Unemployment: A Driving Force toward Kidnapping in Sokoto and Zamfara States, Nigeria

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Abstract
The problem of kidnapping has assumed an alarming dimension in Nigeria, leading to loss of lives, properties and money, and has a negative impact on the socio-economic aspects of Nigeria. This paper examined the nexus between unemployment and kidnapping in Sokoto and Zamfara states. Data were gathered from both primary and secondary sources, the primary data were gathered through interviews, while the secondary data were sourced from both published and unpublished research. The findings of this research revealed that most of the convicted kidnappers confessed that they were unemployed, looking for a way to survive, and if there was no good way to stay alive, evil was the only option. Many youths have joined criminal groups due to unemployment. The paper recommended, amongst others, that the Government of Sokoto and Zamfara states should design empowerment programmes to target youths who are involved in abductions and kidnappings out of economic frustration caused by unemployment. The paper also suggested that socio-cultural transformation through a rebranding project for moral sensitisation should be carried out in the study area, because a morally sensitised individual is less likely to be troubled or worried by a lack, to the extent of seeking wealth through criminal means.

Keywords: Unemployment, driving force, crime, and kidnapping.

1.0 Introduction

Nigeria is undoubtedly blessed with abundant natural resources capable of providing gainful employment to the populace. The abundant human and material resources in Nigeria have not been effectively managed or utilised to bring about the required economic benefits and provide employment to the youths, as many factors, ranging from years of negligence and adverse policies, lead to the underutilization of these resources, embezzlement, mismanagement and corruption.

The issue of unemployment has been of great concern to scholars and policymakers in Nigeria since the early 1980s (Akeju1 & Olanipekun, 2021), because unemployment has become one of the problems that bedevil and impede the development of the youths in Nigeria, as in most countries of the world, particularly the developing nations. In Nigeria, it is very rare to find a family in rural or urban areas without some members being unemployed. The rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria is alarming, as it is evident that every year, thousands of graduates are passing out of the universities without jobs. Nigerian streets are littered with youth hawkers who ordinarily would have been gainfully employed in enterprises, or are self-employed or would have demonstrated their skills and resourcefulness if there were an enabling environment and reliable management structures. This led to a significant number of youths in Nigeria to indulge in social vices such as kidnapping, banditry, armed robbery, cattle rustling, thuggery, prostitution, destitution, financial crime (419), among others.

The rate of unemployment in Nigeria is hovering at about 37% (Egole, 2023). Regarding the nexus between unemployment and crime, there are two main perspectives. The first viewpoint emphasises the "supply of offenders," while the second standpoint focuses on the "supply of victims" (Ezeajughu 2021). For the first perception, the high rate of unemployment might be the reason for high supply of offenders which has exceeded the demand, this explains why many young people have taken to the life of crime in Nigeria, particularly due to the scarcity of high-quality employment prospects, youths are seen in every corner of the country struggling for survival in job positions that pay next to nothing. This happens because their sense of dignity and self-worth has long ago been undermined by unemployment.

Considering that Nigeria's unemployment rate is at 37%, the highest level since the country's return to multi-party democracy (Egole, 2023), Okwuwada & Nsirimovu (2023) posit that the implications of kidnapping and other criminalities are debilitating, cancerous, and tentatively pushing Nigeria into terminus decline. Kidnapping has had a long history as a dysfunctional act featuring so conspicuously as one of the social vices, perhaps only second to drug trafficking in the global catalogue of crimes. The rapid increase in kidnappings in Nigeria led to numerous exterminations, killings, and destruction of property and investments (Ojo, et al., 2023). Kidnapping is one of the security challenges plaguing the nation at the moment, resulting in the loss of lives and valuables (Ojo, 2020). Kidnappers make the lives of captives and the people they care about miserable by demanding an outrageous ransom for their freedom (Oluwole, & Balogun, 2022). Kidnappings have increased significantly in northwestern Nigeria, which has triggered the displacement of people and disruption of social and economic activities. In the quest to provide the ransom, many families of victims have sold their valuables; some have lost their source of livelihood to effect the release of their relatives. Moreover, paying ransom does not even guarantee that the victim will be released unhurt (Abdullahi, 2023).

There is no dispute about the fact that kidnapping in Nigeria has become one of the most upsetting and disturbing social problems that causes tremendous havoc to Nigerians. The prevalence of kidnapping in Nigeria is on the increase as statistics show that Nigeria is recording more than 1,000 kidnapping incidents in a year, and there are undoubtedly many that are unreported (Catlin Group, 2019). In a similar vein, the British government has decried the fact that at least more than 25 British and dual British citizens and more than 200 other foreign nationals were kidnapped in the Niger Delta area in January 2007 alone. That is why Fage & Alabi (2017) postulated that one of the fundamental instrument used by militias in the Niger Delta sub-region is kidnapping. These acts of kidnapping could be for either financial or political gain. Victims were originally foreign nationals, oil workers, however, it has reached the extent that today many are

locals who are employees of international oil and oil service companies and not necessarily wealthy; anyone whose family might pay a ransom could be targeted.

There was a high rate of abduction and other social vices, such as armed attacks targeting oil and gas workers. Ships and oilrigs at sea off the coast of the Niger Delta are also targeted. In January 2012, kidnappers abducted a US citizen from his vehicle in the Delta and murdered his security guard. Similarly, in April 2012, criminals captured a US national in Imo State and a Spanish citizen in Enugu State in separate incidents. More so, an Italian national was kidnapped in Kwara State in May 2012. On the 7th May of the same year, a Lebanese was abducted in Kaduna State, and his colleague was brutally killed during the abduction. It was also reported that two engineers, one British and one Italian, were exterminated by their captors in March 2012 when Nigerian security forces, with the support of Britain, attempted to rescue them; they were held by the Boko Haram sect for ten months (Catlin Group, 2012).

Kidnappings of Western nationals for ransom have also been recurring in Nigeria as seen in some cases, which include the kidnapping of a French priest, Georges Vandebeusch, in November 2013 and that of a seven-member French family, which led to the payment of a ransom of USD 3 million. Both of these criminal acts took place in the area close to Cameroon (Barna, 2014). The kidnappers have also attacked schools and universities, like the extermination of sleeping students in dormitories in February 2014 (Barna, 2014). Similarly, on 14th of April 2014, the sect abducted 250 female students from the Government Girls' Secondary School Chibok, Borno State. (Shuaibu et al., 2015). The bombing and kidnapping of Kaduna train passengers, the kidnapping of passengers on commuter interstate buses across the nation, the kidnapping of foreign expatriates, politicians, pastors of churches, schoolchildren, and government appointees are the recent victims of kidnapping across the country (Anyadike, 2023; Obiezu, 2021). The menace has caused a lot of financial and psychological dissatisfaction among the citizens, with some fleeing the country, many perpetually displaced, and others killed because they could not afford to pay ransom (Ajah et al., 2022).

The north-west of Nigeria, as well as the entire country, is at existential risk of kidnapping, the worst security concern the country has recently faced (Imhonopi & Urim, 2016). From 2018 to date, kidnappers have concentrated their activities in the North West region specifically, Zamfara, Sokoto, Katsina and Kaduna States, to the extent that people dwelling in these states are no longer sure of their safety and the security of the places. People move about their lawful business activities with perpetual fear because nobody knows who is going to be the next target or victim. This has greatly impeded socio-economic activities in these areas.

Sokoto and Zamfara States seem to have experienced this social menace at a scale unrivalled in Nigeria. These states appeared to have experienced a change of governmental control, with kidnappers dictating the pace of activities, as a wave of crime occasioned by their nefarious behaviour has thrived to an extent that one begins to wonder if the government is still in charge. The kidnappers exploit the victims, using intimidation and threats to the victim's family to discourage them from reporting to the police, threatening that their captive would be killed if they did. Coupled with the failure of security operatives to safeguard lives, families prefer to obey the orders of the kidnapper to those of the police, whom they frequently accuse of complicity and complacency (Sahara, 2022; Adeniyi, 2022). The dangers associated with kidnapping in the study area leave the victims at the mercy of their captors. Children are kidnapped and hidden in an open forest with all the environmental hazards associated with it; for example, children can die easily when they fall sick in the kidnappers' den without medical attention (Oluwole & Balogun, 2022). According to Ojo, et al. (2023), the majority of the afflicted women who suffered rape and impregnated by their captors, are left to suffer anguish because their communities frequently

anathematize them. It is reported that 44,000 kids in Zamfara State suffered the deaths of their parents due to banditry (PM News, April 25, 2023). As a result of these problems, street begging and homelessness among children have increased astronomically in numerous cities, preparing the ground for a generation of kids who would not get the attention they need and who could also grow up feeling impoverished, dissatisfied, and enraged. They might even grow up desiring retaliation.

Sokoto and Zamfara states have earned the most unenviable designation of the kidnapping capital of Nigeria (Ibekwe, 2019). This criminal act violates the freedom of movement, which is one of the fundamental human rights enshrined in the UN Charter and the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, as amended. The rate of recurrence of this violation places on the front burner the question of the government's apparent show of inability to place this criminal activity on the leash. The media and security agencies have continued to run stories of abductions of innocent people in Sokoto and Zamfara states. Over 498 people were abducted in Sokoto State between 2021 and 2022 out of which 114 were killed by the kidnappers. Similarly, within the same period, in Zamfara state, over 3,996 people were abducted including secondary school students, travelers, wedding guests and various community dwellers. At the height of this spate of kidnapping in Sokoto and Zamfara states, individuals, families, groups, businesses, worship centers, educational establishment, government institution and, of course, the entire society suffered gravely as properties, monetary wealth, and time (from an economic waste perspective) were wasted. This indicates that the Nigerian security organisations may have been overwhelmed to the extent that, one article in guardian of July 24, (2021) was unequivocal in its caption: Kidnapping and the falling State of Nigeria. Governance entails a social contract by which the governed submit certain aspect of their rights to government, in return for government's protection of lives and properties as well as provision of social welfare. That government agencies have so far not been able to curb this social menace is evident in the study area. Therefore, this study is set to examine the nexus between unemployment and kidnapping in Sokoto and Zamfara states.

The study seeks to provide answer to the research question, does unemployment lead to kidnapping in Sokoto and Zamfara states? Specifically, the study seeks to determine whether unemployment leads youths to engage in kidnapping in Sokoto and Zamfara states.

2. Literature Review

There are various studies previously conducted on the kidnapping phenomenon. The concept of kidnapping is defined by various scholars. Kidnap is derived from the two words 'kid' and 'nab." While kid literally indicates a child, nab is to steal by force, (Alexander & Klein 2020). However, Inyang & Abraham (2013) viewed it as a forcible seizure, taking away and unlawful detention of a person or group of persons against their will. It is a serious offence and the key part is that, it is an unwanted act on the part of the victim. Another definition is offered by Fage & Alabi (2017), who perceived kidnapping as the forceful or fraudulent abduction of an individual or a group of individuals for reasons that would be attributed to political, economic and religious to "struggle for self-determination". However, they later argued that the forcefully or fraudulently kidnapped individuals are carried off as captives for ransom purposes. This indicates that while political and economic factors could instigate kidnapping, the economic reason appeared to be the most common predisposing factor of the phenomenon in Nigeria.

According to Uzorma & Nwanegbo-Ben (2014), kidnapping is an act of seizing and detaining a person by unlawful force or by fraud, which often deals with a demand for ransom. It deals with taking a person or group of persons from their family forcefully without their consent with the motive of holding them as a hostage and collecting money from their family. From the

foregoing definition, kidnapping has no one best way to describe it, however, it is clear that for a crime to be deemed kidnapping, it shall involve coercive movement of a victim from one place to another, seizure or detention of that person, be it a child, an adult or group. In a similar vein, Inyang & Abraham (2013) argued that it is largely viewed as a restriction of someone else's liberty, which infringes on the freedom of movement of persons as enshrined in the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The act of kidnapping is most often motivated by financial gain or political demand. Consequently, criminals as well as political dissidents can resort to kidnapping to illegally obtain economic gains or have their political demands granted.

Jesse (2015) opines that kidnapping takes innumerable forms, but the growing pervasiveness of kidnappings and their growing brutality have made the issue an important one for the international community. It is always traumatic to the victims themselves, their immediate families, friends and colleagues. The act of kidnapping has grown into a criminal industry in many parts of Nigeria, which is been used by terrorist groups to gain influence, funding and slaves. In this respect, Uzorma & Nwanegbo (2014) believe that kidnapping occurs when a person is abducted and taken from one place to another against their will, or a condition in which a person is restricted to a controlled space without the confinement being from a legal authority.

The early common law conceptualised kidnapping as the forcible abduction or stealing of a person from their country and sending them to another one (Berrell, 2018). According to Abraham (2013), kidnapping is an act of seizing, taking away and keeping a person in custody either by force or treachery. Similarly, Abraham (2013) describes kidnapping as ''the forcible seizure, taking away and unlawful detention of a person(s) against their will. Fage & Alabi (2017) conceived kidnapping as the forceful or fraudulent abduction of an individual or a group of individuals to an unknown destination, for reasons ranging from economic, political, and religious to the struggle for self-determination.

Causes of Kidnapping in Nigeria
The common causes of kidnapping in Nigeria, as identified by some scholars, include poverty, unemployment and moral decadence.
1. Poverty: According to Oluwole, & Balogun (2022), poverty is a multi-dimensional and complex phenomenon, encompassing not only material deprivation, but also other forms of deprivation, such as unemployment, ill-health, lack of education, vulnerability, powerlessness and social exclusion. This definition links the concept of poverty as having serious consequences on the living conditions of the populace and consequently on the socio-economic and political security of a nation, which may prompt some of the youths into the activity of kidnapping. According to Farraro (2021), poverty is the state of human beings who are poor; they have little or no material means of surviving with little food, shelter, clothes, healthcare, education, and other physical means of living and improving one's life. Nigeria, a sub–Saharan African country, has at least half of its population living in abject poverty (Ojo, 2022). Ogwumike (2020) reveals that the majority of the population is considered poor, especially youths struggling for survival and young people engaging themselves in various criminal activities such as kidnapping, armed robbery, among others.

2. Unemployment: A study conducted by Inyang (2021) associated the problem of unemployment to kidnapping in Nigeria, as most of the convicted kidnappers state that it is unemployment that led them to abduct people for ransom. He used the widely acknowledged adage, "an idle mind is the devil's workshop" to present the situation of unemployment in Nigeria. He noted that there are uncountable able-bodied men and women in Nigeria roaming the streets in search of non-existing jobs. Out of frustration, together with mounting responsibilities to tackle, many idle young persons

have ventured into criminal activities, of which kidnapping is not an exception. He further acknowledged that a graduate who is unable to secure a job is psychologically bereft of other means of survival. In such a situation, the young person could develop a negative attitude towards society and attribute his failure to society. However, Inyang (2021) further asserted that the proliferation of arms, as a result of political patronage of miscreants who were dumped after elections, may indirectly encourage and enhance kidnapping. He also associated today's kidnapping situation with the scourge of armed robbery in the early eighties, where many young able-bodied men who fought during the Nigerian civil war were discharged and sent home with nothing. Meanwhile, since the schools they left behind were destroyed and there were no jobs to engage them and keep them busy. Many of them consequently took to armed robbery, since, as ex-soldiers were armed with weapons, having acquired the skills and guns during the war.

The story is almost the same today, as politicians employ most idle youths as political thugs and later dump them after elections. Therefore, the youths (thugs) who have been abandoned by their masters after winning elections, are now busy kidnapping innocent persons and relatives of those persons they aspired to be wealthy. Ezeajughu (2021) corroborated that "an Idle mind thinks nothing but evil, plans nothing but evil, and wants to do nothing but evil".

3. Moral Decadence: The issue of "moral decadence" and the "quest to get rich quick" syndrome has been identified as one of the causes of kidnapping. Inyang (2021) asserted that in Nigeria, nobody asks questions about how people make their wealth. To him, a poor person today can show up with an expensive car tomorrow, and nobody dares to question the sudden wealth, and if someone begins to ask how a community member became rich overnight, such a person would be considered an envier. In addition, people who have donated money to develop their communities are rewarded with chieftaincy titles, thereby creating a wrong impression in the minds of Nigerian youths who thereafter take to kidnapping. The inconsistency between economic transparency and accountability in the running of normal government affairs and the desire to amass wealth among public office holders at different levels of government often contributes to the influence of kidnappers. They believe that, when those in government looting the treasury do so without fear, they too can take the laws into their hands by abducting people for ransom to live in luxury. Above all, poverty, unemployment and moral decadence are the major tripartite evils instigating the proliferation of kidnapping in Nigeria.

2.3 The Concept of Unemployment

Unemployment is the state of joblessness where people who are capable of working but have not found work even after actively seeking for 4 weeks, which includes those who lost their jobs or quit their previous jobs (Adebayo, 2013; Arat & Seth, 2018). The Lumen Learning Course (2005) is of the view that unemployment simply means joblessness, a scenario that happens when individuals are without work and are actively looking for a job. In a similar vein, Chappelow (2020) argues that unemployment occurs when a person who is actively searching for employment is unable to find work, adding that unemployment is often used as a measure of the health of the economy.

According to Byrne et al. (2019), a person is considered unemployed if he or she is being (a) 'without work', i.e., he is not in paid employment or self-employment, (b) 'currently available for work', i.e., he is available for paid employment or self-employment and (c) 'seeking work', i.e., he had taken specific steps in a specified recent period to seek paid employment or self-employment. This implies that the 'without work' condition serves to distinguish between the employed and the unemployed person, and thus guarantees that these are mutually exclusive

categories of the working age population, whereas the latter two criteria separate the non-employed into the unemployed person and the out of labour force. The purpose of the availability for work condition is to exclude those individuals who are seeking work to start later, and thus is a test of current readiness. The intention of the seeking work criterion, on the other hand, is to ensure that a person will have taken certain 'active' steps to be classified as unemployed

Unemployment is clustered and categorised based on the average population of active job-seekers without employment. Whereas, within that cluster of categories, we can safely find the number of unemployed youth through sampling our overall data. With "youth" formally and academically derived simply as those individuals within a populace falling within the "= or > 18 up to < or = 29 years" parameter. Therefore, with real statistical data at our disposal, we can adamantly speculate, suggest or pass a critique about almost everything relating to youth unemployment (Yu, 2013).

2.4 Effects of Unemployment on Kidnapping among the Youths

One of the modern political and policy terrains is the claim that unemployment causes crime, and more specifically, that youth unemployment is a key factor in juvenile crime and delinquency. Unemployment accounts for most of the social crimes perpetrated by youth in Nigerian society today. The accelerating level of kidnapping, armed robbery, rape, thuggery and all facets of violence can largely be attributed to the incidence of unemployment (Eze, 2019). Most of the convicted criminals are those without gainful employment. Some of them are those who have the potential for gainful employment but have been denied such opportunity. Therefore, unemployment can be seen as one of the core causes of the rising level of social disorder and insecurity permeating the entire country of Nigeria. Ajaegbu (2019) also noted that the rise in violent crime, such as robbery, kidnapping, thuggery, terrorism, among others, committed by the youth is a sign of a 'gap' in the society. According to him, society already has expectations for individuals and established means of achieving them. The unemployed youth are available for recruitment into various terrible gangs, including political thuggery. According to Ajufo (2019), desperation as a result of unemployment can drive many people into living outside the law to survive and as a means of expressing dissatisfaction with the apparent neglect of their very existence.

Okonkwo (2018) observed that crime may be a consequence of unemployment, but it is also an additional factor causing youth unemployment through its negative effects on the economy. He pointed out that crime affects the economy in several ways. First, it increases the cost of doing business for the private sector and in providing public services, as it has become necessary that armed guards must be hired for the protection of lives while on duty. Second, resources which would otherwise have been invested in increasing output and funding of education, health programmes and in the provision of other essential services are diverted into crime prevention and procurement of relief materials for the displaced persons. Finally, the increase in crime rates has scared away foreign and local investors and substantially limited the rate of business expansion across the country (Economic Commission for Africa, 2016). Bell (2018) notes that the volatility of local economies in an era of recurrent global economic crises, the vulnerable position of youth within labour markets may become more solidified as they are often not the priority in the agendas of policy makers.

2.5 Review of Empirical Studies

Various studies were conducted on unemployment in Nigeria. A study by Ibikunle et al. (2019) analysed the causes and effects of unemployment in Nigeria. The study used both primary and

secondary sources of data. The study revealed, among others, that, lack of political will from the side of political leaders is the main cause of unemployment among youths, which resulted in graduates' idleness in Nigeria. The study further recommended that the government should strive to provide employment opportunities to youths in Nigeria.

A study carried out by Richard (2022) focused on unemployment and the government's response to youth empowerment from 2015 to 2020. The study established that the prevailing security challenge in Nigeria is a resultant effect of prolonged youth neglect, as they resort to various forms of crime and criminality. It recommends, among others, that the government should have a change of mindset towards youth empowerment programmes/initiatives as well as their administrations; if they really mean to reduce the overall tension in the country.

Kemi & Dayo (2015) assessed unemployment and economic growth in Nigeria. The Error Correction Model (ECM) and Johasen cointegration test were employed to determine both the short run and long run relationships among the variables employed in the study. Empirical findings showed that there is both a short and a long run relationship between the unemployment rate and output growth in Nigeria. Hence, there is a need to incorporate fiscal measures and increase the attraction of foreign direct investment (FDI) to reduce the high rate of unemployment in the country.

On a different focus, Oyewobi et al. (2021) assessed the short-term challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic on the youth unemployment crisis in Nigeria. Secondary data were sourced from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and other published literature and analysed to determine the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth unemployment in Nigeria, while the primary data were gathered through the use of a questionnaire. From the analysis carried out, the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on unemployment via difference-in-difference assessment shows that Nigeria's unemployment rate ranked 30.1 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2020. The study revealed that the unemployment rate among young people, that is, ages 15-34 years, is 30.1%, up from 26.7%. The study also found that 64% of the considerable increase inflows from employment to unemployment was due to the COVID-19 shutdown measures. It was also established in the study that as at the fourth quarter of 2020, the youth unemployment rate rose to 30.1%, indicating that about 22,764,614 Nigerian youths remained unemployed. The study concluded that, in sum, the shutdown measures amplified increased unemployment in Nigeria. The study recommended the participation of private companies, by creating jobs in averting the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, on increased youth unemployment in the country.

A study conducted by Freeman (2016) on the incidence of kidnapping at the international level, with a specific focus on child abduction, revealed that the act of kidnapping has an economic connotation. Similarly, File-Muriel (2013) also examined the menace of kidnapping, which was limited mainly to political kidnapping. However, a closer study was conducted by Uzorma & Nwanegbo-Ben (2014) on kidnapping and hostage-taking in the South-eastern Nigeria; their research focused on the Southern Nigeria, where it was discovered that the causal factors were mostly to make money while the dominant factor for kidnapping in the South-south was environmental struggle, and in the Northwestern and Northeastern parts, it could be attributed to poverty and terrorism, respectively.

Benjamin et al. (2018) examined the phenomenon of kidnapping and hostage taking in Southern Nigeria and its socio-economic implications. The study posits that kidnapping and hostage taking have become ubiquitous in Nigeria, however, more prevalent in the South-South and South-East parts of the country. Inefficient and ineffective strategy being adopted by the security agents and policy inconsistencies of the government led to a security gap, which the culprits are taking advantage of in perfecting their crime. This has resulted in a security challenge

to the country and has caused the economy to dwindle. Amongst other factors, the research revealed that the issue of kidnapping and hostage taking has been on the increase due to leadership failure, unemployment, poverty and corruption among security agencies.

A study conducted by Wajim (2020) focused on the proliferation of kidnapping in Nigeria. The study unveiled some common causes of kidnapping and their consequences in the study area, which is characterised by poverty, unemployment, insecurity, corruption, weak constitutional framework and poor policy implementation.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This section examines some criminological theories on crime causation, since a theory, among other considerations, is an explanation that can guide human behaviour; the under-explained theories are therefore used to make for a better understanding of this research work.

Choice Theory: Several perspectives abound on choice theory as a crime causation. According to Gaines et al. (2000), the basic tenet of crime is the result of a rational choice made by those who want to engage in criminal activity for the rewards it offers. Siegel (2005) threw more light on choice theory when he affirmed that crime is a function of a decision-making process in which the potential offender weighs the potential costs and benefits of an often-illegal act. We are persuaded by Siegel's outlook on crime causation because man is considered and widely acknowledged as a moral agent characterised with free will and intellect (Iwe, 2005) and a subject of rights and responsibility. As a thinking being, man is responsible for his actions and inactions, provided he is knowledgeable about the issue or has an informed conscience that leads to such a decision. Igbo (2007) agrees with the notion of free will and hedonistic tendencies of man as a rational pleasure-seeking animal that chooses what will bring pleasure and not pain or suffering. Agha (2010) observes that one desirable thing for man is pleasure or happiness to be sought by an individual. To control crimes with this orientation in mind, severe punishment will serve as an adequate deterrent to intended offenders by making the crime unattractive to all potential criminals in society.

Psychological Theories: This is the second aspect of trait theories. It comprises psychobiological and psychoanalytic theories. Psychobiological factors are the mid-part or synthesis of core biological and psychological traits. Schmalleger (1997) avows that the emphasis is on the role of chromosomes in the determination of criminal behaviour. These biochemical factors are derived from dietary deficiency, genetics that are hereditary, among others. For Schmalleger, the control measure of the psychobiological trait basis of crime causation is, among other things, the modification of body chemistry for a more desirable behavioural change. One wonders from the comment of Schmalleger how deficiency in diet can lead to crime when we know that some, if not all, crimes work with opportunity, the criminal intent and time to actualise such premeditated thoughts. Psychoanalysis has Freud as its pioneer theorist. For Freud, humans possess inherent drives and urges that lead to criminal tendencies. Nwite (2010) observes that through the process of socialisation, criminal tendencies are curbed by the development of inner controls learnt through childhood experience. The filial relationship that exists between a child and a parent was pinpointed as a contributory factor to criminal behaviour. Opera (1998) agrees with Nwite when he asserts that a defective relationship between a mother and her child brings problems in the proper socialisation of the child, with evidence in emotional disturbances that lead to the formation of maladjusted personality traits. Haskell & Yablonsnky (2011) maintain that psychoanalysis theory takes the position that criminal behaviour is a result of inner conflict, emotional problems, unconscious feelings of insecurity, inadequacy and inferiority. The researcher agrees with Haskell and Yablonsnky, since they are not oriented towards exonerating the criminals

as though they are helpless, but contending with their emotions and drives to indulge in deviant acts. Alexander & Staub (1931), cited in Dambazau (2007), assert that the only difference between the criminal and the normal individual is that the normal man partially controls his criminal drives and kind outlets for them in socially harmless activities. They concluded that the solution or control measure to eradicate unsocial behaviour is acquired through the process of education, world over, stands as an effective means of nurturing the human conscience through proper moral upbringing and training that can control the human mind on what to and not to do.

Economic Theories: The Marxist perspective is fundamental to the economic theories of crime causation. Gibbons (2019) suggests that crimes are of entirely low-class phenomenon to people who want to meet the basic needs of life. Siegel (2015) throws more light on this view when he stated that people at the lowest rungs of the social structure have the greatest incentive to commit crimes. In a similar note, Nduoma (2016) sees these basic needs of food, shelter and clothing as the propelling force that drives men to ignore the legitimate means of livelihood for unethical, immoral and of course illegitimate ways to satisfy their basic needs. As a primary orientation, poverty is seen as the driving force for involvement in criminal activities. Gibbons (2019) had this in mind when he opined that people are basically "motivated to engage in crime because of economic precariousness or other economic self-interest". Okezie (2017) argues that greed, self-interest and hostility generated by the capitalist system are motivating factors for crimes at all levels of society. Bonger (2018) sees capitalism as the facilitating environmental condition" for crime. Igbo (2017) concludes that it is generally assumed that poor people are potential criminals because of their desperate economic condition" in societies. On a dialectic note, lgbo (2017) admits that not all those considered to be poor with whatever standard are engaged in crime. This is essentially true because crime nowadays seems to be a human tendency that cuts across all social classes and status, with the rich involved in all manner of dubious criminal activities, often in their sphere of influence or comfort zone or place of work.

3. Methodology
This research adopts a qualitative research method. A sample from the population was carefully selected to represent the population. The population of this study constitutes the convicted kidnappers who are serving their jail terms in Sokoto and Zamfara States. Therefore, the total population is 72 and 42 people were taken as a sample (Sokoto and Zamfara states high courts). For this research, a stratified sampling technique was adopted. The population under study was divided into strata. The prisons where the convicted kidnappers are serving their jail terms serve as strata.

Sources and Methods of Data Collection
Both the primary and secondary sources of data were used in this research. The primary data was gathered through face-to-face interviews of the convicted kidnappers who are currently serving their jail terms in Sokoto and Zamfara States prisons, to determine whether unemployment was the reason for their indulgence in kidnapping in the study area. The secondary data used in this study include: Government publications from the National Bureau of Statistics, Journals, Conference Papers and Seminar Papers, among others. Others are online materials, such as published articles and journals, and unpublished materials.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

The following are interview guides which were used to obtain the primary data for the study:

1.   What was your employment status before you got involved in kidnapping?
2.   If employed, then what kind of job did you have?
3.   What motivated you to participate in kidnapping?
4.   How did you manage to meet your basic needs before indulging in kidnapping?
5.   Have you experienced anxiety, depression, or hopelessness due to joblessness?
6.   What kinds of financial responsibilities or pressures were you facing at the time?
7.   Was there a financial motive behind your indulgence in kidnapping (e.g., ransom)?
8.   Did you see kidnapping as a solution to financial or personal problems?
9.   Does kidnapping allow you to live a comfortable life?
10.   Did you feel forced into this act due to a lack of other options?
11.   Did you have any dependents or financial pressure at the time?
12.   Were you promised quick money or a way out of poverty?
13.   Looking back, do you think having a good job /business would have stopped you from kidnapping?
14.   Do you believe most kidnappers would quit if offered employment or business support?
15.   Do you believe unemployment is the biggest cause of kidnapping?

The respondents were asked whether they were engaged in any form of occupation. 76.3% of the respondents stated that they had nothing to do to earn living, however, there are few among the respondents (9.0%) who were engaged in some forms of small businesses, where as 7.5% were survving from handworks, while 5.2% were engaged in cattle rearing and 2% were civil servants. As regards the reason for their involvement in kidnapping, the majority of the respondents, representing 74.8%, indicated that it was unemployment that made them part of the kidnappers, while 25.2% gave different reasons for taking part in kidnapping, including poverty, inability to meet basic needs, taking revenge, and quick money making.

On the issue of how the interviewees manage to meet their basic needs before indulging in kidnapping, the majority of the respondents, representing 53.6%, indicated that they were able to meet their daily needs from their various sources of income. Whereas 37% of the informants stated that their various sources of income were not adequate to cater for their needs, and 10.4% of respondents depended on their parents and relatives for survival.

The respondents were asked whether they experienced anxiety, depression, or hopelessness due to joblessness. A significant number of the respondents, representing 77%, indicated that they experienced depression and hopelessness due to a lack of jobs. However, 23% stated that they had not been into any form of anxiety, depression or hopelessness due to unemployment.

The interviewees were asked about what motivated them to partake in kidnapping. The majority, 89%, indicated that it was the financial aspect of it that motivated them, whereas the remaining 11% stated that it was destiny that made them indulge in the act.

The opinion of the respondents was sought on whether they see kidnapping as a solution to financial or personal problems. The respondents gave divergent views on this issue as 59.7% believed that kidnapping would not solve their problems. However, 40.3% had a contrary opinion as they argued that their indulgence in kidnapping was to solve the pressing problems.

On the issue of whether kidnapping made them live a comfortable life, 77% of the informants stated that sometimes they get a reasonable amount from their gang leaders, which enabled them to cater for their needs, while sometimes they used to get a meager amount depending on the person

being abducted, while 23% of the respondents revealed that the money they used to get did not make them to live the kind of life they desired.

However, some interviewees stated that they were forced into the act of kidnapping due to a lack of other options, as 47.6% of them held such an opinion, while the remaining 52.4% indicated that they had other options other than kidnapping. More so, the respondents were asked whether they had any dependents or financial pressure at the time. 57.5% of the respondents, which constitutes the majority, stated that they had dependents, while 31.5% indicated that they had no dependents, and 11% of the respondents were dependent on their parents/guidance.

Similarly, the respondents were further asked to indicate their views on whether they were promised quick money or a way out of poverty. A significant number of the respondents, representing 71.0%, revealed that they were enticed by having a lot of money quickly, which led them to join kidnapping, while 14.0% stated that it was peer pressure that made them join the act. However, those with a contending view who had different reasons were only 15.0% of the respondents.

Meanwhile, the opinion of respondents was sought on whether having a good job/business would have stopped them from kidnapping. The responses indicated that the majority of the respondents, who represent 89.6%, believed that having a job or business would have stopped them from being part of the kidnappers. While only 10.4% of the interviewees had a contrary opinion.

In terms of whether most kidnappers would quit if offered employment or business support, the respondents strongly indicated their readiness, as 97% of them stated that they would have quit the act of kidnapping had they been employed or had business support from the government or wealthy individuals. While it was only 3% had no opinion.

Finally, the respondents were asked whether unemployment is the biggest cause of kidnapping. 91.5% of the respondents, which constitutes the majority, agreed that unemployment was the main cause of kidnapping in the study area, whereas 8.5% of the interviewees indicated different reasons, apart from unemployment.

Discussion and Findings

From the data presented and analysed above, it can be deduced that most of the respondents joined kidnapping due to unemployment, as almost all interviewees described severe economic pressure as a key factor. Many had dependents such as children, parents, or spouses and were unable to meet basic needs like food, rent, or medical care. This economic strain was a significant push factor toward criminal activity. Most respondents revealed that unemployment or underemployment, with some previously engaged in low-paying, unstable jobs, was the reason for engaging in kidnapping. For those employed, jobs ranged from manual labour to small-scale trading. The instability of these roles contributed to financial strain and a sense of futility in legitimate work.

Respondents spoke of anxiety, depression, and feelings of hopelessness due to joblessness. Many reported that the psychological toll of prolonged poverty, resulting from unemployment, made them more susceptible to considering extreme actions like kidnapping. "You just wake up and see no hope. Every day, you feel like a failure. That's why I joined", was the kind of response they gave.

The dominant motive was financial, with some respondents stating it was a "last resort." A few mentioned being influenced by others who portrayed it as a lucrative and low-risk endeavour. Others were introduced by peers who were already involved. Some stated that "It wasn't something I planned. A friend told me how much they made in one operation, and I was desperate." Peer

influence played a notable role. Many were introduced by individuals who were themselves unemployed or struggling. There was also a trend of small criminal groups recruiting from among jobless youth in the same neighbourhoods. "My cousin was into it. He used to give me money. One day, he just said, 'Come with me', which was the type of response.

Many saw kidnapping as a way to make quick and large sums of money compared to the meagre wages of legal work. The low perceived risk (in areas with weak law enforcement) further encouraged the decision. "One job could give me what I wouldn't make in two years of selling bread."

Nearly all participants expressed the belief that a stable job or sustainable business opportunity would have prevented them from turning to crime. Many indicated they would quit kidnapping if given better legal income options. "If I had a job, I swear I would never have done this. I'm not proud of it" was the kind of response. Therefore, the findings of this research revealed that most of the convicted kidnappers confessed that they were unemployed, looking for a way to survive, and if there was no good way to stay alive, evil was the only option. Many youths have been persuaded into joining a criminal group due to unemployment. Meanwhile, this paper discovered that unemployment has led many youths in the study area to become disreputable kidnappers due to the implacable famine and deficient means to survive the economic downturn.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Kidnapping in Nigeria is on the increase, and it is prevalent across all the geopolitical zones. However, the act of kidnapping varies, as in the south-south and the south-east, militiamen are using kidnapping as an insurgent tactic to abduct foreigners to seek ransom to finance their violent movement. Opportunist criminals also commit kidnapping for ransom. In the Northern parts of the country, Boko Haram and other gang groups have been reported to have committed large-scale abductions. Therefore, this study concludes that unemployment led the majority of the convicted kidnappers in the study area to engage in this criminal act. The paper made the following recommendations to address the problem of kidnapping in the study area:

i. The Government of Sokoto and Zamfara states should implement various empowerment programmes, targeting youths who are mostly involved in abductions and kidnappings out of economic frustration caused by unemployment.
ii. The Governments in the study area should devise poverty alleviation programmes directed towards addressing the high incidence of poverty among youths.
iii. The paper also suggests a moral transformation through a rebranding project for moral sensitisation, organised by the families, mass media, traditional and religious institutions, government and its agencies., This is because a morally sensitised individual is less likely to be troubled or worried by a lack of abundance, to seek wealth through criminal means.
iv. Finally, the State House Assemblies in Sokoto and Zamfara states should make laws to prescribe severe penalties, such as a death sentence or life imprisonment, for kidnapping. This would serve as a deterrent for those willing to be involved in the future

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