THE PREVALENCE OF KIDNAPPING AND HOSTAGE TAKING IN KADUNA METROPOLIS

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Abstract

The paper examined the prevalence of kidnapping and hostage taking in Kaduna Metropolis. Related literature was reviewed and social learning theory was used to explain the phenomenon because the theory is suitable in explaining the link between all forms of learning and criminality. The study adopted a survey research design and multi- stage sampling technique was used to recruit 384 respondents for the Study. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the field. Majority of the respondents revealed that kidnapping and hostage taking incidence in Kaduna Metropolis occur on weekly basis. The respondents claimed that people often get kidnapped and taken hostage in their areas. The findings further showed that men, women and children are vulnerable to kidnapping and hostage taking in Kaduna Metropolis today as affirmed by the majority of the respondents. In addition, the findings also revealed that some communities in Kaduna Metropolis are more prone to kidnapping and hostage taking than others. The research recommended that Kaduna State Government in collaboration with the Federal Government should set-up a well-equipped/effective anti- kidnapping agency in order to over-power the perpetrators of kidnapping in Kaduna Metropolis. Government should create jobs and skills development centres for the unemployed youths in Kaduna Metropolis to avert the temptation of kidnapping among youths.

Key Words: Government; hostage taking; kidnapping; Kaduna metropolis; and prevalence.

Introduction

Kidnapping and hostage taking are global phenomena that are intertwined with human history, and are perpetrated with certain scenarios and differences (Ibrahim et al., 2021). The issue of kidnapping and hostage taking were rare in the Nigerian context prior to 1990s, 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 25th 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, 2020). Since then, the menace became boldly commercialized in several parts of the country. In contemporary Nigeria, the implications of kidnapping are no longer on the foreigners who were mostly the targets; sadly, it now rests on the locals, such as; the poor and the rich, the aged, and children. In fact, virtually every Nigerian today commands a kidnapping value.

However, Kidnapping and hostage taking have become daily routines in Nigeria and they are often used by armed groups as mechanism for achieving the demands of the abductors or kidnappers. The proliferation of kidnapping and hostage taking in Nigeria have scared a lot of local and foreign investors away which also affected the socioeconomic development of the country and give chance to other social vices in the country. Foreign investors as well as citizens are scared to operate businesses in Nigeria because no investment thrives in an atmosphere of insecurity and this contributes to the unemployment and poverty of some youths who before now were absorbed by

some of the companies or factories that have been closed down in the country which leads to economic meltdown (Wajim, 2020).

According to Asuquo, (2009), the term "kidnapping" is complex and transitional due to its state-to-state scenario as well as jurisdictional criteria. Also, Walsh & Poole, (2019) has described hostage taking as 'abducting or capturing away of a person intentionally to deprive them of personal freedom. Generally, kidnapping involves capturing and detaining an individual against his or her will, usually in an extension of other criminal intentions. From these definitions, kidnapping is operationalised as illegal and forceful taking away of an individual or group of individuals purposely to demand for ransome. The wave of kidnapping and hostage taking phenomena has become so absurd and terrible. The diary of the recent major kidnaps in Nigeria have 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 3rdquarter 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 this menace of kidnapping in Nigeria often die in the process while the luckier ones are released after severe torture and payment of huge ransom.

Notwithstanding, the widening scale of insecurity in Kaduna State is a cause for concern as all are affected by it. Everyone is worried, presently. Hardly can people pray in worship centers, or travel on highways or farm without being scared of being kidnapped. In fact, the abductees and their families are being traumatized by the ordeal of kidnapping and hostage taking. Commuters plying the Kaduna-Abuja expressway undergo about two-hour trip in a state of fear as the usually busy road is plagued by activities of kidnappers. Most times when their activities are curtailed by security agencies, they resurface, leading to another round of horrendous experience. In fact, there are growing security concerns of kidnapping on the Kaduna-Abuja highway despite the presence of security agencies (Ibrahim et al, 2021).

Kidnapping and hostage taking in Kaduna State have become a major feature of urban and highway crime committed largely by high profile elite criminals in the cities and township on one hand and armed robbers/bandits on the other hand. Investigations by Mohammed (2018) revealed that bandits kidnapped at least 100 people along Birnin Gwari Kaduna road and demanded 5 million ransoms. According to Agande (2018), two Americans and two Canadians were on Tuesday January, 17, 2018 at about 6.16pm kidnapped in Kaduna State by armed gunmen. Consequently, a member of the lower chamber of the National Assembly, Garba Umar Durbunde was abducted at about 1.48pm on May 31st 2017 at Jere, along Kaduna-Abuja road. He was released upon the payment of N10 Million ransom. The most audacious of kidnap incidences was when heavily armed Kidnappers blocked the Kaduna-Abuja highway for several hours and kidnapped over 50 persons. No hostage was allowed to leave without paying ransom; some paid as low as N50, 000 only (Abdulrahman, 2017).

Recent kidnapping around Kaduna State have turned deadly with the victims either killed or left to die unattended to by the kidnappers. This has heightened fear among residents urban or rural or even travellers along Kaduna-Abuja expressway. It is sad that the incident of kidnapping in Kaduna State is quite very high, for every high profile kidnapped case that finds its way into the media you have a hundred other cases that are unreported. The kidnappers are predictably unpredictable. They fish in troubled waters taking away big fishes surrounded by security personnel. As a matter of fact, kidnapping has assumed a new height in Kaduna State. It is a pity that in Kaduna State, road kidnaps have recorded the most incidents; this is because kidnappers prefer to strike where security is weakest, in transit far kidnappers have the capacity to breach security at work sites, farm and residences, when resident kidnap occurs, and it is likely the perpetrators had assistance from an insider (Ibrahim et al, 2021).

Residents in kidnapping and hostage taking zones such as Kaduna metropolis experience social distrust and relationship problems as people have been found to be informants to kidnappers. These

are symptoms of psychological distress which may vary across cultures but may include headaches, sleep problems, and fatigue. According to Abamara and Dike (2018), assessments of kidnap victims reveal that they suffer physical and emotional trauma from captivity. Psychological distress according to McLachlan and Catharine (2018) affects health as it elevates the risk of incident arthritis, cardiovascular disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease even at moderately low levels of distress.

The catastrophe of the kidnapping and hostage taking phenomena has devastated the nooks and crannies of Kaduna Metropolis. These violent crimes currently constitute a serious menace that has kept many residents of Kaduna Metropolis without sleep as every person: male and female, young and old seems to command some kidnapping and hostage taking value within the State. Kidnapping and hostage taking have taken an alarming dimension and as the incidences of kidnapping increased recently, various explanations have been adduced including harsh socio-economic conditions, cult group activities, and political rivalries among others with varying degrees of endorsement on one hand and condemnation on the other. In tune with this confusion, law enforcement agencies appear to be at a loss as to the best way to curtail this development (Ibrahim et al, 2021). Therefore, it is against this backdrop that this paper intends to examine the prevalence of kidnapping and hostage taking in Kaduna Metropolis.

Statement of Research Problem

Kaduna State has turned to a place for kidnapping and hostage taking. These discourage many people to have hope in a better Kaduna or to have belief in promised changed. From all observations of how insecurity unfolds systematically, couple with keen consideration of news or reports about kidnappings and hostage taking in Kaduna State, it is no longer news that things have completely changed in Kaduna State because every resident of Kaduna State commands some kidnapping value. The kidnappers don't care who to kidnap, where to kidnap, and when to kidnap. It is alleged that those behind it are youths that supposed to be the leaders of tomorrow. The speed with which the evil is growing in Kaduna State and the merciless ways that lives of innocent ones are being wasted are altogether worrisome. According to Timothy et al (2019), people are burdened on a daily basis with psychological and emotional trauma resulting from gory sights of lifeless and mutilated bodies of loved family members, close associates and colleagues littered on the streets, public squares and everywhere

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the prevalence of kidnapping and hostage taking in Kaduna Metropolis. To achieve this, the study adopted the following specific objectives:

1. To find out the prevalence of kidnapping and hostage taking incidence in Kaduna metropolis.
2. To determine the rate in which people get kidnapped and taken hostage.
3. To identify the most vulnerable group to kidnapping and hostage taking in Kaduna metropolis.

4. To ascertain communities in Kaduna metropolis that are more prone to kidnapping and hostage taking.

Literature Review

The early common law conceptualizes kidnapping as the forcible abduction or stealing of a person from their country and sending to another one (Birrell, 2018). To Abraham (2013) kidnapping is an act of seizing, taking away and keeping a person in custody either by force or treachery. Abraham (2013) further describes kidnapping as "the forcible seizure, taking away and unlawful detention of a person(s) against their will". Fage and Alabi (2017) conceived kidnapping as "forceful or fraudulent abduction of an individual or a group of individuals to an unknown destination, for reasons ranging from economic, political, and religious to struggle for self-determination. Therefore, this study understands kidnapping as the action of abducting someone and holding the person captive. In their conception of hostage taking, Odoemelam and Omage (2013) described it as "capturing and holding individual or group of individuals as prisoner by one or more others, who threaten to keep, harm or kill her or him or them, unless certain demands are met". Hostage taking to Protus (2014) involves abduction; it is considered to occur when a person is seized or detained or moved from one place to another against his/her will or a situation in which local authority with the intent to use the abduction in connection with some other evil or wicked objective. Having reviewed these, the paper conceptualise Hostage taking as the act of capturing somebody and holding them prisoner, usually threatening to injure or kill them if people or Government do not meet certain demands.

In terms of the prevalence of kidnapping and hostage taking around the world, Umar (2023) reported from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, (2019); US Department of Justice, (2021) and Control Risk, (2016) that the estimated prevalence of kidnapping and hostage taking varies greatly by country. It is estimated by the U.S. Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation that for approximately every 800,000 missing persons in the United States per year, at least 12,500 are the result of kidnappings including approximately 2,500 children (mostly by non-custodial parents) and 10,000 adults. The prevalence and danger of kidnapping and hostage taking is higher in Mexico that experiences over 3,000 kidnappings; making it the second-highest country for such a crime. Following that, Colombia witnesses 10 abductions on average per day. It has been observed by Umar (2023:15) that statistics on kidnapping and hostage taking around the world are still murky even though it is an internationally known issue. This is in part due to the concealment strategies by those who enact this premeditated crime, and due to a lack of public source of information on kidnapping and hostage taking in every modern country. However, kidnapping and hostage taking are so prevalent and complex through the world and history. For example, 70% of Africa's countries recognize the prevalence of imported and exported kidnapping victims within their territories, for approximately 250,000 annually trafficked children in Nigeria and Central Africa. In the Middle Eastern region, including countries such Israel and United Arab Emirates, approximately 250 victims of kidnapping and human trafficking are reported annually and this is largely believed to be an underestimate.

Theoretical Framework

The paper adopted social learning theory as its explanation tool. Albert Bandura, (born December 4, 1925, Mundare, Alberta, Canada—died July 26, 2021, Stanford, California, U.S.) is the propounder of the theory. Social Learning Theory assumes that behavioral patterns are acquired by links (contingencies) established between the behavior and its consequences. When behavior is followed by desired results (reward) that behavior is reinforced (made more likely) on the other

hand, when behavior is followed by undesirable or aversive consequences that behavior is punished (made less likely) (Ruwan et al, 2020). This assumption explains the prevalence of kidnapping and hostage taking in Kaduna. The incidence of kidnapping and hostage taking is increasing as the society is encouraging it through social inequality, which results to a wide gap between the poor and the rich.

Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design. This allowed data collection without manipulation of variables hence the residents are familiar with the problem being studied. The target population of the study consisted of men and women, who as at the time of the study were eighteen (18) years old and above irrespective of their social affiliations, who were as well residents of Kaduna Metropolis and were either directly or indirectly affected by the spate of kidnapping in Kaduna State. Also, the study adopted the Cochran's formula of sample size determination for infinite population to arrive at a sample size of 384. Using the multi-stage sampling technique, this sample size was distributed equally across the four (4) Local Government Areas that make up Kaduna Metropolis (that is, Kaduna North, Kaduna South, Chikun, and Igabi Local Government Areas). In the same vein, the study adopted questionnaire as the instrument of data collection. Undoubtedly, the choice of this instrument is the most appropriate for data collection in quantitative study. The questionnaires were self-administered by the researchers and face-to-face delivery method was employed to administer questionnaires to the sampled population. Descriptive statistical technique for data analysis was adopted for the study. In this direction, a computer software known as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 was adopted for easy and accurate analysis of data obtained from the field, and the results were presented in tabular forms using frequency distribution tables and percentages.

Results

This section analyzes and interprets the data collected from the field. Out of 384 questionnaires distributed in the field, 360 questionnaires were duly filled and successfully retrieved. However, the analysis is presented thematically based on the questionnaires recovered from the field.

Table 1: Prevalence of Kidnapping and Hostage Taking Incidence in Kaduna Metropolis

Prevalence	Frequency	Percentage
Daily Occurrence	70	19.4
Weekly Occurrence	166	46.2
Monthly Occurrence	124	34.4
Total	360	100.0

Source: (Survey data, 2023)

Table above provides information on the prevalence of kidnapping and hostage taking incidence in Kaduna Metropolis. The table shows that; 19.4% of the respondents revealed that kidnapping and hostage taking incidence in Kaduna Metropolis occur on daily basis, 46.1% said these unfortunate phenomena occur on weekly basis, and 34.4% said they occur on monthly basis. This implies that majority of the respondents revealed that kidnapping and hostage taking incidence in Kaduna Metropolis occur on weekly basis. This could be due to the widespread breach of security in the

State. The use of more sophisticated and superior weapons by Kidnappers have aided their criminal activities in Kaduna Metropolis.

Table 2: The Rate in Which People Get Kidnapped and Taken Hostage

Rate	Frequency	Percentage
Very often	113	31.4
Often	229	63.6
Not Often	18	5.0
Total	360	100.0

Source: (Survey data, 2023)

Table above provides information on the rate in which people get kidnapped and taken hostage in the study area. The table shows that; 31.4% of the respondents claimed that people get kidnapped and taken hostage in their areas very often, 63.6% of the respondents said it is often, and 5% of the respondents said it is not often. This implies that majority of the respondents claimed that people often get kidnapped and taken hostage in their areas. This is not surprising considering the fact that Kaduna State has suddenly become a den of kidnappers.

Table 3: Most Vulnerable Group to Kidnapping and Hostage Taking in Kaduna Metropolis

Vulnerable Group	Frequency	Percentage
Men	30	8.3
Women	54	15.0
Children	132	36.7
All	144	40.0
Total	360	100.0

Source: (Survey data, 2023)

Table above provides information on the most vulnerable group to kidnapping and hostage taking in Kaduna Metropolis. The table shows that; 8.3% of the respondents alleged that men are the most vulnerable to kidnapping and hostage taking in Kaduna metropolis today, 15% of the respondents alleged that it is women, 36.6% of the respondents alleged that it is children, and 49% of the respondents declared that all categories of the population are vulnerable to kidnapping and hostage taking in Kaduna Metropolis. This implies that men, women and children are vulnerable to kidnapping and hostage taking in Kaduna Metropolis today as affirmed by the majority of the respondents. This is due to the fact that every inhabitant of Kaduna Metropolis commands some kidnapping value.

Table 4: Communities in Kaduna Metropolis that are More Prone to Kidnapping and Hostage Taking than Others

Communities that are more prone to kidnapping than others	Frequency	Percentages
True	232	64.4
False	36	10.0
I'm not sure	92	25.6
Total	360	100.0

Source: (Survey data, 2023)

Table above provides information on whether some communities in Kaduna Metropolis are more prone to kidnapping and hostage taking than others. The table shows that; 64.4% of the respondents agreed that some communities in Kaduna Metropolis are more prone to kidnapping and hostage taking than others, 10% disagreed, and 25.6% claimed they were not sure. This implies that some communities in Kaduna Metropolis are more prone to kidnapping and hostage taking than others as affirmed by majority of the respondents. It is obvious that remote communities at the outskirt of Kaduna Metropolis are more vulnerable to kidnapping and hostage taking than communities in the metropolis.

Discussion

The objective of this paper was to examine the prevalence of kidnapping and hostage taking in Kaduna Metropolis. According to the findings majority of the respondents revealed that kidnapping and hostage taking incidence in Kaduna Metropolis occur on weekly basis. This was supported by 46.1% of the respondents. Also, the respondents claimed that people often get kidnapped and taken hostage in their areas. This was equally supported by 63.3% of the respondents. This finding is in agreement with (Ibrahim et al. (2021) who revealed that, the spate of kidnapping and hostage taking incidences in Nigeria is becoming more worrisome and even national embarrassment as hardy a day passes now without hearing one case of kidnapping or hostage taking occurrence with no exception of age, religion, gender, ethnic background and so on of the individuals. The findings further showed that men, women and children are vulnerable to kidnapping and hostage taking in Kaduna Metropolis today as affirmed by the majority of the respondents. This was supported 49% of the respondents. This finding contradicts Olaniyi and Aminu (2021) who argued that; recently, students

have become cheap target of notorious kidnappers in Nigeria with its antecedent consequences on individuals, schools, government and the society at large. Also, the finding revealed that some communities in Kaduna Metropolis are more prone to kidnapping and hostage taking than others as affirmed by majority of the respondents. This was supported by 64.4% of the respondents.

Conclusion

The paper examined the prevalence of kidnapping and hostage taking in Kaduna Metropolis. Based on the findings of the study as discussed above, it is concluded that kidnapping and hostage taking are prevalent crimes in Kaduna Metropolis. And every resident of Kaduna Metropolis is vulnerable to kidnapping and hostage taking.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusions of this paper, the researchers made the following recommendations:

1. Kaduna State Government in collaboration with the Federal Government should set-up a well-equipped/effective anti-kidnapping agency in order to over-power the perpetrators of kidnapping in Kaduna Metropolis.
2. Appropriate Sanctions should be meted out to kidnappers and their sympathizers in Kaduna Metropolis. The Kaduna State House of Assembly should make harsh and stringent laws against kidnapping and hostage taking in Kaduna State.
3. Government should create jobs and skills development centers for the unemployed youths in Kaduna Metropolis to keep them engaged and resist the temptation of venturing into the kidnapping and hostage taking business. This will help curtail the high levels of idleness as the mother of evil thoughts, evil plans and evil actions among the youths. It will curtail the idleness that results to learning criminality like kidnapping.
4. Government at all levels should live up to their constitutional primary responsibility of protecting lives and properties of residents of Kaduna Metropolis and Kaduna State as a whole.

5. Security structures and formations should be firmly established in some remote communities in Kaduna Metropolis in order to check and balance the excesses of kidnappers who capitalize on their geographical location to kidnap at will.

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