



KIDNAPPING AND ECONOMIC SECURITY AMONG THE IJAW PEOPLE IN BAYELSA STATE

¹CHRISTIAN Tsaro Dii, ²CHRIS ‘Edozi Onyemenam and ³DUBAKEME Eniye Christian

^{1,3}Department of International Relations, Baze University Abuja, FCT Nigeria.

²Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Baze University Abuja, FCT Nigeria.

Email: ¹christain.dii@bazeuniversity.edu.ng, ²chris.onyemenam@bazeuniversity.edu.ng and ³eniye.dubakeme@bazeuniversity.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

This study investigated kidnapping and economic security among the Ijaw people in Bayelsa State. Kidnapping and economic security were measured on a deconstructed three-component indices. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design strategy, and a mixed method approach. Using a multistage sampling procedure, 122 respondents were randomly selected from three local government areas chosen for the study and descriptive and inferential techniques were used to analyze the data and evaluate the relationship between kidnapping and economic security. The QLT-DOT theoretical framework informed the study, which found that kidnapping has a negative effect on economic security. Furthermore, although kidnapping was a well-known crime with punitive sanctions, the very high incidence stemmed from lack of deterrence: poor policing, multi-faceted inadequacy of anti-kidnap agencies and corruption/complicity among their officials. The study recommended an overhaul of government policies and strategies towards staff reorientation, optimization of existing digital public infrastructure, particularly the use of the digital identification eco-system and government should embark on massive digital technology deployment in the anti-kidnap agencies.

Keywords: Economic security, Ijaw people, Kidnapping,

INTRODUCTION

The root word for ‘kidnapping’ is believed to have been derived from two words: ‘kid’ (infant) and ‘napping’ (caught sleeping). Tzanelli (2009) posited that kidnapping first originated in 17th Century Great Britain when infants of wealthy individuals were abducted while they were asleep, and payment of ransom was demanded before their release - hence the term ‘kidnapping’. Ayuba (2020) state that many scholars agreed with the concept that kidnapping first emerged as an act of child abduction or stealing but over time, it evolved to include other forms and dimensions of kidnapping. One form of kidnapping that Nigeria witnessed on 5th July 1984 and made news all over the world was the attempted abduction of Umaru Dikko by the Buhari/Idiagbon military regime in the United Kingdom. Alex (2012) explained that the foiled kidnap was allegedly arranged to repatriate Umaru Dikko to Nigeria, to face allegations of corruption and embezzlement of public funds during his time as a Federal Minister.

Kidnapping assumed a disturbing dimension in the 1980's when all sort of criminal elements, gangsters, ritualists, rebel groups and terrorists got involved for a variety of reasons (Onuoha & Okolie-Osemene, 2019). The frequency and their sophistication in Nigeria is alarming, their audacious confrontation with anti-kidnap officials is unprecedented, worrisome to citizens and government and the factors that underpin the upsurge in kidnapping are many and varied as the targets and actors, including those who benefit from it.

In Bayelsa State, the incidence of kidnapping became rampant after the two-million-man match organized in Abuja for then Head of State, late Gen Sani Abacha, to transmute to civilian President in 1997. Eye-witness accounts of two of the authors described how many youths were mobilized from the creeks/villages in Bayelsa, to participate in the rally. This unwittingly exposed them to the environment of Abuja, with modern infrastructure, when compared to their rural communities, urban slums and shanties - where crude oil wealth of the country came from. The Ijaw social historical account showed their peculiar acts of bravery, courage and early socialization with the West, they reasoned that the wealth from the natural resource exploitation in their state was being used to develop Abuja/Federal Capital Territory when they were left to lead a life of worsening poverty, polluted/devastated environment. On their return to Bayelsa, the youths soon formed militant groups and engaged in illegal crude oil/petroleum products bunkering but later switched to the more fancied kidnap for ransom, of expatriates and oil industry workers.

So, while citizens whose normal life were affected by the activities of kidnappers – and could not move freely to attend to their social needs, for fear of being kidnapped, there were those who benefited from the consequential '*crime economy*' - especially in the informal sector where the crime proceeds fueled the spending pattern of kidnappers and caused a boom. It also meant that ransom monies were spent on building houses, landlords received handsome rents and peasant farmers, fishermen and traders got good profits from the sale of their produce.

As the informal sector experienced the criminally induced boom, the incidence of kidnapping gradually eroded the economic security of individuals, communities and businesses in the state - several businesses became dislocated. Foreign and local experts closed shops to escape the kidnap threat, the State's Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) from taxes dwindled, (kidnappers typically do not pay taxes). Meanwhile, perpetrators gradually became better organized into gangs, recruited youths and procured arms for their operations.

The fundamental conceptual linkage between kidnapping and economic security is reflected on its impact on sustainable development. First, expectations of the vulnerable/poor and those excluded from the '*crime economy*', that the State will meet its obligations of provision of welfare and security of lives and property of citizens, with the constrained/dwindling revenue. Second, kidnapping sends negative signals of business insecure environment, with attendant consequences including loss of employment and economic opportunities for the indigenes. So, it raises the basic issue of how acts of, or threat of kidnapping is related to economic security. That is, how does kidnapping or the threat of it determine access to means/resources and activities, which mirror economic security status (ESS) of the individual/household or business, so that its curtailment corresponds to an enhanced ESS, and by extension, economic prosperity of the Ijaw people in the study area. This encapsulates the focus of the study. The rest of paper is divided into six sections: 'key concepts and perspectives', 'review of relevant literature', 'theoretical perspectives and framework of study', 'methodology', 'data set and analyses and 'conclusion/recommendations.

KEY CONCEPTS AND PERSPECTIVES

The phenomenon of kidnapping has been variously conceived, depending on the background of the researcher, as “the forcible seizure, taking away and unlawful detention of a person against his/her will, (Inyang and Abraham, 2013), or ‘act of seizing and detaining or carrying away a person by unlawful force or by fraud, and often with a demand for ransom’ (Uzorma and Nwanegbo-Ben, 2014). Some opined that ‘kidnapping’ is difficult to define and/or it depends on the jurisdiction (Walsh and Adrian, 1983, Asuquo, 2009). Others justified a ‘typology of kidnapping’ based on a distinction between ‘social’, ‘political’ and ‘economically’ motivated kidnapping (Zannoni, 2003), or conceptual distinction between ‘primary/secondary’ and ‘cause/effect’ of ‘kidnapping, indexed against two fallible assumption - in every kidnap incident, a form of economics is involved, and ‘hostage status’ is of significance in the payment of ransom’, so, ‘kidnapping is a business’ (Ibrahim and Mukhtar 2017).

Conviction for Kidnapping requires two preconditions - ‘*mens rea*’ and ‘*actus rea*’ (Okonkwo and Naish, 1992), that is, the suspect/accused must be proven to have ‘thought of it’ and subsequently ‘acted upon it’. The Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2022 is the extant federal law in Nigeria on kidnapping and related offences (FGN 2022). It provides in Section 24 (1) that: ‘*A person who knowingly or intentionally:*

- a. *Seizes, detains, or attempts to seize or detain a person, property, or facility in order to compel a third party to do or abstain from doing a lawful act, or*
- b. *Threatens to kill, injure or continue to detain a person in order to compel a third party to do or abstain from doing a lawful act, or,*
- c. *Gives an explicit or implicit condition for the release of the person held hostage, or property or facility detained, commits an offence.*

Subsection (2) says ‘Any person who commits an offence under subsection (1) above is liable on conviction to

1. Where death does not result from the act, to life imprisonment; or
2. Where death results from the act, to a death sentence.

Yet, kidnapping is rampant in Nigeria – maybe due to worsening poverty, and unemployment, which reinforces poverty and engenders a predisposition to crime (Obijiofor, 2019), or the ‘weak public institutions’, ‘poor administration of criminal justice system’ and ‘poor level of technology deployment in the fight against kidnapping. Consequently, this study adopted the view that kidnapping is a crime, which involves the actual or attempted act of seizing, detaining, or threatened act to kill and or injure a third party in order to compel a third party to do or abstain from doing a lawful act with an explicit or implicit condition for the release of the person, held hostage, or property or facility detained.

A pragmatic view of ‘economic security’, is adopted, (following the United Nations Development Programme 1994) - as the totality of protection from actual or threat of harm, injury and or hurtful disruptions in the daily activities, at homes, offices, businesses, farms, and/or communities - in socio-economic, political and business activities. It covers the diverse concern for well-being, safety and security – as individuals/households, community, business and the State, and the various contexts of ‘security’ (Rothschild, 1995), from which three, corresponding, interlinked, self-reinforcing categories are derived: ‘personal security’, ‘community security’ and ‘business security’. They capture the core social needs of human life and business, within the wider concept of ‘human security’, (UNIFTHS, 2010, UNDP, 1994, Imam, 2014) and encapsulate the focus of public

policing, crime prevention, loss prevention, national security and the defense of a nation-state through armed force or the use of such force to control its citizens (Knote, 2004).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kidnapping has been on the increase in the Niger-Delta Region, particularly the rural communities (Dodo, 2010), due in part, to the natural resources nationalism aimed at securing larger share of the crude oil proceeds for themselves (Essien & Ema, 2013). Also, it increased against the perceived ‘marginalization’ of the community by the government and oil companies (Townsend, 2008, Akpan, 2010, Essien and Ema, 2013, Chidi and Uche, 2015). Turner (2008) also conceived ‘kidnapping and hostage taking as a derivative of freedom-seeking militants’ protest of environmental degradation, which transmuted into ‘expatriate kidnap’ for ransom money (Demola, 2011, Adetuba’s, 2016), with adverse effect on foreign/domestic investments (Oyemwinmina and Osazuwa 2016), and even the kidnap for ransom, of men of God, politicians and businessmen (Okorie-Ajah, Nwokeoma and Okpan, 2018, Efiemor, 2017).

Kidnappers deploy digital devices to mask their trade, obviate being detected/apprehended (Garner, 2009) or in furtherance of other crimes (banditry, ethnic militia), using small arms and weapons (Nseabasi, 2010, Nextier, 2021, 2022) which undermine economic activities (Adegoke, 2013) – like farming, small businesses and oil exploration activities, and further diminish economic security of host communities (Albert and Odinwa, 2015, Essien & Ben, 2013), in spite of government efforts to curtail it (Chukuigwe and Albert, 2015). Dami (2021) demonstrated the adverse connection between various crimes with kidnap element and economic security.

Okoli and Agada’s (2014) study identified three elements in the crime of kidnapping - ‘taking one away against their consent’, ‘keeping one in false imprisonment and ‘extortion of ransom from the victim’, which has been the traditional motive of kidnapping (Tzanelli, 2009) but now includes ‘political’ (Zannoi, 2003), quest for ransom payment, and inflicting emotional pains on the victims. Fass, 1997; 2010) categorized child kidnapping into three major types - abductions by parents or family members; stranger abductions for monetary ransom or physical exploitation and abuse; and children abduction by women who intend to keep and raise them as their own. Kidnap-for-ransom has been empirically found to be most prevalent form of kidnapping (Nwanunobi, 2017, Okorie - Ajah, Nwokeoma and Okpan, 2018).

The Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC, 2019) identified kidnap for ransom as one of five basic types of kidnapping, which is used by kidnappers to finance their illicit operations. The others include ‘tiger’ or proxy bombings - force victims to aid a criminal act; ‘express kidnapping’ - coercing the victim to make ATM withdrawals; political and ideological kidnapping, virtual kidnapping - using an accomplice to pretend as a hostage, and kidnapping for ritual purposes (Nzeda, Mohammed, & Abbare, 2024).

Alimi, Ibrahim, Yusuf and Ishaku (2023) deconstructed ‘households’ economic security’ into *household employment*, *household income*, and *household property security* and found a negative relationship, especially in terms of diminished economic value of properties, community social cohesion/inclusion and generally slowing down economic activity in the community (Odebode et al., 2022; Gabriel, 2021; Ibidough and Kakulu, 2018). Household property as an index of economic security is negatively impacted by kidnapping (Ibidough and Kakule, 2018,) as well as foreign investment flows (Achumba, et al, 2013).

According to ICRC (2013), economic security is defined as the condition of individuals, households or communities being able to provide essential needs and unavoidable expenditures in a sustainable manner, given physiological requirements, the environment, and prevailing cultural standards. The International Labour Organization (ILO) on the other hand state that economic security is composed of basic social security, which is defined by access to basic infrastructure needs pertaining to health, education, dwelling, information, and social protection, as well as work-related security. The work-related security is said to have seven component dimensions that are important however, two are essential for basic security: income security and voice representation security. Ibragimovich, Ogli, Kholikovich, and Ogli, (2020), posit that the national security of the state depends on the level of economic security and therefore, developed countries in their concept of national security pay special attention to the issue of economic security...and economic security of a country depends on its social, economic, financial, political, environmental and epidemiological situation (Ibragimovich et al, 2020). Ronis (2011) submit that:

Economic security is a major element of national security, even as borders are less important than ever. No matter how we look at national security, there can be no question of the need to include the economic viability of our nation. Without capital, there is no business; without business, there is no profit; without profit, there are no jobs. And without jobs, there are no taxes, and there is no military capability (Ronis 2011.)

Thus, the foregoing, highlights three key issues are highlighted. First, a preponderance of empirical evidence on the connection between kidnapping and economic security driven by different conceptualization of kidnapping, and even economic security., although there is a dearth of such studies in the study area – with a history of a peculiar evolution of kidnapping activities. Second, a wide range of theoretical perspectives underpin studies of kidnapping, which have opened research findings to several ‘boxed’ and or sometimes interdisciplinary evaluations. Finally, most researchers have not really contextualized ‘ethnic homogeneity’ in the study of kidnapping, as this study, to further understand the place of ‘punitive sanctions’ as deterrence to the act of kidnapping.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE AND FRAMEWORK OF STUDY

Researchers have adopted different theoretical approaches, which reflected their disciplinary background and interest: The ‘Frustration-Aggression’ (FA) theory, focused on the explanation of violent criminals’ behaviour as apparently stemming from the inability to fulfill their needs, using existing legitimate means (Berkowitz and Aubrey, 1962 Ugwuoke, 2015), ‘organized crime’ perspective was adopted by Ezeibe (cited in Okoli and Agada, 2014), Oladeinde (2017) and Zannoni (cited in Okoli and Agada (2014) attempted a ‘typology perspective’ in their studies. Others suggest difficulty in conceptualization of ‘kidnapping’ with some measure of certainty, (Asuquo, 2009, Walsh and Adrian 1983) especially due to jurisdictional issues. Others used the purely ‘legal’, and strict interpretation of the ‘forcible seizure’, and ‘unlawful detention of a person against his/her will’ (Siegel, 1986, Abraham, 2010).

Some other researchers have used the Cloward and Ohlin’s (1961) ‘Differential Opportunity Theory’ (DOT), which posits that the structural positions of individuals are defined both in terms of the strain of blocked legitimate opportunities and illegitimate opportunities available to them in specific social settings that create ‘differential opportunity’ in the attainment of culturally set goals by legitimate means and/or illegitimate means including (violent) crimes like kidnapping (Alimi,

Ibrahim, Yusuf and Ishaku, 2023) of society. So, the lack of access to legitimate means to reach cultural goals can result into intense frustrations, which can trigger the aggressive resort to and use of illegitimate means to achieve those goals (Conklin, 2017, Swetnam & Hope, 2001). The DOT has been useful in the study of (crime including) kidnapping and Nigerian government's policy responses – increasing legitimate opportunities through pro-poor schemes like 'N-power', 'Trader-Moni, which have ostensibly helped to keep in-check, unemployed youths who could be tempted to engage in the act of kidnapping (especially) for ransom.

The Queer Ladder Theory (QLT) attempted to explain the functional significance of organized crime as a desperate tactic for socioeconomic empowerment and social climbing (Bell, 1953), with three assumptions underlying the 'queer ladder' nature of organized crime (Okoli and Agada, 2014) which are that 'organized crime is an instrumental behaviour/practice' (which is a means to an end), 'it is an instrument of social climbing, fame and socioeconomic advancement', and a 'means to accumulate wealth and build power' (Mallory, 2007).

A combination of the DOT-QLT perspectives is adopted in this study to achieve a suitable complementary theoretical approach, which best explicate the phenomenon of kidnapping and its connection with economic security, at individual and/or organized crime level, resorted to because of the inability to deal with the perceived discrepancies between aspirations and the legitimate chance(s) of attaining them. The contextual and intervening factors are common to both perspectives because the governmental structure to detect and deal with criminal practices are weak and a low level of political will to address the matter. The unemployment situation is strangulating; the legitimate means to attain societally approved goals are compromised with little or no deterrence. Faced with the dilemma, resort to criminality, whether looting and stealing of public resources or illegitimate acts that yield proceeds of crime, which can be publicly acclaimed and recognized became attractive and made crime fighting more difficult in Bayelsa State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a positivist approach, employing a cross-sectional survey design (Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991, Babbie, 1990). A multistage sampling technique (Collis and Hussey, 2003, Saunders et al., 2011) was used to select 122 respondents from communities in Yenegoa, Sagbama and Ogbia, Local Government Areas in Bayelsa State. The focus was the relationship between kidnapping and economic security, and how constrained access to 'means/resources' used to meet social needs of individuals/households and objectives of business, affect economic security. The primary data was collected using a carefully designed questionnaire developed, following into five sections corresponding to thematic aspects of the phenomenon under investigation.

A combination of measurement techniques was adopted – a five-point Likert scale, a dichotomous, a declarative and multiple options. A set of questions were used to obtain information on the characteristics of respondents and the key variables. The questionnaire was administered via an online survey link to the respondents, while a 'convenience strategy' was adopted for interview of key strategic informants, that included ethnic leaders and categories of officials of the Intelligence, Security, and Law Enforcement institutions in the study area. A pilot survey preceded the main exercise and the computed Cronbach Alpha value, at 0.87 was good enough for the study.

Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential techniques to organize, present and evaluate the stated hypothesis. The evaluation of the hypothesis followed a 'deconstructive approach'. 'Kidnapping' and 'Economic Security' were each deconstructed into three components and relevant

data were used to describe and evaluate each component - further reclassification and variate analyses, to achieve required measurement indices and provide further insights on the respondents' perception of the phenomena, before the hypothesis was tested, findings analyzed and discussed.

Overview of the Ethnographic and Social History of the Ijaw People in Bayelsa State

Bayelsa State, formerly a part of Rivers State, was created in 1996. It has an estimated population of 2,704,515 as at 2023 (UN), spread among the eight local government areas. The Ijaw people, an ancient kingdom known for practicing farming especially fish farming and staple food crop with palm nuts form the largest ethnic group in the Niger-Delta Region. The discovery of crude oil soon turned their economy into an oil exploration dominated economy with a huge influx of Nigerians from all works of life and foreign nationals also. There is a strong community system which provides the bedrock for 'being your brothers' keeper, a philosophy that over the ages have created among them a deep sense of belonging and bonding that provides informal social capital for a people with a rich socio-cultural heritage and are known for bravery and resilience and having fought several existential local wars and conflicts over time – which explains why most militant activities did not take time in gaining acceptance and recruits. Often, when one group is disbanded another is formed with ease due to sense of communal associational life and capacity for local mobilization especially with their system of local information dissemination traditional authority system which has stood the test of time.

In the more recent times, a felt sense of deprivations, emanating from the neglect of their environment due to crude oil exploration activities, have led to the development of reactive nationalism and a communally felt sense of alienation from the resources beneath their land. The long history of 'struggle' for a better share has unwittingly engendered resilience, courage and capacity to dare - which have made the people who they are and perhaps created a pre-disposition to such acts of bravery and courage, in the face of stringent laws and fight against kidnapping and other crimes.

DATA SET AND ANALYSIS

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The field exercise ended with an overall response rate of 80%. The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, presented in Table 1, showed that they are predominantly (92%) young, within the youthful segment of the labour force and (in the case of women) childbearing age category. Indeed, 50% are between 18years and 30years, and another 42% are in the age bracket of 31 – 45 years – most active age groups in most populations. There are more males (62%), than females (38%), predominantly educated – 55% have first degrees and another 25.4% have a second degree and who are Christians predominantly.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of Respondents

S/N	Category of Characteristics (N = 122)	Frequency (N/%)
1.	<u>Age</u>	
	18 – 30	50% (61)
	31 – 45	42% (51)
	46 – 60	8% (10)
2.	<u>Religion</u>	
	Christianity	97% (118)
	Others	3.0% (4)
3.	<u>Level of Educational Attainment</u>	
	No formal education	3.3% (4)
	SSCE	6.6% (8) } <u>9.9%</u>
	OND	1.6% (2)
	HND	0.8% (1.) } <u>2.4%</u>
	B..Sc	55% (61)
	M.Sc	25.4% (31)
	PhD	5.7% (7)
4.	<u>Gender</u>	
	Male	62.3% (76)
	Female	37.7% (46)

Source: Fieldwork

The Crime of Kidnapping,

Kidnapping was deconstructed into three parameters, and a set of questions used to each, and determine a kidnapping index, namely:

3. Knowledge/Awareness of ‘Kidnapping’ and kidnapping as a Crime;
4. Perception /Understanding of the Nature/Type of Kidnapping in Bayelsa State;
5. Causes of Kidnapping in Bayelsa State;

Table 2, showed that respondents have a very deep knowledge/awareness (above 90%) of kidnapping, and as a crime, although about 57% consider the incidence to be high - consistent with the findings of Alimi, Ibrahim, Yusuf and Ishaku (2023) and Chukuigwe and Albert, 2015) in their studies. At a composite mean of 87.9%, (107) there is a very high level of knowledge and awareness of kidnapping as a criminalized act.

Table 2: Respondents’ Level of Knowledge/Awareness of Kidnapping/as a Crime in Study Area.

S/N	Components of Knowledge/Awareness of Kidnapping and Kidnapping s a Crime (N = 122)	Affirmative/High Responses N (%)	Negative /Low Responses N (%)	Total(N/%)
1.	Do you know what is meant by ‘kidnapping’?	119 (97.5%)	3 (2.5%)	122(100%)
2.	Have you heard of ‘kidnap case(s) in this area where you reside and/or in Bayelsa State?	119 (97.5%)	3 (2.5%)	122(100%)
3.	To you, is ‘kidnapping’ a crime?	121(99.2%)	1 (0.8%)	122(100%)
4.	Rate the incidence of kidnapping where you reside and/or in Bayelsa State, especially between 2015 and 2022?	70 (57.4%)	52 (42.6%)	122 (100%)

Source: Field work

Furthermore, Table 3, respondents identified the top three types of kidnapping they know of as ‘ransom kidnapping’ (89%), ‘ritual kidnapping’ (70%) and ‘political kidnapping’ (51%) - ‘ransom kidnapping’ being the most peculiar in Bayelsa State.

Table 3: Respondents by Nature and Peculiar Type of Kidnapping in Study Area/Bayelsa State

S/N	Category of Nature/Peculiar Type of Kidnapping (N= 122)	N (%)
1.	Which type of kidnapping do you know?	
6.	Ritual kidnapping	85 (69.7%)
7.	Ransom Kidnapping	109 (89.3%)
8.	Virtual Kidnapping	12 (9.8%)
9.	Political Kidnapping	63 (51.3%)
10.	Bride Kidnapping	21 (17.2%)
11.	Express Kidnapping	21 (17.2%)
12.	Tiger Kidnapping	4 (3.3%)
13.	Emotional Kidnapping	22 (18%)
2.	Which type of kidnapping is peculiar in Bayelsa State?	
14.	Ritual Kidnapping	36 (29.5%)
15.	Ransom Kidnapping	107 (87.7%)
16.	Virtual Kidnapping	1 (0.8%)
17.	Political Kidnapping	40 (32.8%)
18.	Bride Kidnapping	3 (2.5%)
19.	Express Kidnapping	3 (2.5%)
20.	Emotional Kidnapping	2 (1.6%)

Source: Fieldwork.

Using a cut-off point of 50%, the top three causative factors respondents identified are ‘unemployment’ (76.2%), ‘get rich quick syndrome’ (72.1%), and ‘Poverty’ (68%) – even though ‘peer pressure’ accounted for 42% (Table 4). The importance of the causative factor perception lies

in the plausible nexus between ‘constrained’ access to ‘means resources’ and ‘economic activities and the lure to the crime of kidnapping, which, though an illegal act, can be used to satisfy the ‘cultural goal’ of survival and/or leading an affluent style of life.

Table 4: Respondents (Top three) Perception of Causes of Kidnapping in the Study Area

S/N	Categories of Causes (N = 122)	N	
1.	Unemployment	93	76.2%
2.	Get rich quick syndrome	88	72.1%
3.	Poverty	83	68%
4.	Peer pressure	52	42.6%
5.	Laziness	45	36.9%
6.	Resource deprivation	45	36.9%
7.	Entitlement mentality	39	32%
8.	Weapons proliferation	37	30.3%
9.	Family breakup	16	13.1%

Source: Fieldwork

Again, at a composite index of 100 (82.2%), kidnapping is a very well-known criminal activity in the study area (Table 5), and ‘ransom kidnapping’, is the most peculiar, and ‘unemployment’, ‘get-rich-quick’ syndrome and ‘peer pressure’ are the top three causal factors.

Table 5: Kidnapping Index in the Study Area

S/N	Kidnapping Components	F(N)	%
1.	Knowledge/Awareness of ‘Kidnapping’ and kidnapping as a Crime;	105	86.3%
2.	Perception /Understanding of the Nature/Type of (ransom) Kidnapping in Bayelsa State	108	88.3%
3.	Causes of Kidnapping in Bayelsa State (top three);	88	72.1%

Source: Fieldwork

Economic Security in Bayelsa State

Economic security was deconstructed into three parameters, measured by a set of relevant questions for each parameter and in the determination of an economic security index, namely:

Personal Security;

Community Security; and

Business/Investment Security.

Personal security parameter is based on the assumption that it is only when an individual or the head of the family/household (‘bread-winner’) perceives the security situation as conducive, would he pursue the satisfaction of social needs, no matter his occupational/employment. Even businesses and government would not open for business and their employees would evaluate the personal security situation to avoid becoming a kidnap victim. Overall, 67% of respondents said their personal security was paramount in deciding whether to go out for any reason, including work and 75% specifically said kidnapping is a key factor in personal security, while 87% said they felt safer going out during the day than in the evening (39%).

Community security captures the notion of an outwardly expanding concentric circles of nuclei of personal security at the level of the group/community – whether farming/fishing communities who indulge in communal practice of some sort - communal farmland-holding system, information sharing, consensus building on decisions on movement, community security and more, that binds everyone, etc. This is ‘carried into discussions and decisions on community security. Although most respondents (67%) have their community as safe, they did not attribute it to anti-kidnap operations which they considered to be ineffective (64%) because of inadequate (personnel 78%, presence 65%) which encouraged kidnapping (60.2%). Interestingly, the derived community security index, at a mean of 64.3% for affirmative responses, indicated a high level of insecurity in the communities in the study area.

Businesses thrive under conducive environment – existing and prospective investors consider this while making plans for their annual activities and future investment decisions. Even employee performance, company profitability and even corporate social responsibilities are factors in the business environment. Although respondents’ perception of overall security is high (67%), they said kidnapping affected business/investment adversely (78.7%), even personal security (75%) and across Bayelsa State (79.5%), and therefore socio-economic security (75%), which caused relocation of business operations and divestments – especially of crude oil corporations. The business and investment security index at a mean of 87.3% is therefore very high, and so based on the foregoing, a composite economic insecurity index, at a mean of 78% is very high.

Kidnapping and Economic Security in Bayelsa State

The fundamental proposition is whether Kidnapping is related to economic security, if so, what is the nature of this relationship. To evaluate this proposition, further analyses and reclassification of data was undertaken in relation to the deconstructed parameters of kidnapping and economic security, and on a dichotomous basis with a cut-off benchmark of 50% and above for ‘Affirmative’ and below 50% for ‘Negative’ responses. The derived data tabulation in each case was used to test the null hypothesis using the chi-square (X^2) statistic and at a significance level of 0.05, based on the rule that where the X^2 calculated is less than the value from the table, the null hypothesis is accepted as being statistically significant when the p-value is less than 0.05.

Evaluation of the relationship between kidnapping and Personal Security

It is hypothesized that there is no relationship between kidnapping and personal security. Kidnapping is central to making the decision on how to exercise the freedom of movement. The exposure to the risk of being kidnaped, will constrain the individual’s access to means and resources, and constitutes an important consideration in weighing the level of personal security.

Table 6: Relationship between Kidnapping and Personal Security

S/N	Components of Kidnapping	Personal Security as measured		Total	p value
		Affirmative Responses/ High Level (N/%)	Negative Responses / Low Level (N/%)		
	Knowledge/Awareness of ‘Kidnapping’ and kidnapping as a Crime;	39	9	48	
	Perception/Understanding of the Nature/Type of (ransom) Kidnapping in Bayelsa State	32	10	42	
	Causes of Kidnapping in Bayelsa State (top three);	17	15	32	
	Total	88	34	122	

Source: Fieldwork

Respondents’ perception in Table 6 was used to test the hypothesis and at the calculated X^2 of 8.13, higher than the table value of 5.99, the null hypothesis is rejected at the p-value of 0.05. Conversely, the alternative hypothesis that there is a relationship is accepted.

Evaluation of the Relationship between Kidnapping and Community Security

It is hypothesized that there is a relationship between kidnapping and community security among the Ijaw people in Bayelsa State. It is trite to presume that when residents of a community feel insecure and or unsafe, hardly can any form of interaction take place, including freedom of movement to pursue the satisfaction of social needs. Respondents’ perception shown in table 7 was used to evaluate the hypothesis

Table 7: Kidnapping and Community Security Among the Ijaw People in Bayelsa State

S/N	Components of Kidnapping	Community Security as measured		Total	p value
		High Level/Affirmative Responses (N/%)	Low Level/Negative Responses (N/%)		
	Knowledge/Awareness of ‘Kidnapping’ and kidnapping as a Crime;	17	22	39	
	Perception/Understanding of the Nature/Type of (ransom) Kidnapping in Bayelsa State	22	19	41	
	Causes of Kidnapping in Bayelsa State (top three);	24	18	42	
		63	59	122	

Source: Field work

And at the calculated X^2 value of 1.58, which is less than the table value of 5.99, the null hypothesis that there is a relationship is accepted at the 0.05 level of significance.

Evaluation of the Relationship between Kidnapping and Business Security

The relationship between kidnaping and business security is an important factor in personal security – from the perspective of freedom to move, so as to be present at the workplace, marketplace or where they transact their businesses especially of a personal service and/or sole proprietorship nature.

More importantly, kidnap for ransom has defined the extant nature of business environment security and directly impacted the activities of corporations in the crude oil downstream sector, even with government interest.

Table 8: Relationship between Kidnapping and Business & Investment Security

S/N	Components of Kidnapping	Business & Investment Security as measured		Total	p value
		High Level/Affirmative Responses (N/%)	Low Level/Negative Responses (N/%)		
	Knowledge/Awareness of ‘Kidnapping’ and kidnapping as a Crime;	27	16	43	
	Perception /Understanding of the Nature/Type of (ransom) Kidnapping in Bayelsa State	34	13	47	
	Causes of Kidnapping in Bayelsa State (top three);	22	10	32	
	Total	83	39	122	

Source: Fieldwork

Respondents’ perception is presented in table 8, which was used to test the hypothesis, and at 1.6, which is less than the table value of 5.99 at the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is accepted.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The fundamental research question about the relationship between kidnapping and economic security is answered in the affirmative. The first hypothesis that there is no relationship between kidnapping and personal security did not hold. Central to personal security is the notion of ‘freedom’ or lack of it, which is a precondition to meet basic daily (social and economic) needs, most important of which is to avoid hunger and poverty. Where the individual is the head of the household, the stakes become higher in view of the responsibility to provide for others and this translates to food security for the household and therefore household economic security (ICRC, 2015, Alimi, et al. 2023). The severity of the situation may vary depending on the size of household, nature of income (daily wage/monthly retail trader/artisan). Furthermore, with ransom kidnapping (88%) as the most dominant and financially severe, and kidnap for ritual (33%) directly existential, affecting life, it cannot be over-

emphasized that the perception of the risk of being a victim is central to the individual's economic security, howsoever defined, hence the negative consequence on economic security, where personal insecurity is perceived to be high. The finding is consistent with those of the studies by Alimi, et al., (2023), Chukwuigwe and Albert, (2015) and Kwanga, et al (2022).

Given the high level of educational attainment, without doubt, the knowledge and understanding of kidnapping as a criminalized act is appreciated, similar to the study by Inyang (2013). However, the incidence of (especially ransom) kidnapping is very high. The paradox then is why is that so? Two plausible explanations can be adduced. First is the poor and ineffective level of policing – security, intelligence and law enforcement, which was very inadequate, operationally weak and riddled with official complicity and corruption. Second, the study area is part of the region in Nigeria where there is seemingly a very long history of kidnapping – of many types that personal security is relative to the preponderance of a type of kidnapping or the other.

Similarly, community security was found to be associated with economic security. Thus, where there is a perceived high risk of being a kidnap victim, the attractiveness to and economic activity of the area reduces. Conversely, properties attract lower values, reduced rental incomes, capital flight, relocation of businesses and individuals. This finding is consistent with those of Alimi, et al (2023), Odebode, (2022) and Kwanga et al, (2022).

Of particular importance is the perception of these issues among operators in the crude oil - dominant sector of the economy of Bayelsa state. With the most frequently cited causes of kidnapping to include 'unemployment' (76%) - corroborated the study by Ngwama, 2014, Ibrahim, 2017, 'get-rich-quick' (72%) syndrome, and poverty (68%), and the most common type identified as 'ransom kidnapping'.

Such a single trigger means the daily wage earners and support-service providers face the immediate consequential risk of loss of revenue and income generating opportunities. They may be heads of families/household, afraid of their personal safety and the more serious consequential financial loss if they became 'kidnap victim', (Chukuigwe & Albert (2015) and so are forced to take precautionary measures (Kwanga et al. 2022). The consequence of such isolated individual decisions across the community can precipitate 'community insecurity', and ultimately heighten its risk profile and discourages both existing and future investors.

So, it is concluded that kidnapping has a negative impact on economic security as measured. The socio-economic milieu and the dominant one-sector economy meant a fluid nature of insecurity pervaded the State. Where security is breached in any segment of the sector, due to digital penetration and social media, the news spreads and the effect becomes rippling and in spite of the criminalization, that included death upon conviction, kidnapping has remained very high.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the relationship between kidnapping and economic security among the Ijaw people who are largely homogenous communities in Bayelsa State. Using a cross-sectional survey design, the study found that kidnapping had negative effect on economic security. The pattern of influence was both cross-cutting and reinforcing because of the social history of the people and the monocultural-economy of the study area, which over time had experienced some form of kidnapping masked as 'clamour for resource control' and/or 'entitlement syndrome' – even before kidnapping was criminalized in 2022.

The study revealed that it was not enough that residents knew the law and consequences of violation, but the State anti-kidnap agencies' officials should deal with the public perception of their complicity, corruption, aiding and abating kidnapping. Government should adequately staff and fund these, agencies and invest more in digital technology deployment.

Kidnappers should not be able to deposit their crime monies in banks, or to acquire chattels of all types, use digital devices, involve in a great deal of logistics, without fear of being apprehended. Anti-kidnap agencies should be able to properly secure and use digital evidence as required by Section 84 of the Evidence Act 2011 to prosecution and obtain conviction of accused persons. So, they should be able to optimize the digital identification eco-system, in particular, the digital identity verification infrastructure using the National Identification Number (NIN).

Lastly, government should take steps to optimize existing digital public infrastructure to invest more in public security surveillance, monitoring and tracking technology, to aid the work of the anti-kidnap intelligence, security and law enforcement agencies.

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