

Factors Influencing Kidnapping in Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

Kidnapping has become a worrisome and recurrent decimal in Nigeria. Records show the severity of this criminal trend in different part of the country recently where different category of persons are abducted. This study thus examined factors influencing kidnapping in Shendam Local Government Area, Plateau State. The structural-choice model was adopted for this study. The study employed the cross-sectional quantitative survey design to identify factors influencing kidnapping via clustered random sampling technique of residents in Shendam. Questionnaires were used for data collection. Out of 400 administered questionnaires, 374 (93.5%) were retrieved for analyses and hypothesis testing. Data was coded with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 computer software and descriptive and non-parametric inferential statistical analyses were computed. Results revealed that 69.0% of the study sample opined that kidnapping is influenced by unemployment. Results also indicated that 62.6% noted that the pattern of abduction tended to rapt on travellers; as 78.1% opined abductors targeted wealthy and affluent victims. 37.4% indicated that kidnapping levels were high, as 74.6% said that abductors capture especially targets in remote towns. 64.4% alluded to employment and empowerment as solution to kidnapping. Hypothesis test result indicated $X^2(2, 374) = 8.860, p = .012$. Therefore, alternative hypothesis was accepted which states that kidnapping is significantly influenced by unemployment at alpha level of 0.05. The study recommended that kidnapping could be curbed by employing and empowering the teeming population of youths who are vulnerable to subscribe to criminality because of strain.

Keywords: Abduction; Kidnapping; Plateau State; Shendam

Introduction

Nigeria is currently plagued by numerous criminal behaviours, amongst which kidnapping traverses its territorial bounds (Alemika, 2013). Globally, the United Nations kidnaping indexes in 2016, showed that 82% adults and 16% children were kidnapped in Europe/Central Asia; 73% adults and 27% children were kidnapped in the Americas; 61% adults and 39% children were kidnapped in Southeast Asia/Pacific. These figures indicated that more adults were kidnapped in the above-mentioned regions. In Africa however, 32% kidnappings affected adults while 68% were children, by 2016 (United Nations; cited in Odey, 2017). As reported by the then Inspector-General of Nigeria Police, Mohammed Adamu, kidnapping was

estimated at about 685 to 900 persons annually, across the country. Persistent mostly in the north-eastern states, where 79.8% of kidnappings have been estimated; its tentacles have spread nationwide (Toromade, 2019). Concerns for kidnapping have been contentious as emerging trends in the felonious act have drawn attention, both nationally and internationally. Within the academia, concern is increasing recently because most victims tend to be captured in large numbers from learning institutions.

Even though kidnapping is prevalent, and has detrimental effects on both developed and developing nations, it has a long history. According to Chidi (2014) the word kidnapping is derived from the word "kid" meaning; child and "nab" which means, to snatch. This has been in use since 1673 to mean the practice of stealing of children for use as servants or labourers in the American colonies. Today, the act of kidnapping has completely gone beyond the abduction of kids-it tentatively could be seen as any illegal capture or detention of a person or people against their will, regardless of age.

Kidnapping is reported to have originated in pre-historic Thora. Specifically, the Bible records that Joseph was abducted by his Hebrew brothers Genesis, 40: 15 (New American Standard Bible). Tuner as cited in Odoemelum, and Omage (2013) stated that the literal origin of kidnapping is traceable to late 17th century. Also, in ancient Rome, the Emperor Constantine (AD, 315) became troubled by the incidence of kidnapping that he ordered death penalty as punishment for the crime. Consequently, the issue of kidnapping has been an extant problem. So that, other countries such as India, Mexico, Philippines and other parts of the world are reported to be also plagued by the unbecoming incidence of kidnapping (Abdulkabir, 2017).

In Nigeria, records on the origin of kidnapping are a bit blur. It is however not a recent phenomenon. Osumah and Aghedo (2011) noted that historically, the rivalry generated by nineteenth-century slave trading was characterised by raids, piracy, abduction and kidnapping of able-bodied men in Nigeria. Since then, this malady has never ceased to take place. Kidnapping became alarming in Nigeria, early 2006, when some militants in the Niger Delta region, abducted some oil workers, ostensibly to draw global attention to the dire situation in the oil-rich region of the country, the victims were mostly foreigners. Since then, the *mala in se* - kidnapping, has spread to other parts of the country (Abraham, 2013; Odoemelum and Omage, 2013). The targets are now seized among locals as well as foreigners. Eventually

every Nigerian, irrespective of class or status is a suitable target. Johnmary and Ndubuisi (2014) observed that kidnapping in Nigeria has become a strong threat to national peace and security. Abdulkabir (2017) corroborated this assertion by stating that:

“the rate of kidnapping in Nigeria was geometrically increasing such that more than 2000 innocent people including Chibok girls, politicians, government officials, influential people and kings were reported to have been kidnapped between 2014 and 2017. As a result of this, Nigeria was ranked in the global index as one of the worst places to dwell in because of frequent kidnapping incidents” (p. 43).

To accentuate this fact, global kidnap for ransom reports by an international security agency NYA24 (2018) observed incidences in the first quarter of the year 2017. Asia witnessed the highest incidence of kidnappings globally, with approximately 43% in 2017. Africa came second, and ranking topmost among countries in the region were Nigeria, followed by South-Sudan and Somalia. Africa had an index of 36%. Americas had 14%, Middle East and Europe had less than 10% of kidnap cases.

The prevalence of kidnapping in Nigeria is not only substantively felt at present, but also in the past; even though rarely observed in historical tabloids. It could be deduced that the return of democracy may have engendered kidnapping of somewhat political opponents. For instance, the then Governor of Anambra State and current Minister of Labour and Employment, Chris Ngige was kidnapped in 2003. This is but one, out of the many kidnap cases in the country that had some political undertone (Johnmary and Ndubuisi, 2014). Nevertheless, for whatever justification, kidnapping has always not been without obvious causes.

Generally, scholars have argued that kidnapping has emerged as a medium of engagement for economic survival, securing political stakes, ritual sacrifice and business advantage between rivals and co-competitors. Secondly, as alluded in the forgone, kidnapping is also said to emanate from political rivalry-politicians use some young and idle minds to attain their political interest, by kidnapping and suppressing contending opponents. At the other end of the continuum, some kidnapers are driven into this dastardly act in order to procure essential human body parts for rituals/sacrifices. Reasons for the sacrifice of individuals vary among: political or economic might, protection, appeasement and so on (Abdulkabir, 2017).

Consequently, despite the dehumanizing feats in the nature of this devilish act, it has continued to spread its tentacle to all regions in Nigeria. Today, incessant kidnapping has grown into a major national problem. Its subject matter draws serious concern to both government policy makers, and non-governmental organisations, political and religious leaders, as well as all stakeholders interested in national advancement (Jeribe and Nlemchukwu, 2016). This work therefore empirically looks at the factors influencing kidnapping in Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State.

Statement of the Research Problem

Being a traversing phenomenon, kidnapping incurs victim's oppression. However, literature has also identified various causative factors which propel perpetrators to include: economic, political, cultural, poverty and lack of gainful employment, among others. All of these social factors could have advanced the wave of kidnapping in Nigeria. Concerns are on which major factor drives kidnapping in the region. Kidnapping, has threatened social stability and even inter-group coexistence in Nigeria and particularly Shendam. It threatens all and sundry within the Nigerian society: residents and visitors, young and old, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, rulers and the ruled, politicians and non-politicians, law makers and even security operatives and so forth. Hitherto, the trend and pattern of kidnapping were common amongst persons of high status. Recently, almost every social category is at risk of being kidnapped. Different forms of kidnapping patterns have surfaced in Nigeria. Concerns are therefore on what pattern or trend of kidnapping is more prevalent.

Inimical consequences ranging from psychological trauma, health and bodily infirmities, social withdrawal, to financial losses and so forth; are some of the levels of devastation caused by kidnapping. While most times, the physiological effects may be borne by victims, the financial and psychosocial effects of kidnapping are being shared by relatives and well-wishers who may suffer consternations as to whether their loved ones (victims) might not be released, maimed, or even killed. Also, the entire community (society) is also not removed from the risk equation, as inimical consequences of kidnapping cause disheartening outcomes between release negotiators and abductors. Communities infested with the problem of kidnapping 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. Recently patterns of kidnapping have

emerged thereby throwing concerned communities and authorities into confusion on what levels of fraught kidnapping trends pose on society.

Governments at federal and state levels have adapted militaristic and non-kinetic approaches for addressing kidnapping. These include joint task force apprehension through mounting several check-points and amnesty programs which have not yielded desired results. Unfortunately, this unpleasant phenomenon has continued to ravage even more intensively, occurring almost frequently and intermittently in most parts of Nigeria. Against the backdrop of the largely unsuccessful militaristic and other local security initiatives that attempt to halt its occurrence within the country, there are however, concerns on how the problem of kidnapping may be resolved. It is against this backdrop which the study seeks to examine kidnapping in Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State, where empirical studies may have not been conducted in recent times on the menace.

Research Questions

The study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions:

- i. What are the factors influencing the kidnapping in Shendam Local Government Area?
- ii. What are the patterns of kidnapping in Shendam Local Government Area?
- iii. What is the level of the kidnapping in Shendam local government Area?
- iv. What are the possible solutions to kidnapping in Shendam local government Area?

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to assess factors influencing kidnapping in Shendam local Government Area of Plateau State. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Identify the major factors influencing kidnapping in Shendam Local Government Area.
- ii. Examine the patterns of kidnapping in Shendam Local Government Area.
- iii. Assess the level of kidnapping in Shendam Local Government Area.
- iv. Proffer solutions to kidnapping in Shendam Local Government Area.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis below was formulated to guide the study:

H₀: Kidnapping is not significantly influenced by unemployment.

Significance of the Study

This study is relevant as it portrays the current trends, pattern and specific factors influencing kidnapping and its implications on Shendam local Government of Plateau State. Findings from the study will enlighten the academic, and can also be of use as literature and reference material for further studies. Recommendations from the study will also be useful for social policy initiation to a more secure nation.

Concept Clarification

Kidnapping: The early common law conceptualises 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. Similarly, Abraham (2013) describe kidnapping as “the forcible seizure, taking away and unlawful detention of a person(s) against their will” (p. 532). 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 (p. 289).

Kidnapping as a term has been conceptualised by terms such as hostage-taking and hijacking. Thus, Odoemelam and Oimage (2013) define hijacking as “to seize control of a vehicle, especially an aircraft in order to force it to go to a new destination or demand something from a government, in return for the safety of its passengers or crew” (p.23). In their conception of kidnapping, Odoemelam and Oimage (2013) describe “individuals who is captured and held prisoner by one or more others, who threaten to keep, harm or kill her or him, unless certain demands are met” as a kidnapped victim (p. 23).

These descriptions underpin ‘hijack and hostage’ as actions geared towards forcing secondary victims with vested interest, to meeting the demands of perpetrators. Notably, kidnappings are perpetrated via coercing victims, government, corporate organizations or victim’s associates into yielding their demand. Kidnaping may sometimes occur in furtherance of another crime such as rape or organ mutilation, among others.

However, this study delineates kidnapping to mean any act which involves fraudulence, coercive abduction and illegal confinement as well as the movement of a person or horde, from one place to another against their wish, for such reasons

as economic (financial), political, and religious etc. In any of these range of reasons mentioned, ransom may be declared and paid. This is not undermining that kidnapping may sometimes be perpetrated for other varied reasons, depending on what motivates assailant.

Features of Kidnapping

In as much as there are different reasons for kidnappings, certain unmistakeable features are observed to cut across all kidnappings. According to *The Economist* (cited in Ezemenaka 2018, pp. 233-246), these features include, but not limited to:

- i. Coercion and threat to inflict bodily harm and maiming, sometimes murder.
- ii. Relocation of victims to some unknown location (hide outs or secret bush camps), for thorough isolation. where unsuspecting or accidental disclosure is not very easy; preferably deep forests or a completely isolated property in remote locality (Ezemenaka, 2018).
- iii. Victims are strip-out, restrained and restricted from access to basic social liberties, such as: accessing or participating in communicative activities.
- iv. Physical and mental torture. This causes traumatic depression, anxiety, fear and most times post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD), which may last a lifetime. Ezemenaka (2018) observes that in a society where the incidence of kidnapping is high, fear limits public activities. People always move with caution as they do not know who might be the next target. The wealthy and powerful mostly surround themselves with security guards because of their fright of being abducted.
- v. Threat to the continued peaceful existence of abductee.

Types of Kidnapping

Literature evidence shows that various forms of kidnapping have been identified by social scientists. These include:

Ransom Kidnapping:

Kidnapping for ransom happens when a kidnapper abducts a person and takes them hostage in order to receive payment from family, employer or the state in exchange for victim's release. This type of kidnapping is the most highlighted in the media, and occurs very often in highbrow areas and suburbs. It has become one of the most lucrative and sinister enterprises globally and spontaneously escalating with time. In Nigeria, this type of kidnapping is perpetrated by insurgent groups such as Boko-Haram and other criminal syndicates, as a means of establishing dominance and pulling huge finances, for funding their network and operations. Suitable targets are

mostly high-net-worth individuals such as wealthy nationals, school children and women or workers of large corporations. Victims of ransom kidnappings are sometimes tortured and maltreated physically. Although there are exceptional instances where victims are neither assaulted nor compelled to do outrageous things, in order to indicate spontaneity as well as raise the stakes of ransom payments are delayed. Though, sometimes victims end-up being murdered, especially when ransoms are delayed or in any attempt to thwart the abductors' plan. Nevertheless, once ransoms are paid, captors are observed to release victims. Victim's release is not always guaranteed (Birrell, 2018).

High Net-worth Kidnapping:

This form of kidnapping is conscripted for specialised groups, involving somewhat higher conditional terms for its occurrence. The kidnapped is usually extremely wealthy and the kidnappers are of high expertise (Johnmary and Ndubuisi, 2014). The distinction between high net-worth kidnapping and ransom kidnappings is the category of offenders and victims involved. High net-worth kidnapping is perpetrated mostly by professionals and based on professional expertise. Also, high net-worth kidnapping involves strategic planning, thorough surveillance, and deep intelligence gathering on targets and prospective ransom redeemers. The perpetrators learn the likes and dislike targets, estimate victims' security, and then determine the clearest opportunity to capture targets (Johnmary and Ndubuisi, 2014). When a target is captured, captors declare ransom and other terms to the appropriate quarters. Typically, once the ransom has been paid, the captive is released.

Tiger kidnapping (also proxy bombings):

This kidnapping style occurs when a victim is forced to follow the perpetrator's instructions by performing their desired intentions. Like a Tiger, perpetrators stalk their target over a period of time, trailing in wait, before commencing their plan (Johnmary and Ndubuisi, 2014). It is a kidnapping style that involves a multi-levelled planning for its execution. For instance, high-ranking military personnel may be coerced to ignite an explosive or give access to the facility. A terrible example of this kidnapping type is when a teacher or college staff is forced into delivering his/her students to kidnappers or detonating a bomb on campus.

Express kidnapping:

Express kidnapping is perhaps the most proliferated type of kidnapping in Africa. It happens when the kidnapper abducts the victim, takes them to an ATM gallery, and forces them to withdraw or empty their accounts (Johnmary and Ndubuisi, 2014). Usually, this type of kidnapping may not involve violence, but is relatively spontaneous hence victims are mostly coerced. Many victims are held overnight and made to carry out several transactions via internet banking services, to enable kidnappers capitalize their gains. Occasionally, victims are released unharmed, but sometimes, they are robbed, assaulted or raped, while some victims may be held for longer periods, as kidnappers believe they could obtain even more financial gains through ransoming (Johnmary and Ndubuisi, 2014).

Political or Religious (Ideological) kidnapping:

This is believed to be the most frightening form of kidnapping since victims are mostly high-profile personalities—people who have a very high net-worth and social status, such as political or religious leaders (men and women) in the category of Clerics among other state or national dignitaries. The pressure from the victim's political or religious constituent may tend to pose serious threat to the kidnappers. Perpetrators may want to swap the hostage for the release of a prisoner, or demand the withdrawal of political or religious decision. They may sometimes kidnap their victim in order to counter a popular notion about an incidence. In most instances, the motive for this type of kidnapping is to raise propaganda. Here too, victims are mostly not tortured physically only in exceptional cases (Odoemelam and Oimage, 2013; Johnmary and Ndubuisi, 2014).

Unlawful detention:

Unlawful detention means keeping or confining a person in custody without any lawful reason. This is a form of kidnapping whose prevalence in Africa has abated since the withdrawal of colonial ties. Unlawful detention is yet observably common amongst law enforcement (police) and other constituted authorities, for instance during outbreaks or breakdown of order (curfews) (Odoemelam and Oimage, 2013). In most cases, the victim (detainee) is arrested, detained and their basic liberties denied, for a considerable duration, after which they are released off detention. However, in cases, such as may be seen in hostage marriages—elopement/adoption marriages, the victim is never released to return to the family. The victims may sometimes be tortured physically, especially when they attempt to resist custody,

while some are abused sexually. Odoemelam and Oimage (2013) maintain that most unlawful detentions, do not result in ransoming, victims may sometimes be used for rituals or as sex objects. This is by far the most scary and dangerous form of kidnapping, in that captors are clueless and victims' chances of getting off are usually narrow (Odoemelam and Oimage, 2013; Oyewole, 2016).

Virtual kidnapping:

Virtual kidnapping is imagery confinement or abduction that has real implications on the target audience. The growth of digital technology has availed highly sophisticated audio and visual gadgetry and the internet is used in creating and transmitting an artificial kidnap situation, which appears real and convincing to a targeted audience—relatives, associates and mostly government agencies (Odey, 2017). It is a new method of extracting funds or deluding a group into meeting the terms of the offender; which does not imply physical contact with neither the victim nor target audience. In this case a graphic presentation to the target audience may be published by the virtual offender, who intends to convince the audience that they have the victim whose image and voice appears in the video. Kidnapers employ the services of audio and videographers, who put together the predesigned scenario of the victim in bonds, at distinct locations away from their known location. The offender would then call the targeted audience, either victim's family or other perceived authority to declare their demands for release (Odey, 2017). The main instrument in this type of kidnapping is the internet media, through which threats are issued. The offender's goal is to scare the target audience (victims), into believing their relative or personal resource and concerns is at stake. Virtual kidnapping is not a common form of kidnaping in Nigeria (Odey, 2017).

Causes of Kidnapping

Literature has identified various motivations for kidnapping. Scholars recognise political, economic factors, religion and rituals causes. It is noteworthy that each of these factors are interwoven, and Nigeria shares a great chunk of them in extreme rates; which calls for concerns from all stakeholders accordingly. Kidnapping in Nigeria have been identified with perpetrators such as religious sects, thugs, fraudsters, baby factories, bandits, ritualists, insurgents, sea pirates among other terrorists (Odoh, 2010; Chidi, 2014; Akpan, 2017).

Political Causes: politics involves the processes or set of activities that are associated with the governance of defined territory (country or state). It involves

attaining political altitude as well as exercising the authority through governance—organized autonomy and control over defined human natural resources. In the zest to acquire political height and might, kidnappings especially of political gladiators, during political campaigns is another astute cause of kidnapping in Nigeria. This is a way of suppressing powerful contenders who pose as obstacles to the ascension of perceived political powers (Chidi, 2014).

Kidnapping is then seen as instrumental for political vendetta and settling of political scores. The operation is organised and targeted mainly at key serving politicians or foreign workers or contractors working directly for government. Once the victim is kidnapped, a high-level negotiation is expected which will ultimately lead to a very heavy ransom. Such a ransom is used to further political scores, gratification of aggrieved groups or a medium of blackmail and financial crippling of serving politician (Chidi, 2014). Accessories to political kidnapping is mostly thugs.

This exchange earmarks the nexus between politics and economic factors influencing the prevalence of kidnapping. It also indicates the relationship between “money and politics”. Thus, desperate politicians, are found to resort in kidnapping of opponents, as a measure to quell contention and generating resources to fund their political campaigns.

Economic Causes: this refers to faulty economic conditions that spur unfavourable economic wellbeing of persons who resort to crimes such as kidnapping, as a means of alleviating their lack of economic stability (Okorie, Nwokeoma and Samuel, 2018). Kidnapping in this regard is exacerbated for financial (economic) gains (Akpan, 2017). Kidnapping is an economic enterprise as kidnappers are observably businessmen, who hold victim’s hostage so as to secure huge funds inflows. This is reportedly the fundamental reason why perpetrators of this crime choose their victims based on known indices of been able to attract huge sums (Chidi, 2014).

Religion: Nigerians are highly religious people. Statistics shows that Nigeria ranked second most religious country in the world, and based on a religion survey, 93 percent of her population tended to be religious (Oyewole, 2016).

Religion plays a fundamental role in the evolution of a people. This can be observed in the way and manner in which individuals commit themselves to religious norms and values. Recently, Boko-haram and Islamic States are arguably some of religious sects speculated to pursue religious ideologies via its list of criminal acts.

Statistics have indicated that kidnappings by these religious sects are overarching, more than 1,500 children and adults have been adopted in the northern states by these insurgent groups (Busari, 2018).

Moreso, reports have also been heard of some religious leaders, who have secret dens for hostage taking, as perceived by their religious precepts. All of these are causative of kidnapping and human trafficking in Nigeria.

Rituals: a ritual is a set patterns or prescribed procedures and orders for carrying out religious actions or ceremonies (Odoh, 2010 cited in Oyewole, 2016). Sacrifice is a vital aspect of most religious ritual. This involves giving up something of value for the sake of something that is of greater value (Ayegboyin 2009 cited in Oyewole, 2016). Kidnapping for rituals have been closely linked with religious rituals. Oyewole maintains that Nigerians are particularly identified to practice more than one religion. And irrespective of one's religious proclivity, traditional religious values thrive.

According to Oyewole (2016) about 11 percent of Nigerian population believe in the protective powers of ancestral, spirit beings. As such, rituals involve offering fresh-blooded sacrifice of a living creature, mostly humans to the gods or spirits, in expectation of good fortune, wealth and status enhancement, or for atonement requests. This has been a central cause for kidnapping of individuals, as may be required to fulfil such ritual purposes. Ritual killers have accelerated the threats of kidnapping in Nigeria. Ritualists are conscious of and interested in utilising vital human organs for ritualistic rites.

Reportedly, Smith 2001 as cited in Oyewole (2016) avers that "most wealthy personalities and powerful individuals have their sources from such fetish rituals" (p. 38). Implicitly, kidnapping is the only medium through which these ritualists and their spiritualists access subjects (sacrificial lambs) for their rituals.

Other factors that are arguably influential to rising trends of kidnapping includes: *Unemployment, Greed, Corruption, Poverty, Thuggery* among others. According to Chidi (2014), the lack of true federalism and diminished patriotism by leaders, has contributed to the injury and underdevelopment in Nigeria. Corrupt and greedy leaders have brought untold difficulty for multitude of followers, who mostly are eligible members of the state and desire the dividends of qualitative and effective governmental practices.

Denial of these privileges and unfair share of national resources to the people of the Nation through community underdevelopment and inequity in resource allocation, as well as unguaranteed social justice and unemployment, has exacerbated socio-economic hardship and therefore the misery of impoverishment on the masses. Thus, prompting the agitation for local resource control and youth militancy in most regions of the nation. The proliferation of these groups has influenced kidnapping either for ransom declaration or as an instrument of liberation (Akpan, 2017).

Considerably, kidnapping, like every other crime trend, is subject to change with exposure and sociocultural (lifestyle) context of society. Causes of kidnapping are indeterminate, as perpetrators undertake kidnapping for diverse reasons and they are influenced diversely.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the structural-choice model. This model was preferred due to its flexibility in exploring and explaining diversely perceived factors influencing kidnapping. This model is an integration of the life-style exposure and routine activity theories of criminal victimisation. Proponents include Miethe and Meier, 1993; Cohen, Kluegel and Land, 1981. These two perspectives collectively highlight certain important conditions that drive kidnapping as follows:

- i. Physical proximity of victims to motivated offenders,
- ii. Exposure of victims to a high-risk environment,
- iii. Attractiveness of suitable targets, and
- iv. The absence of capable guardianship.

It is noteworthy to observe that these factors—economic, political, psychological, or religion amongst others, are fundamental conditions for kidnapping, as proposed by this model.

Proponents of this model emphasize *macro dynamic* and *micro level* attributes for kidnapping of suitable targets. In this regard, *Macro dynamic* attributes involves: physical proximity and the exposure of suitable targets. This informs the pattern of social interaction that pre-dispose individuals to circumstances that result to their kidnapped. *Micro level* attributes involves the processes that determine the selection of particular targets; as identified by this theory micro level processes include: attractiveness of targets and lack of capable guardianship. This reflects the

processes and the socio-spatial context, within which kidnapping of suitable targets occurs.

Proponents argue that every kidnap situation underplays both macro dynamic and micro level processes that bring about suitable target selection, as well as the socio-spatial context within which a successful perpetration of kidnapping.

Contributors to this model, conceptualise the *opportunity of predatory* victimisation, which consider the time-space relationship in which victimisation is greatest. According to them;

“the risk of criminal victimisation is seen as largely dependent on the lifestyle and routine activities of persons that bring them and their property into direct contact with potential offenders in the absence of capable guardians, who could potentially prevent the occurrence of a crime ... in our judgement, the key to understanding why wealth, race, religion, class, sex and age appear to affect the likelihood of victimisation in the ways they do is to focus on the mediating role played by the five attributive conditions earlier identified-exposure, guardianship, proximity to potential offenders, attractiveness of potential targets, and definition properties or victims” (Alemika, 2013, pp. 9 – 10).

In this regard, thus model observe that, exposure, physical proximity, and capable guardianship all have significant spatial effects on the likelihood of being kidnapped.

Finally, protagonists of this model, Miethe and Meier (1993) argue that capable guardianship as a concept has social (interpersonal) and physical dimensions. To them, social guardianship or social security includes neighbourhoods where people pay closer attention on each other's interest. They observe that availability of well-equipped law enforcement officers, vigilante among others could prevent kidnapping. Physical guardianship to them involves target hardening structures such as: Iron doors, gates, window locks, burglary-proofs, street lighting, alarm-traps, tracking devices and participation in physical (martial) arts, would boost the significance of capable guardianship, as it would require greater efforts, and greater risks of detection and apprehension and a contingent decrease in the opportunity for victimisation (Alemika, 2013).

From the foregoing, kidnapping is a crime of opportunity of predatory victimisation, in which victims are not accidentally marked as targets. This suggests that, kidnapping is not a haphazard predation of random individuals. It is premeditated victimisation that involves intelligence and calculable approaches to acquiring suitable targets without being foiled. Thus, kidnapping in whatever form is situated within a criminal opportunity structure aimed at yielding desired intention for a motivated abductors and their accessories.

According to the structural choice model, before kidnap targets are acquired, there must be physical proximity of suitable and attractive targets, and motivated kidnapper or sponsors. Attractive victims must be exposed via routine activities, such as going to school, church, cinema, or visiting relatives at particular periods. And there must be lack of capable security around targets. This forms the socio-spatial context where kidnapping of attractive victims is possible. This model views kidnapping as crime of opportunity, as such, victims serve as a means to an end, as envisaged by ransom, political, religious among other forms of kidnappings.

Method

This study employed cross-sectional quantitative research design, using a survey research method. The research was conducted in five different council wards of Shendam local Government; including *Kalong, Karungbau, Moekat* and *Shendam Central* (a) *Shendam Central* (b). This is because these were the major towns with highly populous areas where incidences of kidnapping have been experienced in the locality. Population of the study consisted both male and female residents of Shendam local Government area aged 15 years and above. Thus, Shendam has a population of 268,700 as estimated by the 2016 population census. The Study drew a sample size of 400 respondents, as determined by Taro Yamane (1957) sample size determination. Cluster and random sampling techniques were used to acquire suitable respondents. Study instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. Out of the 400 copies of questionnaire administered, 374 (93.5%) were returned. Analysis of data was descriptive using frequency tables and percentages while hypothesis testing is through chi-square inferential statistics. Data were coded and analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software version 21.

Study Location

Shendam local government area is located in Plateau State, Nigeria and occupy an area of 2,477 km². The Local Government Area (LGA) composes eleven council wards and its headquarters is in Shendam township. The LGA has a democratic elected Chairman, whose allegiance is to manage public resources among other administrative responsibilities. However, there is no exemption of traditional rulership among constituents. The administrative composition of Shendam includes Councillors, representing each council wards; and host of LGA administrative staffs among other socio-political dignitaries (City population, 2016).

The LGA has demographic count of about 268,700 that speaks majorly English, Geomai, Tiv languages, among several West-Chadic ethnicities who also inhabit it. Thus, the LGA is bounded by Ibi, Taraba State to the south, Qua'an Pan to the east, Pankshin to the north, and Mikang to the west. Shendam town is the second most populous town in Plateau State, after Jos town. Inhabitants are predominantly Christians with a placeable mixture of Muslims (City population, 2016).

River Shemankar is the major river in Shendam, rising from Plateau. It flows southward of Shendam at about 95 miles (150 km) to meet the Benue River at Ibi. During wet season Shemanker floods most of plains Swamplands (Fadamas), providing support for rice production among other food crops. However, vast vegetation in Shendam is savanna woodlands predominated (City population, 2016).

Hence, Shendam is mainly an agrarian region, more than half of its populace engage various crop farming activities. However, few of its urbanites are primarily engaged in various civil and commercial occupations, while some majority of its urbanites, especially youths are seen to engage in various commercial activities. Since majority of Shendamites engage in subsistent farming; females mostly involve in petty trading and hawking of some harvested farm produce in local market and sometimes along major roads. Whereas, the male mostly indulges commercial transportation (Achaba and Kekenapep) (Orisaremi & Alubo, 2012).

The LGA is also a market for merchants of various agri-food produce, thus earning it the commercial and populous setting that it is known to be. There are several private and public basic-schools, a college of education, banks, shops, cottage establishments that makeup the commercial centre, where various trading activities

corroborate. Security management in Shendam is anchored by Nigerian Police Force; backed by other military, paramilitary agencies, and community guards (Vigilante group). Recently, Olufemi (2020) reported that there was a hideout of hoodlums in the LGA. Consequently, a senior official of the State Security Service (SSS) Nigeria, was killed during a raid on the hideout. This follows series of reports on kidnappings among other violent crimes in the LGA and Plateau state at large.

Findings

This section of the study presents results from the analysis of socio demographic and other relevant variables in the objectives of the survey on kidnapping in Shendam.

Table 1: Socio demographic Variables per Council Wards in Shendam

Gender	Kalong	Karungbau	Moekat	ShendamA	ShendamB	Totals	Percent
MALE	52	57	35	47	51	242	64.7
FEMALE	17	15	41	32	27	132	35.3
Totals	69	72	76	79	78	374	100
Age in Years							
18 – 30	27	34	24	27	43	155	44.5
31 – 50	39	30	38	36	20	143	41.1
51 +	3	6	14	16	11	50	14.4
Total	69	70	76	79	74	348	100
Education							
Primary	8	11	21	17	13	70	21.0
Secondary	23	34	39	20	32	148	44.3
Tertiary	22	24	13	36	21	116	34.7
Total	53	69	73	73	66	334	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Table 1 presents the socio demographic data of respondents across five sampled council wards of Shendam. Findings from the data indicated that (242) 64.7% respondents were males, while (132) 35.3% respondents were females. This was as a result of declined interest in academic exercises by most female folks in Shendam. (155) 44.5% respondents, were aged 18 – 30 years, (143) 41.1% were aged 31 – 50 years, and (50) 14.4% were aged 51 years above. This age distribution showed that most respondents were between 18 – 50 years. This result implied that there were more younger persons in the sampled (urbanite) areas, whereas older persons retired to rural areas. (70) 21% were having primary education, (148) 44.3% were

having secondary education, and (116) 34.7% had tertiary education. This result indicated that most respondents had attained secondary and tertiary education. Of course, a major criterion for respondents' selection for this survey was the ability to read and write eligibly.

Objective 1: Identify the major factors influencing kidnapping in Shendam.

Table 2: Factors Influencing Kidnapping in Shendam

Factors	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Unemployment	258	69.0
Religion/Ritual	23	6.1
Politics	55	14.7
Greed	33	8.8
Others	5	1.3
Total	374	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

From the table 1 (258) 69.0% respondents were of the view that unemployment was the major factor influencing kidnapping. (23) 6.1% indicated that religion/rituals were responsible for kidnapping. (55) 14.7 % opined that politics influenced kidnapping. (33) 8.8% posited that greed was a driver of kidnapping, while, (5) 1.3% were of the opinion that other factors such as clinically verifiable psychosomatics, were responsible for kidnapping in Shendam local government of Plateau state. This data indicates that unemployment was the dominant factor influencing abduction of victims in Shendam, Plateau State. This is in line with the assertion in Akpan (2017) which iterates that denial of privileges and unfair share of national resources to the people and inequity in resource allocation, as well as unguaranteed social justice and unemployment, has exacerbated socio-economic hardship and therefore the misery of impoverishment on the masses. Thus, prompting the agitation of youth militancy in most regions of the nation. The proliferation of these groups has influenced kidnapping either for ransom declaration or as an instrument of liberation.

Objective 2: Examine the Pattern of kidnapping in Shendam Local Government.

Table 2: Places where kidnapping have Occurred

Places of occurrence	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Place of worship	22	5.9
School	53	14.2
When travelling	234	62.6
Market	4	1.1
Others	61	16.3
Total	374	100

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Results in table 2 indicated that (22) 5.9% showed that kidnaped victims were abducted from places of worship. (53) 14.2% said abduction was in schools. (234) 62.6% opined that abduction occurred while travelling. (4) 1.1% averred that abduction was in the market place, whereas, (61) 16.3% opined that abduction occurred in other places. This data indicates that travellers were more prone to being kidnapped due to their exposure on interstate highways, and since they were not within capable guardianship, and had no form of target hardening feats to rely on for their security.

Table 3: Category of individuals mostly kidnapped

Categories of Individuals Kidnapped	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Rich	292	78.1
Poor	30	8.0
Educated	48	12.8
Others	4	1.1
Total	374	100

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Results from table 3 show that (292) 78.1% indicated that the rich-high net-worth personalities were most likely kidnapped. (30) 8.0% opined that the poor were the most victimised. (48) 12.8% opined that educated individuals were the most kidnapped, while, (4) 1.1% observed a mixture of persons such as foreign nationals were most likely to be kidnapped. Abdulkabir (2017) corroborates this by stating that, kidnapping in Nigeria was geometrically increasing such that among other persons, influential people were reported to have been kidnapped. Among which

include monarchs, top government functionaries and students were the targets of kidnappers.

Table 4: Incidence of kidnapping in Shendam

Victims of Kidnapping in the Town and Villages	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Town	279	74.6
Village	95	25.4
Total	374	100

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Results in table 4 show that (279) 74.6% opined that most kidnapping incidences took place in the towns, while, (95) 25.4% averred that most kidnapping occurred in remote settlements (villages).

Data from tables 2, 3 and 4 collectively indicate the pattern of kidnapping in Shendam local government. 62.6% of this data indicated that travellers were more exposed to kidnapping. 78.1% of the data indicated that wealthy people were most likely to be kidnapped. Findings from the tables cited above indicate that 74.6% kidnappings occurred in townships because victims in the towns could afford huge payments either from associates, employers, or the government.

Objective 3: Assessment of the level of kidnapping in Shendam local Government.

Table 5: The Rate of kidnapping in Shendam

Rate of kidnapping	Frequency	Percentages (%)
High	140	37.4
Moderate	123	32.9
Low	111	29.7
Total	374	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Table 5 indicated that (140) 37.4% were of the view that rate the of kidnapping was high and (123) 32.9%, said that it was moderate while (111) 29.7% said it was moderate.

This data shows a slightly high incidence of kidnapping in Shendam.

Objective 4: Proffer solutions to the challenges of the kidnapping of individuals in Shendam local Government of Plateau State.

Table 4: Solutions to Curbing Kidnapping

Solution	Frequency	Percentages%
Adequate Policing	21	5.6
Employment/empowerment	241	64.4
Proper Youth Socialisation	38	10.2
Stiffer Penalty	74	19.8
Total	374	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Result shown in table 7 revealed that, (21) respondents 5.6% suggested that kidnapping could be curbed by adequate policing, (241) respondents 64.4% suggested employment/empowerment, and (38) 10.2% suggested proper youth socialisation, while (74) 19.8% suggested stiffer penalties. This result implies that majority of respondents were confident that employment generation and the empowerment of policing agencies would curb the rising kidnapping trend. This opine is in alliance with structural choice theorist assertion about the empowerment of security agents, so as to guarantee a capable guardianship against kidnappers (Alemika, 2013).

Testing of Hypothesis:

The null hypothesis formulated in this study was tested using the chi-square (X^2) independence statistics test, to test the measure of association between hypothesised variables.

The analysis was guided by the decision rule of chi-square and probabilistic statistics, cited in Udofia, (2013, pp. 207–209; 85–92), which states that: “When

1. If the calculated value of chi-square is greater than the tabulated value, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis. And
2. If the p -value, is less than alpha value, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

**Cross tabulation of Influence of Unemployment and Kidnapping of Individuals
* The Rate of Kidnapping**

Variables		The rate of kidnapping			Total
		High	moderate	low	
Influence of unemployment and the kidnapping of individuals	Yes	95	103	82	280
	No	45	20	29	94
Total		140	123	111	374

Table 5 shows the cross tabulation of the variables involved in stated null hypothesis.

H₀: Kidnapping is not significantly influenced by Unemployment.

Table 6: Chi-Square Independence test Result

Measures	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.860 ^a	2	.012
N of Valid Cases	374		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 27.90.

Table 6 presents the Chi-square test result. $X^2 = 8.860$ Critical = 0.5987. Therefore, Chi-square Independence test result shows: $X^2 (2, 374) = 8.860$, $p = .012$, s.

Decision

From the Chi-square independence test above, we therefore reject the null hypothesis which states that kidnapping is not significantly influenced by

unemployment, and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that kidnapping is significantly influenced by unemployment. This is because the calculated (empirical) value $X^2 = 8.860$ is greater than the critical value = 0.5987. Also, the p -value = .012 is less than alpha value = .05. This result indicates statistical significance between kidnapping and unemployment in Shendam local government.

Discussion

Findings revealed that males participated more than females in the study. There were 64.7% males, and 35.3% female respondents. Majority of respondents 85.6% were between ages 18 – 50 years. 70% had appreciated understanding and awareness of the subject matter, hence they had a minimum of secondary education. This study aimed mainly to ascertain factors influencing kidnapping in Shendam Local Government. Findings indicated that majority, 69.0% respondents opined that unemployment was the significant factor influencing kidnapping in Shendam, while 14.7% respondents identified politics as a cause of kidnapping.

On the second objective of the study, data on the pattern of kidnapping indicated that 62.6% of travellers were more exposed to being victims. Data indicated that 78.1% of wealthy people were most likely to be kidnapped and finally, 74.6% kidnappings occurred in townships because victims in the towns could afford huge payments either from associates, employers, or the government. Since such abductions stood a higher chance of been circularise on media. Of course, most wealthy, working class and business class personalities lives in townships and not villages of Shendam local government.

The third objective was to assess the level of kidnapping in Shendam. Data showed a slightly high incidence of kidnappings as 37.4% of the responses indicated. Though, slightly less than that percentage, 32.9% felt kidnappings were moderate. Whereas 29.7% counted kidnappings at low ebb. This showed a dicey opinion on the severity of kidnappings in Shendam local government as at the time of this study.

The fourth and last objective of the study was to proffer solutions to kidnappings in Shendam. Data showed that kidnapping could be checked significantly by employment creation and empowering security agencies. Employing more capable security measures and empowerment of existing security forces is also aligns with the proposition by structural choice theorists on capable guardianship. Thus, when

security agencies are empowered and their capacity strengthened or improved, there would be more capable guardianship against kidnapping, for residents in Shendam.

Test of association between hypothesised variables ‘unemployment’ and ‘kidnapping’ showed a statistically insignificant association, which prompted the rejection of study hypothesis and acceptance of its alternative viz, kidnapping is significantly influenced by unemployment in Shendam local government area of Plateau State. This implied that most of the kidnappers within the local government were lured into kidnapping hence, they were unemployed - unoccupied with any form of socioeconomic activities and therefore lacking reliable financial source. This corroborates with findings from Alemika (2013) that kidnapping in Nigeria can be classified into; criminal and political. While criminal kidnapping has the motive of obtaining ransom from the family or business associates of the victim, political kidnapping has the objective of furthering the political aim of the group or movement. Odoh (2010) and Busari (2018) concluded that most of the criminal insurgency and particularly kidnapping in Nigeria are instigated by growing unemployment rates.

Conclusion

The incidence of kidnapping in Shendam and indeed Nigeria is exasperating. It is however not strange because there are known social factors influencing its prevalence. The various reasons for kidnapping maybe multidimensional but, this study has identified unemployment, poverty and unequal employability scaling, caused by corruption and greed on the part of leaders and the state authority; as well as the lifestyle and routine activities of members of the upper and middle class as motivating factors. It is noteworthy that as culture shifts, so does trends in kidnapping. Kidnapping trends such as virtue kidnapping may not be very pronounced at the moment of conducting this study, it nevertheless is bound to surface as technology grows continually in the country.

The present level of threats posed by kidnapping may have stimulated diverse social and physical security responses from individuals, organisations and the government, to nip the malady in the bud. Thus, the study concludes by noting that kidnapping could be checked significantly with the employment of tougher security measures and empowerment of existing security forces. Also, a massive job creation policy is imperative in engaging Nigeria’s teeming population of

unemployed youths productively. To achieve this both government and private industrialists should take up the challenge.

Recommendations

The study has made the following recommendations to curb kidnapping in Shendam, Plateau state and Nigeria at large.

- Topmost of the recommendation arising from the study is on employment generation. The danger of having unemployed subjects (youths) is recognised as causative of the high-strung kidnapping activities. Therefore, governmental and non-governmental agencies, private and public institutions such as schools and religious organisations are admonished to cater for the employability needs of members across all ages, especially the youths.
- Empowerment of youths has to be tailored to the values of earned trust. The current prominence given to inordinate wealth acquisition and an unrestrained culture of flamboyance needs to be de-emphasised, and the value system of the youth reassessed towards contentment and productivity through proper re-socialisation. Of course, when subjects are employed, there will be empowerment, which will enable them to resist all forms of vices used in luring them to kidnapping. As such an entrepreneurial approach other than the usual bureaucratic approach, could slow the rate of unemployment while boosting the development of lucrative economic skill sets.
- The law enforcement agents, such as the police and judiciary should intensify prosecuting kidnappers with stiffer penalties so as to deter intending abductors. Proper youth socialization would undoubtedly curb the preponderant number of emerging kidnappers.
- Resocialization of Nigerian youths, is one of the recommendations from this study. If all Nigerians re-evaluate their cultural/traditional value system, then, there would be reduction in such criminal acts.
- Modern Kidnapping trends could be checked through adequate policing. This involves employing or recruitment of more policing agents—both conventional and traditional policing structures, so as to reduce the gap in policing the Nigerian public.

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