IDENTIFYING THE ECONOMIC RATIONALE FOR CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF KIDNAPPING FOR RANSOM IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *This study endeavoured to formulate an economic* rationale for why human beings commit crime, particularly the heinous crime against persons known as kidnapping. This forms the major objective of this study. The issue of kidnapping has attained such significance in Nigeria that the country was recently listed as sixth on the global kidnap index, putting Nigeria amongst countries with serious kidnapping problems, behind Philippines, Venezuela, Columbia, Brazil and Mexico. Utilising secondary data, the study applied functionalist theoretical assumptions and employed Qualitative Document Analysis (ODA), thereby utilising a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the causes, nature and quantum of kidnapping for ransom in Nigeria. The theoretical framework that governed this study was Becker's Rational Choice model, where an individual's decision to commit a crime is based on the costs and benefits analysis. The study revealed that kidnapping for ransom in Nigeria is a multifaceted phenomenon with social, economic, political, cultural and demographic ramifications. Our study further showed that there are many economic causes of the spate of kidnapping in Nigeria. *Prominent among them are unemployment, poverty, low literacy* level and high rate of school dropouts, increasing urbanisation, multidimensional inequality, low real income, and spiraling inflationary trends, among others. We recommended that government should tackle this menace head-on by instituting measures to reduce poverty, creating enabling environment for more productivity; thus, leading to increased employment, increasing school enrolment and improving educational infrastructure, reducing rural-urban migration to make the rural areas worthwhile to live in, discouraging ransom payments to free captives and instituting stiffer laws against kidnapping.

KEYWORDS: Crime, Kidnapping, Qualitative document analysis, Gary Baker, Nigeria.



INTRODUCTION

Intellectual endeavour regarding the economics of crime could be traced to the seminal article by Nobel Laureate Gary Becker in <u>1968</u>, wherein he suggested that the economic theory of criminal behavior is an application of the neoclassical theory of demand (Beker, 1968). It states that potential criminals are economically rational and respond significantly to the deterring incentives by the criminal justice system. They compare the gain from committing a crime with the expected cost, including the risk of punishment, the possibility of social stigma, and other negativities associated with their actions. Since the 1970s, economists have been contributing to this area of economics in explaining and validating the traditional socio-economic determinants of crime such as unemployment, education, inequality, social networks, age and socio-economic background.

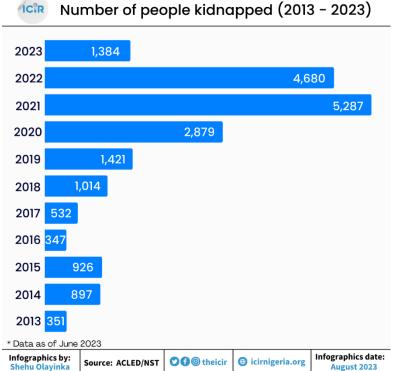
In this vein, Miles (2005) argues that economics, especially empirical economics, has much to contribute to the study of punishment and crime as it provides a model of how an individual behaves in the presence of legal rules and particularly, how the individual responds to the presence of criminal punishments. For its central conceptual framework, economics uses the decision-making process by rational individuals. This framework comports with common intuitions about human behaviour. Most of us do the best we can with what we have, or in the parlance of economics, we maximise our utility subject to constraints. In the context of criminal behaviour, gains from criminal activity may increase utility, but the threat and actual imposition of punishment are potentially significant constraints on the decision to participate in crime.

From Buonanno's (2003) extensive review of the literature, it can be stated that crime is closely related to poverty, social exclusion, wage and income inequality, unemployment, cultural and family background, level of education and other economic and social factors. High crime rates can threaten social stability, create insecurity, and hinder economic growth and national development. As pointed out by Oliver (2002), the economics profession has been analysing the determinants of criminal behaviour from theoretical and empirical points of view for quite some time. This growing public awareness is justified because rampant crime and violence may have pernicious effects on economic activity and, more generally, because they directly reduce the quality of life of all citizens who must cope with the reduced sense of personal and proprietary security.

Concerning the prevalent incidence of kidnapping in Nigeria, it has historical antecedents, from the earlier days in the 1970s immediately after the Civil War. This was when kidnapping involved snatching children, known as "gbomogbomo, ntori and maigarkuwa" among the Yorubas of the south west, Igbos in the south east and Hausas in the northern part of Nigeria respectively (Kareem, Ameh & Adah, 2020). However, this phenomenon has metamorphosed into a monster that is ravaging the entire fabric of the Nigerian socio-economic system today. Victims of this hideous crime have transcended children, with much wider scope these days; involving kids, both adult males and females, highly successful chief executive officers, politicians, top government functionaries, traditional rulers, pastors/clergymen, foreign investors and development partners, among others (Kareem et al., 2020). A particular kidnapping incident in Nigeria that shocked the entire world was the one that involved over 276 innocent, mostly Christian schoolgirls, who were abducted from their school hostels in Chibok, North-eastern Nigeria in 2014. It stunned the entire world and as at now, some of the girls are still yet to be recovered (Abdulkabir, 2017).



Nigeria currently faces severe security crises across its six geopolitical zones, from kidnapping groups in Boko Haram, bandits, criminal youth gangs, sea piracy and armed separatist agitation. In Nigeria today, ransom payments have become the dominant motivation for kidnapping due to Nigeria's struggling economy, rising inflation and high unemployment rates. Inyang and Abraham (2013) maintained that kidnapping has become very endemic in the Nigerian society and it is fast becoming a lucrative alternative to armed robbery incidences. The gravity of kidnapping is so intense that it has virtually affected most persons and families in the society. Kidnapping cases became very prevalent in the Niger Delta region in Nigeria when militants, in February 2006 abducted some oil workers, ostensibly to draw global attention to the dire situation in the oil rich Niger Delta region of the country. In that particular instance, the victims were mostly foreigners. The gravity of the kidnapping situation can be seen from the fact that in 2018, Nigeria was placed sixth on the global kidnap index. This rating puts Nigeria among countries with serious kidnapping problems, behind Philippines, Venezuela, Columbia, Brazil and Mexico (Ezemenaka, 2018).



Number of people kidnapped (2013 - 2023)

Sources: The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED)/The Nigeria Security Tracker (NST)/International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR)

Kidnapping is an offence punishable by several Federal and State laws in Nigeria. Anybody caught involved in the act is expected to face a penalty of a minimum of 10 years imprisonment, up to life, depending on the jurisdiction (Kyrian, 2017). The incidences of kidnapping have severely affected Nigeria's image as a nation abroad. It has also affected Nigeria's attempt to develop a viable tourism industry as visitors are regularly warned by their countries to be wary of coming to Nigeria as the safety of persons in Nigeria and their properties could not be guaranteed.

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According to a report titled 'The Economics of Nigeria's Kidnap Industry 2023 Update: Follow the Money" by SBM Intelligence (2023), an Africa-focused geopolitical research and strategic communications consulting firm, between July 2022 and June 2023, 3,620 people were abducted in 582 kidnap-related incidents in the country, with a reported ransom demand of at least \$5 billion and actual ransom payments of \$302 million. However, this figure could be higher due to underreporting. According to Shehu (2023), the International Centre of Investigative Reporting (ICIR) says there has been a significant surge in kidnappings within Nigeria in recent times, resulting in Nigerians paying billions of naira in ransoms to free their beloved family members from abductors.



Sources: National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)/Shehu Olayinka

Kidnapping for ransom (K4R) has been variously studied in Nigeria in terms of the causes, the scope and the nature, with various recommendations proffered for its minimization and possible ultimate eradication. However, very few studies have been carried out in Nigeria in terms of trying to seek the fundamental economic rationale or motivation for its occurrence. While socio-economic factors such as poverty, unemployment, drug abuse, moral decadence, vengeance, religion, etc. have long been proffered as reasons for the increasing rate of kidnapping in Nigeria, this author believes that there is a gap in proffering an economic rationale for the proliferation of this heinous crime. Thus, this research aims to address the observed gap in this regard.

Currently, crime is a major socioeconomic problem for all governments, especially those in developing countries. Even after controlling for other growth determinants, a cross-sectional study conducted by the World Bank (2016) revealed that crime hinders economic growth in developing economies. It thus behooves every government, especially in developing countries like Nigeria, to fashion ways to reduce the incidences of crime; as a crime -free environment is virtually impossible. To achieve this, governments need to be aware of the fundamental causes of criminality in all its ramifications; social, political, economic, demographic, psychological, etc. Providing an economic rationale for criminal behavior is thus the major objective of this paper.

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This paper is structured under five sections. After this introduction, the paper proceeds in Section 2 to review the relevant literature, while the Methodology is presented in Section 3. Section 4 is devoted to Summary of findings and analysis, while the final Section 5 contains the conclusion and recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual

The definition of crime differs from country to country; from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Ordinarily, crime, or criminal acts. refer to illegal acts or activities that are at variance with a country's established laws and legal requirements. Specifically, crime has been defined by Apriza and Hermanto (2023) as a type of action that is contrary to human morals, detrimental to society, and violates the law and criminal law.

In their analysis of the crime situation in India, Raj and Rahman (2023) classified crime into three main categories: crime against persons, which includes murder, rape, kidnapping, and abduction; crime against property, which includes robbery, dacoity, burglary, thefts, etc.; and economic offenses, which include money laundering, bribery, and corruption, among others. This paper focuses solely on crime against persons.

Kidnapping refers to the 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 or some form of gratification of exchange (Dodo, 2010). Kidnapping is the illegal abuse and financial exploitation of the victims of kidnapping. Kidnapping for the purpose of extortion has become a tactic of political revolutionaries or terrorists seeking concessions from a government.

According to Onuoha and Okolie-Osemene (2019), the criminal activity of kidnapping consists of four main typologies - routine, invasion, highway, and insider models - based on insights gleaned from the character and modus operandi of kidnapping gangs. Utilizing a theoretical bridging framework that combines the lifestyle theory, routine activity theory, and economic theory of crime, the authors argue that the escalation of kidnapping for ransom (K4R) derives from, and reflects, the crisis of the Nigerian political economy. The upsurge in K4R has overwhelmed the Nigerian Police, necessitating the adoption of extra measures by the Nigerian government such as the registration of mobile phone users, adoption or amendment of anti-kidnapping legislation by some states to provide harsh punishment (death penalty), the deployment of military task force, and demolition of structures or buildings owned or used by kidnappers for their operations, among others. However, these and other measures have proven largely ineffective in addressing the menace.



Theoretical Framework

Professor Gary Becker (1930-2014), the winner of the 1992 Nobel Prize in Economics, is considered as the founder of the economics of crime literature. His 1968 seminal study *"Crime and Punishment: An Economic Approach"* was the first rigorous analysis on crime done by an economist and inspired many other economists to follow suit. The economic theory of criminal behavior is the application of the neoclassical theory of demand (Becker, 1968). It states that potential criminals are economically rational and respond significantly to the deterring incentives by the criminal justice system (Becker, 1968). This economic approach to criminal involvement rests on the assumption that most potential criminals are normal individuals, who are merely acting in their own self-interest. He argued that they will commit a crime if the expected net benefit (utility) from committing the crime exceeds the benefit (utility) derived from legitimate activity.

To him, crime generates costs to society, but fighting crime is also costly. There is, therefore, an optimal amount of crime which minimizes society's total loss and which can be attained by setting the optimal levels of punishment and probability of apprehension and conviction. From that analysis, Becker further claims that the role of criminal law and law enforcement policies should be limited to the minimisation of society's loss. Crime is, therefore, framed as an external effect, and criminal law's purpose is redefined as the activity of assessing the harm incurred by crime in order to enforce optimal compensation.

According to Anupama (2011), three key economic frameworks can be used to explain a persistent social problem in modern society, crime and delinquency: the rational model, the present-oriented or myopic model, and the radical political economic model. Based on a costbenefit analysis, an individual's decision to engage in crime in the rational model is consistent in the short-and long-term. Present-oriented individuals, however, focus on the short-term benefits without particular concern for the long-term consequences of their actions. The radical political economic model focuses on the following key political and socio-economic factors that sustain crime: relative deprivation, poverty and inequality, unemployment, and class conflict. The conclusion includes a conceptual map integrating the three frameworks.

In their *A General Theory of Crime*, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990; 15) defined crime as "acts of force or fraud undertaken in pursuit of self-interest." In their theory, also known as the General Theory of Crime, they argued that all crime can be explained as a combination of criminal opportunity and low self-control, they hypothesized that a child's level of self-control, which is heavily influenced by child-rearing practices, stabilizes by the time he reaches the age of eight. Thus, they identified parenting as the most decisive factor in determining the likelihood that a person will commit crimes. Self-control represents the capability to abandon the short-term pleasures that potentially result in long-term, negative consequences.

In Varian's (1987) view, crime can be characterized as an externality. An externality is an action or activity by which a person realizes his/her preferences, despite the fact other people have incompatible preferences, and this incompatibility is not accommodated through the market. Because of the incompatibility in preferences, the person who undertakes the activity imposes costs on the people he/she affects who have incompatible preferences. These costs may be distributional in terms of the frustration of the affected people's preferences, or allocational in terms of the cost of precautionary measures they undertake to avoid the effects of the activity. Because there is no market in which the losers can charge the winner for the



costs they suffer, these costs are "external" to the winner's decision whether or not to engage in the activity. As a result, the winner may decide to undertake the activity even though the benefits she derives are less than the costs she imposes on other people. This state is clearly not Pareto optimal since the losers could be made better off without making the winner worse off merely by bribing the winner to yield to their preferences.

The market equilibrium model of criminal behavior emerged in the works of van den Haag (1975) and Ehrlich (1981). This model attempts a joint determination of volume of offenses and net return from crime. One early result of this model is the suggestion that the efficacy of deterring sanctions cannot be assessed by reference to the elasticity of the aggregate supply of offenses. The primitive renderings of this model also suggest that the efficacy of rehabilitation and incapacitation programs cannot be inferred solely from the impact on individual offenders. It depends on the elasticity of market supply and demand schedules that determine the extent to which rehabilitated offenders will be replaced by others attracted by high net returns to crime.

Utilizing a theoretical bridging framework that combines the lifestyle theory, routine activity theory, and economic theory of crime, Onuoha and Okolie-Osemene (2019), argue that the escalation of kidnapping for ransom (K4R) derives from, and reflects, the crisis of the Nigerian political economy.

Empirical Review

In extending Becker's paradigm of causes of criminality, Ehrilch (1973) incorporated income distribution, unemployment, income levels, and schooling and their effects on criminal propensity. The study found that distribution of income and income levels have bigger impacts on criminal behavior than unemployment does. Additionally, schooling as a proxy for educational attainment has a negative impact on delinquent behaviors. Following this, a study by Lochner and Moretti (2001) carried out in the USA argues that the impact of education on crime is so strong, that, in fact, 1 percent increase in high school completion rate of all men between the ages 20-60 would save the United States as much as USD 1.4 billion per year in reduced cost from crime incurred by victims and society at large.

Glaeser and Sacerdote (1999) found that crime rates in big cities in the USA are much higher than in small cities or rural areas due to the fact that families are much less intact in cities (45 percent); there are higher benefit levels in cities (26 percent) and lower probability of arrest (12 percent). It has to be noted, however, that the economic crime models focus more on property crimes such as theft, and not on felonies like murder and rape.

In their attempts to establish an empirical association between unemployment and crime rates, researchers have come to conflicting conclusions. According to Cantor and Land (1985), the counteracting forces of increased motivation for crime and diminished opportunity brought on by unemployment could affect crime rates both positively and negatively. Addressing this "consensus of doubt", Chiricos (1987) highlighted the conditional nature of unemployment and crime. His study found evidence in favor of the existence of a positive and significant association between property crimes and unemployment, but not between violent crimes and unemployment. He also observed that increasing the availability of work may reduce property crimes.



Freeman (1983) conducted a series of studies on the relationship between the labor market and crime by focusing on the effect of unemployment on the level of crime, though unemployment is only one measure of how potential criminals fare in the legitimate job market. In general, his studies found that higher rates of unemployment (lower employment-population rates) are associated with higher levels of crime, but that the relation is not particularly strong. Further work by Chiricos (1987) gave a more positive assessment of the impact of unemployment on crime, noting stronger results for studies in the1970s than earlier periods.

Marselli and Vanninni (1997) developed a crime equation by utilizing a panel dataset of Italian regions from 1980 to 1989. According to the findings of the study, the unemployment rate, the value of government-initiated public works, and the proportion of persons employed in the service sector influenced crime rates. The likelihood of being captured had a bigger influence on crime reduction than the severity of sanctions, according to their findings.

A study, based on the human capital approach by Williams and Sickles (2002), finds that years of schooling has a significant negative effect on crime in adulthood, and that there is a relationship between crime and other measures of human capital. Earlier studies support this empirical evidence on the education-crime relationship. For example, Freeman (1996) states for the 1991 US Census that two-thirds of US prison inmates are high-school drop-outs.

An alternative narrative concerning the economic causes of criminality has been propounded by the Marxists who believed in a fair economic system. Marxism was propounded by the political and economic theorists Karl Marx and Fredrich Engel (Wills, 2022). They believe that capitalism causes crimes since it encourages individuals to pursue self-interest at the expense of other people's pleasure. According to Marxist theorist David Gordon, capitalistic systems are 'dog eat dog societies' (Thurkettle, 2021; 24). Therefore, individuals are encouraged to pursue their selfish gain before other people's interests, community interests, and environmental protection. Encouraging selfish interests leads to crimes since individuals care less about any mechanisms that protect the dignity of other society members. They believe that capitalism encourages people to commit crimes to afford things that are beyond their capabilities.

The conventional economic knowledge is that when economic conditions are unbearable, crime may increase and that contrarily, in the period of healthy economic condition, crime rates may decrease. This augment has been examined empirically in developed countries, while little or nothing is known in developing countries, most importantly Nigeria. Very few studies have addressed the economic rationale of crime, especially kidnapping in Nigeria. The few that exist considered a variety of socio-economic factors in their analyses.

It was based on this gap that Ajide (2021) examined the impact of economic conditions on crime rate in Nigeria. To analyze this, the researcher employed ARDL bound test approach to cointegration and causality test within the framework of VECM to examine directional relationship between crime rate and economic conditions for the period of 1985-2015. His main finding confirmed the existence of a long run relationship among the variables. In addition, economic conditions contribute positively and significantly to the crime rate in Nigeria in the short run and long run. In conclusion, the study shows that real income per head could serve as a key weapon in fighting criminal activities in the Nigerian economy.



In the same vein, using an error correction modeling approach for the years 1981 to 2015, Igbinedion and Ebomoyi (2017) in their study of the Nigeria crime situation, concluded that crime rates and unemployment, and inflation in Nigeria are all positively correlated. The study also revealed an inverse association between crime rates and educational achievement.

Marenin and Reisig (1995) tested the general theory of crime as proposed by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) which claims to be valid across time and space. The authors assessed this claim through an analysis of three categories of Nigerian crime — normal, political-economic, and riotous. Logical, empirical, and theoretical shortcomings in the theory were identified and discussed. They found out that many individuals who act imprudently (and criminally) in Nigeria did not seem to fit the low self-control characterisation requirement under the theory. The unacknowledged value assumptions built into the theory therefore undermine its claim to universality.

In summary, the review of literature carried out above has revealed that crime is a multifaceted concept and it is influenced by a plethora of socio-economic factors like income levels, poverty, multidimensional inequality, deterrence factors, unemployment, etc. These are in addition to culture, family background, religion, education, gender, urbanization, population density, and several other factors.

METHODOLOGY

The study applied the functionalist theoretical assumptions and employed Qualitative Document Analysis (QDA), utilizing a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the causes, nature and quantum of kidnapping for ransom in Nigeria. We used the Qualitative Document Analysis (QDA) as a research tool because it is a method for rigorously and systematically analyzing the contents of written documents and it is quite useful in social science research, especially when there is need to facilitate impartial and consistent analysis of written policies (Wach, 2013). Additionally, it is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents, both printed and electronic (computer-based and internet-transmitted) materials, in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Our data sources are secondary, online and paper review of literature on previous studies conducted on kidnapping. Also, we used media and newspaper reports, all geared towards analyzing the phenomenon of kidnapping in order to generate new findings concerning this menace. At the same time, several empirical case studies were analyzed, which involved specific kidnapping events and efforts by the state to ensure justice.

The theoretical framework that governed this study is Becker's Rational Choice model, where an individual's decision to commit a crime is based on the costs and benefits analysis (Becker, 1968).



FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The work done so far in this study has revealed that crime is multifaceted and is influenced by a variety of economic factors. We summarize our findings regarding the economic rationale for kidnapping in Nigeria as follows:

Unemployment

Unemployment has been cited as the key economic rationale for the increasing case of K4R in Nigeria. In most of the interviews carried out on suspects, the major issue has always confirmed that lack of economic opportunities led them to embark on this crime. This has recently been corroborated by a leading research and polling authority in Nigeria that unemployment and poverty are the two main causes of K4R in Nigeria (NOI Polls Limited, 2022).

Poverty

Endemic poverty is the second major economic cause of kidnapping in Nigeria based on the synthesis of the various studies carried out. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2022), 63% of persons living within Nigeria (133 million people) are multidimensionally poor. The poor youths therefore see K4R as the only opportunity for them to make ends meet.

Low literacy level

The increasing level of secondary school dropouts is also another area of concern. Higher level of educational attainment increases the market returns from legal activities, thereby increasing the opportunity cost of criminal activities.

High Population Density and Increasing Urbanization

As noted by Gibbons (2004), an increase in the number of people living per unit land area increases the chances of crime. An increase in population density of most cities in Nigeria leads to neighborhood disorders, decrease in social cohesion, increased social tension, loss of employment opportunities; all of which increases the chances of criminality.

Increasing GDP and increasing multidimensional inequality

The findings of this study are consistent with economic theories of crime, which maintain that as economic activities increase, criminal activities also rise generally. Nigeria has consistently been among the highest national income earners in Africa in the last number of years. Unfortunately, this has also been accompanied by increasing inequality, due to so many other economic malaise like official corruption and greediness. Also, as supported by empirical findings, an increase in consumerism, especially by the elites, has further fueled tendencies of the marginalized towards criminality, especially kidnapping.

Worsening inflationary trends

Inflationary trend keeps shooting high, with the attendant worsening of the standard of lives, especially among people in the lower rungs of the society. Hence the tendency towards criminality.



Declining real income levels

The continuous depreciation of the national currency, spiraling inflationary trend and high cost of energy, all contributed to the freefall in real income, even among those gainfully employed. Hence, the tendency towards criminality.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Recommendations

This study recommends the government's implementation of measures to drastically reduce poverty, create employment for the teeming youths. Government should also create an enabling environment for more job creation because high unemployment rates will compel people to commit crimes and this will increase crime rate in Nigeria.

There should be appropriate budgetary provision towards poverty alleviation measures, especially in the areas of infrastructure provision, access to credit, storage facilities for farmers and improvement of rural roads.

There is a need for increased school infrastructure and increased school enrolment in order to raise the returns on education and, consequently, raise the opportunity costs of criminal activity.

Government should continue to implement measures that will reduce rural-urban migration. The urban poor living in the slums and ghettos are willing tools in the hands of criminal gangs and kidnappers.

There should be proper city planning, universal access to necessities, and infrastructure improvement in densely populated cities and towns.

We also suggest that the issue of ransom payment by victim's families/relatives to kidnappers should be seriously discouraged. Law enforcement and speedy justice delivery systems should be encouraged to serve as deterrent to criminality.

Governments at all levels should enact stiffer anti-kidnapping laws that will make kidnapping a serious felony. A kidnapper should be charged with a capital offense if the kidnapping results in death.

All levels of government, especially at the federal level should embark on public enlightenment programmes in the schools, media and public places for people to shun criminal activities.

CONCLUSION

Evidence has been proffered in this study to show that kidnapping as a criminal activity is endemic in Nigeria. We have also shown that it is a multifaceted phenomenon with social, economic, political, cultural and demographic ramifications. Our study has shown that there are many economic causes of the spate of kidnapping in Nigeria. Prominent among them are unemployment, poverty, low literacy level and high rate of school dropouts, increasing African Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development ISSN: 2689-5080 Volume 7, Issue 2, 2024 (pp. 1-14)



urbanization, multidimensional inequality, low real income, and spiraling inflationary trends, among others. We suggest that government should tackle this menace head-on by instituting measures to reduce poverty, create enabling environment for more productivity, thus leading to increased employment, increase school enrolment and improve educational infrastructure, reduce rural -urban migration to make the rural areas worthwhile to live in, discourage ransom payments to free captives and institute stiffer laws against kidnapping.

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