

Impact of Kidnapping on Access to Education in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was conducted to determine the effect of kidnapping on access to education in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. The major objective of the study was to determine the extent to which kidnapping activities specifically impact on access to education. The study used a population size of 11,113 and sample of 400 students to analyse the study. The researcher adopted 5 point Likert-Scale, primary data were generated through questionnaires and surveys which were analysed using Spearman's Rank Correlation analysis to determine the correlation coefficient and strength of the relationship between kidnapping and access to education. The study established that kidnapping exhibited a strong negative correlation coefficient of (-0.844) indicating that 84% of the variation or behaviour of access to education was explained by the autonomous factor (kidnapping) with a P-value of (0.004). The great impact of statistical significance of the impact of kidnapping on access to education in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State, as revealed by the result analysis, was thus established. The implication is that a per cent increase in kidnapping will lead to 84% decrease in access to education in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. The study recommends that government should implement policies to eradicate kidnapping activities through direct actions in the community.

Keywords: crime, kidnapping, access, education, Etche LGA

INTRODUCTION

Crime is a globally condemned phenomenon. People condemn crime because of its adverse effect on humanity. Crime has caused injuries, loss of lives and priced possessions of victims all over the world, Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State and the rest of Nigeria inclusive. Crime is common and has come to stay and not something that can be wiped away easily in a society; whether developed or developing society. Rivers State Police Command Annual Report (2014) asserts that even in the developed world where they employ sophisticated gadgets/weapons to fight crime, it is still difficult to totally eliminate crime; at best, it is reduced to the barest minimum.

There are all sorts of crime in Rivers State ranging from theft, armed robbery, murder, rape, aggravated assault, oil bunkering, cultism, to kidnapping. Crime

in Rivers State is so heightened that residents fear for their safety and security. Some crimes are perpetrated by petty criminals who ultimately grow to become crime lords in the state, with some attaining the notorious level of war lords who do as they like in the particular territories they control. Etche Local Government Area is one of the twenty-three Local Government Areas of Rivers State troubled by petty and notorious criminals. Chukwu and Elemba (2014) had described Etche LGA as a place where terror gangs struck terror into the community and set up what might be termed a parallel “government” (Chukwu and Elemba, 2014). This still remains the state of affairs in Etche LGA.

Among the crimes in Etche LGA, kidnapping for ransom is a major challenge. Most kidnapping activities in Etche LGA are perpetrated by cultists. According to Nairadiary (2022) majority of kidnapping activities and other crimes in Etche LGA are perpetrated by ‘Umuoma Boys’ cultist group. The kidnapping activities of these perpetrators greatly hinder the educational sector in the area. They have become a source of fear for parents who daily worry about the safety and security of their children and their teachers, some of whom might be kidnapped at home, on their way to school or inside their school premises in Etche LGA. Situations like these could create panic in the mind of students and teachers and discourage them from going back to school. It could also lead to students’ poor academic performance due to fear and lack of concentration on their studies. Incessant kidnapping activities in Etche LGA has made some parents to withdraw their children from school and keep them at home because they feel it is better to keep the children at home instead of allowing them to go to school and end up being kidnapped by criminals. The kidnapping challenges have also made some rich parents to relocate their children to schools in other states in Nigeria where there is relative peace; some have even sent their children abroad.

Efforts have been made to tackle this problem. However, in spite of the Etche America Foundation (EAF) Community Development Initiatives, which include the award of scholarship to intelligent indigent students, provision for healthcare services, provision for employment to reduce the crime rate in Etche LGA (<https://www.thisdaylive.com>), and stringent measures such as life imprisonment, confiscation of monies and destruction of property acquired through kidnapping, as stipulated in the Rivers State Anti-Kidnapping and Cultism (Prohibition) Amendment Law No.7 of 2018 (Ejirefe and Aruwa, 2022), kidnappers refused to turn a new leaf and continue to destabilise Etche LGA learning environment.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the impact of kidnapping on access to education in Etche Local

Government Area of Rivers State?

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to evaluate the impact of kidnapping on access to education in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

The hypothesis stated in null form was tested in this study.

Ho¹: Kidnapping does not have significant impact on access to education in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant to the Federal and Rivers State governments, especially to Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State, because it will help them to formulate policies and strategies on how to curtail the menace of kidnapping. The results of the study will add to the existing literature on kidnapping and serve as reference material for researchers.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study on impact of kidnapping on access to education is limited to secondary school education in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Crime

Crime is relative and has been conceptualised in different ways by different scholars. Isiaka and Okaphor (2018) defined crime as acts or omissions forbidden by law that can be punished by imprisonment or fine. Similarly, Marchuk (2014) conceptualised crime as a socially harmful act or omission that breaches the values protected by a state. It is an event prohibited by law, one which can be followed by prosecution in criminal proceedings and, thereafter, by punishment on conviction.

Furthermore, Imhonopi and Urim (2012) conceptualised crime as an action prohibited by law or failure (omission) to act as required by law. Though, for an act to be a crime, it must possess certain elements, such as harm or injury inflicted on the victim; it must possess legality in the sense that the act must be prohibited by the state; it must possess the element of *Actus reus*, that is the physical element or guilty act which requires proof; and it must also have *Mens rea*, meaning that the perpetrator must have planned to commit the crime intentionally and knowingly for the act to be considered a crime.

Concept of Kidnapping

Odomemene (2014) defined kidnapping as the act of holding a person captive in order to make him offer material or non-material payment for his or her release. Just like what is happening in Rivers State, the motive here is economic exploitation and greed. Similarly, Section 364 of the Criminal Code Act also conceptualised kidnaping as: Any person who unlawfully imprisons any person, and take him out of Nigeria without his consent; or unlawfully imprisons any person within Nigeria in such a manner as to prevent him from applying to a court for his release or from discovering to any other person the place where he is imprisoned, or in such a manner as to prevent any person entitled to have access to him from discovering the place where he is imprisoned is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for ten years (Olahanmi and Co, 2016: 116-117).

Furthermore, United Nations Economic and Social Council (2012) defined kidnapping as unlawfully detaining a person or persons against their will (including through the use of force, threat, fraud or enticement) for the purpose of demanding for their liberation an illicit gain or any other economic gain or other material benefit, or in order to oblige someone to do or not to do something, and resolves to treat it henceforth as a serious crime, particularly when it is connected with the action of organised criminal groups or terrorist groups.

Concept of Education

Ajuzie (2017) defined education as a process of imparting knowledge and skills to younger generation of a society. Similarly, MBN (2022) conceptualized education as the process or act of learning or teaching, that is, acquiring or imparting knowledge. It includes the preparation of children for mature life. It also involves developing people's powers of reasoning and judgment. Additionally, education is a method or practice that aims at teaching an individual a new skill or new principles (John, 2022). Furthermore, Ololube (2011) defined education as any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual (for instance, the child is educated by his environment through interaction with the environment). In conclusion, Ogbondah (2016) suggested that education is the process for transmitting culture in terms of continuity and growth and for disseminating knowledge either to ensure social control or guarantee rational direction of the society or both.

There are three levels of education in Nigeria: primary education, secondary education and tertiary education. However, this study is specifically concerned with secondary education as specified by the scope of the study.

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Jimoh, Gyan and Adeniyi (2022) evaluated the impact of insecurity (kidnapping) of school environment on the academic performance and school enrolment of secondary school students in Katsina State, Nigeria. The study adopted exploratory sampling method. A structured questionnaire tagged “Impact of Insecurity” questionnaire was used to collate data from 159 respondents which consist of teachers, parents and guardians that had students in secondary schools or children of secondary school age. Descriptive statistics and Chi-square test was used for data analysis. The findings revealed that insecurity (kidnapping) impacted negatively on secondary school students’ academic performance, school attendance and enrolment rate in Katsina State. The study recommended that government and other stakeholders should make serious effort to promote safety in secondary schools.

Additionally, Maiangwa and Agbibo (2020) examined the impact of the extremist group called Tanzeem-ul-Islami-ul-Furqan activities on girls’ education in Pakistan. The study showed that the existence of the extremist group in Pakistan is a threat to girls’ access to education as they have earlier issued a warning letter to all girls’ schools to shut down or face being kidnapped. The findings of the investigation also revealed that the threat made all government and private schools to close down in Panjgur for several days. The findings also revealed that a bus transporting some secondary school female students and teachers to a private school was attacked by unidentified gunmen for flouting their stay at home order. The terrorists group took this action just to deny the girls access to education.

Furthermore, Global Coalition to protect Education from Attack (2018) examined the impact of kidnapping on education in South Sudan and Libya. Interview method was used to solicit information from the respondents who were both students and teachers in the study areas on the kidnapping activities of the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) and militants during the Libya conflict. The findings indicated that over 2 million children in South Sudan were out of school because of the SPLA’s destruction of 800 schools, kidnapping of over 300 students and several teachers. The findings also indicated that during the Libya conflict militants used kidnapping in extorting money from professors, teachers and students in the primary, secondary and tertiary school levels, which has kept many educational resources and students away from schools.

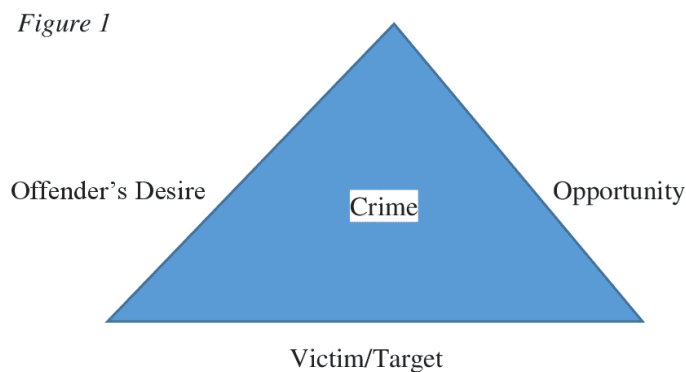
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Crime Triangle Theory

The theory used to anchor this paper is the crime triangle theory which was

developed from one of the environmental theories of criminology - the Routine Activity Theory (RAT) originated by Felson and Cohen in 1979. The principle of the crime triangle states an easy way to visualize and understand crime problems: three things must exist in order to have a crime: an offender, a victim, and a location. Lacking any one of these, a crime will not occur (Inderbitzen, Bates, and Gainey 2016). According to Melanie (2018) the term target here refers to the victim who must be at the scene of the crime. Felson and Clarke (1998) assert that offenders will only be interested in targets that they value for whatever reason. The desire of the perpetrator (kidnapper) is to commit the crime. The victim/target must appear to be gullible or easy prey while the opportunity is the various loopholes in the environment. Melanie (2018) argued that the three elements must be present for a crime to occur. Melanie argued further that we have control over two of the three elements but we do not have control over the desire of the criminal to commit the crime, that once the criminal has made up its mind to commit a crime he start looking for the target or victim and the opportunity to commit the crime.

The diagram below is a demonstration of crime triangle:



Source: Fightuntilthefinish.com

METHODOLOGY

The study used survey design. The population of the study is 11,113 students from the 18 Government Senior Secondary Schools in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State (Planning, Research and Statistics Department, Rivers State Senior Secondary School Board, 2022). The sample size was 400 using Taro Yamane formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{(1+N(e)^2)}$$

Purposive sampling method was used to select 8 senior secondary schools. The selected schools were Community Secondary School Egwi, Community Secondary School Isu, Community Secondary School Egbu, Community Secondary School Igbo Etche, Community Secondary School Nihi,

Community Secondary School Obite, Community Secondary School Okoro-Agu and Community Secondary School Ulakwo-Etche. The selection was informed by the predominance of kidnapping in these communities of Etche Local Government Area. Questionnaire instrument was adopted for the study. 400 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, out of which 392 filled questionnaires were collected from the field but only 380 were good enough for analysis. Simple regression method was used in the analysis and testing of hypothesis.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient measures the strength of the association between two variables and is represented as $r_s = 1 - \sqrt{6[\sum di^2 / n(n^2 - 1)]}$.

The test of significance of the independent variables at 5% level is used in the analysis.

Spearman’s Rank Correlation Result

			ACCESS _ TO_ EDUC	KNPT_A CT		
Kendall's tau_b	ACCESS _ TO_ EDUC	Correlation Coefficient		1.000	-.767**	
		Sig. (1-tailed)		.	.008	
		N		360	360	
		Bootstra p ^a	Bias		.000	.064
			Std. Error		.000	.225
	95% Confidence Interval		Lower	1.000	.371	
		Upper	1.000	1.000		
	KNPT_A CT	Correlation Coefficient		.867**	1.000	
		Sig. (1-tailed)		.007	.	
		N		360	360	
Bootstra p ^a		Bias		.064	.000	
		Std. Error		.225	.000	
	95% Confidence Interval	Lower	.371	1.000		
Upper		1.000	1.000			
Spearma n's rho	ACCESS _ TO_ EDUC	Correlation Coefficient		1.000	-.844**	
		Sig. (1-tailed)		.	.004	
		N		360	360	
		Bootstrap a	Bias		.000	.078
			Std. Error		.000	.173
	95% Confidence Interval		Lower	1.000	1.000	
		Upper	1.000	1.000		
	KNPT_A CT	Correlation Coefficient		-.844**	1.000	
		Sig. (1-tailed)		.004	.	
		N		360	360	
Bootstrap a		Bias		.078	.000	
		Std. Error		.173	.000	
	95% Confidence Interval	Lower	.511	1.000		
Upper		1.000	1.000			

EDUC = KNPT (- 0.844**)

Test of sign = (0.004)

The above table shows the test of Spearman's rank correlation test carried out for the purpose of the study. The test results show that there is a strong negative correlation between kidnapping and access to education in Etche Local Government Area with the coefficient of correlation of (-0.844) designating that 84% of the variation or behaviour of access to education was explained by the autonomous factor (kidnapping). It is clear from the result that 1% increase in kidnapping activities will trigger 84% decrease in access to education in that community. Again from the result, the significant level or P-value of kidnapping (0.004) indicates that there was specific impact as the statistical significant is clearly below the 5% level. Although the exit rate is high, the analysis shows that there is a strong negative or inverse correlation between kidnapping and access to education. The study, therefore, rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between kidnapping and access to education in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State.

CONCLUSION

Kidnapping has remained at the frontier of policy debates in developing economies like Nigeria. This study, anchored on the theory of crime triangle, explored the impact of kidnapping on access to education in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State, whilst access to education was specifically utilized as the measure of educational performance. The primary survey method, direct interview, structured questionnaire, Spearman's rank correlation and Likert Scale were applied as data analysis techniques. It was found that kidnapping activities strongly impact negatively on access to education. The result also shows that kidnapping was significant in negatively driving educational build-up. The implication of this finding is that kidnapping activities create a great deal of social instability and shocks that hinder educational growth in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1 Policy Recommendations

(i) Government should implement policies to eradicate kidnapping activities through direct actions in the community.

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Writers' Brief Data



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