	83	34	17	92	79	25	21	72	92	6	8
N2000000- N5000000	178	89	22	11	77	66	40	34	68	87	10	13
N6000000-N9000000	120	60	80	40	88	75	29	25	56	72	22	28
N10000000- N13000000	130	65	70	35	95	81	22	19	70	90	8	10

N16000000- N19000000	145	73	55	28	95	81	22	19	66	85	12
15											
N20000000 and above	195	98	5	2	87	74	30	26	50	64	28
36											
No Ransom Paid	150	75	50	25	99	85	18	15	69	88	9
12											
Total Frequency and Percentage per Row :											

Source: Field Work 2024

Table 4 shows the distribution of responses between respondents on the number of victims killed by kidnappers while in captivity. In Chikun LGA, it was gathered that majority (98%) of respondents revealed that 51 victims and above died in kidnappers' camps while few (2%) disagreed. Similarly, in Igabi LGA, majority (95%) of the respondents said 11 – 20 victims died while in kidnappers' camps while few (5%) respondents disagreed. Furthermore, in Zango Kataf LGA, it was gathered that majority of the respondents representing 96% said between 11 – 20 people died while in kidnappers' dens while few (4%) disagreed. Based on these findings, it can be deduced that majority of victims of kidnapping in Chikun LGA died in kidnappers' camps. The implication of these findings shows that more victims were killed in Chikun than Igabi and Zango Kataf LGAs.

Table 4 Number of People Died while in Kidnappers' Captivity

Variables	**Chikun LGA**		**Igabi LGA**		**Zango Kataf LGA**	
	Agree	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Disagree**

	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1 – 10 victims	150	75	50	25	74	63	43	37	50	64	28	36
11- 20 victims	180	90	20	10	111	95	6	5	75	96	3	4
21- 30 victims	147	74	53	26	101	86	16	14	58	74	20	26
31- 40 victims	178	89	22	11	77	66	40	43	68	87	10	13
41- 50 victims	145	73	55	28	95	81	22	19	66	85	12	15
51 victims and above	195	98	5	2	99	85	18	15	69	88	9	12
No victims Died	166	83	34	17	92	79	25	21	72	92	6	8
Total Frequency and Percentage per Row :												

Source: Field Work 2024

Conclusion and Recommendations

This exploratory study sheds light on the devastating effects of kidnapping on victims in Chikun, Igabi and Zango Kataf Local government Areas. Kidnapping has economic implications such as payments of ransom, loss of livelihoods, and financial instability and can exacerbate victim's suffering. In addition, kidnapping has tremendous prolong impacts on victims' mental health and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), psychological trauma and emotional distress.

In order to address the critical and fundamental issues in this study, it is recommended that:

i. Government should reinforce security measures and law enforcement in the affected areas through increased surveillance, intelligence gathering, and community policing.

ii. Establishing comprehensive support services for victims including counselling and psychotherapy, economic empowerment, programs (vocational training, microfinance, medical care and rehabilitation, legal assistance and advocacy).

iii. Community based initiatives to promote social cohesion and prevent kidnapping through community sensitization and awareness programs, youth empowerment and engagement programs and traditional and religious leaders' engagement.

iv. Policy reforms to address the root cause of kidnapping by address poverty, and unemployment improving education and healthcare and enhancing governance and accountability

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