KIDNAPPING AS A BUSINESS VENTURE AND SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Security management challenges confronting the Nigerian nation is quite alarming and poses as impediments to socio-economic development of the country. One of this security challenge is the phenomenon of kidnapping human beings for ransom. Kidnapping business has become a household word in Nigeria in recent years. It has become highly problematic and a big challenge to the attainment of a peaceful, secured and healthy environment for her citizens, tourists and investors among others. Currently, Nigeria is ranked as a terrorist country with increasing rate of kidnapping activities carried out as a business venture. Youth have been reported to be involved in various aspects of kidnapping activities most of which have resulted in wanton destruction of lives and loss of money worth millions of naira. This paper uses quantitative analysis and secondary data to examine the factors that contributes to kidnapping and its implications on security management and development in Nigeria. The paper observes that some of these acts of kidnappings have their roots in youth unemployment, youth restiveness, youth indulgence in drugs, poverty and social inequality in the society. Despite various security measures applied by government, aimed at eliminating kidnapping in Nigeria, the trend still continues. This paper therefore recommends that for kidnapping to be curbed, the government need to demonstrate the necessary political will in terms of providing employment opportunities and confidence building measures among the youth. There should also be a process of eradicating poverty among youth in Nigeria.

Key words: Kidnapping, Business, Social-Security, Challenges, Unemployment, Poverty, Drug abuse.

INTRODUCTION

While kidnapping business may have their benefits for perpetrators which, however, may not be many and far reaching, their consequences are usually and mostly sad and devastating to victims, their families and the society in general. Imobighe (2013) and Dsaze (2011) claimed that from every kidnapping case on incidence, arises a clearer understanding of people's feelings, grievances and behavioral patterns. The consequences of kidnapping whether within Nigeria or outside it leaves much to be desired. Mallum and Oguche (2008) pointed out that generally, the destructive consequences of kidnapping are legion. According to them, not only does it destroy lives and property, it creates deeply rooted mutual suspicion among people you meet or about to interact with. Kidnapping causes emotional problems on a major scale has led to the death or murder of innocent persons, with many feeling physically, emotionally and psychologically demeaned, having lost their fortunes and properties in terms of

the ransom they pay or vehicles they lost. Many victims and their families suffer a feeling of insecurity and loss of confidence on the government which may invariably affect any effort they may contribute to nation building.
It is no longer news that insecurity, instability and uncertainty are the hallmarks that characterize most regions and countries of the world, Nigeria inclusive, due to kidnapping business. The zeal to be rich or grab money at all cost are some of the major factors that induced youths into kidnapping activities. Beside, youth remain victims to incipient bad governance. One also begins to appreciate how far unemployment has pushed even our educated youth to join the business of kidnapping. Because of lack of jobs, most of the youth engage in this social vice as a means of livelihood. This shows how the energies of the youths have been pushed to the sordid experiences of joining kidnapping gangs. Again, because the social system tend to favour certain class of people while some are excluded from the good things of life, feeling a deep sense of alienation as all entry points into the system are blocked, the only seeming point of entry is to involve themselves in kidnapping the perceived rich class for ransom in order to make ends meet.

The increasing presence of unemployed youth (educated and uneducated, skilled and unskilled) poses severe challenges to existing security management of the society. As political elites use youths as instrument of violence to acquire political power, the only form of political education these youths are being taught is the culture of violence. Indeed, the level of negligence on the side of government led to the increasing rate of kidnapping activities by the youth in our society. For instance, in most places in Nigeria like the Niger Delta region the youth resorted to kidnapping expatriates, foreign investors and tourists which constitutes a security challenge the region and the nation in general. In the study area poverty remains a harsh reality for the people including the youths who are plagued by want and deprivations.

In Nigeria, the rate of youth unemployment is very high and consequently most of the youth are reduced to a status of dependency which in turn results to internal resentment and frustration which may be shown in an intense irritated mode of behaviour like kidnapping. The effect of unemployment on the youth is enormous. Indeed, the high rate of unemployment predisposes youth to low motivation, poor self-concept, and process to crime, intolerance and radicalism. Many of the unemployed youth had relatively high class consciousness which influence their negative tendencies towards life. Such hyper activeness had manifested in negative reactions like aggression, intolerance, kidnapping and other socially unacceptable behaviours of the youths.
It is also observed that some of the youth belong to secret cults or militant groups whose members are noted for drug abuse such as smoking of cigarettes, marijuana, excessive alcoholic intake and injection of heroin or cocaine. This implies that drug abuse induces kidnapping among the youth. Whenever the youth indulge in drug abuse they display disruptive behaviours, such as kidnapping, assault, and are generally maladjusted in their ways. The youth have also noted that instead of the government meeting their needs, such as employment and provision of infrastructural facilities, they are rather economically marginalized and socially degraded thereby forcing them into kidnapping as an escape route from poverty.

This scenario creates hardship for the youth as they were unable to engage in meaningful economic activities. Because of poverty, the youths are subjected to frustrating experiences, limitation on morality and decent life style, limited access to education, information, and deprivation of better health services. This deplorable condition manifests itself in the form of youth involvement in kidnapping as excape routh from poverty. Also, because the youth are increasingly dissatisfied with the prevailing circumstances surrounding them resort to kidnapping business. For each person adopted, the kidnapped person's relations are compelled to pay any amount of money demanded by the kidnappers. Sometimes, the price tag is bargained for between the kidnappers and the relations of the kidnapped. The payment is usually in millions of naira depending on the socio-economic status of the kidnapped person or his/her relations.
Despite the security measures put in place to stem the tide of kidnapping in Nigeria, the wave still persists. A combination of factors tend to account for this. While the security agencies are aware of the facts and realities about kidnapping, their behavior and methods of fighting and curbing it still remain a worrisome

issue. Sometimes, their behavior are irrational and compromising towards suspects. It is however, notable that government and security agencies alike tend to be placing much emphasis on the management of security challenges through the operations of the police and other security outfits with little or no attention given to intervention measures such as behavior and value change skills, counselling, awareness creation and campaigns, provision of employment opportunities for the unemployed youth. Recently, anti-kidnapping drones was displayed in the media as a new security apparatus to stop kidnapping activities in Nigeria.

The government and other stakeholders have the fundamental task to solve and resolve the problems that gave rise to kidnapping as well as ensure social functioning of kidnapped individuals after their release. Security apparatus should not only be involved in arresting and punishing kidnappers but should be interested in behavior change processes and social engineering through advocacy, counseling, sensitization, conscientization and awareness creation skills. It is against this background that this paper examines the kidnapping phenomenon and social security management challenges in Nigeria. It is hoped that its findings may be useful in guiding the government and other groups in Nigeria to map out security measures to stamp out acts of kidnapping in Nigeria.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
Socio economic influences and youth involvement in kidnapping activities

The issue of socio-economic influence on youth involvement and participation in kidnapping has been particularly profound. For instance, studies carried out so far on the influence of socio economic factors on youths participation and involvement in criminal behavior have shown that such behaviour tend to come more from socio-economic lower class than from middle or upper class individuals. In attempting to explain this phenomenon, some writers argued that power is something that is pursued to compensate for deprivations by overcoming low estimate of the self. This suggests that youths of socio economic lower status who might consider themselves to be deprived may indulge in kidnapping behaviour because they want a compensation for their low esteem background. Nwokwule (2012) asserted that kidnapping problem constitutes an obstacle to economic, social and technological advancement of any society. He posited that one of the root causes of youth indulgence in kidnapping is poverty and has constituted an obstacle to economic, social and technological advancement of any society.

The poverty environment in which the youth find themselves has great impact on their psychic thoughts and actions. It influences their attitudes, values, morals and behaviour (Onyejiaku, 2009). Man is a social animal that continuously interacts with other members of the society and in this context, he begins to evaluate and to compare himself with others. This comparison may be based on his socio-economic status and position relative to others around him who may have material acquisition within the social milieu. In his desire to equate himself with others, he resort or to tended to display criminal behaviours. Giddens (2009) in his study of the influence of socio economic status on children's behaviour found out that children with behavioural problems come from families with low socio economic background. Enu (2012) also found a significant relationship between socio-economic status and youth's anti-social behaviour. His study revealed that the lower higher the socio-economic status of an individual, the higher his tendency to get involved in antisocial behaviour.

In his study of the influence of poverty on youth involvement in kidnapping persons for ransom in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, Akinyemi (2006) revealed that the psychological nature of poverty and its dire consequences causes many persons to venture into crime as a way of avoiding it. This is the reason why some scholars like Nwachukwu (2009) see criminal behavior, maladjustment and character or personality deficiencies as the result of faulty socialization which in most cases is determined by the socio-economic disposition of the individual concern. Psychoanalysts interpret anti-social, delinquent or criminal behaviour among children as symptoms of underlying frustration as well as anxiety conflicts in them. These conflicts as noted by Madu (2012) are the direct results of inadequacies or deprivations occasioned by low socio economic status of some persons in the society. Thus, the problem of youth

involvement in kidnapping activities may be produced by either emotional deprivation, economic deprivation or over indulgence. Economic deprivation results when the youth are deprived of life necessities, and this as noted by Madu (2012) leaves them with the option of joining criminal gangs to kidnap people for ransom.

Also, Asina (2013) in a study of socio economic status and youth anti-social behaviour hypothesized that high socio economic status influences the child's level of discipline behaviour. In other words, children from socio economic upper class parents tended to display more satisfactory discipline behaviour than their counterparts from the lower socio economic group. It was also revealed that kidnappers go for persons they know or seen to be rich, perhaps after a careful investigation of their home background. This means that the wealthy disposition of people in the society provided stimulating urge to kidnaping activities. (Udofia, 2015).

Douglas (2014) posited that youths from low income families lack basic necessities of life and are economically and even socially depressed thereby developing certain negative psychological feelings leading to frustration and culminating in the manifestation of antisocial behavior. Chinoy (2007) is of the opinion that most delinquent gangs are found in urban slums and their presence is sometimes attributed to the rigors of poverty. In a similar study earlier, Johnson (2010) affirmed that statistics on apprehended and punished delinquents showed a high or strong relationship between economic conditions and crimes because the poor are more likely to be identified and arrested and are less able to get bail. Eysenck (2009) argued that poverty, poor housing, social inequality have been found to contribute significantly, to individuals' involvement in criminal behavour.

Youth unemployment and youth involvement in kidnapping activities

The effects of unemployment according to Oyasanya (2014) in any society are always very devastating and could cripple the growth and development of such a society. Youth unemployment according to Oyasanya (2014) has become a social phenomenon that has taken prominence in causing increasing spate of kidnapping, especially in the Niger Delta Region of the country. He observed that the menace of kidnapping in Nigeria began after the unemployment rate in Nigeria was rated among the first ten in Africa. Oyasanya (2014) further assert that the effects of unemployment in any society are always very devastating as there could cripple the growth and development of such a society resulting to criminal behavior by the youth. Squire (2008) observed that in Nigeria there are many persons who are not self- employed or engaged in any paid employment but rather engaged in dubious and criminal activities to survive. To him, some of these unemployed youths are school graduates who for nothing to hold onto interms of a wage earning employment, from the labour market resort to kidnapping as business.

Nwachukwu (2009) opined that unemployment may affect the ego, personality or self-image of an individual to the extent that it might lead such an individual to a negative perception of life and the subsequent involvement in crime or other unwholesome behavioral patterns. The unemployed youth who lacks basic human /needs like food, clothing and shelter would be tempted to join criminal or kidnapping gang as a means of survival. Being reduce to a status of dependency when he should be dependent upon causes an internal resentment and frustration which may be shown in an intense irritated mode of behaviour like kidnapping.

Marsden and Duff (2010) reported that unemployment predisposes youths to low motivation, poor self-concept, process to crime and intolerance. In a study conducted by Umana (2009) on the political and social attitudes of unemployed youths, revealed that about 65 per cent of youths caught for their involvement in kidnapping claimed they are unemployed. The report added that if we accept unemployment as a sort of frustration, a way of thwarting the hope and aspirations of the youths, then frustration occasioned by unemployment can incite or create a number of negative reactions like aggression, intolerance, kidnapping and other socially unacceptable behaviours of the youths must not be in any contention. Bassey (2015) stated that unemployment has become a social phenomenon that has become a prominent causative factor to crimes in our contemporary society. He also asserts that youth involvement in kidnapping' manifest itself as a

result of the unequal distribution of societal resources.

Youth indulgence in drug abuse and youth involvement in kidnapping activities
The study of a US Department of Justice (2008) in a juvenile institution revealed that many under the age of 18 years were under the influence of drugs at the time of the offence that landed them in jail or detention. According to this study, cases of murder, rape, sexual assaults armed robbery, assault, kidnapping and other violent demonstrations were committed by these youths as a result of drug abuse. In Nigeria, most of the kidnapping cases and other societal vices had been traceable to drug abuse (Une-Umepe, 2010). It is the general belief that it is the influence of drugs that induces a greater number of youth to crime. Besides, some of the youths also belong to kidnapping gangs whose members are noted for smoking of cigarettes, marijuana, excessive alcoholic intake, injection of heroin, cocaine and any other substance (Adeleye, 2012). Adeleye (2012) further stated that no "normal" youth would engage in shameful and unwholesome acts like kidnapping without the influence of drugs.

Ajayi (2009) stated that kidnappers, armed robbers and violent demonstrators abuse drugs because they want a change in their state of mind. This is so because the drug or substance can lift the mind to an intense psychoactive effect like becoming bold, strong, restive in mood and actions (Mayer and Filstead, 2011). According to Ajayi (2009) drug addicts or abusers are always out of touch with reality and prone to taking decisions and actions which may not be in consonance with acceptable norms and behavioral patterns. According to him, crimes such as kidnapping, armed robbery, aggression, assault and other social ills cannot be dissociated from drug abuse. A good number of youth languishing in prison is due to drug related offences. Potency, Mupier and Crafter (2006) opined that the Nigerian society is noted for its youth involvement in kidnapping, violent demonstrations, harassment of innocent citizens, assault and other societal vices due to the high incidence of youth indulgent in drug abuse.

Security management and kidnapping phenomenon
Sreden (2011), posited that security matters concern with kidnapping were handled by the police and other security operatives, but lamented that the performance of police seem not to be yielding dividends as each day that passes, more persons are kidnapped and their relations made to pay huge amount of money as ransoms. Besides the police, security operatives such as the Peace Corps and community vigilante groups were also put in place to work hand in hand with the police to ensure effective security. The government provided the police with operational gadgets, vehicles and other resource to help in their operations. According to Bam (2008), any country that experiences terrorism should be conscious of the fact that it must tighten its security very well, otherwise it would have itself to blame. Nigeria have being having bitter experience when some people are kidnapped and only released after the payment of huge amount of money. Odiong (2012), saw these security treats as something that required effective management through the training of security personnel, provision of resources and adequate budgetary allocation to security issues. Uhunmwuangho and Epelle (2008) maintained that the main problem of managing security challenges include lack of consistency, coordination and co-operation.

Most developed countries like America and Britain records the least crime rate as a result of effective security management. Zummen (2010), opined that in some countries, the government invest much on security. Yet in some other countries, security operations are managed by the private industry while the government provide the enabling environment for them to function. In Nigeria today, there is poor management of the security outfit in checkmating social vices like kidnapping and the attainment of a crime free society (Paulston, 2007). The security management in Nigeria could be affected by the non-availability of security equipment and resources. Akinyede (2013), reported that the provision of security equipment is a strong predicting factor that enhances peaceful environment in any society. Akinyede argued that inadequate resources, including security vans, arms and ammunitions and trained security personnel are bound to hinder quality security services to the nation. Fridgen (2011), asserts that the Nigerian police is unable to carry out effective security service delivery because of insufficient and obsolete equipment at its disposal. He went further to say that in order to protect lives and property of individuals from kidnappers, the government had

mapped out strategic programmes that would strengthened the resource base of security apparatus, especially in the area of equipping the police force with the needed resources to work with. Munzi and Dantata (2009), assert that ineffective security management results in low motivation and morale of security personnel, and consequent poor performance. According to Travis (2010), what tend to discourage investors and tourists' visitations in developing countries has been the incessant kidnapping activities occasioned by the poor security indices and unacceptable security situations in these countries. The factors hindering effective security management in Nigeria include: lack of political will and a weak government, poor implementation capacity, corrupt practices among government officials, especially security outfits, poor funding of the security outfits. Bamgbe and Gabriel (2008), noted that kidnapping can be prevented with well-known technologies. Agreeing to this view, Offiwana (2008), stated that without an efficient, equitable and modern technology, the security outfits in Nigeria would not be able to scale up the security network required to tackle terrorism and other criminal activities.

Laminkana (2009), assert that the combat of crime fighting equipment like anti- kidnapping drones, security patrol vans and communication gadgets, talkie-talkie, computers, which would have boosted the morale of the police as well as foster understanding between police institution and the public are not found in most security posts. The lack of basic security infrastructure and remunerations for security personnel make them provide poor quality security services to combat kidnapping activities. Bamgbe and Gabriel (2008), noted that police service in Nigeria is overwhelmingly dominated by untrained persons. According to them, as a result of shortage of trained security operatives, there was increased crime waves and social vices like armed robbery, kidnapping, car theft, drug abuse and youth restiveness among others.

Theoretical framework

For the purpose of providing a theoretical framework for this study, Ethno-nationalism theory formulated by Bandura and Macdonald (1963) was adopted. The theory assumed that each person by virtue of birth identifies himself as belonging to an ethnic or national group and sees others as outsiders. It creates a "family" or oneness group where emotions associated with the "family" are very strong and powerful. Each ethnic group sees itself in a competition for power, prestige and progress with other ethnic groups.

Like the social learning or behavioural theories, ethno-nationalism suggest strongly that criminal behaviour is not innate or instinctual but learned or acquired through the process of socialization. It also contended that human beings acquire criminal or aggressive behaviour by learning and interaction with the social environment. In other words, the theory amply demonstrates that criminal behavior is a cognitive-behavioral phenomenon. The theory further explains the complexities of conflict in terms of antagonistic group relationships. It claimed that individuals have a deep rooted psychological need or instinct to differentiate and establish enemies and allies on individual and group levels. It is primarily a group interest against the other group model of behavior which is seen as resulting to conflict.

The implications of this theory on this study implies that the society in its entirety consist of conflicting social groups with distinct identities and interest. Kidnappers usually see themselves as in-group members, sharing the same interest, motives and values while non-members or other members of the society, who are adopted, exploited and dehumanized as out-group. In other words, the kidnappers sees themselves as in-group and their victims or other members of the society as out-group. The in-group (kidnappers) instill fear and violent threats on the out-group members. The theory also suggest that since kidnapping and its acts are acquired through learning and interactions with the social environment, it goes to suggest that it can also be done away with in our society through counterproductive learning. It implies therefore that kidnapping can be eradicated through learning processes involving behavior change mechanism, counselling, sensitizations, advocacies and education, which can be achieved through the media, workshops, seminars, institutions of learning among others. The theory also views kidnapping as a complex business in which the perpetrators have a deep rooted psychological need which pushed them into this crime. Some of this psychological needs include employment opportunities, to survive in a society perceived to be corrupt, and

a government full of injustice, and insensitive to their needs. When once these needs are attended to, kidnapping would definitely become a historical event of the past in Nigeria in particular and the world in general.

Conclusion and recommendations

The paper investigated the socio-economic instigators of youth involvement in kidnapping and security challenges in Nigeria. Some of the contending issues were considered and the conclusion arrived at was that variables like poverty, youth unemployment, youth indulgence in drug abuse and poor security infrastructures have helped to instigate youth involvement in kidnapping in Nigeria. It was also observed that the method and processes of kidnapping are many and varied. These include adoption of their victims, snatching of cars, stealing, looting, and killing, destruction of property, and molestation and dehumanization among others. It is concluded that youth involvement in kidnapping was inimical to progress and development of the society. That is, the youth involvement in kidnapping has contributed negatively to the growth process of the entire nation in general. It does not only affect the way of life of the youths, but renders socio-economic activities to a standstill. Whenever kidnapping takes place in the society, innocent people are murdered in cold blood.

This is the bane of our society, a problem that the security apparatus finds it extremely difficult to confront. Since the kidnapping menace started in Nigeria, in the early part of 1999, specifically in the Niger Delta region, the government and security apparatus were unable to put a stop to it. Instead, the criminal act is increasing tremendously. Currently, no single city in Nigeria that has not experienced kidnapping cases. The security system in Nigeria stands to be a failure and a disappointment if these unwholesome activities of kidnappers are not permanently eradicated or to a large extent minimized. Not only should relevant statute laws be used to sanction kidnappers, but solving the problem should start from the root, which is engaging the youth in meaningful ventures and providing employment opportunities to them. There is need for moral studies and ethics to be taught by parents to their children, right from their homes and schools. Above all, the society has the responsibility to educate, mobilize, socialize, enlighten and sensitize its youth towards a tradition of non-violence behavior, integrity, honor, reputation, good name and other moral virtues that will make the society a better place for all. For the peace and stability of our society to be sustained, the government need to demonstrate the necessary political will in terms of providing massive infrastructural development, job creation and confidence building measure among the youth.

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