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TRENDS OF SCHOOL KIDNAPPING AND HOSTAGE TAKING IN NIGERIA: A REFLECTION OF A FAILED STATE

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Abstract
Nigeria is under a severe internal security threat, as the threat has political and socioeconomic dimensions. Each of these dimensions has critically affected the stability of the nation and can be traced to many factors in which kidnapping and hostage taking is one of them. This paper takes a look at school kidnapping and hostage taking in Nigeria: a reflection of a failed state. the objectives of the study are to look into the causes of school kidnapping and hostage taking in Nigeria and the effect of school kidnapping and hostage taking in Nigeria. The study was anchored on failed state theory and relies on secondary sources of data collection. The findings reveal that, a lot of factors are responsible for school kidnapping and hostage taking ranging from high level of insecurity, unemployment, poverty and so on. The study also reveals that the effect of school kidnapping and hostage taking on the children, community and the attitude of the affected parts cannot be under estimated. The study therefore recommends that, Nigeria government should provide good security measures in the country and make sure all the security measures put in place are working effectively.

Key words: Failed State, Hostage Taking, Nigeria, School Kidnapping

Introduction
The issue of insecurity ranging from militancy group, boko haram insurgency, kidnapping for ransom, killing for rituals, hostage taking and banditry attack continues to threaten the existence of Nigeria as a nation state. This has made national security threat to be a major issue for the government and has prompted huge allocation of the national budget to security. In order to ameliorate the incidence of crime, the federal government has embarked on criminalization of terrorism by passing the Anti-Terrorism Act in 2011, installation of Computer-based Closed Circuit Television cameras (CCTV) in some parts of the country, enhancement of surveillance as well as investigation of criminal related offences, heightening of physical security measures around the country aimed at deterring or disrupting potential, strengthening of security agencies through the provision of security facilities and the development and broadcast of security tips in mass media (Azazi, 2011). Despite these efforts, the level of insecurity in the country is still high. In addition, Nigeria has consistently ranked low in the Global Peace Index (GPI, 2012), signifying a worsened state of insecurity in the country. Hence, Adagba, Ugwu, and Eme, (2012), Uhunmwuangho and Aluforo (2011) are of the view that the efforts of government have not yielded enough positive result.

Terrorism is one of the most dangerous and deadliest threats to human security in Nigeria (Abodunrin, Adeyeye and Oloye, 2021). With the lingering security challenges and the inability of the security apparatus of the government to guarantee safety and security in the country, the question that borders everyone in Nigeria today is that "can there be security?" Is security of lives and properties achievable? Apparently, the security situation in Nigeria appears or at least have remained insurmountable and many people have argued that government at all levels has not done enough by not confronting the situation head on and dealing with it decisively, others have argued that the situation has a political undertone or inclination calculated to serve the interest of certain political gods, who have been dissatisfied and disgruntled about the political manifestations in the country (Achumba, Ighomereho, and Akpor-Robaro, 2013).

Over the years, civil unrest has become a recurring decimal in Nigeria (Abodunrin, 2019). Terrorism has become one of the most dangerous threats to lives and property in the world (Abodunrin and Alaba, 2019). Kidnapping and hostage taking is a global crime with similarities and differences in its occurrence from the global North to the global South (Surtees, Tankebe& Bland, 2019; Attah, Sambo, Sule, Bello &Saragih, 2021). Forest (2012) asserted that the exact count of kidnapping statistics is rather impossible due to its complexities necessitating different interventions and strategies across the globe. In that light, the concept of kidnapping andhostage taking interchangeably to mean the abduction of an individual forcefully or by trick from his immediate environment to a secluded place in demand for money, use for ritual, trafficking, slavery, baby making or political purposes.

The issue of kidnapping and hostage taking in Nigeria is one of the criminal activities that have continued to pose serious security threat to the Nigerian State. According to Chukwurah (2011), kidnapping is conceived as the act of illegally taking someone away and keeping him as a prisoner for the purpose of receiving ransom (money in return). Historically, kidnapping in the South-East zone and some other parts of Nigeria, could be traced to the hostilities, conflicts, crises and violence in the Niger Delta region (Igbokwe, 2009). The challenges posed by this criminal dimension of Nigeria's perennial internal security checklist painted negative image of the country nationally and internationally. This ugly situation explains why Arizona-Ogwu, a Nigerian Residing in the United States of America bluntly describes the attitudes of the Federal Government of Nigeria toward the menace of crime as follows:

> *Owing to the government cold-feet attitude to certain crimes in Nigeria, there is an outcome of thousands of cases signifying the brutality wrought on the innocent Nigerians with the help of local collaborators. Besides kidnappings and murders, there are millions of cases of torture, rape, arson, looting and other crimes (Arizona-Ogwu, 2010:18)*

Education is a panacea for national development across the world. There is no society that does not give adequate attention to her educational growth and development. Apart from the paltry budgetary allocation by the government, the Boko Haram insurgency, banditry has been an obstacle to educational development in Nigeria. By implication, Boko Haram translates to war against western education especially in northern Nigeria. In Borno state the attacks had destroyed over 882 classrooms as of August 2013, in Yobe state all schools were shot from June to September 2013. On 6 March 2014, the federal government closed five Federal Colleges (Unity Schools)
in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states, ordering their estimated 10,000 students to relocate to other schools (Daily Trust, 10 March 2014). Parents fearing attacks have withdrawn thousands of children from schools in a region already the most educationally backward in the country (Awortu, 2015)

The kidnapping and hostage-taking of students, particularly those attending boarding schools, has posed a severe threat to Nigeria's educational system. Both insurgents and bandits have assaulted numerous educational institutions since the Boko Haram terrorist group's 2009 breakout, killing numerous professors and students. The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) reported that the violence in northeastern Nigeria has resulted in the deaths of over 2,295 teachers, the displacement of 19,000 people, the destruction of 1,400 schools, the majority of which are unable to reopen, and more (www.unicef.org). Since many of them have been kidnapped, female students are the worst victims. The threat of kidnappings at schools has spread beyond of northeastern Nigeria. Unfortunately, it has managed to hold sway over the whole northern region of Nigeria (North-East, North-West, and North-Central).

This study takes a look at school kidnapping and hostage taken in Nigeria: A reflection of a failed state.

CONCEPTUALIZATION

With differing degrees of effectiveness, several scholars have defined kidnapping. The first definition of kidnapping is the "act of seizing and detaining or carrying away a person by unlawful force or by fraud, and often with a demand for ransom," according to Uzorma and Nwanegbo-Ben (2014, P.132). It is the practice of forcibly removing someone from their family without that person's consent in order to hold them as a hostage and obtain money (ransom) from them. Kidnapping, according to the criminal law perspective described in Abdulkabir (2017), is the act of transporting someone against their will, usually in order to hold them in false custody without a court order.

This conduct may be performed largely to obtain ransom or in connection with child custody as a fall out of marital disagreement (Okoye, Joe-Akunne and Chire, 2016). "Kidnapping is the forceful or fraudulent abduction of an individual or a group of individuals for reasons ranging from economic, political, and religious to (struggle for) self-determination," according to Fage and Alabi (2017), referenced in Bello and Jamilu (2017). The authors then clarified that political circumstances can also lead to kidnapping, even though people who are forcibly or fraudulently abducted are taken as hostages for ransom. However, the most frequent reason for kidnapping is financial.

Another definition of kidnapping is provided by Inyang and Abraham (2013), who defined it as a legal restriction of another person's freedom that goes against the Federal Republic of Nigeria's constitution, which serves as the model for all other laws. According to Uzorma and Nwanegbo-Ben (2014), kidnapping is the act of capturing, holding, or removing a person or people using coercion or illegal force, frequently with a ransom demand. In order to detain someone as a hostage and profit from their families and places of official duty, it entails forcibly removing them from their home or other area of interest without their agreement. According to the aforementioned, there is no one perfect way to define kidnapping; nonetheless, it is evident that an act must involve the forcible removal of a victim, whether they be an adult or a child, from one location to another, as well as their imprisonment or seizure.

For this reason, Inyang and Abraham (2013) noted that it is legally considered to be a restriction of another person's freedom, which is against the Federal Republic of Nigeria's constitution, which serves as the model for all other laws. Furthermore, political or financial gain are typically the driving forces behind kidnapping. Therefore, abduction can be used by criminals as well as political and freedom fighters to illegally get money or raise awareness of their demands. The objective of kidnapping is criminal motivation, regardless of its origins in social science or business. Abdulkabir (2017), kidnapping, abduction, or hostage-taking might be done to obtain a ransom from the victim's

family, obtain ritual money, or serve as an excuse to gain political freedom or appointment. Here, two assertions are crucial: (a) that money of some kind is always involved in kidnappings, and (b) that ransom money is paid.

According to Hoffman (2006), hostage taking is a type of terrorism in which a person or organization kidnaps one or more persons in order to accomplish particular political, social, or economic objectives. This strategy is used to put pressure on organizations, governments, or private citizens to abide by the demands of the hostage-taker. According to the United Nations, hostage taking is "the unlawful seizure or detention of a person or persons against their will, often with the intention of demanding ransom, concessions, or other benefits" (United Nations, 2005). Kidnapping, kidnapping, and hijacking are some of the ways that hostages might be taken. The reasons behind kidnapping hostages can differ greatly. While some hostage-takers may demand monetary compensation or the release of incarcerated comrades, others may aim to raise awareness of a specific cause or issue (Crenshaw, 2000). A perceived opponent may occasionally be the target of hostage-taking as a form of retaliation or revenge.

For the victims, their relatives, and the larger community, hostage kidnapping can have dire repercussions. Long-term psychological and emotional harm might result from the traumatic experience of being held captive (Danieli, 2009). Furthermore, taking hostages can have serious negative effects on the economy and society, especially if the hostages are detained for a long time. Terrorist groups and other non-state actors have been using hostage-taking more frequently in recent years. Hostage-takers now have an easier time communicating with their target audience and promoting their demands thanks to the growth of social media and other digital technologies (Weimann, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

One of the proponents of failed state theory is Robert I. Rotberg. He stated that Nation-states fail because they are convulsed by internal violence and can no longer deliver positive political goods to their inhabitants. Their governments lose legitimacy, and the very nature of the particular nation-state itself becomes illegitimate in the eyes and in the hearts of a growing plurality of its citizens.

Failed state theory is germane to the study of school kidnapping and hostage taking in the sovereign state of Nigeria, as it helps to explain reasons for its intensity and longevity in the state. According to Max Weber, a state is defined as maintaining a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force within its borders. When this is broken (e.g., through the dominant presence of warlords, paramilitary groups, armed gangs, or terrorism), the very existence of the state becomes dubious, and the state becomes a *failed state*. Weber explains that only the state has the means of production necessary for physical violence. A state is adjudged to have failed when it is unable to effectively maintain all or some of the essential characteristics of the state. Failed state means that the state has been rendered ineffective and is not able to enforce its laws uniformly or provide basic goods and services to its citizens because of (variously) high crime rates, insurgency, extreme political corruption, an impenetrable and ineffective bureaucracy, judicial ineffectiveness, military interference in politics, and cultural situations in which traditional leaders wield more power than the state over a certain area.

However, there is no real consensus on the definition of a “failed state”; the subjective nature of indicators that are used to measure state failure has led to an ambiguous understanding of the term (Olivier, 2013). Some scholars focus on the capacity and effectiveness of the government to determine if a state is failed or not (Patrick, 2007). Other indices such as the Fund for Peace’s Fragile States Index underline the democratic character of state institutions to determine its level of failure. Furthermore, other scholars focus their argument on the legitimacy of the state (Kaplan, 2008) on the nature of the state (Gros, 1996)

on the growth of criminal violence in a state (Rotberg, 2004) on the economic extractive institutions, or on the states' capacity to control its territory. Robert H. Bates (2008) refers to state failure as the "implosion of the state", where the state transforms "into an instrument of predation" and the state effectively loses its monopoly on the means of force. According to Charles T. Call (2010) the concept of "state failure" focuses on three gaps that the state is not able to provide when it is in the process of failure: capacity, when state institutions cannot effectively deliver basic goods and services to its population; **security**, when the state is unable to provide security to its population under the threat of armed groups; and **legitimacy** when a "significant portion of its political elites and society reject the rules regulating power and the accumulation and distribution of wealth.

Account of the dynamics of the different forms of school abduction

The Chibok girls school Kidnapping

On the night of 14 – 15 April 2014, 276 female students age from 16 to 18 were kidnapped by the boko haram terrorist from the Government Girls Secondary School at the town of Chibok in Bornu State, Nigeria. Prior to the incidence, the school has been closed for 4 weeks due to deteriorating security conditions but the girls were I attendance in order to take final examination in English.

Dapchi girls school Kidnapping

On Monday, February 19, 2018, Boko Haram insurgents invaded Government Girls Science Technical College in Dapchi, Yobe state, abducting 110 of the 906 students' population. It was yet another tragic day for a nation that is yet to get over a similar incident that took place on April 14, 2014 in Chibok, Borno state, when the insurgents invaded Government Secondary School, carting away as "ready luggage" 276 schoolgirls.

Kankara Boys, Katsina

On the 11th of December, 2020, Banditry took 203 students of Government Science Secondary School, Kankara, Katsina into captivity. A week after the students were taken into captivity, their abductors released them.

Dandume Foiled Kidnapping Attack

On the 19th of December 2020, less than two days after the kidnapped Kankara students released, some gunmen abducted more than 60 Islamic School students in the same Katsina State. The students were quickly rescued by security forces after a fierce gun battle according to the police.

Bandit Abduct 41 in Kagara, in Niger State

On the 17th of February, 2021gunmen invaded a school in Niger State kidnapping 41 students. The gunmen raided The Government Science College Kagara, Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State capturing students, teachers and their family members from the school. 27 students were among the abductees.

317 Female Students Abducted in Zamfara State

On the 26th of February 2021, less than 10 days after the bandit raided Kagara, gunmen kidnapped 317 school girls from the Government Girls' Science Secondary School Jangebe, Zamfara State.

College of Forestry Alaka, Kaduna

On the 11th of March 2021, the Alaka kidnapping took place. Gunmen attacked Federal College of Forestry Mechanization, Alaka Igabi Local Government Area, Kaduna State and kidnapped 39 students just weeks after a similar in Jangebe. The abducted comprised 23 females among with 16 males. Security forces were able to rescue 180 staff and students the next day.

Greenfield University Kidnap

On the 28th of February 2021, the Greenfield University kidnapping took place. At least 20 students and 2 staff were kidnapped in Kasarami Village, Chikun Local Government Area, Kaduna State during an attack by suspected armed bandits at Greenfield University. Kidnappers demanded 600 million naira ransom. On the 23rd of April 2021, the kidnappers killed 3 of the students. On May 29th 2021, after 40 days in captivity the remaining 14 students were freed. Their parents also said they paid a ransom of 150 million naira and 8 brand new motorcycles to the bandits.

Niger Muslim School Kidnap

On the 30th of May 2021, an armed gunmen abducted dozens of students from an Islamic School in Niger State. One of the school officials disclosed that the attackers initially took more than 100 children but later sent back those that are considered too small for them.

Effect of school kidnapping and hostage taking

The negative implication of school kidnapping and hostage taking on the academics, political, social, economic and environment cannot be underestimated due to the level of hardship inflicted on the concerned parties ranging from loss of lives and displacement. Ilugbami and Saka – Olokungboye (2021) opined that regardless of the nature and purpose for its perpetration, kidnapping has major social effects on victims, especially when such victims are school students. The psychological effect on the school children is pretty terrible as they are traumatizing and feeling continually dejected owing to the ugly ordeal they experience in the hand of their abductors. Buba (2015) asserts that emotional trauma, including rape, child marriage, slavery, and torture, is experienced by the abducted children. In such a situation, these schoolchildren might develop drug and alcohol dependence, experience suicidal thoughts, and become unable of functioning normally.

In Northwestern Nigeria, the abduction and hostage-taking of schoolchildren has also resulted in a rise in the number of youngsters quitting school. According to Onyido (2019), who referenced Okobiah (2002), education in the northern region of Nigeria has historically lagged behind that in the southern region. Religious beliefs, cultural customs, and the conviction that education influenced by the West is incompatible with Islamic principles have all contributed to the rise in kidnappings. Since one-third of primary-aged children in the area already do not attend school, some schoolchildren's educational prospects are in jeopardy (Ruth, 2021).

Given the frequent attacks on schools and the abduction of schoolchildren, no parent would want to put their child's life in jeopardy for no other reason than education, so the wave of attacks on schools portends a double assault on education in the area. Due to the frequent abduction of schoolchildren, students' attendance has decreased out of dread of such incidents (Ovuorie, 2015).

There are social repercussions in the area when academic activities are disrupted and the calendar is extended. Nduka (2021) claims that while certain schools in Zamfara state were recently closed due to insecurity, officials in Kano and Yobe states ordered the closure of over 20 institutions.

The massive gains made in recent years from the Federal Government of Nigeria's school feeding program to entice schoolchildren in Northwestern Nigeria back to school are being

seriously threatened by the ongoing disruption of the school calendar and activities due to the ongoing kidnapping of schoolchildren in a region with a high rate of out-of-school children. Attacks on schools have the potential to deter students from attending formal education and contribute to the rise in Almajiri syndrome, a disease that Northern Nigeria has been dealing with for many years.

Conclusion

The study has established that the effect of school kidnapping and hostage taking on the affected communities are too numerous to mention with it impact felt across Nigeria at large. The resources that are expected to be used for developmental projects are been diverted to security sector with little or no result. Nigeria which is being regarded as giant of Africa has not been able to prove to the whole world that, they are indeed giant of Africa due to the series of attacks and civil unrest on schools which has bedeviled the country which has put some cities, towns and villages into pandemonium in which institution of learning are not exempted from this barbaric attack. Series of school kidnapping and hostage taking has shown to the whole world that Nigeria is a toothless barking dog when it comes to the issue of maintaining security of life and properties of their citizen and non-citizens living in their country.

Recommendations

The study therefore recommends that:

- The federal government should work closely with the state and local government with the aim of ensuring that factors contributing to school kidnapping and hostage taking are addressed so as to prevents the re-occurring of the incidence.
- Nigeria government should provide good security measures in the country and make sure all the security measures put in place are working effectively. Also, the federal government should allow each state to have their own security force. This will enhance security of the country.

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