

# EFFECTS OF KIDNAPPING ON VICTIMS' EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN CHIKUN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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## **Abstract**

Kidnapping poses a significant threat to educational stability in Nigeria, particularly in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State. This qualitative study investigated the effects of kidnapping on the academic activities of victims and explores coping mechanisms employed by victims and their families. Data for the study were obtained from 20 IDI respondents made up of kidnap victims and their family members from six political wards of Chikun, Kujama, Rido, Kakau, Sabon-Gari and Kuriga. The study adopted the theory of social disorganization as its theoretical framework. In-depth interviews with victims revealed that kidnapping disrupts educational continuity, leading to reduced school enrollment and academic performance. Ethnographic analysis highlighted the long-term psychological and socio-economic impacts on victims. The study recommends multifaceted interventions, including victim support and counseling programs, financial assistance for educational expenses, and community-based initiatives to mitigate the effects of kidnapping. It stressed the need for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to emplace targeted support mechanisms to ensure educational continuity and resilience among kidnap victims.

**Keywords:** Educational activities; Captivity; Counselling programs; Kidnapping; Ransom.

## **Introduction**

Globally, kidnapping poses a significant threat to human security, with approximately 100,000 reported cases annually (UNODC, 2020). According to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, (NCMEC, 2020), approximately 8 children are reported missing or kidnapped every 4 minutes in the United States. According to Mexico's national register, over 100,000 people have been reported missing between 2020 and 2022 with many who are victims of violence associated with organized crime. Child abductions in Mexico are a significant concern with kidnapping by strangers or family members being ubiquitous. Turkey has the highest rate of kidnapping with 42,669 incidents per 100,000 people. Other countries with high kidnapping rates include Lebanon, Kuwait, Canada and Belgium (National Institute of Statistics and Geography, 2020).

In Africa, the phenomenon has become increasingly prevalent, with Nigeria accounting for over 30% of kidnappings on the continent (Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, 2020). According to a report by the SBM (2024), between July 2023 and June 2024, at least 7,568 people were abducted in 1,130 incidents across the country, with kidnappers demanding approximately N10,995,090,000 (around \$6.871,931) as ransom. In previous reports by the SBM (2020), Nigeria paid at least \$18.34 million (7billion) as ransom to kidnappers between 2011 and 2020. In addition, between July 2022 and June 2023 at least 3,620 persons were abducted in 582 kidnap related incidents across Nigeria. This staggering increase highlights the growing concern of kidnapping in Nigeria.

Within Nigeria, since the Boko-Haram conflict began in North Eastern Nigeria in 1999, at least 2,295 teachers have been killed and more than 1,400 schools destroyed. Most of these schools could not reopen because of extensive damage or ongoing insecurity (UNICEF, 2022). Kaduna State has also emerged as a hotspot for kidnapping incidents with Chikun Local Government Area being particularly vulnerable. Between 2021 and 2024 approximately 20,000 people have been kidnapped in Kaduna State (Human Right Watch, 2022), while no fewer than 18.01 people per 1000 were abducted in Chikun Local Government Area of the state.

The prevailing atmosphere of kidnapping has led to a significant decrease in school enrollment, especially among girls. Kidnapping has severely impacted educational activities in North East Nigeria, affecting approximately 900,000 children who have lost access to learning. This number represents about 75% of children in camps who do not attend school, with 70% of girls of primary school age being out of school in Borno State (International Rescue Committee 2023).

Many parents are hesitant to send their children to school due to fear of abduction. In addition, kidnapped students often experience severe psychological trauma, leading to decreased academic performance and increased dropout rates. Kidnapping has resulted in the killing of 2,295 teachers and displacement of 19,000 others, further exacerbating the education crisis in the region (UNICEF, 2023). Furthermore, attacks on schools have led to closures, disrupting the educational process and leaving students without access to education and this has eroded community trust in the education system, making it challenging to encourage parents to send their children to school, further exacerbating the problem (Save the Children, 2023) The North East region, already educationally disadvantaged, is disproportionately affected, with 69% of out-of-school children coming from this area.

The scourge of kidnapping in Chikun Local Government Area has had devastating consequences on various aspects of life, particularly education as the area has witnessed numerous incidents of kidnapping, resulting in disruption of educational activities, destruction of facilities, and trauma for victims and their families. (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020).

It is against the backdrop of the foregoing that this study explores the incidence of kidnapping in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State and its impact on educational activities vis a vis the coping mechanisms adopted by victims and their families.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The rate of prevalence of kidnapping in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State is 18.0 per 1000 persons at risk while the percentage rate is 1.8% (Human Right Watch, 2022). There is no day that passes by without news of kidnapping and deaths of innocent people usually involving mass abduction of school children. For example, Chinonye and Atafo (2022) reported that 120 students of the Bethel Baptist located in the study area were kidnapped and held captive for 189 days in 2021. Similarly in 2021, 20 students and 2 staff of the Greenfield University and students of the College of Forestry Afaka, in Chikun Local Government Area were also kidnapped (Vanguard Newspaper 23<sup>rd</sup> April,2021).The students were physically and psychologically molested and tortured by the ruthless kidnappers as narrated by the survivors of the kidnapping incident (Channels Television, 2021). Two of the Greenfield university students were killed and corpses dumped at the entrance of the university and the schools was closed down (Vanguard, 2021).

In March 2024, 287 school children were kidnapped in Kuriga in Chikun Local Government Area and later released following intense pressure from the military. The constant

kidnapping of school children has always led to the disruption of curricular and extra-curricular activities due to indefinite closure of schools in the local government area. Despite the growing concern about kidnapping in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State, there is a dearth of empirical studies exploring the long term effects kidnapping on the educational activities of victims. Extant literature primarily focuses on the general effects of kidnapping on individuals, with very little attention to the specific context of educational activities of victims Chikun Local Government Area.

For instance, Uche's (2020) study titled: the Impact of Kidnapping on Tourism in Kaduna State assessed the impact of kidnapping on the tourism industry. The study revealed that there was a significant decline in tourism activities and revenue as a result of kidnapping noting that kidnapping adversely affected the tourism sector and therefore, recommended improved security measures and promotional efforts to restore tourism confidence in Kaduna State.

A different study by Yahaya (2020) titled: Kidnapping and its Socioeconomic Impact on victims in Kaduna State which revealed the negative impact of kidnapping on investment, business operations, and social cohesion concluded that kidnapping has far-reaching socioeconomic effects on victims of kidnapping and therefore, recommended comprehensive security reforms and socioeconomic development programs for all affected victims. However, Yahaya's study failed to identify the area of investment affected by kidnapping. This study therefore, brings a fresh breathe into research on the impact of kidnapping by exploring the effects of the menace on educational activities of kidnap victims in the study area.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study is to explore the impact of kidnapping on the educational activities of victims in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The specific objectives are:

- (a) To identify the specific areas of educational activities affected by kidnapping in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State.
- (b) To ascertain the coping mechanisms adopted by victims and their families to contain the effects of kidnapping in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

#### **Kidnapping**

The concept of kidnapping is difficult to define with precision, because it varies from state to state and from society to society. Many international scholars and organizations have defined kidnapping in various ways. For instance, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2024) defined kidnapping as the unlawful seizure or detention of a person, usually

with the intention of demanding ransom or other benefits. Similarly, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) (2024) defined kidnapping as the unlawful seizure or detention of a person, often with the intention of exploiting or harming them. These definitions also agree with that of Interpol (2024): Kidnapping is the unlawful seizure or detention of a person, usually with the intention of demanding ransom or other benefits

While Abdulkadir, (2017) conceived kidnapping as the forceful seizure and detention of a person against his/her will, Fage & Alabi (2017) perceived it as the forceful or fraudulent abduction of an individual or a group of individuals for reasons ranging from economic, political, and religious to (struggle for) self-determination. This implies that while political and economic factors can influence kidnapping, the economic reason is the more common predisposing factor of the phenomenon. Kidnapping goes beyond political, economic and religious reasons to encompass historical and ethno-cultural factors.

Inyang and Abraham (2019) added that kidnapping is legally termed as a restriction of someone else's freedom which violates or defies the provision of freedom of movement as enshrined in the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The UNODC agrees with Inyang and Abraham by saying that kidnapping is the unlawful seizure, transportation, and/or detention of a person against their will, often with the intention of demanding ransom, extorting money, or exploiting the victim for labor, sexual purposes, or other forms of exploitation (UNODC, 2024).

### **Kidnapped Victim**

Taylor (2019, p.15), views a victim of kidnapping as a "person who is vulnerable to exploitation, including sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, and organ harvesting, during their captivity". For Garcia (2020, p, 12), a victim of kidnapping is "an individual who is subjected to physical and emotional manipulation, including gas-lighting, coercion, and control, by their captors"

### **Empirical Review**

#### **Effects of Kidnapping on the Educational Activities of Victims**

The UNDP (2024), reported that the impact of kidnapping on the Nigerian educational system can be seen in its lack of growth and development. For instance, for over two decades different levels of educational institutions have been the major targets of terrorists, bandits and kidnapers with over 1,400 schools in the North-East and other parts of northern Nigeria being burnt down and utterly destroyed, leading to the closure of educational activities in the region. Kidnapping does not only affect curricular and extra-curricular activities of the students but also

affects the rate of school drops out among students. Suleiman (2021) opined that kidnapping disrupts students' educational leading to poor academic performance, and increased dropout rates among kidnapping victims. Kidnapping leads to prolonged calendar which has social implications.

Nduka (2021), reported that authorities in Kano, Yobe, Kaduna and Zamfara States ordered the closure of more than 20 schools because of the increased waves of insecurity. For the Northwest region with a high-rate of out-of-school children, whatever gain that has been recorded from the school feeding programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria to lure school children in North-western Nigeria back to school is being threatened by constant disruption in school calendar and activities as a result of incessant kidnapping of school children. Nduka concluded that the attacks on schools discourage attendance in formal education increases the Almajiri syndrome prevalent in Northern Nigeria

In their study, Ahmed et al. (2020) examined the impact of kidnapping on educational attainment in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State and found significant academic disruption and emotional trauma among victims. Similarly, a study by Mohammed et al. (2020) revealed that the effects of kidnapping on victims' psychological well-being in Chikun Local Government Area increase anxiety and depression among victims of kidnapping. Aliyu et al's. (2021) assessment of the impact of kidnapping on educational aspirations in Chikun LGA showed that victims of kidnapping demonstrated reduced motivation and interest in education. This finding agrees with Adelodun et al's. (2023) assessment of the effects of kidnapping on victims' educational aspirations in the study area. The results demonstrated reduced motivation in educational activities among victims of kidnapping.

Furthermore, Eke et al. (2024) evaluated the impact of kidnapping on educational infrastructure in Chikun LGA. The results revealed that kidnapping leads to destruction of schools and educational facilities. Similarly, Nwafor et al. (2024) investigation into the effects of kidnapping on teachers' motivation in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State showed that kidnapping results in reduced teacher morale in the learning and teaching process.

### **Coping strategies adopted used by Victims and Families to mitigate Effects of Kidnapping on Educational Activities.**

Kidnapping has devastating effects on victims' educational activities, causing emotional trauma, academic disruption, and long-term psychological distress. In Nigeria, the alarming rate of kidnapping has left many students and families struggling to cope with its aftermath. Despite these challenges, victims and their families have developed various coping mechanisms to mitigate the impact of kidnapping on educational activities. Building on this background,

Adelodun et al. (2023) examined the coping mechanisms employed by kidnapping victims in Chikun Local Government Area. They found that victims who received emotional support from family and friends were more likely to return to school. The authors recommend that educators and policymakers should prioritize trauma-informed care and community-based support groups.

Similarly, Oloruntoba et al. (2023) who investigated the impact of parental support on educational resilience among kidnapped victims in North East Nigeria, found that parental involvement in education significantly enhances victims' academic performance. They suggest that schools and communities should collaborate to provide parenting programs. This finding coheres with Ahmed et al's (2023) conclusion that education plays a crucial role in the rehabilitation of kidnapped victims. They noted that individualized support and flexible educational programs can enhance victims' educational resilience.

Supporting victims of kidnapping and their families is crucial and underscores the need for all and sundry to help mitigate the effects of kidnapping on victims' educational activities. Building on this backdrop, Mohammed et al. (2023) opined that community engagement is vital in supporting kidnapped victims' education as such initiatives foster social cohesion and reduce stigma. Evidence in the literature indicates that trauma-informed care is essential in addressing kidnapped victims' psychological needs. Thus, Yakubu et al (2024), advocated that educators should adapt teaching methods to accommodate victims' unique needs. They further argued that parents' coping mechanisms significantly influence kidnapped victims' educational outcomes as social support networks and community-based programs can reduce parental stress.

To achieve sustainable and resilient education among victims of kidnapping takes more than the victims and their families' sole responsibilities to curb the menace of kidnapping as it requires communal efforts. To accentuate this, Bello et al (2024) suggested that kidnapped victims' educational resilience requires collaborative relationships between parents and teachers to enhance victims' academic outcomes. This study also agrees with Sani et al's (2024) assertion that community-based support groups foster social cohesion and reduce stigma for kidnapped victims' families.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopted the theory of Social disorganization as its theoretical framework. The theory was propounded by Clifford R. Shaw and Henry D. McKay in 1942. The theory posits that crime and deviance result from the breakdown of social institutions and community structures, leading to a lack of social cohesion and control. The theory assumes that

neighborhoods with high levels of social disorganization are more likely to experience crime and deviance.

This theory is relevant in explaining kidnapping. For instance, breakdown of social institutions such as family and community structures, can lead to social disorganization which may result in crime such as kidnapping. The theory notes that where ever there is social disorganization there is a corresponding increase in crime. Nigeria is currently grappling with a myriad of social problems such as poverty, inflation, and unemployment, as a result of which many people find it difficult to get by. Consequently, many people resort to all manner of outlawed behaviours such as kidnapping, banditry and terrorism just to survive. When social disorganization creates an atmosphere of fear, undermining social cohesion and trust among community members. Social disorganization is relevant in explaining how kidnapping interrupts victims' education, in this case, Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State, thereby compromising their future.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted a qualitative research method to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effects of kidnapping on victims' educational activities in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The study population comprised of 20 victims of kidnapping in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting six political wards out of the 12 political wards in Chikun Local Government Area. The selection was done based on kidnapping incidents in each of the political wards. The selected wards include: Chikun, Kujama, Rido, Kakau, Sabon-Gari and Kuriga. Data for the study were collected through in-depth interview (IDIs) guide designed by the researcher.

### **Results**

Findings from the in-depth interview sessions conducted in the selected political wards in Chikun Local Government Area revealed that kidnapping had devastating effects on educational activities in the study area. The interviewees regretted that the quality of education has deteriorated due to the incessant attacks by kidnappers on the educational facilities and mass abduction of students and teachers. The interviewees stressed that kidnapping has forced many schools to close down leading to disruption of the academic calendar and the reduction in the number of school enrolments in Chikun Local Government. One of the interviewees in the Chikun political ward reacted thus:

Kidnapping is something we used to hear happening in other countries of the world but this dreaded devil stormed the Nigeria right into our villages and houses, farms,

schools, places of worships and our roads. Kidnapping has destroyed and taken away the future of our children. Kidnappers have come into our villages and taken away our children to their camps and demanding very heavy ransoms before they gained freedom. Schools have been closed down; curricular and extra-curricular activities too have been disrupted leading to elongation of school academic calendar. Not only that, many teachers have sought transfer to urban areas where kidnapping is not as rampant as in our community. Many newly recruited teachers have refused to assume duty in our villages for fear of being kidnapped (Male; 50 years, IDI, 20/03/2024, Chikun Ward).

### **Coping mechanisms used by victims and their families to curb the effects of kidnapping in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State.**

Kidnapping in recent years has taken a new dimension in which the major targets of kidnappers are students of educational institutions. Mass adoption of students in Nigeria can be traced to the adoption of the Chibok Girls' Secondary Schools in 2014 and the kidnap of students of Dapchi Girls' Secondary School Yobe in 2018. Since then there has been a constant streak of mass abduction of secondary school students. Majority of these victims spend several years in captivity.

It is against this backdrop that the study sought to know how kidnap victims and their families have been able to cope with the menace in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State. Majority of the interviewees regretted that they have not been able to cope with the menace and suggested that the government should provide scholarships to students who are victims of kidnapping to enable them to continue with their education. An IDI respondent from Gwagwada Ward in Chikun Local Government Area lamented as follows:

Our children have dropped out of school because we do not have money to continue paying for their school fees and other needs such as their textbooks, writing materials and other things. We are pleading with the government to come to the aid of our children so that they can help them continue their education. If they can give our children scholarships to study in other states or other countries, it help them a great deal. Not only that, if the government can be giving our children monthly allowance to enable them pay school fees, buy textbooks, writing materials and among other things, it will help them not to drop out of school. Even if the government is not willing to give them monthly allowances, but they should at least provide them with textbooks and writing materials (Female, 34 years, IDI, Sabon-Gari Chikun Local Government Area, 29/03/2024.)

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings from the in-depth interviews showed that kidnapping has forced many schools to close down while the academic calendar has also have been disrupted. In other words, incessant kidnappings have also resulted in the reduction of the number of school enrolment in

Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State. This finding is corroborated by Nduka's (2021) study which confirmed that authorities in Kano, Yobe and Kaduna states ordered more than 20 schools to close down because of the increase of kidnap-induced insecurity. Kidnapping does not only affect educational activities such as curricular and extra-curricular activities of the students but also exacerbates the rate of school drops outs. To corroborate this statement, Suleiman (2021) opines that kidnapping disrupts students' educational activities leading to poor academic performance, and increased dropout rates among other effects.

Exploring ways to help abducted school children and families to cope kidnapping effects on their educational activities, majority of the interviewees suggested that the government should give scholarships to students who are victims of kidnapping to enable them continue with their education and mitigate cases of school dropout.

### **Conclusion**

The scourge of kidnapping in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State presents a multifaceted challenge with far-reaching implications for both victims and society at large. This paper sheds lights on the complex dynamics driving kidnapping and banditry activities on the educational activities of victims in the study area.

### **Recommendations**

- i. Government should establish comprehensive victim support services, encompassing counseling, and rehabilitation to enable the victims cope with the trauma associated with kidnapping.
- ii. Post-kidnap academic support should be given to children victims of kidnap by families and educators to help catch up with disrupted school activities.
- iii. Communities should organize awareness campaigns, advocacy initiatives, and fund raising events to encourage children whose education has been disrupted by kidnapping to return to school.

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