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Poverty-Kidnapping Nexus: Study in Katsina State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the nexus between the two variables (poverty and kidnapping) in Katsina State. The study adopted social structure and anomie theory as a frame of theoretical analysis on the nexus between poverty and kidnapping in the study area. Methodologically, the study is a survey research design, which involves going to the field to gather the opinions of respondents on the subject matter. Both primary and secondary data are used in the study. The targeted population of the study include residents of the study area of 18 years and above, community leaders, security agents like the military, the police, civil defense and vigilante groups. Data was collected from sample size of 405 respondents. Questionnaire and IDI were the instruments of data collection. The technique of data analysis was mixed method (quantitative and qualitative). The study found that poverty leads to kidnapping and vice versa because the problem is subjecting people to serious economic losses. Both quantitative and qualitative data indicated that there is no commonality of the factors responsible for kidnapping across the various LGAs in Katsina State, but poverty plays important role. Other factors leading to kidnapping in addition to poverty in the study include; lack of education, poor parenting and loss of social values. To address the problems of poverty and kidnapping the study area, the study recommends State and national governments should address the major driving factors of kidnapping and poverty in Katsina State, such as unemployment and corruption; the national government should collaborate with the State Government to bring to an end kidnapping in Katsina State; community leaders should revive the past practice of traditional ruler-ship in which the community is aware of every movement in the area and any suspicious movement is furtively reported to the community leaders, etc.

Keywords: Kidnapping; Katsina State; Poverty; Poverty-Kidnapping Nexus.

Introduction

Kidnapping is defined by different authors. The term “kidnapping” is difficult to define with precision, because it varies from State to State and jurisdiction to jurisdiction. In simple terms, kidnapping is forcible seizure, taking away into unlawful detention of a person against his/her will (Balarabe, 2025). Kidnapping is an act of seizing, taking away and keeping a person in custody either by force or fraud (Abraham, 2010). However, it includes snatching and seizing a person in order to collect a ransom in return or settle some scores of disagreement among people. The kidnapping varies from country to country; therefore, the term is uncertain and devoid of any strait-jacket definition. That is, it depends on who is defining it and from what perspective and for what purpose (Balarabe, 2025).

Like the concept of kidnapping, poverty lacks single universal connotation. It is a multi-dimensional and complex phenomenon, encompassing not only material deprivation (those measured by income or consumption), but also other forms of deprivation, such as unemployment, ill-health, and lack of education, vulnerability, powerlessness and social exclusion (Mukhtar, Mukhtar & Abdullahi, 2014). This definition is very relevant in this context as it made attempt to link the concept of poverty with insecurity (kidnapping in this case). Poverty has serious consequences on the living condition of the people and consequently on the socio-economic and security of a nation (Nigeria in this case).

In the post-colonial periods, Nigeria began to experience high incidences of poverty and unemployment due to fall in crude oil price since 1982 and accompanying reduction in

foreign exchange earnings, shortage of raw materials for manufacturing industries and corresponding depression in business firms altogether led to subsequent economic downturn, poverty and unemployment (Mukhtar, Isyaku & Sani, 2016). This economic instability culminated in the rise of various security challenges in the country. Kidnapping is one of these challenges. The trend is on the increase all over the world, because The Global Slavery Index (2014) reported that men, women and children continue to be kidnapped in village raids and held as slaves by militias in eastern DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo). In April and May 2014, 267 women and girls suffered sexual violence by armed groups. In Nigeria, also, kidnapping is ongoing since the early 1990s (Balarabe, 2025).

In the northwestern Nigeria states-Kaduna, Sokoto, Zamfara, Kebbi and Katsina- the problem is also on the increase over the years (Abdullahi & Mukhtar, 2022). Today, Katsina State is one of the states in Nigeria where the incidence of kidnapping is very pronounced. As observed by Balarabe (2025), the nature of kidnapping in Katsina State include violent kidnapping, kidnapping for ransom and kidnapping for political aim. This signifies the multidimensional nature of the problem in the State. But little do we know that there is strong nexus between kidnapping and poverty. In view of this, the present study is designed to examine the nexus between the two variables (poverty and kidnapping) in Katsina State.

History of Kidnapping in Nigeria

The act of kidnapping in Nigeria is traced to the advent of the struggle of Niger Delta

militants from the 1990s. The initial motive of this militant struggle was to draw the attention of government and even the international community to their plights as a result of the oil exploration activities occurring in their communities (Balarabe, 2025). To achieve this, the militants engaged in the random abductions of the expatriate oil workers in the region. They keep them in captivity and demand a huge ransom as a condition for their release. The magnitude of these abductions was so high that it drew global attention particularly from countries of origin of the victims, as they made headlines in almost all local and some international media (Ibrahim & Mukhtar, 2017). It was estimated that between 2007 and 2009 alone, over two hundred foreign nationals were kidnapped in the Niger Delta region.

The Niger Delta is known for its notorious gangs of kidnappers, who pose as freedom fighters agitating for the emancipation of their region from the chains of poverty occasioned by the environmental degradation caused by oil spillage. Efforts of arresting the situation by the federal government at different times yielded little or no results, as the kidnappers continued to succeed in capturing their targets – mostly foreign nationals. This was manifested in the arrest of one of the notorious leaders of the Niger Delta militants – Mujahid Asari Dokubo by the Federal government. The militants confronted the FG by kidnapping nine expatriates of different countries and demanded nothing but the release of their leader as a trade-off (Chidi, Rose & Uche, 2015).

Thus, throughout the 1990s the militants operated and recorded some degrees of successes. Moreover, with the formation of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), they simply got stronger and more terrifying. In 2003, the militants were reported to have kidnapped 270 persons 97 of whom were expatriates (Ogbuehi, 2018). Subsequent years equally witnessed a rise in kidnapping incidents in the region with the foreign nationals being the main targets. Even though kidnapping in Nigeria started in the Niger Delta, it has now spread to other parts of the country. In fact it has become a national disaster that occurs in every nook and cranny of the country almost on a daily basis.

Closely related to the foregoing, Turner (1998) also gave a vivid documentation of how kidnapping originated. According to him, it started in 17th century in England where children were kidnapped and often sold as slaves or agricultural workers to colonial farmers. In Nigeria, the current wave of kidnapping began with the abduction of expatriate oil workers by the movement for the emancipation of the Niger-Delta in the late 2005 as a means of alerting the world of the many years of injustices, exploitation, marginalisation and underdevelopment in Niger-Delta region (Onduku, 2001). The plain negligence and the underdevelopment of the region have always been explained by virtue of the fact that they work for the Nigerian government and pay royalty to it.

The activities of the Boko Haram in the northeastern Nigeria also involved humanitarian crimes which transcend kidnapping, hostage-taking, and trafficking in humans (the Chibok girls abduction takes the form of all the three violent crimes). The activities of the Boko Haram also culminated in wanton destruction of lives and properties (Jamri, 2019). Since the group's first armed confrontation with the Nigerian security forces in 2009, death toll by the Boko Haram insurgency is about 15,000 (Mukhtar, 2017).

As noted by Ibrahim & Mukhtar (2017), civil unrest, terror threats, endemic corruption and ongoing abductions of Nigerians, including the well-publicised kidnapping of school-girls by terrorist group Boko Haram, underscore the continuing challenges of combating modern slavery in Nigeria. Federal government on its own blames the Ministries constituted by it to tackle the problems of the region and they blame the region for disrupting projects. It is widely accepted that this particular kidnapping was conducted to draw international media attention to the disparity of wealth in the Niger-Delta (Inyang & Ubong, 2013). From that material point in time, kidnapping began to spread to the other parts of the country.

Poverty- Kidnapping Nexus in Nigeria

The poverty situation in Nigerian is one of the reasons that trigger people to partake in the kidnapping. As observed by Onuoha (2014), poverty is a socioeconomic challenge that is glaringly evident in the Northern Nigeria and is intricately interconnected to security challenges. In the same vein, Usman (2010) observes that, the Nigeria's poorest people are largely living in the northern part of this country which include; Jigawa, Kebbi, Katsina, Bauchi, Kwara, Yobe, Zamfara, Gombe, Sokoto, and Adamawa. People in these states are struggling on daily basis for food, shelter and other necessities. As a result of poverty, they often suffer from severe malnutrition, epidemic disease outbreaks, famine and uprisings etc. Such state of deprivation can consequently erode peace amidst the impoverished population. Thus, kidnapping is viewed as a means of exit from the track of poverty for riches by some of the kidnappers. This is because when an individual is kidnapped, a huge ransom is demanded and until that ransom is delivered to the kidnappers, the person kidnapped will never be released to his people. When the kidnappers secured the ransom, they suddenly turn rich compared to their former miserable poverty state (Umez, 2000). According to Dodo (2010), kidnapping in Nigeria is associated with get rich-quick syndrome, which is also as a result of poverty because it is just an impulse for transition from poverty to riches.

Most poor Nigerians are not willing to strive and struggle to become wealthy or get out of poverty. At the same time, survival of the fittest is the norm in contemporary Nigeria. Yet, some are struggling to survive from poverty in a wrong direction, which is why they sort refuge in illegal activities like kidnapping. Dodo (2010) opined that one cannot harvest what she/he did not plant. To get clean wealth, one should engage in legitimate business not kidnapping. The irony is that most Nigerian youth are people with big dreams; through the get rich quick syndrome without working, they decided to achieve those dreams upon kidnapping for ransom.

Thus, poverty and the desire for getting money form the basis for the involvement of some individuals in kidnapping in Nigeria. The level of poverty in Nigeria is exacerbated by inadequate provision of basic amenities, such as potable water, good road networks effective healthcare delivery, quality education at all levels and most importantly government's inability to ensure the security of lives and properties have combined to produce aggressive and frustrated young adults, who eventually become a security threat to the society (Ayuba, 2020). Closely related, Dodo (2010) & Ugwuoke (2011) have elaborated on the causes of kidnapping

in Nigeria, such as abject poverty, corruption and fraud, political influence, joblessness, terrorism, lack of capital punishment by the government, the changing value system and the quick-money syndrome.

Economic deprivation like poverty and a sense of desperation have planted the seeds of kidnapping as a way of getting money in poor communities. It can then become a way of life, even when legal options become available and the poor is growing. Thanks to the internet and global media, everyone can see how the rich are living. It fuels resentment and a desire for a bigger share (Catlin Group, 2012). Ayuba (2020) also identified the disappearance of core traditional moral values of respect for elders, communal sense of belonging, love for human lives and hard work as responsible for the scourge of kidnapping in Nigeria. Related to this is the argument of Onovo (2010) that the celebration of fraudsters by elites through the conferment of traditional titles is not only an indictment on the societal values but also an encouragement for kidnapping as a quick evil way to wealth generation. Poor governance has also been described as a cause of widespread poverty in the country and, by implication, a driver of kidnapping.

Theoretical Framework

Social Structure and Anomie Theory will form framework for explaining the nexus between poverty and kidnapping in the study area. The theory is primarily rooted in Durkheim's work on anomie. Merton (1938) developed social structure and anomie theory from the theory of anomie. Merton's theoretical work was concerned more with the way in which the tensions between the legitimate and illegitimate means of acceding to the norms and values of a particular society resulted in deviant (rather than just criminal) behaviour. Merton's social structure and anomie theory argues that society creates crime by identifying cultural goals and institutionalized means of achieving these goals. This is a value consensus meaning that all the members of the society share this value system. By this, the society ends up creating five modes of behaviour, namely: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion (Merton, 1938).

Conformity occurs when people accept both the cultural goals and institutionalized means of achieving the goals. Merton claimed that in most societies this is the standard form of adaptation, for if this were not the case society would be extremely unstable. *Innovation*, a person accepts the goal but rejects the approved means of achieving it (Hopkins-Burke, 2009). *Ritualism*: the ritualist rejects the goals and accepts the means for achieving them. *Retreatism* occurs when people reject both the goal of the society and the available means for achieving them. Here, a person does not feel any obligation to act in ways acceptable to the society. *Rebellion* occurs when people reject societal goals and the available means of achieving them and attempt to replace them with new goals and means they consider appropriate (Hopkins-Burke, 2009). For example, the revolutionary group. Anomie theory has been subjected to many criticisms however it is generally regarded in the fields of Sociology and Criminology.

Some of the limitations identified by Tierney (2010) include: the various modes of individual

adaptation are difficult to classify in reality. Thus, value judgments are likely to be used when assigning individuals to specific categories; it predicts too much lower-class crime. Although the source of deviance lies in the social structure, the responses of a deviant nature are conceptualized in individual terms. This ignores the importance of collective responses; it is unclear why particular individuals opt for one type of adaptation rather than another.

S/N	Type of Adaptation	Cultural Goals	Institutional Means
1	Conformity	+	+
2	Innovation	+	—
3	Ritualism	—	+
4	Retreatism	—	—
5	Rebellion	+—	+—

Adapted from Reid (2003).

The anomie theory is relevant to this study as a result of the fact that wealth acquisition is a common feature in contemporary Nigeria. The rising incidence of kidnapping more especially in the north-west, particularly in Katsina State, is, to say the least, a concomitant effect of certain socio-political economic backlogs in the nation's social structure and political economy, which limit and frustrate people of this region from effectively competing for overstressed success. The theory is very important in explaining that when people are asked to pursue economic success and at the same time denied the means of achieving it, this can lead them to choose illegitimate means (such as kidnapping) to achieve their goals (Walklate, 2003).

Critics against Merton's theory of Anomie believed it relied on official statistics of police and court records as measures of crime and most reported crimes are lower class cases. Merton relied on official statistics on lower class crime and ignored white-collar and government crimes. According to Walsh & Adrian (2014), the theory assumed and viewed crime as an act committed by the lower class by neglecting crimes committed by government officials and the upper class. Government officials and the upper class are always conformists, while lower classes are found in innovation, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion. The theory viewed them as the only criminals in human society. To Merton's theory, social class determines mode of adaptation.

Methodology

This section deals with the brief background of the study area and research methodology. It includes methods and tools for data collection, research design, study population, sample size, sampling techniques, method of data collection and method of data analysis.

History of the Study Area

Katsina State is located in Northern Nigeria lying approximately between latitudes 11° 30' N and 13° 15' N and longitudes 6° 52' E and 9° 20' E covering an aerial extent of 23,850 km²

(Alo, OluwaKadejo, Fakiseyi, Omojola, Soneye, Osho & Ayoola, 1998). The State is bounded by Niger Republic to the north, by Jigawa and Kano States to the east, by Kaduna State to the south and by Zamfara State to the west. The two ancient kingdoms of Katsina and Daura metamorphosed into present day Katsina State that was carved out of the former Kaduna State on 23rd September, 1987 (Alo et al. 1998). Katsina State presently constitutes one of the thirty six (36) states that make up the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the State itself is divided into thirty four local government areas. Based on the 2006 national population census, the State has a population of 5,801,584 persons and is mainly populated by members of Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups who are largely Muslims base on religion. The major occupations of the people are rain-fed farming during the rainy season and irrigation farming during the dry seasons along the rivers and dams in the State. Cattle rearing is also practiced on grassland areas by the Fulani and the native Hausa people of the State (Balarabe, 2025).

Trading activities are also major occupation that involve travelling for buying and selling at the weekly markets in towns and villages of the State. It has rivers and streams that are mainly seasonal in nature and can be found in different parts of the State. The major rivers include Tagwai, Koza, Sabke, Gada, Karaduwa, Bunsuru, Gagare, Galma, Turami, etc some of which are dammed for irrigation purposes (Balarabe, 2025). However, Katsina State has been ravaged by a malady previously unknown to the people, which is kidnapping. The widening scale of insecurity in Nigeria is a cause for concern, as all are affected by it. Churches, mosques, markets, schools, homes and the highway all are susceptible to this menace. Abductees and their families are traumatised by the ordeal of kidnapping. Foreign investors are scared away from Nigeria. In the last ten years, the volatile oil rich regions of the Niger Delta witnessed this phenomenon on a large scale with the target being mostly expatriates and Nigerians in the oil business (Balarabe, 2025).

The crime of kidnapping has now grown as an illegal industry. It has spread throughout the country, extending to places as far as Kano and Kaduna in the far Northern part of Nigeria. South-East and South-South Nigeria have become known as the kidnappers' playgrounds of Nigeria. Today, this phenomenon has rapidly become domesticated in the northwestern, especially in Katsina, Kaduna, Niger and Zamfara States. The rampant cases of kidnapping and its attendant consequences have crippled the socio-economic lives and properties of the indigenous and non-indigenous people of Katsina State involved to the point that investors fear coming to Katsina state for lucrative business. Many women are raped as a result of the menace of kidnapping. Some even die on the process.

Research Design: The study is a survey research design, which involves going to the field to gather the opinions of respondents on the subject matter. Both primary and secondary data are used in the study. This research design involves data collection through questionnaires and interview applications. The targeted population of the study includes residents of the study area, religious leaders and community leaders and security agencies like the military, the police, civil defense and vigilante groups. Specifically, the questionnaire and IDI have been used to collect data from the respondents on the nexus between poverty and kidnapping in the

study area. Similarly, the secondary data helped in the literature review on the same theme. The technique of data analysis was mixed method.

Population of the Study: Based on the 2006 national population census, Katsina state has a population of 5,801,584 persons. The population is said to have a natural growth rate of 3.0% annually. Therefore, the projected population of Katsina State is 8,412,297 in 2021 (Macrotrends, 2021). The study area (Katsina State) consists of thirty four local government areas. The study population of this research covered male and female residents of the study area, political and community leaders and security agencies like the military, the police, civil defense and vigilante groups who are responsible for the protection of lives and properties and combating the menace of kidnapping in Katsina State. The respondents consisted of males and females, who were of 18 years and above as at the time of the data collection.

Sample Size and Sampling Method: This research selected a sample of 405 respondents. Out of the total sample size, 396 are respondents for quantitative data and the rest (9) for qualitative data. In selecting the sample, the research adopted both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Multistage cluster and purposive sampling were adopted for this research. Multistage cluster sampling is a probability method that divides the population into groups (or clusters) for conducting research. On the other hand, purposive or judgmental sample is one that is selected based on the knowledge of a population and the purpose of the study. In the first stage, purposive sampling technique was used to select three local government areas (LGAs), which are; Jibia, Kankara and Batsari LGAs. These three LGAs were selected because they are believed to be affected more by kidnapping than the rest of the LGAs. Hence, the rationale for using the purposive sampling technique in this stage.

In the second stage, each LGA was divided into clusters based on the political wards. From each LGA, three (3) political wards were randomly selected, using the lottery method, which gives nine (9) political wards in total. Simple random sampling was adopted in this stage in order to give all the existing political wards equal chance of being selected without bias. Similarly, 3 political wards from each of the 3 LGAs are enough to provide the sample for generalization in the study. In the third stage, two (2) streets were chosen from each of the selected political wards purposively, making eighteen (18) streets in total. Purposive sampling technique was used at this stage because there are streets that have more people affected by the kidnapping or they have more experience of the problem.

In the fourth and last stage, the researcher employed accidental sampling method to select twenty-two (22) respondents for the administration of questionnaires from each of the selected streets; that is 396 for the entire study area ($22 \times 18 = 396$). Accidental has been used in this stage because the researcher found it difficult to collect data from most respondents because the topic on kidnapping is very sensitive and therefore many respondents were nervous of even listening to the researcher and his assistants. Thus, it will be difficult to get data using probability sampling techniques, like simple random sampling.

Finally, purposive sampling technique was used to select ten (9) respondents, 3 from each LGA ($3 \times 3 = 9$). The respondents for qualitative data are 3 political leaders, 3 traditional leaders (including religious leaders) and 3 security agents across the study area. Purposive sampling

technique was used in the selection of qualitative data (IDI) respondents because they are few and selected as key informants on the subject matter. Also, composition for the IDI was selected from different segments of the society (politics, traditional institutions, law enforcement agencies). With the IDI respondents, the total sample size of the study gave $(396+9=)$ 405.

Instruments of Data Collection: The data collecting instruments used are a questionnaire and an in-depth interview guide. The questionnaire was employed for data collection because it is time saving and less expensive in drawing information from the population available for the study. It also gives the respondents a great level of confidence in being anonymous in their decision making. In addition, the in-depth interview guide was also used to gather qualitative data from the selected samples for complementarities.

Method of Data Collection: The data for the study was collected from two sources. These sources are: the primary sources and the secondary. The primary sourced data was collected through the administration of a questionnaire and in-depth interview (IDIs). The questionnaire was administered to the residents of the study area. It contained open and close-ended questions. This allowed respondents to pick from the provided options and express their views freely without restrictions. The questions revolved around poverty-kidnapping nexus. A total number of 396 questionnaires were administered to the three local government areas. That means 132 were administered to each local government area. The research was assisted by two research assistants, who were trained on the aims and objectives of the research.

The in-depth interview guide was also conducted. The IDI was made with political and traditional leaders and security agencies like the Nigeria Police, who are saddled with the responsibility of combating the menace of kidnapping in the area. The participants of the in-depth interview were identified based on their experience on the subject under study. The interviews were conducted on face to face basis and tape recorded. They were later transcribed by the researcher. The secondary data was collected from relevant textbooks, journals, articles and web materials retrieved online. Effort had been made to search and include materials that are up-to-date and relevant to the subject matter of the study.

Method of Data Analysis: The quantitative data was processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The data were presented in frequency distribution tables with simple percentages, multiple choice questions, and cross-tabulations to examine relationships between the variables. The qualitative data generated through the interview sessions with the respondents were transcribed and presented verbatim to complement the quantitative data.

Results and Discussions

Based on the field work and analysis of the data and the research questions guiding this study, the following results and discussion synthesizes the key findings:

Demographic Information of the Respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents offers an essential basis for the analysis and interpretation of results. This section provides a detailed discussion of the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

S/N	Variables	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Gender	Male	284	75.1
		Female	94	24.9
		Total	378	100
2	Age	18-27	167	44.2
		28-37	87	23.0
		38-47	77	20.4
		48-57	27	7.1
		58 and above	20	5.3
		Total	378	100
3	Marital Status	Single	189	50.0
		Married	128	33.9
		Divorced	35	9.3
		Widowed	26	6.9
		Total	378	100
4	Number of children	1-3	160	42.3
		4-6	118	31.2
		7-9	65	17.2
		10 and above	35	9.3
		Total	378	100
5	Highest Educational Qualification	No formal education	56	14.8
		Quranic education	46	12.2
		Primary education	8	2.1
		Secondary education	100	26.5
		OND/NCE	76	20.1
		First Degree/HND	74	19.6
		Postgraduate	18	4.8
		Others, specify	0	0.0
		Total	378	100
6	Religion	Islam	221	58.5
		Christianity	121	32.0
		Islam	27	7.1
		Christianity	9	2.4
		Others, specify	0	0.0

S/N	Variables	Options	Frequency	Percentage
7	Ethnic Group	Total	378	100
		Hausa	247	65.3
		Fulbe	37	9.8
		Yoruba	47	12.4
		Igbo	38	10.1
		Others, specify	9	2.4
8	Occupation	Total	378	100
		Student	126	33.3
		Farming	54	14.3
		Artisan	16	4.2
		Civil servant	74	19.6
		Business	69	18.3
		Petty trading	24	6.3
		Others, specify	15	4.0
		Total	378	100
9	Average Monthly Income	No income	128	33.9
		Below N10,000	85	22.5
		N10,000 – N30,000	54	14.3
		N30,001 – N60,000	38	10.1
		N60,001- N100,000	30	7.9
		N100,001- N150,000	24	6.3
		N150,001 and above	19	5.0
		Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The demographic profile of the respondents, as presented in Table 1, reflects diverse characteristics crucial for understanding the context of kidnapping and its impacts in Katsina State, Nigeria. A majority are male (75.1%), aligning with Ibrahim & Mukhtar's (2017) observation that security issues often have a distinct gender dimension potentially influencing the perceptions and experiences of crime and security. The age distribution indicates a significant representation of younger individuals, with 44.2% between 18-27 years, suggesting a youthful demographic, which is consistent with the broader Nigerian population structure (Macrotrends, 2021). The high percentage of younger respondents could reflect their increased vulnerability or awareness to kidnapping, as indicated by Ibrahim & Mukhtar (2017), who highlight the particular risks faced by certain demographic groups.

Marital status shows a balanced distribution with half of the respondents being single (50.0%) followed by married individuals (33.9%). This demographic spread is important, as it represents varied social responsibilities and life experiences, which might influence their perceptions and experiences of kidnapping, as different marital statuses could have different socio-economic and security concerns (Asuquo, 2009). The number of children per respondent and their educational qualifications provide insights into family obligations and literacy levels both of which are significant factors in understanding societal issues. A larger family size, as indicated by 42.3% of the respondents having 1-3 children, might impact economic pressure and thereby influence the perception of security threats like kidnapping (Ayuba, 2020). Educational levels, with a notable percentage having secondary education (26.5%) and higher education (39.5% combined for OND/NCE, First Degree/HND and Postgraduate) suggest a relatively educated sample, which could mean a more informed and critical understanding of the kidnapping phenomenon (Ibrahim & Mukhtar, 2016).

The majority of respondents identify as Muslim (58.5%), reflecting the religious composition in the region, which is important, as religious beliefs can influence the perceptions of social issues, including crime and security (Fage & Alabi, 2017). The ethnic composition, predominantly Hausa (65.3%), is also reflective of regional demographics and may influence cultural perspectives on the issue. Occupationally, the respondents are diverse, with a significant proportion being students (33.3%), indicating an involvement of the younger, potentially more educated segment of the population. This diversity in occupations, including farming and business, provides varied socioeconomic perspectives, which is crucial in understanding the multifaceted nature of kidnapping (Chidi, 2014). Lastly, income levels, with 33.9% having no income and a substantial number earning below N10,000, highlight the economic backdrop of the respondents, which is crucial as economic factors are often interlinked with security issues like kidnapping (Dodo, 2010; Ugwuoke, 2011).

In sum, the demographic profile of the respondents reflects a diverse and representative sample of the population in Katsina State, providing a comprehensive base for analyzing and interpreting the perceptions and experiences related to kidnapping. This diversity is essential to understand the multi-dimensional nature of kidnapping in the region and develop targeted, inclusive policies and interventions.

Poverty- Kidnapping Nexus in Katsina State

This section deals with the analysis of poverty influence on kidnapping in Katsina State.

Table 2: Whether Respondent Think Poverty Leads to Kidnapping in Katsina State

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	319	84.4
2	No	59	15.6
3	No response	0	0.0
Total		378	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 above presents respondents’ views on whether poverty leads to kidnapping in Katsina State. Majority of the respondents (84.4%) are of the view that poverty leads to kidnapping, while 15.6 percent did not believe that poverty leads to kidnapping in the State. Also, regarding the factors responsible for kidnappers, a male IDI, DSP in Batsari LGA, corroborated the above data, thus:

The major factors leading to kidnapping in these LGAs are poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and selfishness. This is because some of them are poor, others were rich but became poor in recent times. Yet there are those who lack nothing, but they are into kidnapping...(IDI with a male respondent, DSP, in Batsari LGA, 2023).

According to a victim of kidnapping:

Poverty plays a significant role in the prevalence of kidnapping in my community. Many kidnappers are driven by economic desperation, as they lack legitimate means to meet their basic needs. The absence of stable income sources pushes some individuals, particularly the youth, to resort to criminal activities like kidnapping as a way to survive. Additionally, poverty-stricken areas often lack adequate education and social support systems, further exacerbating the problem. (IDI with a victim of kidnapping, 35 years, 2024).

This suggests that the connection between poverty and kidnapping is widely recognized across the respondents, though there may be nuanced differences in how strongly this connection is felt depending on one’s socio-economic situation. The finding is supported by Ibrahim & Mukhtar (2016), who observed that Nigeria has a large number of adolescents living and making a living on the streets. They attributed these to economic factors and exposure to all forms of risks.

Strength at which Respondents Agree Poverty Drives People to Commit Kidnappings

S/N	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Strongly agreed	215	56.9
2.	Agreed	131	34.7
3.	Disagreed	12	3.1
4.	Strongly disagreed	9	2.4
5.	Undecided	11	2.9
6.	Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 3 above presents data on the strength at which respondents agree poverty drives people to commit kidnappings. Significant number of the respondents (56.9%) reported that strongly agreed, less than half of the respondents (34.7%) agreed that poverty drives people

to commit kidnappings, while 3.1 percent disagreed and 2.4 percent strongly disagreed. In Kankara LGA., one of the IDI respondents (a male community leader), gave the following response on the factors responsible for kidnapping in Katsina State:

I cannot say there is commonality of the factors responsible for kidnapping across the various LGAs in Katsina State. However, poverty can play important role in kidnapping; but the Fulanis were known to be rich. Money is one of the major factors that motivate the kidnappers into their illegal business. (IDI with a male respondent, community leader, in Kankara LGA, 2023).

According to a victim of kidnapping:

I strongly agree that the rate of kidnapping in the community is indeed associated with lack of income or ways of making a living. Many youths are living in poverty and no job to source the income. As a result, they resort to illegal businesses like kidnapping (IDI with a victim of kidnapping, 35 years, 2024).

From the findings of the study, respondents are of the view that poverty leads to kidnapping in Katsina State. Qualitative data also indicated that they cannot say there is no commonality of the factors responsible for kidnapping across the various LGAs in Katsina State, but poverty plays important role; although the Fulanis are known to be rich. This finding is in concord with the work of Uyang & Omono (2019), whose examination of socioeconomic implications of kidnapping on the nuclear family found that there is correlation between poverty and kidnapping (poverty induces kidnapping and it is caused by kidnapping).

Table 4: Opinions on the Poverty-Related Factors Contributing to Kidnapping

S/N	Response	Yes	No
1	Lack of basic needs (food, shelter)	310(82.0%)	68 (18.0%)
2	Lack of education	297(78.6%)	81 (21.4%)
3	Unemployment	277(73.3%)	101 (26.7%)
4	Debt and financial pressure	283(74.9%)	95 (25.1%)
5	Other (please specify):	314(83.1%)	64 (16.9%)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 4 above shows the opinions on the poverty-related factors contributing to kidnapping. The table shows that lack of basic needs (food, shelter), constituting 82.0 percent is the major poverty-related factors contributing to kidnapping, followed by lack of education (78.6%), debt and financial pressure (74.9%) and unemployment (73.3%). During IDI, the DPO Jibia LGA Police State stated the following on the factors responsible for kidnapping:

It is for money, nothing like political ambition or activities is a factor. Tribalism is a factor because the Fulani were only attacking Hausa people

before. They Hausas and rustle their animals. (IDI with a male respondent, DPO, in Jibia LGA, 2023).

However, the DPO Jibia LGA Police State also added the following factors:

Issue of migration by the kidnappers (majority of which are Fulanis) from jungle areas to townships has also lead the Fulani kidnappers to start attacking their fellow Fulanis who remain in the jungle. When the Fulanis were in the bush, they were not attacking the Hausas and then they migrated to towns and started attacking the Fulanis who have cattle. ...(IDI with a male respondent, DPO, in Jibia LGA, 2023).

The above finding that only socio-economic reasons like food, shelter, poverty, lack of education, debt/financial pressure, tribalism and unemployment are behind kidnapping is not supported by Ibrahim & Mukhtar (2016). For them, political factors also lead to involvement of youths in kidnapping. But they admitted that poverty and lack of legal/available employment opportunity among the youths are also playing fundamental role in the rise of kidnapping.

Table 5: Other Factors Responsible for Kidnapping in Addition to Poverty

S/N	Response	Yes	No	Total
1	Backup from politicians	342(90.5%)	36 (9.5%)	342(90.5%)
2	Sabotage from other communities	317(83.9%)	61 (16.1%)	317(83.9%)
3	Get rich quick syndrome	305(80.7%)	73 (19.3%)	305(80.7%)
4	Porous border	311(82.3%)	67 (17.7%)	378 (100.0%)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 5 above presents the other factors responsible for kidnapping in addition to poverty in Katsina State. From the Table, the respondents' reported that other factors responsible for kidnapping are political backing (90.5%), sabotage from community members (83.9%), get-rich quick syndrome (80.7%) and porous borders (82.3%). These additional factors point to social, environmental and governance-related issues that underlie kidnapping in Katsina State.

In Kankara LGA., one of the IDI respondents (a male community leader), gave the following response on the factors responsible for kidnapping in Katsina State:

Thus, the factors might be changes in their economic statuses like bankruptcy or downfall in their cattle ownership. Other factors responsible for kidnapping in the State include materialism and envy... IDI with a male respondent, community leader, in Kankara LGA, 2023).

Also, the community leader also added the following:

There are informers for the kidnappers, but they are normally individuals living outside the Kankara city centre. They are at the fringes of the city and they come into towns to gather information on potential victims for the kidnappers. They also contribute to the increasing cases of kidnapping. (IDI with a male respondent, community leader, in Kankara LGA, 2023).

This suggests that the connection between poverty and kidnapping is widely recognized across different people, though there may be nuanced differences in how strongly this connection is felt depending on one's socio-economic situation. The lack of responses in some tables also indicates a strong conviction among the respondents regarding the influence of poverty on kidnapping. These results showed the multi-layered factors responsible for kidnapping in Katsina State, caused by a variety of factors in addition to poverty. This necessitates multifaceted approaches encompassing economic, political and socio-cultural interventions to effectively address the issue.

Conclusion

The study examined the nexus between the two variables (poverty and kidnapping) in Katsina State. The study found that poverty leads to kidnapping and vice versa because the problem is subjecting people to serious economic losses. Both quantitative and qualitative data indicated that there is no commonality of the factors responsible for kidnapping across the various LGAs in Katsina State, but poverty plays important role; although the Fulanis are known to be rich. Other factors leading to kidnapping in addition to poverty in the study include; lack of education, poor parenting and loss of social values. There is strength at which respondents agree that poverty drives people to commit kidnapping, whereby majority of the respondents strongly agreed that poverty drives people to commit kidnapping.

On the poverty-related factors contributing to kidnapping, the study finds that lack of basic needs (food, shelter), lack of education, debt and financial pressure and unemployment are poverty-related factors that contribute to kidnapping in the study area. The study also found other factors responsible for kidnapping in addition to poverty in Katsina State, such as political backing, sabotage from community members, get-rich quick syndrome and porous borders, which point to social, environmental and governance-related issues associated with kidnapping in the State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made in order to address the problem of kidnapping the study area:

1. The State and national governments should address the major driving factors of kidnapping in Katsina State, such as poverty, unemployment and corruption;

2. The national government should collaborate with the Katsina State Government to come up with workable modalities, which can reduce if not bring to an end kidnapping in Katsina State, because lack of harmony on the approach to the problem is aggravating it;
3. Community leaders should revive the past practice of traditional ruler-ship in which the community is aware of every movement in the area and any suspicious movement is furtively reported to the community leaders;
4. Community leaders should shun connivance with the kidnappers in selling the safety and security of their subjects, because there are several cases in which some unscrupulous community leaders betray their communities by giving helping hands to kidnappers in some quarters;
5. Community members should be security-conscious and take all measures to prevent victimization like following security tips against kidnapping maintaining a low profile and avoiding flamboyant and conspicuous lifestyle lest they attract the eyes of kidnappers; and
6. Families can also greatly help the society in shaping the thoughts and actions of the young people in the family to avoid adopting the 'get-rich-quick' attitude and counsel them to be patient in moments of poverty and unemployment before they get legitimate employment, but not kidnapping.

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