

The Perception and Measures towards Curbing Kidnapping in Ondo State, Nigeria.

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Abstract: This study examines the public perception and measures towards curbing kidnapping in Ondo State, Nigeria. The study adopts both qualitative and quantitative methods of research. A structured questionnaire was administered on 1872 respondents from the three Senatorial Districts in Ondo State, while IDIs was used to collect qualitative data. The quantitative data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and presented using descriptive techniques, while the qualitative data were analysed using content analysis. Findings show that members of the public perceive kidnapping as illegal detention to extort money; a social crime and violation of human right. They agreed that kidnapping is about 16 years above and it's usually carried out by a syndicate. Majority of the respondents reported that the victims of kidnapping were people of the middle economic class. They concurred that kidnapping has made their community insecure and that everyone is worried by the heightened level of insecurity. The following measures were suggested: institutionalizing neighbourhood watch/vigilante group in high-risk areas; moral authority return to community to inculcate indigenous value of hardwork and integrity; reviewing the legal punishment. The paper concludes that the respondents in Ondo State demonstrated a good knowledge of what constitute kidnapping. Therefore, the study recommends that, the measures that were suggested should be looked into by the Federal government of Nigeria with a goal to incorporating them into future policies aim at curbing kidnapping and the teaching of the indigenous values should be encouraged at home and in schools.

Keywords: Kidnapping, security, punishment, moral decadence.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Kidnapping, for ransom, is a common occurrence in various parts of the world today. In fact, the geographical spread of kidnapping is global, while certain world cities are notorious in the incidence (Akpan and Akpabio, 2009; Ngwam, 2014; Uzorma and Nwanegbo-Ben, 2014). In 2001, Colombia was christened “the kidnapping capital of the world” with 3600 foreigners kidnapped, Iraq in 2007 with 1500 foreigners, while the title was shifted to Mexico in 2004 with 3000 foreigners (Abati, 2009; Politifact, 2010; CNN, 2005). Nigeria was ranked 5th position in the list of global kidnapping hot spots and, since then, hardly has there been a day without a report of kidnapping incident across the country (Inyang and Ubong, 2013; Emeh, 2011; Ugwulebo, 2011).

Though, the menace of kidnapping is not absolutely new in Nigeria, the dimension and rate of its prevalence and the targets have been quite different from what it used to be (Ngwama, 2014; Ngwama, 2014; Obarisiagbon and Aderinto, 2018). There had been many incidents of kidnapping at the local level, mostly targeted at children before now (Sanyaolu, 2009). Some of these kidnapping incidents were connected to money-making rituals (Graham, 2005). Now, kidnapping has taken quite a new dimension in terms of both the targets and the motives (Inyang and Ubong, 2013).

Kidnapping as presently carried out in Nigeria, cut across demographic and geographic boundaries of States. It is no longer a peculiar feature of either urban or rural setting (Bamiduro, 2010; Bello and Jamilu, 2017; Badamsi, Ummu, Kamarul, 2019). In Nigeria the spate of kidnapping attracted national attention on 25th February, 2006, when some restive youths abducted some foreign oil workers in the bid to press for restitution and increased infrastructural development in the Niger Delta area (Ben, 2006). On April 14, 2014, Boko Haram militants kidnapped more than 276 schoolgirls from Government Girls Secondary School, Chibok in Nigeria's north-eastern Borno State, this attracted outcry from local, national and the international communities, social media and civil society (Human

Rights Watch, 2014). On September 13, 2013, Archbishop Ignatius Kattay Nigeria's second-ranking Anglican Cleric and his wife were abducted by an unknown armed gang in Port Harcourt Rivers State ([The Timekeeper](#), 2013). Also, the kidnapping case of the fifteen innocent primary and nursery school children who were taken away from their school in Abia State cannot be easily forgotten (Raheem, 2010). Six students from Igbonla Model School, near Epe, Lagos were abducted at around 5 a.m. on Thursday 25th May, 2017 by gunmen who arrived through a creek behind the school. The hoodlums broke through the school's fence to gain access into the premises. The incident occurred seven months after gunmen kidnapped two teachers and four pupils of the same school (Ejikeme, 2017). The kidnapers reportedly broke the hostel doors, seized 10 senior secondary school pupils and led them to the shore where their boat was parked. After profiling their family backgrounds, four pupils were released, while the men from the underworld whisked away the remaining six pupils (Ejikeme, 2017).

This deadly crime has not only become ubiquitous, it has been commercialized in different parts of the country (Inyang and Ubong, 2013; Ugwuoke, 2011; Emanemua and Akinlosotu, 2016). With the nefarious attention shifting away from children and the foreigners, now to mostly Nigerians' -adult males and females, irrespective of their professions, religions, etc (Bello and Jamilu, 2017).

The phenomenon of kidnapping is giving the residence of Ondo State sleepless night, this is because the State is now taking a lead in the South West Nigeria. On June 19, 2015, the Executive Secretary of the Cocoa Association of Nigeria (CAN), Michael Adewunmi was kidnapped by unknown gunmen, at Akinjo Junction, Oshokoti area of Akure, Ondo State (Daily Post, 2015). A former Vice-Chancellor of the Federal University of Technology Akure, (FUTA), Prof. Albert Adeoye Ilemobade was also kidnapped by unknown gunmen along with his security guard at his residence at Ijapo in Akure, Ondo State (The Nation, 2015).

The Afenifere leader Chief Olu Falae was abducted on Monday, September 21, 2015, at his Ilado farm along Igbatoro Road, Akure North Local Government Area of Ondo State (Guardian, 2015). Though some of these incidents were later put under control by the Nigerian Police Force, Nigerians, most especially the residents of the South West are becoming worried every day about how the region has become Nigeria's 'kidnap capital' and also the rate at which 'kidnapping culture' is increasing in a cultural setting where people formerly see themselves as brothers and sisters (Akoni and Olowoopejo, 2016). It is therefore believe that the research on the public perception of kidnapping and the security consciousness in Ondo State will be of great contributions to knowledge and also a yardstick for policy-making in Nigeria.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The incidence of kidnapping in Nigeria has come to stay. The 2013 survey conducted by the CLEEN Foundation with the support of the United States-based Macarthur Foundation, shows that the South-West has the highest incidents of kidnapping with 5 per cent of the respondents from the region saying they have either been kidnapped outright or attempts have been made to kidnap them (Okenyodo, 2013; Okenyodo, 2013). Also, the Nigerian Security Report (NWSR, 2015) recorded an increase in the number of Kidnapping and other crimes in the South-West Nigeria.

Consequently, governments at both federal and state levels have made concerted efforts at reducing the menace of kidnapping. This is evident, as some States of the federation have adopted laws against kidnapping, some of these states are: Enugu, Abia, Edo, Rivers, Osun, Ebonyi, Akwa Ibom etc (Inyang, 2009). The Nigerian police have been responsive to every reported cases of kidnapping in every part of the country (Ani, 2010). Individuals are not left out of this, as schools, households and individuals are sensitized to always be at alert.

In spite of these efforts, incidence of kidnapping is blooming nationwide and most especially in the South West, Nigeria. There is never a month that cases of kidnapping are not reported either in the print or electronic media in Nigeria. The very worrisome aspects include the age bracket of the perpetrators, the varying targets, and the brazen manner in which the attacks are carried-out. The society, at large, is becoming so dreadful, and gripped by the pervasive fear of who may become the next victim of kidnapping. Individuals are not safe as there are cases of people being kidnapped right in their abodes both in the day-time and at nights (NWSR, 2015). The streets and highways are not left out of daily occurrences as there are records of innocent victims who were kidnapped on their way from places of work.

There is an acute dearth of studies done on kidnapping in Nigeria; Ugwuoke (2011) examined the implication of kidnapping on the labour market, the common sense of surviving it, and the way forward. He recommended the use of capital punishment for convicted offenders and a modified form of community policing; Ngwama (2014) indicates that the current wave of kidnapping has aggravated massive unemployment, worsening the already faulty labour market situation, and creating unfriendly environment for economic development; (Okengwu, 2011) outlined measures an individual can take to minimize the risk of being kidnapped, how the individual can survive the kidnapping and what friends and family members can do to facilitate the release of the kidnapped. While most of these studies are descriptive, there seems not to be enough qualitative work on kidnapping in the south west Nigeria where kidnapping seems to be presently blooming.

It is therefore believed that using the data collected from the field on the residents perception and self reported mechanisms towards averting being kidnapped in Ondo State shall greatly contribute to knowledge and also a significant guide to formulating kidnapping-related-policies that can address the increase incidents of kidnapping in Nigeria.

2.1. Objective of the Study

This study investigates the public perception of kidnapping and measures towards curbing kidnapping in Ondo State, Nigeria.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. The Concept of Kidnapping

Various ideas have been projected to denote what may be termed kidnapping. According to Akpan (2010) defining kidnapping poses a number of definitional problem in relation to a country legal and moral viewpoint as well as the availability of other variables such as hostage-taking and hijacking. Ikpang (2011) argued that in kidnapping, the criminal motive for removing the victim is irrelevant for the crime to be committed. He noted that it is sufficient if the accused intends to deprive the victim of his freedom of movement or victims parents or custodians of their control; the motive of the accused in depriving the victim of his freedom is to demand a ransom for his release. Turner (as cited in Akpan, 2010) noted that kidnapping applies to all situations where persons are forcibly seized and transported to a destination where they are held against their will in unlawful confinement which may involve the use of force. Furthermore Eso (as cited in Nwadiora and Nkwoch, 2011) acknowledged hostage-taking as a part of kidnapping. Kidnapping means to seize and detain unlawfully a person by force and fraud and to remove a person to an undisclosed location against his will and usually for use as a hostage or to extract ransom (Igbo, 2004). It had also been noted that kidnappers belong to common criminal terrorist and common criminal terrorist are motivated by gains (Igbo, 2004). Therefore germane to the crime of kidnapping is the use of force and fraud.

In Nigeria criminal act, the prosecutor must prove some fundamental elements in order to secure conviction for kidnapping. These were enumerated by Ikpang (2011) as prevention from access to court for release; prevention of person from discovering where the victim is detained and prevention of any person entitled to have access to where the victim is being imprisoned or detained. This is also inscribed in section 364 (2) of the criminal code of Nigeria. Conclusively, kidnapping involves taking away a person by force without legal authorities in order to gain ransom. To secure conviction for kidnapping the prosecutor must prove that no legal opportunity was given to the victim for a release

3.2. Effects of Kidnapping Activities

Kidnapping human beings at random produce significant psychological, sociological and financial impacts on the lives of the victims, victims' relatives, and the nation at large (Onyishi, 2011).

Traumatic Effect - Kidnapping a person or holding an individual hostage is very traumatic. The kidnappers traumatize their victims by blindfolding their eyes and sometimes hide the victims in the trunk of their vehicles and transport them to unknown locations. The kidnappers sometimes use inhalant tranquilizers to make their victims become tranquil so that they would remain asleep until they get to their hidden destinations (Onyemaizu, 2006). When the victims realize their predicament, their psychological trauma ranges from depression, emotional attack, anger to fear of unknown.

Victims' Families Emotional Effect - The victims' families are normally emotionally traumatized. The emotional impacts get the families deeply involved as financial negotiating partners with the kidnappers in order to secure their release from their captors. Kidnappers place heavy financial burden on victims' families. In an effort to secure the release of the victims, the families may go on solicitations for fund from friends, relatives, and well-wishers.

Nation's Negative Effect - The kidnapping activities create negative headline news on the World News Report. This type of report depicts the country as one of the most dangerous places to travel in the world. As a result, many tourists, manufacturing companies, investors, and business communities boycott the country and the economic effect are disastrous. The frequency of these criminal models have created popularity for the criminals and exposed the nation as the most dangerous part of the world to dwell (Onyishi, 2011).

Fear and Insecurity - Kidnapping creates fear among the indigenes and foreign nationals. People live in fear of being kidnapped. Some foreign multinational oil companies, construction companies, production sectors, and foreign investors closed down offices due to fear of being abducted.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Marxian conflict and the strain theories of crime were employed to explain the incidence of kidnapping in Nigeria. Through these theories one would see why the social kidnapping has become so incessant. The work is anchored on the Marxian strand as explained by Crutchfield, Bridges and Weis (1996). They consider crime as the violation of laws by essentially normal persons in the course of realistic conflicts of interest, emanating from either; (i) The activities of those involved in organizations created to satisfy the demand for illicit goods and services, as well as to use illegal means to control and profit from legitimate economic activity. (ii) Resistance by vested interests to legal restraints, especially where efforts are made to modify institutionalized patterns of legitimate economic activity, (iii) criminal behavior as almost entirely a function of an inequitable and unstable economic structure promoting selfishness and resulting in uncertainty for all and misery for many, or conflict between those who seek to preserve a given authority structure and those who are trying to modify or destroy it.

The three objectives as provided above give a useful insights into the explanation of kidnapping. Violent crimes such as armed robbery and kidnapping can be linked to structural poverty structural poverty which also has to do with exploitation and injustice by the political authority in the country. One can also use the strain theory to give an insight to the problem of crime in Nigerian. Blackburn (1993) opine that Emile Durkheim theorized that rules lose their authority over behaviour under certain social conditions. The condition which Durkheim referred to as condition of 'anomie'. Blackburn therefore asserts that on this premise Robert Merton's propounded a strain theory of criminal behavior. Merton's argument was that a society instills in its members a desire for certain goals and prescribes socially approved means for realizing such goals. He had identified five different ways by which individuals adjust themselves especially in capitalist societies with strongly prescribed goals and clear distinctions between institutionalized and deviant means of realizing such goals. The fourth method of adaptation in Merton's analysis, which is innovation is the centre of this discussion. Due to quest for materialism and the love to desperately become rich over night have so many Nigerians developed innovative methods towards achieving their desire. Some of the deviant strategies innovated include; bribery and corruption, embezzlement, robbery, kidnapping for financial purposes and all forms of fraud. In fact, innovative methods or short cuts to wealth or financial success in Nigeria has translated into what Ugwuoke, (2005) has described as a prevailing value system that encourages tainted, corrupt and illegal practices as necessary and sufficient means to an end.

5. METHOD AND MATERIALS

The researcher adopts both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The study was conducted within six LGAs in Ondo State. The proposed sample size for this study is One thousand eight hundred and forty-two (1,842) respondents who have been residing in Ondo State for three years and above. To select the sample for this study, a multi-stage sampling technique was adopted; two LGAs were purposively selected from each of the - three senatorial districts- Ondo North (Akoko South West and Akoko North East); Ondo Central (Akure South and Ondo West) and Ondo South (Okitipupa and Ese Odo) - in the first stage. In the second stage, four communities were randomly selected from each of the selected LGAs.

In the third stage, systematic sampling method was employed to divide the selected communities into blocks, based on the number of quarters they have. And two (2) blocks each were randomly selected for the study. Making a total of 48 blocks. Occupants of the houses that fell within the selected blocks were selected systematically using a sample interval (s.i) of 5. The researcher conducted 60 in-depth interviews (IDIs) in all; i.e., Interviewees include three (3) chairpersons of three of the six selected LGAs with other twelve (12) political office holders, nine (9) traditional leaders; twenty-one (21) religious leaders; eighteen (15) opinion leaders. Informed consent was made available to prospective interviewees/respondents.

The quantitative data collected from the field were analysed, using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and presented using descriptive techniques. Also, tabulations, cross-tabulations, simple frequencies, percentages were used where necessary. On the other hand, data collected from IDIs were sorted, transcribed, and reported using content analysis.

The researcher upheld the principles which aim at protecting the dignity and privacy of every individual who, in the course of the research were requested to provide valuable information. In addition, no pressure was exerted on any of the respondents and their identities as well as any information given by them were kept strictly confidential.

6. RESULTS

6.1. Respondents' Biosocial Characteristics

Slightly more than half (976) of the respondents interviewed were male 53.0% while the remaining 47.0% (866) were female. Classification of the respondents by age group indicated that about 6 in 10 were between 20 years and 39 years old (1,118), slightly less than a third were in the adjacent older age group 40 – 59 years (552), while only 8% (148) and 1.3% (24) were younger than 20 years and 60 years or older respectively. Information on respondents' religion showed that majority (1625) 88.2% were of Christian faith, only about 1 in 10 were Islamic faith adherents (192) 10.4%, while those who were practising other religions were (25) 1.4%. The religious mix is a reflection of a southwest Nigeria state where Christianity is a dominant religion practiced in the region.

Distribution of the respondents according to marital status reflects that those who never married were in the majority (1170) 63.5%, only a third were married (612) 33.2%, and those who were divorced/separated/widowed were only (60) 3.3%. More than half (1098) 59.6% of the respondents had attained tertiary level of education, more than a third (688) 37.4% had attained secondary school level; while almost equal proportions of (32) 1.7% and (24) 1.3% had no formal education and primary education level respectively. More than a third were students (689) 37.4%, approximately, a third (617) 33.5% were civil servants, (272) 14.8% were self-employed, while (148) 8.0% were farmers, and (116) 6.3% engaged in other occupations.

More than a third (657) 35.6% of the respondents were sampled in both Ondo South district and Ondo Central district (694) 37.7% each; while slightly than a third were sampled in Ondo North district (491) 26.7%. More than half (988) 53.6% of the respondents had lived for more than twelve years in their respective district of residence; whereas, slightly more than 1 in 5 (418) 22.7% had been residing in the districts for less than five years, while almost equal proportions of 1 in 10 had lived for a period of five to eight (252) 13.7% and nine to twelve years (184) 10%.

6.2. Perception of People about Kidnapping

Information on the perception of the respondents about kidnapping revealed that more than half (761) 54.0% viewed kidnapping as illegal detention to extort money, two hundred and twenty four 15.9% viewed it as abduction for financial gains, about 1 in ten (183) 13.0% perceived kidnapping as both forceful seizure for money-making rituals and armed robbery committed on persons for ransom (151) 10.6%; while only (91) 6.5% viewed it as fraudulent deception for ransom.

About 9 in 20 (721) categorised kidnapping as a social crime, more than 1 in ten identified it as a violent/predatory crime (211) 13.1% and manslaughter/murder (205) 12.7%, (67) 4.1% and (50) 3.1% described it as serious felony and aggravated assault respectively; while more than 1 in 5 (362) categorised it as violation of human rights. Similarly, (274) 16.0% affirmed that kidnapping is relatively recent less than five years in Nigeria, approximately, 1 in 5 (374) also affirmed that it has

been ravaging the country between six to ten years, 1 in 10 (199) responded that it is between eleven to fifteen years; while half (866) of the respondents affirmed that kidnapping has been experiencing for sixteen years or longer in the country.

More than 9 in 10 (1,617) 90.9% viewed kidnapping as an organised crime carried out usually by a syndicate while the remaining (62) 3.5% responded in the contrary. Also, about half (860) 49.5% of the respondents viewed kidnapping as a child of Nigerian on-going economic recession; however, more than a third (630) 36.3% had a contrary view. Less than a third (474) 27.8% alluded to the view that kidnapping is a way of taking back what 'the have' stole from 'the have-not', while more than half (883) 51.9% did not support the view. Only 1 in 10 (183) 10.7% approved the opinion that those who are kidnapped deserved it, while the majority (1,306) 76.3% disapproved it. Approximately, 6 in 10 (1,040) 59.5% opposed the view that kidnappers have justified reasons to engage in the act, while more than a quarter (470) 27.4% held the view. Majority (1517) 87.8% viewed that kidnapping has made communities highly insecure, while less than 1 in 10 (157) 9.0% held a contrary view. More than 8 in 10 (1,452) 83.6% responded that everybody should be worried about kidnapping. More than 1 in 5 (371) 21.3% affirmed that incidence of kidnapping is regular in their areas, more than half (985) 56.5% responded that it is rarely in their areas, equal proportions of about 3 in 10 reported monthly (57) 3.3% and fortnight (66) 3.8% incidence, while less than 1.0% (10) reported weekly incidence. Excerpts from the IDI shed light on the participants perception about kidnapping.

There is no how their will not be an increase in the rate of kidnapping as it is being currently experienced in Nigeria. This is because, common men could no more afford their basic needs. The condition we are in Nigeria presently is terrible that those who do not have access to steal from the government's purse could hardly provide for their family. Our economy is bad, the effects of which can be seeing in every household - most especially the masses. Those who cannot endure the hardship may likely devise a means of survival which may be unacceptable to societal norms (IDI Male participant, Ondo town, Aged 52years).

A respondent put in her words when said:

My concern now about the trend of kidnapping in Nigeria is that the victims have cut across all the economic statuses in Nigeria. Kidnapping which used to be targeted at the wealthy before now - I mean those who are assumed to have gotten their wealth through the unapproved means, has now become a general thing. It is no more an attempt at taking back what were stolen by the elites, but just make ends meet not minding the statuses of the victims. Imagine an ordinary teacher who earns less than #60,000.00 monthly who was kidnapped. How do we explain that? (IDI Female participant, Ikare-Akoko, Aged 47years).

In another view extracted from a female secondary school teacher in Okitipupa, she analysed her opinion on kidnapping from the class point of view. In this case, the respondent said:

Majority of those who have been victims of kidnapping in recent time do not deserve it at all. This is because, considering their economic strength, it does not worth it at all. Most of the school children who were kidnapped were children of the common men. Their parents are of middle-class status, these are struggling parents. What I observed is that, the kidnappers do not go to highly paid school. Probably because most of these schools have a fortified security which make it difficult for the kidnappers to penetrate (IDI Female participant, Okitipupa, Aged 29years).

Another interviewee reported thus;

The incident of kidnapping has made our community highly insecure. Parents can no longer send their children on errands due to the fear of being kidnapped. Even parents themselves are always very conscious when on the streets. An old man was kidnapped in this community about three years ago. The man was going for morning mass in a Catholic Church directly opposite his house around 5:17am. Since then, kidnapping has become a thing of worry to every member of our community (IDI Male participant, Iwaro-Oka Akoko, Aged 33years).

6.3. Respondents' Response on Measures towards Curbing Kidnapping

Information on possible measures to effectively discourage kidnapping reveals that more than half (969) 56.5% of the respondents strongly agree that neighbourhood watch/vigilante group should be

institutionalized in high-risk areas, a little more than a third (595) 34.7% also agree with this view. However, (53)3.1% and (15)1.0% disagree and strongly disagree. Majority (1,529)34.7% agree that indigenous value of hard-work, integrity and social responsibility should be inculcated to communities, while only (50)2.9% disagree. About a third (565)32.8% strongly agree and more than 4 in 10 (724)42.0% also agree that restraining ostentatious lifestyle would curb kidnapping, (137)8.0% and (29)1.7% disagree and strongly disagree respectively. More than a third of the respondents (648)37.8% and about 4 in 10 (717)41.8% strongly agree and agree respectively that concern for people's source of income would curb kidnapping, while (145)8.5% and (55)3.2% disagree and strongly disagree respectively. More than half of the respondents (895)52.3% strongly agree that reviewing the legal punishment to fit the crime in contemporary times would help to deter kidnapping, also, more than a third (605)35.4% agree with this view. However, about (50)3.0% and (31)2.0% disagree and strongly disagree with the view. One of the central measures towards curbing kidnapping is stated:

So many people have been arrested for kidnapping, but till today we have not heard of any serious punishments meted out on them. Government should make laws commensurable with kidnapping incident, if this happens, I am very sure it will deter some of the perpetrators. So many victims of kidnapping lost their lives in the process of being rescued. This shows that kidnapping is a heinous crime, I am therefore suggesting a capital punishment for anyone convicted of this crime (IDI; Female participant, Akure, Age 41).

Another participant said:

Policemen have been trying so hard to see that the incidents of kidnapping reduce in our community. But what we realised is that the number of policemen as we currently have is not enough to effectively match the increase number of crime of which kidnapping is one. Therefore, there is a need for government to recruit more persons into the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). The government also need to institutionalise the local community vigilante group so as to complement the efforts of the NPF in fighting crime. The local vigilante group members are drawn from the local community, this avails the members the opportunity to have mastered and have a good knowledge of the terrain where they operate (IDI; Male participant, Ayegunle Oka-Akoko, Age 41).

7. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The public perception of kidnapping in the study area varies. These range from illegal detention to extort money; kidnapping was perceived as a social crime and violation of human right. The respondents were also of the opinion that this menace is about 16 years and longer; the crime was perceived usually carried out by a syndicate. Considering the victims of kidnapping majority of the respondents were of the opinion that most of the victims do not deserve being kidnapped, this is as most fall within the middle economic class in these communities. Majority of the respondents also concurred that kidnapping has made their community insecure and that everyone has become worried about this menace. The respondents also suggested measures through which the incident of kidnapping could be curbed. Some of these measures are: Institutionalizing neighbourhood watch/vigilante group in high-risk areas; Moral authority return to community to inculcate indigenous value of hard work and integrity; reviewing the legal punishment. Based on the summary of the findings above, the paper therefore concludes that the respondents in Ondo State, Nigeria, demonstrated a good knowledge of what constitute kidnapping, this they did as they associated different unlawful acts with kidnapping. They also in their view made some suggestions on what should be done to curb kidnapping in Ondo State. Therefore, the study recommends that some of the measures that were suggested by the respondents should be looked into by the Federal government of Nigeria with a goal to incorporating them into future policies aim at curbing the menace of kidnapping in Nigeria.

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