

# Kidnapping and Socioeconomic Implications for The Nuclear Family in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

*The study examines kidnapping and the associated socioeconomic implications for the affected family in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State, Nigeria. Two null hypotheses were formulated namely: social status of kidnapped victim has no significant relationship with socio-economic wellbeing of the family; poverty induced kidnapping has no significant relationship with socioeconomic wellbeing of the family. Using the survey research design, data were obtained from 180 respondents and statistically analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Analysis with at 0.05 alpha significant. The results showed that social status of kidnapped victim has significant relationship with*

*socioeconomic wellbeing of the family; also poverty induced kidnapping has significant relationship with socioeconomic wellbeing of the family. The study recommended amongst other things that, government at all levels should put adequate policies in place at all levels to combat kidnapping effectively.*

**Keywords:** Kidnapping, social status, poverty, greed, socioeconomic implications for the nuclear family, Calabar Metropolis

## **Introduction**

Kidnapping is the wholesale taking away of person against the persons' will usually to hold or confine the person in false imprisonment without legal authority. This may be done for ransom or in furtherance of another crime, or in connection with a child custody dispute (Ottuh & Aitufe, 2014). Kidnapping is the crime of seizing, confining, abducting, transporting and carrying away of a person by force and sometimes subject him or her to involuntary servitude in an attempt to demand for ransom (Ottuh & Aitufe, 2014; Dodo, 2010). Kidnapping is a common law offence requiring that one person takes or carries another away by force or through fraud without lawful excuse. It is the common law offence of intentionally or recklessly detaining the victim without lawful authority (Lewis & Nazer, 2002).

There are series of media reports of daily incidents of kidnapping in most Nigeria cities. In Nigeria, it drew public attention from 2006 when militants in the Niger-Delta started kidnapping expatriates for ransom. Today in Nigeria, its a daily occurrence particularly the Niger Delta area of Cross River State (Dodo, 2010; Ottuh & Aitufe, 2014). It has become a national problem that has eaten so deep into the fabric of the nation. The widening scale of kidnapping in Nigeria is a cause for concern as everybody is affected by it directly or indirectly, highway, schools, homes, markets, churches, mosques, hostels, night clubs, wedding reception etc. are all susceptible to kidnapping (Dodo, 2010; Ngwama, 2014).

The global system of mobile communication (GSM) provides the mechanism through which kidnapers use in communicating and negotiating with relations of the kidnapped victims to obtain ransom for freedom. Sometimes, the criminals collect the money and still kill their victims especially if the victim(s) recognized the kidnapers thereby impoverishing the economy by scaring away both local and foreign investors (Udoh, 2012). This has negatively affected socioeconomic development and also increased other social vices in Nigeria (Okorie-Ajah, Nwokeoma & Okpan, 2018). Kidnapping is an offence that is punishable by law in Nigeria. The legal provision is that anybody involved in this act is to face a penalty of 10 years imprisonment. Some states in Nigeria like Abia, Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, Imo and Rivers have all passed into law in a bill term “Prohibition of Hostage Taking and Related Offences Law”, with death penalty as punishment for offenders (Inyang, 2009; Ekpe, 2009; cited in Inyang & Ubong, 2013). Kidnapping in Calabar Metropolis takes the forms of seizing, detaining, unlawful, force or fraud and remove a person to an undisclosed location against his or her will and usually for use as a hostage to collect ransom (Umoren, 2009; cited in Udoh, 2012). In Nigeria generally and Calabar Metropolis in Cross River State in particular, it has become a life threatening ailment, and a critical variable vitiating national development (Dodo, 2010).

### **Research hypotheses**

- 1) Social status of kidnapped victim has no significant relationship with socioeconomic wellbeing of the family.
- 2) Poverty induced kidnapping has no significant relationship with socioeconomic wellbeing of the family.

## Literature review

Nigerian nation has witnessed kidnapping phenomenon and its rate is increasingly alarming. Ujumadu (2008) and Ekpe (2009) cited in Inyang and Ubong (2013), maintained that in 2008, Nigeria was placed six on the global kidnap index by an online tourism site. They maintained further that the rating puts the country Nigeria among countries with serious kidnapping problems, behind Philippines, Venezuela, Columbia, Brazil and Mexico. Umoren (2009) argued that kidnapping is one problem that has given the country bad image, in recent times. He averred that kidnapping in Nigeria was a strategy used by those in genuine struggle to the development of the Niger Delta region. In his view, kidnapping is not anymore used for genuine struggle rather in committing crime.

Kidnapping has great adverse effect on the nation's socioeconomic development (Okorie-Ajah, Nwokeoma & Okpan, 2018). Inyang and Ubong (2013) noted that over the last few years, the wealthy and the income earners have been picked up by kidnapers who only free their victims after payments of ransom. Okorie-Ajah, Nwokeoma and Okpan (2018) revealed that kidnapping exerts enormous and far reaching economic and social costs. For them, it induces and creates a palpable ambience of fear and despair for all citizens and stultify economic growth and sustainable development. From their observation, kidnapping is one major development challenge bedeviling Nigeria today. They conclude that it drives away investment, both domestic and foreign direct investments and consequently slows down growth which has devastating effect on the socioeconomic wellbeing of the family.

According to Inyang and Ubong (2013), cited in Okorie-Ajah, Nwokeoma and Okpan (2018), economic effects of kidnapping as direct and indirect costs with devastating effect on the economy. They averred that direct cost of

kidnapping involves the economic value that individuals and government may lose to kidnappers, that much money has been paid for ransom. The former Inspector General of Police, Sir Mike Okiro, noted that ₦15 billion was paid as ransom to kidnappers between 2006 and 2009 (Kyrian 2009; cited in Okorie-Ajah, Nwokeoma & Okpan, 2018). The huge amount of money spent as ransom payment could negatively affect both state and national economy drastically. Since many people kidnapped paid a lot of money as ransom, the situation affects both state and household economy with negative effect on the socioeconomic wellbeing of the family. Some people go as far as borrowing to pay ransom to kidnappers for the release of their love ones (Inyang & Ugbong, 2013; Okorie-Ajah, Nwokeoma & Okpan, 2018).

Okorie-Ajah, Nwokeoma and Okpan (2018), pointed out that victims of kidnapping also suffer indirect cost from the incidents. Some of the victims are killed in the process of kidnapping. Some sustain various levels of injuries like bullet wounds which may deform them forever. Many victims suffer various degrees of assault, abuse and tortured in the hands of the kidnappers. Some of the female victims are even rapped by the kidnappers.

Ngwama (2014) observed that kidnappers target the executive, legislature, the judicial branch of the government, and their family members in spite of the tight security at their disposal. He maintained that government expatriates, religious leaders and their children are also the target of kidnappers. Kidnappers target prominent people of high social status. For instance, the father of the former Central Bank Governor was kidnapped and heavy ransom demanded (Ngwama, 2014). Akpan-Nsoh (2008) commented that most people are victims of kidnapping because of their social status in the community. This is so because kidnappers believed that prominent people of high socioeconomic standing and their family

members can afford to pay ransom demanded by them before the release of the kidnapped victim(s).

In July 2010, four journalists were kidnapped in Abia State on their way to Lagos. The kidnapers demanded a ransom of N30 million. In Idah, Kogi State, the mother of the former president of Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), was kidnapped and ransom demanded by the kidnapers (Ngwama, 2014). Adetuba (2016) cited in Okorie-Ajah, Nwokeoma and Okpan (2018), argued that seven people, including five foreign expatriates were reportedly kidnapped by suspected militants in Calabar. They were on their way to work at the Lafarge Holcim plant in Mfamosing. In the process, a local driver was fatally shot by the kidnapers. The picture painted above show that kidnapping has now turned into a business venture and a daily affair in Nigeria in general and Calabar Metropolis in particular.

According to Inyang and Ubong (2013), Rev. Akan Weeks of Reigners Bible Church was kidnapped in Ukanafun Local Government Area on his way to Port Harcourt and a ransom of N5 million naira was demanded and paid before he was released. Similarly, Efiezomor (2017) cited in Okorie-Ajah, Nwokeoma and Okpan (2018), noted that kidnapers kidnapped a catholic priest in-charge of St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Eku in Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State, the kidnapers demanded a ransom of N10 million for the release of Rev. Fr. Joseph Oghenekevwe Ojakorotu.

There are a lot of factors responsible for the alarming rate of kidnapping in Nigeria. Many youth would not have resorted to violence including kidnapping if they were gainfully employed. As a result of unemployment, they see kidnapping as a venture to get out of poverty (Umore, 2009; Inyang & Ubong, 2013). For Chingunta and Mkanawire (2002), the level of youth unemployment and poverty

vary from social and economic strata. Thus, unemployment and poverty are factors that lead the youth into kidnapping.

According to Ogabido (2007), cited in Inyang and Ubong (2013), “the issue of poverty and unemployment of youth as well as social injustice and unfair distribution of the nations resources are potent causes of kidnapping in Nigeria. These factors have caused the youths to engage in kidnapping and criminal activities as a way of getting their share of nation wealth”. Kidnapping has plagued the socio-economic development of Nigeria and has lured some jobless youths and graduates into it as lucrative and alternative means of making money, acquiring economic power and getting out of poverty (Okorie-Ajah, Nwokeoma & Okpan, 2018; Ottuh & Aitufe, 2014; Dodo, 2010).

Ngwama (2014), contended that kidnapers are greedy businessmen indulging in criminality. In Nigeria, it has become a multi million naira criminal industry. Due to greed, it is one of the lucrative businesses in Nigeria after oil bunkering (Dodo, 2010). According to Pharoah (2005), Turner (1998), all cited in Akpan (2010), kidnapping for ransom is propelled especially by greed. Kidnappers have criminal, political, economic and greedy motives (Akpan, 2010).

Umoren (2009), admitted that kidnapping is induced by greed. He maintained that kidnapping pays and that it is the easiest way of making money for those who engage in it. He maintained further that kidnapping has devastating effect on the victims and their families in terms of finances. The money that would have been channeled for other economic purposes for the socioeconomic wellbeing of the family is diverted for payment of ransom for the release of the kidnapped victim(s). In Nigeria, people are kidnapped for various reasons ranging from economic, political, personal/ cooperative grievances and greed. Some victims are killed before they are rescued while others are rescued by their

relatives and friends after paying ransoms (Ottuh & Aitufe, 2010). Greed for money is a serious factor when discussing the social vices of kidnapping.

## **Theoretical framework**

### Social disorganization theory

Social disorganization approach is associated with Chicago school of Sociology specifically, Thomas and Znaniecki (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003). The assumption is that a person's thinking processes and attitudes are constructed by the interactive situations and behaviour. Social disorganization occurs in an area where social institutions, norms and values are no longer functioning. It presents an absence of normative constraint, a state of "anything goes" and hence crime such as kidnapping flourishes. On the other hand, order exists when there is a high degree of internal binding of individuals and institutions in a conventional society. This cohesion consists largely of agreement about goals that are worth striving for and how to behave and how not to behave (Oriola, 2004).

The implication of the theory for the study is that delinquent or criminal behaviour like kidnapping thrives well in a disorganized society. The theory posits that certain environment or geographical area especially towns or cities are prone to criminal behaviour including kidnapping. This is as a result of an influx of immigrant to the environment, town or cities because of the economic and social potentials of the area. Social change induced by colonialism, industrialization and urbanization, have precipitated criminal activities including kidnapping in the cities, Calabar Metropolis is not exception.



## **Methodology**

The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire administered to respondents in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State. The selection of the sample for the study was done through simple random sampling technique. To ensure randomization, balloting method was employed. The ten areas selected were: University of Calabar, Cross River State University of Technology, Marian Market, Calabar Municipal Council, Watt market, Akim, School of Health Technology, State Housing Estate, Federal Housing Estate, Cross River State House of Assembly quarter. These were the clusters of the study. Out of the ten clusters of the study, a total of one hundred and eight (180) respondents participated in the study. Eighteen (18) respondents were selected from each cluster which formed the total of one hundred and eighty (180) in all.

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## Analysis and discussion of findings

### General description of data

**TABLE 1**

**Distribution of respondents' socio-demographic data**

Variables	No. of respondents	Percentage
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	102	56.67
Female	78	43.43
Total	180	100
<b>Age</b>		
Under 20 years	9	5
20-30	90	50
31-40	71	39.44
41 and above	10	5.56
Total	180	100
<b>Educational level</b>		
Tertiary	130	72.22
Secondary	38	21.11
Primary	10	5.56
No education (specify)	2	1.11
Total	180	100
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	20	11.11
Married	150	83.33
Separated	2	1.11
Divorce	7	3.89
Widow	1	3.89
Total	180	100
<b>Occupation</b>		
Civil servant	44	24.44
Politician	52	28.89
Trader	32	17.78
Self employed	14	7.79
Unemployed	8	4.44
Religious leader	30	16.66
Total	180	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2018

Table 1 indicates the socio-demographic data of respondents. In terms of sex, 56.67 percent (N = 102) were male, while 43.43 percent (N = 78) were female. This implies that male were more in the sample than female. Respondents below 20 years were 5 percent (N = 9), 20-30 were 50 percent (N = 90), 31-40 were 39.44 percent (N = 71), while 41 and above were 5.56 percent (N = 10). This implies that the highest number of respondents who participated in the study belonged to age bracket 31-40 years. For educational level, 72.22 percent (N = 130) had acquired tertiary education, 21.11 percent (N = 38) had secondary education, 5.56 percent (N = 10) has primary education, while 1.11 percent (N = 2) had no primary education. The implication is that the respondents with tertiary education was the majority in the sample and readily available to fill the questionnaire. In terms of marital status, 11.11 percent (N = 20) were single, 83.33 percent (N = 150) were married, 1.11 percent (N = 2) were separated, 3.89 percent (N = 7) were divorce, while 0.56 percent (N = 1) was a widow. This implied that the greatest number of respondents were married. In the area of occupation, the table shows that civil servants were 24.44 percent (N = 44), politicians were 28.89 percent (N = 52), traders were 17.78 percent (N = 32), self employed were 7.79 percent (N = 14), unemployed were 4.44 percent (N = 8), while religious leaders were 16.16 percent (N = 30). This means that majority of the respondents were politicians. Politicians occupied high status in the society.

## **Results**

### Hypothesis one

Social status of kidnapped victim has no significant relationship with socioeconomic wellbeing of the family

TABLE 2

Pearson Product Moment Analysis of the relation between social status and victim of kidnappers in the society (N = 180)

Variables	$\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma Y^2$	$\Sigma YX$	r-cal
	$\Sigma X$	$\Sigma X^2$		
Social status of kidnapped victim (X)	1800	4250		
Socioeconomic wellbeing of the family (Y)	1920	4125	43251	0.611*

\* Correlation significant at .05, df = 178, critical r = .118

For table 2, the calculated value of 0.611 was found to be higher than the critical r-value of 0.118 tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance with 178 degrees of freedom. From this significant r-value, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that social status of kidnapped victim has a significant relationship with socioeconomic wellbeing of the family.

### Hypothesis two

Poverty induced kidnapping has no significant relationship with socio-economic wellbeing of the family.

TABLE 3

Pearson Product Moment Analysis of the relationship between socioeconomic wellbeing of the family (N = 180)

Variables	$\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma Y^2$	$\Sigma YX$	r-cal
	$\Sigma X$	$\Sigma X^2$		
Poverty induced kidnapping (X)	1800	4250	42153	0.541*
Socioeconomic wellbeing of the 1920 family (Y)		4125		

\* Correlation significant at .05, df = 178, critical r = .118

From table 3, the calculated r-value of 0.541 was found to be higher than the critical r-value, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that poverty induced kidnapping has a significant relationship with socio-economic wellbeing of the family.

### Discussion

From the study, the result in table 1 shows that social status of kidnapped victim has a significant relationship with socioeconomic wellbeing of the family. This view is supported by Ngwama (2014) who observed that kidnappers target the executive, legislature, the judicial branch of the government, and their family members in spite of the tight security at their disposal. He maintained that government expatriates, religious leaders and their children are also the target of kidnappers. He pointed out that the former Central Bank Governor father was kidnapped and heavy ransom demanded. This findings are also in line with

Akpan-Nsoh (2008) who commented that most people are victims of kidnapping because of their social status in the community. He argued that this is so because kidnappers believed that prominent people of high social status and their family members can negotiate and afford to pay ransom demanded by them before the release of the kidnapped victim(s).

In table 2, the result shows that poverty induced kidnapping has a significant relationship with socioeconomic wellbeing of the family. The result is consistent with Ogabido (2007) cited in Inyang and Ubong (2013), he averred that “the issue of poverty and unemployment of youths as well as social injustice and unfair distribution of the nations resources are potent causes of kidnapping in Nigeria. These factors have caused the youths to engage in kidnapping and criminal activities as a way of getting their share of the nation wealth”. The findings are also in agreement with Okorie-Ajah, Nwokeoma and Okpan (2018), they maintained that kidnapping has plagued the socio-economic development of Nigeria and has had spill-over effect on some jobless youths and graduates who see kidnapping as lucrative and alternative means of making money, acquiring economic power and getting out of poverty.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

The effect of kidnapping on the economy is very enormous and impedes development. With rise in the cases of kidnapping, it is very difficult for potential investors to do business in the state. From the foregoing, the following recommendations are made;

- 1) Government should take the issue of unemployment as a matter of concerned and create jobs for unemployed citizen in Calabar Metropolis.

- 2) There should be adequate policies put in place by government at all levels to combat kidnapping effectively.
- 3) Poverty alleviation programmes introduced by various government in Nigeria should be pro-poor in order for the poor to benefit rather than politicians using the programme(s) as compensation to their supporter and family members. If the programme(s) is meant and designed for the poor, it will promote income generation and the social phenomenon of kidnapping will be reduced or averted by those who take to it as a result of poverty.
- 4) There should be establishment of more centres for vocational skill acquisition across every local government areas in the state for easy accessibility. Also, parents and guardians should encourage their children/wards both literate and non-literate to acquire vocation which provides them with skills, knowledge and attitudes for effective employment in a specific occupation.
- 5) Members of the society should work hard and be contented with what they have rather than living extravagant life.
- 6) More security personnel should be deployed to Calabar Metropolis, since security in the area is a major challenge.

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