The Prevalence of Kidnapping for Ransom in Karenbana Parish, Kontagora Diocese, Nigeria

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Abstract: **Since the late 1990s, kidnapping in Nigeria has become increasingly a thing of concern, and like wildfire, it is ravaging towns and cities. The main objective of this study is to assess the relationship between kidnapping for ransom and victims' psycho-spiritual well-being. This article is devoted to one of the objectives, the prevalence of kidnapping for ransom in Karenbana Parish, Kontagora Diocese, Nigeria. This research examines kidnapping for ransom and the Psycho-Spiritual wellbeing of the victims in Karenbana Parish of Kontagora Diocese, Nigeria. The study's findings show a moderate relationship between kidnapping for ransom and victims' psycho-spiritual well-being, with Pearson's correlation coefficient of two variables of r=.377**, implying that kidnapping has had a moderate impact on victims' psycho-spiritual well-being in Karenbana Parish of Kontagora Diocese. The theories for this research were Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs and William Glasser's Choice theory. The target population was 17,000 according to the Annual Diocesan Statistics as at December, 31, 2020 comprising of men, women and youth/children. 391 chosen as the sample size but only 309 were validly returned questionnaires out of which 15 participants were purposively chosen for interview. 94.5% of respondents agree that kidnapping has been rampart in their area, which means there is a high rate of kidnapping for ransom. The research also revealed that 86.7% of the respondents believe that God loves them and cares about them, which shows a high level of psycho-spiritual well-being. The study will be beneficial to Government, the Church, and the local community and for psycho-therapists who engage in helping victims.**

Keywords**: Kidnapping, Victims, Ransom, Kontagora Parish, Psycho-Spiritual, well-being, Choice theory, hierarchy of needs.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Kidnapping is the unlawful carrying away of a person, or persons by force or fraud and detaining them at gunpoint against their will. It is understood legally as an illicit way through which persons are abducted or taken by force to an unknown place by other persons for mischievous reasons (Abdulkabir, 2019). A society with high records of kidnapping naturally creates an atmosphere of anxiety and fear, capable of limiting activities that would enhance growth and progress in the society (Kennedy & Halidu, 2019). This leads the victim to a disconnection from the higher power, the community, religions and other elements at the root of their spiritual wellbeing.

Kidnapping for ransom seems to have become endemic; nations and peoples are grappling with what to do with it. At some point, the body language of those in power encourages this kind of criminal activity. It is mind-boggling to know that just in the year 2017, Pakistan recorded 18,363 kidnap cases; South Africa, 5,455 cases, Germany 4,625 cases; Mexico 6,235 cases of kidnappings for ransom. In Australia, 20,000 children go missing each year; Canada records 45,288 missing children annually; the United Kingdom records 112,853 cases of missing children; in China, 70,000 children are kidnapped every year. Nigeria is said to have recorded the highest number of kidnappings for ransom in Africa in 2017, and in fact, it is said to have moved from 0.3 level rates per 100,000 persons to 0.4 level rates as of 2018; and already by 2020 has reached 6.96 level rates per, 100,000 persons (Safeatlast, 2020).

This harms the victims emotionally, psychologically and spiritually: And when a person's self-esteem, self-confidence and self-acceptance are harmed, they start to mistrust the people around them and begin to look at them with suspicion. This implies, that with difficulties of trust and affection, the victims may grow to distrust everyone around them (Akwash, 2016).), the victims could live with feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem, and other issues involving moving up the pyramid of Maslow's motivation theory to self-actualization.

Cunningham et al. (2018) utilizing data from a National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) of the United States of America Department of Justice to assess differences in the use of violence among 4,912 stranger kidnappings by solo offenders and multi-offender groups, using cross-tabulations, ordinal regression, and logistic regression. The study findings show that there are no significant studies on kidnapping despite efforts to examine co-offending crimes. Also, that stranger kidnappings are more likely to utilize weapons than non-stranger kidnappings. However, the public outcry over stranger kidnapping necessitates an immediate and thorough investigation of the incident and its perpetrators with the intent to establish differences between those committed by solo and multi-offender groups (Cunningham et al. 2018).

The import of the public outcry over kidnapping is relevant even in the current study, though the research gaps that would allow the current study to differ from this is that while this is a study in the United States based on stranger kidnappings by solo offenders, the current study focuses on kidnapping for ransom and the psycho-spiritual wellbeing of victims in Karenbana Parish, Kontagora Diocese, Nigeria

In the same vein, López and Marcelo (2019) carried out a study in Mexico using the autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) model, looking at quarterly time series data for the period 1997Q1 – 2017Q4, to analyse the impact that registered kidnappings have had on long-term cruise tourism. The study found that, the arrival of tourists in Mexico has been inflexible due to the changes in the rates of kidnappings, but the effect of kidnapping remains in the long term. This is to say, the victims may not experience the effects immediately but would experience such in the future. This study is relevant to the current study because it is based on the impact that registered kidnappings have had on long-term cruise tourism. However, the current study pays attention to those unregistered cases, especially because the Location of the current study is hardly covered by the news agencies.

In addition, Mutlu, et al. (2021) conducted a qualitative study in south-eastern Turkey, concentrating on extortion and kidnapping for ransom as methods of financing terrorism by the Kurdistan Worker's Party (KWP), with in-depth interviews with kidnapped business people as the primary technique. The study looked into the Kurdistan Worker's Party's core style of operation, which includes extortion and kidnapping. The impact of kidnapping on enterprises and the Turkish government's insufficient protection of businesspeople in Turkey's southeast was investigated.

According to the study's findings, most business people in the region believed that paying the ransom is best, to avoid the group's fury. This is because government pays little or no attention to the plight of the local business community, and that as a result, the party will continue to employ this method to fund its terrorist activities. This study was carried out in Southern Turkey, and concentrated on extortion and kidnapping for ransom as methods of financing terrorism. This study shows that kidnapping for ransom has affected businesses in Turkey, this may be a similar situation with the people of Karenbana, the location of the current study the farming activities are also affected due to kidnapping for ransom.

There is a record of kidnapping in South Africa, and according to the records of 2018/2019, 5,693 cases were documented, although only 3.6 percent of the number of cases were classic kidnappings; the rest included child abduction or abduction as part of sexual assault and other crimes. While these instances certainly lean towards more disadvantaged groups, there are at least ten high-profile cases of businesspeople in South Africa. The study was on records of classic kidnapping, whereas, the current study concentrated on kidnapping for ransom.

Similarly, the National Crime Research Centre Nairobi (2017) researched the topic: Emerging crimes: the case of kidnappings in Kenya, using a descriptive research design where the population of study is 36 counties in Kenya, where kidnapping incidents were recorded; and 20 counties were selected as a sample size by simple random sampling. The study targeted 90 respondents from each county to make a total of 1800 but ended up with 1326 respondents spread across the counties due to the nature of the crime. The findings show that the majority of the respondents (88.2%) indicated that kidnapping was a significant security problem in Kenya. 10.8% of the respondents disagreed, while the rest remained neutral. Also, in the respective counties, 60.7% of the respondents pointed out that kidnapping was a significant security problem in their counties, 37.2% said it was not, while the rest said they did not know. From the study, it is clear that in Kenya, kidnapping is prevalent, and it is a security problem that requires the attention of the relevant authorities to address.

For Ibrahim & Ibrahim,(2017), utilizing Secondary Qualitative data, concluded that Kidnapping for ransom has been taking place in Nigeria as a result of the militants and other groups in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria (the oil-rich region). Moreover, they found that with the activities of the terrorists in the North-eastern part, the rate of kidnapping has become skyrocketed, and the findings suggest that kidnapping for ransom had no connection with corruption but rather the ungodly alliance of politicians with thugs who turn out to be kidnappers and sometimes were used to collect ransom from political opponents; this resulted to multiple consequences ranging from financial gain to raping of female victims and to murder of victims. This implies that, kidnapping for ransom in Nigeria is rampart as a result of the political thurgery which has led to proliferation of firearms. The current study gave an import from the North-western region of the country where the security and news agencies are not covering. This means cases around the location of study are under reported.

Olulowo, & Anani, (2021) used a descriptive approach, with Ogun State's three senatorial districts as the location, and where 600 questionnaires were distributed to Churches, a total of 472 copies were collected, the equivalent of 78.7%. The findings show that 368 respondents (77.97%) attested to the fact that there is a high rate of kidnapping in the state. Also, 460 respondents (97.46%) agreed that the growing rate of ritual killings is linked to the kidnapping and its effects. This study brought in the new import of ritual killings linked to kidnappings in Ogun State.

Gongs, et al. (2020) carried out research on the Factors Influencing Kidnapping in Shendam, Plateau State, Nigeria. Kidnapping in Shendam Local Government Area, Plateau State, was investigated. The researcher used the structural-choice model, using a clustered random sample

method to investigate variables affecting abduction in Shendam. This study concentrated on factors influencing kidnapping in Shendam while the current study concentrated on kidnapping and the psycho-spiritual wellbeing of victims in Karenbana Parish, Kontagora Diocese, Nigeria.

Another study by Obileye and George (2021) on the trends of kidnapping and hostage taking in 21st century Nigeria: a reflective discourse, using an explanatory research design and the rational choice theory, routine activity theory, and situational crime prevention were adopted to buttress the understanding of the subject matter in order to improve the overall understanding of the subject matter. The findings show that, these operations, carried out for monetary gain and for other purposes, have made a significant contribution to the overall level of insecurity experienced by the typical Nigerian, both within and without the country's borders. It was also, discovered that the trend of kidnapping and hostage taking in Nigeria in the twenty-first century is on the "high" side, necessitating immediate attention from all stakeholders, including the Nigerian government, non-governmental organizations, private organizations, and all citizens of the country.

The study is relevant to the current study because it makes use of the choice theory and emphasizes the role of government in securing her geographical boundary using sophisticated gadgets. However, the current study is particular about kidnapping for ransom and psycho-spiritual well-being of victims in Karenbana Parish. It made use of the convergent parallel mixed method design and combining Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of human needs and William Glaser's Choice theory to guide the study.

In Karenbana parish, the location of the study, which is between Kebbi, Zamfara and Niger states, of the North-West region, the situation is worse for lack of government presence. The cases are by far under-reported because many villagers are displaced, farms and farmlands are taken over, and many Parishes in the area have become camps for internally displaced persons.

This is supported by the account given by the Parish Priest, who was interviewed by observer times and had testified that they were attacked when they were praying in the Church, that most shops were looted and that "They have kidnapped many, and more than 90% of us that have survived the attack have migrated to Bena, Ribah, Bedi, Rijau, Zuru and some unknown places" (2021, June 5).

An unnamed terrorist researcher and kidnapping negotiator's narrative would further give a clue about what Karenbana Parish population are experiencing, because the issues range from payment of ransom, underreporting of cases of kidnap of locals, destruction of their farms, houses and places of worship, which happens on a much more regular basis, this rather unfortunate situation is the reality of these people due to lack of Government presence and absence of newsagents and agencies in the area (Schmid, 2018).

II. PURPOSE

The rate at which kidnapping for ransom is putting peoples' lives and economic activities in Karenbana parish, Kontagora Diocese, at risk calls for a serious investigation into the factors that are responsible for this unfortunate and dreadful scenario.

Some areas like Karenbana Parish of Kontagora Diocese and other social sectors suffer more because of lack of government and security presence among them. This has led to the displacement of many villagers in the area, with their farms being destroyed. These internally displaced persons mostly end up taking refuge in the Parishes nearby, which means, in a way, many Parishes have become internally displaced persons (IDP) camps.

Therefore, this proposes to ascertain the prevalence of kidnapping for ransom in Karenbana Parish of Kontagora Diocese, Nigeria.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study used the convergent Parallel mixed method design, where the researcher conducted the quantitative and qualitative elements in the same phase of the research process (Creswell & Pablo-Clark, 2011). And in using this design, it offered the researcher an opportunity to verify the quantitative measures from a qualitative perspective, by utilizing a set of approaches for merging insights with the aim of providing realistic, ethical solutions (Muhibul, 2015).

Consequently, this study analyzed the data from the qualitative and the quantitative data distinctly, and then by way of comparison, the results looked at were brought together at the end, to see if one supports the other or not. This process involved emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, and data analysis inductively building from particular to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2014).

The sample size for the study is 391 respondents out of the target population of 17,000 men, women and youth/children, these were selected through random sampling for quantitative data while 15 participants were purposively selected from the sample size for face-to-face interview. However, only 309 questionnaires were returned and submitted for coding and analysis. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 21 was used for coding of the quantitative data, while the qualitative data was presented in tables using frequencies and percentages, while qualitative data was coded into themes and presented into narratives.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research question was, what is the prevalence of kidnapping for ransom in Karenbana parish, Kontagora Diocese, Nigeria? The respondents were asked about the prevalence of kidnapping for ransom as it described their

personal experience, using the statements rated on the scale of 1-4 where, 1- Strongly Agree (SA); 2 – Agree (2); 3-Disagree (D); 4- Strongly Disagree (SD).

Data collected for the research question one was to find out the prevalence of kidnapping for ransom. Their responses in terms of the prevalence of kidnapping for ransom are shown in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: The Prevalence of Kidnapping for Ransom

STATEMENTS	SA		A		D SD			
	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%
Kidnapping has been rampant in your place	116	37.5	176	57.0	15	4.9	2	.6
There is no special target for kidnappers	84	27.2	162	52.4	57	18.4	6	1.9
The kidnappers can go with as many people as possible	121	39.2	156	50.5	27	8.7	5	1.6
Kidnappers only release their victims after ransom is paid	107	34.6	155	50.2	38	12.3	9	2.9
The kidnappers target market days to pick their victims	71	23.0	156	50.5	38	12.3	10	3.2
Kidnappers target victims at places of worship	74	23.9	171	55.3	53	17.2	11	3.6
Kidnappers even pick victims from their homes	124	40.1	166	53.7	15	4.9	4	1.3

When the respondents were asked, whether kidnapping was rampart in their location, 116(37.5%) strongly agreed, 176(57.0%) agreed, which brings the total of 94.5% of the respondents agree that kidnapping has been rampart in their place, while only 5.5% disagree. These findings indicates that kidnapping in the area of study has become a security challenge. This agrees with the study by the National Crime Research Centre Nairobi (2017), where the findings show that the majority of the respondents (88.2%) indicated that kidnapping was a significant security problem in Kenya. Also, the findings of Olulowo and Anani (2021), is a strong support to this fact because in their study of 600 sample size, 368 respondents (77.97 %) attested to the fact that there is a high rate of kidnapping in Ogun.

Furthermore, the respondents were asked whether kidnappers can take so many people, and about 121(39.2%), strongly agree and 156(50.5%) agree. This findings shows that the percentage of those agree that the kidnappers can go with as many people is 89.7%. This is supported by the respondents where about 84(27.2%) strongly agree and 162(54.2%) agree that, there are no special target for kidnappers. This fact is supported by Zenn & Pearson (2014), who found out in their study that, "on April 14, 2014, Boko Haram militants kidnapped more than 250 schoolgirls from Chibok in Nigeria's North-East, Borno State."

In the same vein, another study found that in Dapchi, Yobe state 113 children were kidnapped in February, 2018. In Kaduna state, University students were kidnapped from Greenfield University on the 23rd April 2021. In Kebbi State one hundred and two (102) students were kidnapped from Federal Government College in BirninYawuri, on the 17th June 2021, while in an area known as Kankara in Katsina State, over three hundred secondary school students were said to have been kidnapped (Obileye & George, 2021).

This shows that the kidnappers are so coordinated that they can go with as many people as they can. This is supported by the narrative of respondent 5 during the face-to-face interview where he said that, "we were 157 persons that were kidnapped at the same time, they moved from house to house to capture us" (23rd February, 2022). In addition, majority of those interviewed agreed that the kidnappers carted away as many people as they could, taking them into the forest and later on begin negotiations with the significant others of the victims. Respondent 10 particularly insisted that, "this reality is one that happens every day, people are taken away in their numbers and most times they go unchallenged except for areas where there are Yansakai (Vigilante)" (25th February, 2022).

Moreover, when asked whether kidnappers only release their victims after ransom is paid 34.6% strongly agree, while 50.2% agree. This finding shows that 84.8% of the respondents agree to the fact that it is only when ransoms are paid that the victims regain their freedom, which implies that if ransoms are not paid there is the possibility of killing the victims. This is supported by the residents' report that in Kankara area of Katsina State $73,000 (N30,000,000) was paid to secure the release of the over three hundred secondary school students, while in the case of the Greenfield University students, the kidnappers were said to have requested the ransom of N800,000,000 unfortunately, in the process of negotiations five (5) students were said to have been killed, however fourteen (14) of the students were reported to have been released after the payment of N180,000,000 (Obileye & George, 2021).

The respondents for face-to-face interview of this study agree completely to the submission that the kidnappers release their victims only after the payment of ransoms. According to Respondent 9 from the face-to-face interview;

We had to wait there for our ransom to be paid, I was there for three weeks and every day new people are brought to their camp, some people died there, others are killed, a few others may be lucky to escape but that would be at the risk of losing one's life … as for me they started asking our people for 5million each, our people bargained and they accepted 1 million before releasing me (23rd February, 2022).

According to Respondent 5 from the face-to-face interview;

Out of 157 persons that were kidnapped no one was released until payments of 73 million naira was made before our release; the villagers were unable to raise the

money demanded as ransom at the same, so the first group to be released 20million was paid; the second group 26 million and for the last group the sum of 27 million was paid for them to be released, I was in the second group (23rd February, 2022).

The findings showed the prevalence of kidnapping for ransom which is seen to be a security challenge. This is because it has become so rampart that 73.5% of the respondents agree that kidnappers target market days to pick their victims; 79.2% agree that kidnappers target victims at places of worship; and 93.8% agree that kidnappers even pick victims from their homes. The finding is supported by Inyang and Abraham (2013), whose studies found that Nigeria's high abduction rate is due to a lack of vigilance in enforcing laws and prosecuting criminals. As a result of this emerges the hopelessness of getting help, which plunges the victims into deep emotional issues of trust, independence, love, respect, fear and anxiety (Akwash, 2016).

V. CONCLUSION

The findings show that kidnapping for ransom is rampart in Karenbana Parish and kidnappers have continued to carry out this activities unchallenged and have reduced them to internally displaced persons. So far from the interactions most of these people are taking refuge in camps and still some are stranded. The research is recommending that the NGOs should find a way of getting to these people with some food items and clothing to help alleviate their suffering.

It is strongly recommended too that Government should consider the idea of community policing echoed by many and at different occasions, expert in security analysis should be invited to offer their sincere and critical suggestions on the matter without any fear of intimidation or victimization. This should lead to a more pro-active boarder control and ensuring a total control and licensing of arms for purposes of hunting or self-defense.

Therefore, the prevalence of kidnapping for ransom is putting peoples' lives and economic activities risk, it calls for concerns for stakeholders to consciously and systematically deal with the matter using available means to tackle it at the same time looking for possible ways to help the victims to recover.

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