



SOCIOECONOMIC EFFECTS OF KIDNAPPING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF OGBA/EGBEMA/NDONI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the socio-economic effect of kidnapping on the development of Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. A multistage sampling technique was used to select 150 respondents from ten communities. Primary data were obtained using structured questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. The result shows that all of the respondents had formal education while majority (63.0%) were male and, of average age of 44years. Results show that the major causes of kidnapping in the study area are moral decadence/quest to get rich quick without work ($\bar{x}=3.47$), cultism/quest for supremacy ($\bar{x}=3.43$), politics and insecurity ($\bar{x}=3.37$), proliferation of arms ($\bar{x}=3.26$) and unemployment ($\bar{x}=2.94$). Kidnapping pose very serious effect on all the socio-economic indices such as: Psychological/emotional trauma ($\bar{x}=2.61$), indebtedness of the victims' family, unplanned relocation of people ($\bar{x}=2.46$), financial loss through payment of ransom / protection and forceful closure of businesses ($\bar{x}=2.35$), amongst others. Inadequate/ill equipped anti-kidnapping squad ($\bar{x}=3.78$), army of unemployed youths ($\bar{x}=3.60$) complicity of some security agents ($\bar{x}=3.56$) and poor security network ($\bar{x}=3.55$) inhibit the eradication of kidnapping in the study area. The study recommends that there should be collaboration between government, communities and other stakeholders for value reorientation.

Keywords: Socioeconomic effects, inhibit, Kidnapping

INTRODUCTION

Kidnapping and violent crimes are the trending social problems that are ravaging rural communities in Rivers State particularly the Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area. Until recently, rural communities in Rivers State were considered haven for people and businesses. The crime rate was low and kidnapping was at infinitesimal level, read in the pages of newspapers, seen on movies and heard on radio or street talks. This social malady has now become a general phenomenon in the state. According to Dodo (2010), kidnapping is a crime of seizing, confining, abducting or carrying away a person by force or fraud often to subject him or her to involuntary servitude in an attempt to demand a ransom. The crime involves unlawfully seizing and carrying away a person by force or fraud or seizing and detaining a person against his or her will with the intent of carrying that person away at a later time (Garner, 2009). The strategies employed by kidnapers in the state include the use of telephones to lure their unsuspecting victims or trailing them to any location considered safe for them to strike.

In criminal the law of Nigeria, kidnapping is the taking away or abduction of a person against the person's will, usually to hold the person in false imprisonment, a confinement without legal authority. This may be done for a ransom or in furtherance of another crime. Nseabasi, (2010) posited that kidnapping in Nigeria can be different forms: the first form comprise of the ethnic militia who employ kidnapping as the major weapon of agitation from oppression, exploitation and environmental degradation. These set of kidnapers, kidnap expatriates who work in the oil

companies in the region. Another form is dislodged militias and other criminals that engage in kidnapping as a means of survival. The last form of kidnapers is not militants but elements in the society that engage in any venture they consider lucrative. Other recent and digital forms of kidnapping have since emerged; terrorists or political revolutionaries like the Islamic militias (*Boko haram*) who employ kidnapping as a tactic to extort or seek concessions from the government and the digital or online kidnapping. This form of kidnapping directly and indirectly impacts on man and operates in two forms. One involves the kidnapping of the organisations website by hacking for a ransom while the other involves the stealing of images of children posted online by some parents.

The act of kidnapping pose serious security and development challenges to the people, residents and businesses in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni local government area and the Rivers State at large. For some time now many persons and businesses have continued to suffer in the hands of the kidnapers. This social milieu has remained unabated and is now a threat to the sustainability of economic activities in the local government. Adegoke (2013) noted that one country where kidnapping has become a daily occurrence in the recent past is Nigeria and, particularly, the Niger Delta region. Nigeria's Niger Delta is rich in petroleum resources which have been explored by multi-national corporations and the Federal Government of Nigeria (Albert and Odinwa, 2015).

The rate of kidnapping and other crimes in the Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government has gained ascendancy in Rivers State, so much that the oil rich local government is now a shadow of its



glorious past. Criminality with impunity in the area has opened up avenues for dangerous socio-political degradation. This no doubt has implications for the socio, economic and political development of not only the local government but also for the whole state. The situation is such that economic activities in the area are almost grounded especially the oil companies have abandoned their various camps in the area for refuge in Port Harcourt. Majority of the oil workers are conveyed from Port Harcourt amidst tight security to carry out essential official assignments while petty businesses are operated at abysmal levels and in trepidation. According to Essien & Ben (2013), kidnapping being a major kind of violent crime can have a destabilizing effect on the socio religious, economic and political existence of the people. It can cause disruption of social peace and economic sabotage. They further posited that when an entrepreneur is kidnapped it could lead to the closure of his business, dis-engaging his labour force and creating more unemployment among the youths. In the same vein when the bread winner of a family is kidnapped, the family and his dependents suffer devastating social and economic hardship.

In a bid to arrest the ugly situation, various levels of governments and agencies in the state have applied a number of strategies to quell the situation. The youth bodies of various communities in the area have were either been banned or unbanned, their executives weredissolved and reconstituted, The Local government Chairmen were either suspended or changed at various times in a bid to forestall security in the area. The situation only abates temporarily and then resurfaces again; it is on this note that the study is embarked upon to investigate the effects of kidnapping on the socio-economic development of Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni local government area. The specific objectives are to: identify the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents; identify the remote and immediate causes of kidnapping; ascertain the effect of kidnapping on the socio-economic development of rural area; and identify the factors that inhibit the eradication of kidnapping in the rural area.

METHODOLOGY

The local government is one of the twenty three Local Government Areas in Rivers State, the headquarters at Omoku. It is one of the largest reservoirs of crude oil in Nigeria and has experienced oil exploration and exploitation activities for many decades. The LGA is a host to

two major multinational oil companies namely; Total E & P and Nigeria Agip Oil Company, many oil servicing companies, academic institutions and banks. The study population consisted of heads of households and local leaders (youth leaders, Community Development Committee (CDC) members, opinion leaders, women leaders and traditional leaders) in the study area. Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted. A total of ten communities were purposively selected based on the rural nature of the community, two communities each from five of the administrative blocks in the study area based on the prevalence of kidnapping in those communities. The communities include; Okwuzi, Mgbede (Egbema block); Obirikom, Kirigani (Osomini block); Ahia-oria, Obosi (Omoku block); Ama, Eleata (Igburu block); Ogbogu and Erema (Egi block). Simple random sampling technique was used to select fifteen respondents from each of the selected communities giving a total of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents that was used for the study. Questionnaire and focus group discussions (FGD) were employed to collect data. Both descriptive and inferential statistical tools were used for data analysis. Descriptive tools used include frequency counts and percentages and mean. The inferential tools used are the t- test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result in Table 1 shows that 63.0% of the respondents were male while 37.0% were female. This disparity indicates more males were interviewed considering the fact that males are the head of household in Africa. It also revealed that the average age of the respondents was 44 years old, implying that were young and would have experience or knowledge of the happenings within the environment. It also showed that all the respondents (100%) had formal education up to primary level a feat that has unduly made it easy for the criminally minded in the study area to acquire necessary skills and expertise to carry out their act. Majority (33%) of the respondents were of medium income (N32,846.00/month) earners. This finding attest to the fact that a number of the well-to-do have deserted the area with their families because of fear of being kidnapped. It agrees with Ngwama (2014), who noted that kidnapping has worsened the labour market situation resulting to loss of employment, displacement of the work force from the affected areas and created unfriendly environment for economic development.

Table1: Percentage distribution of the socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Mean
Sex			
Male	94	62.7	
Female	56	37.3	
Marital Status			
Single	46	30.7	
Married	104	69.3	
Age			
20 – 29	23	15.3	44 years
30 – 39	33	22.0	
40 – 49	34	22.7	
50 – 59	42	28.0	
60 and above	18	12.0	
Educational level			
No Formal Education	-	-	
Completed Pry Education	18	12.0	
Incomplete Sec. Education	17	11.3	
Completed Sec. Sch.	46	30.7	
Completed NCE/OND	37	24.7	
Possess B.Sc/HND	32	21.3	
Occupation			
Farming/Fishing	31	20.7	
Trading/Contractor	36	24.0	
Civil servant	49	32.7	
Public servant	15	10.0	
Industrial worker	11	07.3	
Others	08	05.3	
Monthly Income			
10,000 Below	12	08.0	32,846.00
11,000 - 20,000	29	19.3	
21,000 – 30,000	39	26.0	
31,000 – 40,000	22	14.7	
41,000 – 50,000	21	14.0	
51,000 – 60,000	17	11.3	
61,000 and above	10	06.7	
Household Size(persons)			
1	5	03.3	5
2 – 3	21	14.0	
4 – 5	47	31.3	
6 – 7	58	38.7	
7 and above	19	12.7	

Causes of Kidnapping in ONELGA

Table 2 shows the causes of kidnapping in their order of seriousness in the area of study as moral decadence/ quest to get rich quickly without work (M=3.47), cultism/quest for supremacy (M=3.43), the abandonment of political thugs - using boys to rig election and not empowering them after the election (M=3.42), politics and insecurity (M=3.37), proliferation of arms as a result of political patronage (M=3.26), peer group influence (M=3.19) and the influence of hard drugs (M=3.11). Also revealed as serious causes were: unemployment/idleness (M=2.94), absence of youth organisations (M=2.93), kidnapping as a lucrative venture (M=2.89), paucity of company

largesse (M=2.88), poverty (M=2.76), corruption and greed (M=2.73), poor parenthood (M=2.60) and agitation from oppression, exploitation and environmental degradation (M=2.59). It shows that kidnapping in the area is anchored more on economic survival and quest for quick riches without genuine work for it. The finding is in harmony with Ngwama (2014) who views kidnapping from economic concept of making ends meet, which is regulated by the laws of demand and supply and is a type of social action that involves the calculation of the most efficient means to the desirable ends. Unemployment and idleness are the major causes of illicit source of livelihood in the society today (Albert, 2010).

**Table 2: Mean Distribution of the Respondents on the Causes of Kidnapping in ONELGA**

Causes	Egbema n = 30	Omoku n = 30	Usomini n = 30	Egi n=30	Igburu n = 30	Grand Mean	Remark
Agitation from oppression, exploitation and environmental degradation	2.52	2.67	2.58	2.61	2.56	2.59	Accept
Cultism (quest for supremacy)	3.38	3.66	3.34	3.53	3.22	3.43	Accept
Kidnapping as a lucrative venture	2.14	3.49	3.24	3.36	2.24	2.89	Accept
Kidnapping as a way of seeking concessions from government	2.08	2.26	1.98	2.34	1.82	2.10	Reject
Unemployment/idleness	2.34	3.44	2.58	3.11	3.22	2.94	Accept
Proliferation of arms	3.11	3.54	3.20	3.14	3.33	3.26	Accept
Abandonment of political thugs	3.14	3.66	3.56	3.45	3.28	3.42	Accept
Poor parenthood	2.43	2.86	2.56	2.64	2.52	2.60	Accept
Moral decadence/ quest to get rich quickly without work	3.26	3.77	3.57	3.29	3.46	3.47	Accept
Corruption	2.61	3.12	2.73	2.58	2.63	2.73	Accept
Poverty	2.52	3.16	2.81	2.75	2.58	2.76	Accept
Illiteracy	2.22	2.43	2.12	2.06	2.33	2.23	Reject
Ritual/cultural activities	1.53	2.45	1.83	1.73	2.13	1.93	Reject
Politics (political tools)	3.23	3.56	3.34	3.44	3.26	3.37	Accept
Greed	2.66	2.97	2.61	2.55	2.88	2.73	Accept
Youths restiveness	2.84	3.22	3.03	3.43	2.78	3.06	Accept
Land/chieftaincy Disputes	1.47	2.10	2.04	2.22	1.72	1.91	Reject
Influence of hard drugs	2.89	3.42	2.78	3.22	3.26	3.11	Accept
Peer group influence	3.54	3.18	3.26	3.11	3.19	3.19	Accept
Insecurity	3.23	3.57	3.33	3.43	3.27	3.37	Accept
Paucity of company largesse	2.57	3.05	3.02	2.98	2.76	2.88	Accept
Absence of youth organisations	2.10	3.87	3.67	2.38	2.62	2.93	Accept

Critical Mean = 2.50

The summary of ANOVA result on the causes of kidnapping in ONELGA (Table 3), show a p-value of 0.0062. Meaning the p-value 0.0062 is greater than the probability value of 0.005 leading

to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_{01}), it means that the causes of kidnapping differ among the communities in ONELGA

Table 3: ANOVA Result of the Respondents on the Causes of Kidnapping in ONELGA

Sources of variance	Sums of square	Degree of freedom	MS	F-calculated	F-tabulated	p-value
Between Group	3.80	4	1.00	3.41	2.46	0.0062
Within Group	28.44	105	0.27			82.30E-05
Total	32.22	109				p<0.05

Significant at $p < 0.05$

Impact of kidnapping on the socio-economic development of the area

Table 4 shows the impact of kidnapping on all the socio-economic variables raised in this respect. This is observed in the area of: psychological/emotional trauma (2.61), indebtedness of the victim's family and unplanned

relocation of people (2.46), financial loss through payment of ransom/protection and forceful closures of businesses (2.35), restriction in farming activities in the area (2.31) and fear and distrust among people (2.06). Also identified as serious effects among others were: the loss of properties and abuse of freedom of movement (1.99), loss of

income/revenue (1.66),the distortion of social and economic development in the area (1.64),loss of lives of some victims or relations (1.63),high cost of food items (1.62) and distortion of traditional rites/patterns(burials/marriages) (1.50). This agrees

with Albert, Nlerum and Ozuroike (2013) who observed that the major outcome of militancy, kidnapping and youth restiveness is distortion of social and economic development.

Table 4: Mean Distribution on the effects of kidnapping on the socio-economic development of the area

Effects	Before Kidnapping (E ₁)	With Kidnapping (E ₂)	Effect E ₂ - E ₁
Financial loss through payment of ransom after kidnapping and protection	1.22	3.57	2.35
Loss of lives of some victims or relations	1.31	2.94	1.63
Loss of properties	1.27	3.26	1.99
Fear and distrust among people	1.57	3.63	2.06
Abuse of freedom of movement	1.21	3.20	1.99
Indebtedness of the victims family	1.08	3.54	2.46
Psychological/emotional trauma	1.00	3.61	2.61
Forceful closures of businesses	1.00	3.35	2.35
Restriction in farming activities in the area	1.23	3.54	2.31
Abandonment of development projects	2.11	3.39	1.28
High cost of food items	1.74	3.36	1.62
Loss of income/revenue	1.55	3.21	1.66
Indiscriminate arrest by security agencies	2.26	3.50	1.24
Distortion of social and economic development in the area	1.66	3.30	1.64
Distortion of traditional rites/patterns (burials/marriages)	1.12	2.62	1.50
Truncation/poor implementation of Memorandum Of Understanding(MOU)	1.78	3.50	1.72
Poor contract execution	2.78	3.12	0.34
Unplanned relocation of people	1.00	3.46	2.46

Critical Mean = 2.50

The summary of paired t-test result on the effects of kidnapping on the socio-economic development of the area in Table 5, showed a p-value of 0.0071 indicating that the p-value 0.0071 is greater than the probability value of 0.005

leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H₀₁), it implies that kidnapping has a negative effects on the socio-economic development of the area, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient of (- 0.03) from the t-test result indicated as negative effects.

Table 5: Summary of Paired t-test result on the effects of kidnapping on the socioeconomic development of the area

Source	N	Mean	df	Variance/SD	t-cal	t-tab	p-value
Before Kidnapping	18	1.49	17	0.24/0.49			0.0071
With Kidnapping	18	3.34		0.07/0.25	13.87	1.74	
Total	36						

Factors inhibiting to the eradication of kidnapping in the area

The result in Table 6 shows in their order of strength that: Inadequate/ill equipped anti-kidnapping squad (M=3.78), army of unemployed youths (M=3.60) complicity of some security agents (M=3.56), poor security network and ransom payment (M=3.55), lack of trust on the security agents (M=3.45), loss of social values (M=3.40), too many arms in circulation (M=3.31), untrained and unmotivated vigilante groups in the communities (M=3.28), laissez-faire attitude of residents to security matters (M=3.18), complicity

of some influential politicians and proliferation of cult activities/groups with equal mean (M=3.14), lack of prosecution/weak enforcement of anti-kidnapping laws (M=2.75), politicization of kidnapping in the area (M=2.96), Lack of basic security orientation/awareness (M=2.82), insincerity on the part of stakeholders (M=2.64) and lack of information (M=2.58) were inhibiting factors to the eradication of kidnapping in the study area. These findings support Okoli (2006) and Okoli and Agada (2014) who deduced that kidnapping has been motivated and sustained by the growing trend of criminal quest for material



accumulation, resulting from high incentive to crime and criminality in Nigeria, criminal impunity among the high and low; lax and inefficient

criminal code that tends to pamper criminal behaviour; weak law enforcement procedures and capabilities; and ineffective criminal justice system.

Table 6: Mean distribution of factors inhibiting the eradication of kidnapping in the area

Inhibiting Factors	Egbema n = 30	Omoku n = 30	Usomini n = 30	Egi n=30	Igburu n = 30	Grand Mean	Remark
Poor security network	3.14	3.77	3.55	3.63	3.68	3.55	Accept
Inadequate/ill equipped anti-kidnapping squad	3.74	3.81	3.74	3.83	3.77	3.78	Accept
Complicity of some influential politicians	2.32	3.64	3.45	3.57	2.71	3.14	Accept
Lack of information	2.53	2.67	2.52	2.51	2.68	2.58	Accept
Complicity of some security agents	3.34	3.65	3.59	3.68	3.56	3.56	Accept
Ransom payment	3.37	3.75	3.35	3.66	3.62	3.55	Accept
Lack of prosecution/weak enforcement of anti-kidnapping laws	2.58	2.66	2.86	3.02	2.63	2.75	Accept
Proliferation of cult activities/groups	3.23	3.33	2.96	3.41	2.78	3.14	Accept
Politicization of kidnapping	2.33	3.44	3.27	3.25	2.51	2.96	Accept
Lose of social values	3.23	3.52	3.44	3.48	3.34	3.40	Accept
Lack of basic security orientation/awareness	2.53	2.99	2.79	3.01	2.77	2.82	Accept
Untrained and unmotivated vigilante groups in the communities	3.12	3.56	3.22	3.43	3.08	3.28	Accept
Laissez-faire attitude of residents to security matters.	2.82	3.36	3.14	3.28	2.86	3.18	Accept
Too many arms in circulation	3.11	3.37	3.45	3.46	3.16	3.31	Accept
Lack of political will	2.53	2.96	2.72	2.66	2.58	2.69	Accept
Army of unemployed youths.	3.46	3.79	3.64	3.68	3.42	3.60	Accept
Lack of trust on the security agents.	3.21	3.68	3.47	3.53	3.38	3.45	Accept
Insincerity on the part of stakeholders.	2.57	2.84	2.66	2.62	2.52	2.64	Accept

Critical Mean = 2.50

The summary of ANOVA result on factors inhibiting the eradication of kidnapping (Table 7), showed a p-value of 0.0084 indicating that the p-value (0.0084) is less than the probability level of 0.005 leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis

indicating that respondents believed that the inhibiting factors to the eradication of kidnapping in the area do not vary among the communities in ONELGA; they were the same.

Table 7: ANOVA result on factors inhibiting the eradication of kidnapping in the Study Area

Sources of variance	Sums of square	Degree of freedom	MS	F-calculated	F- Tabulated	P-value
Between Group	2.25	4	0.56	3.41	2.45	0.0084
Within Group	14.01	85	0.16			8.26E-07
Total	16.26	89				P > 0.05

p < 0.05

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Moral decadence/quest to get rich quickly without work, cultism/quest for supremacy as well as politics and insecurity were the major causes of kidnapping in the area, an indication that kidnapping in the area is anchored more on economic survival and vague lifestyle. Kidnapping has posed very serious negative effects on the socio-economic development of the area, some of which are the: Psychological/emotional trauma on the victims and their family members, indebtedness

of the victim’s family and unplanned relocation of people, financial loss through payment of ransom/protection and forceful closures of businesses, restriction in farming activities in the area and fear/distrust among the people. The factors inhibiting the eradication of kidnapping are: Inadequate/ill equipped anti-kidnapping squad, an army of unemployed youths, the complicity of some security agents, poor security network and high ransom payment, the complicity of some influential politicians and proliferation of cult



activities/groups. Based on the findings, the study recommends the following: Government (particularly the Local government) should collaborate with the communities and other stakeholders to host regular community-based programmes for value re-orientation among the people. The relevant security agencies especially the anti-kidnapping squad should be properly equipped and funded to stamp out the kidnapping in ONELGA

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