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SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA: AN ASSESSMENT OF KIDNAPPING AND RITUAL KILLINGS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE PRODUCTIVITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigeria has in recent years faced escalating security challenges, particularly kidnapping and ritual killings, which have significantly threatened human security, social stability, and economic development. This study examines the nature, causes, and prevalence of these crimes, as well as their effects on productivity and economic growth. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, using both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to respondents in selected high-risk areas, while secondary data were obtained from official security reports, academic journals, and policy documents. The study was grounded in Routine Activity Theory and Strain Theory to explain the environmental and socio-economic conditions that facilitate these crimes. Findings indicate that kidnapping and ritual killings have a statistically significant negative effect on economic activities. A majority of respondents (over 70%) reported reduced workforce participation and business disruptions due to fear of victimization. Approximately 65% indicated that insecurity has discouraged both domestic and foreign investment in affected regions, while more than 60% of business operators reported increased operational costs linked to private security measures. In addition, about 68% of respondents in agricultural communities confirmed reduced farm output due to insecurity and restricted access to farmlands. The study concludes that kidnapping and ritual killings are major constraints to Nigeria's economic productivity and sustainable development. It recommends strengthened security architecture, improved law enforcement effectiveness, targeted socio-economic interventions to address unemployment, and sustained public awareness campaigns. Addressing these challenges is essential for restoring investor confidence, improving productivity, and achieving long-term economic stability in Nigeria.

Keywords: Kidnapping, Economic Development, Productivity, Security, Nigeria.

Background of the study

Security is a key condition for national development, stability, and economic performance because it enables the protection of lives, property, and productive activities. When security is weak, development outcomes are constrained as economic actors operate under uncertainty and risk. In Nigeria, persistent insecurity since 1999 has intensified exposure to violent crimes,

including kidnapping and ritual-related killings, thereby weakening economic resilience and state capacity (Omede, 2020; Achumba et al., 2019). These conditions create an enabling environment for organized criminal activities, with kidnapping emerging as one of the most widespread manifestations of insecurity.

Kidnapping, in this context, refers to the unlawful abduction and detention of individuals for ransom or other criminal objectives. However, rather than focusing on multiple competing definitions, this study treats kidnapping as a direct outcome of broader insecurity characterized by weak enforcement, poverty, and governance gaps. Within this framework, kidnapping becomes a mechanism through which insecurity translates into economic disruption. The economic consequences are substantial. Insecurity reduces investor confidence, as both domestic and foreign investors avoid unstable environments. It also increases the cost of doing business through higher security spending, insurance premiums, and ransom-related losses, thereby lowering productivity and profit margins (Adebayo, 2020). In rural areas, insecurity forces farmers to abandon agricultural activities, leading to reduced output and food insecurity. Similarly, attacks on schools disrupt education, affecting human capital development. Furthermore, persistent insecurity contributes to displacement and emigration of skilled workers, weakening the labour force and overall national productivity.

Kidnapping and related violent crimes function as key transmission channels through which insecurity undermines economic development in Nigeria. This study therefore examines their patterns, drivers, and economic implications in order to inform policy measures aimed at strengthening security, improving productivity, and promoting sustainable development.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria is currently confronted with escalating security challenges that continue to undermine national stability, economic productivity, and sustainable development. Among these, kidnapping and ritual killings have become increasingly widespread across different regions of the country. Despite government responses such as increased security funding, enactment of anti-kidnapping laws, and reinforcement of security agencies, these crimes persist and, in some areas, appear to be intensifying. Existing studies (Omede, 2021; Achumba et al., 2021) generally agree that insecurity in Nigeria reflects deeper structural problems such as weak governance, unemployment, and poverty. However, most of these studies focus broadly on insecurity without

isolating how specific violent crimes particularly kidnapping and ritual killings—translate into measurable economic consequences.

A key limitation in previous research is the lack of clear empirical linkage between kidnapping incidents and productivity outcomes at regional or sectoral levels. Many studies emphasize general development implications but fail to quantify how these crimes affect specific economic indicators such as agricultural output, business performance, labour productivity, or investment flows across different regions. In addition, limited attention has been given to comparative analysis of how kidnapping influences productivity differently in rural versus urban economies, despite the fact that these areas experience varying intensity and forms of insecurity. Furthermore, existing literature rarely integrates micro-level experiences (households, farmers, and small businesses) with macroeconomic indicators such as GDP contribution, employment trends, and investment patterns. This creates a gap in understanding the full economic transmission pathway of insecurity.

Kidnapping and ritual killings, once considered isolated or region-specific crimes, have now evolved into organized and widespread threats affecting both urban and rural communities. In Nigeria, reports indicate a growing frequency of kidnapping for ransom, disrupting economic activities and weakening social stability. This study therefore seeks to address these gaps by examining the specific economic effects of kidnapping and ritual killings, with emphasis on their regional productivity impact and broader macroeconomic implications.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine security challenges in Nigeria, with particular focus on kidnapping and ritual killings, and to assess their effects on productivity and economic development.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the nature, patterns, and causes of kidnapping and ritual killings in Nigeria, including their spread from earlier hotspots such as the Niger Delta to other parts of the country.
2. Identify the key socio-economic and institutional factors—such as unemployment, poverty, corruption, and weak security systems—that contribute to the persistence of these crimes.

3. Assess the effects of kidnapping and ritual killings on productivity in major sectors of the Nigerian economy, including agriculture, education, trade, and investment.
4. Evaluate the implications of these security challenges for Nigeria's overall economic development and propose practical policy recommendations for improvement

Research Questions

In line with the objectives of this study, the following research questions are formulated to guide the investigation:

1. What are the nature, patterns, and underlying causes of kidnapping and ritual killings in Nigeria, including their expansion from regions such as the Niger Delta to other parts of the country?
2. What socio-economic and institutional factors contribute to the persistence and spread of kidnapping and ritual killings in Nigeria?
3. How do kidnapping and ritual killings affect productivity in key sectors of the Nigerian economy such as agriculture, education, commerce, and investment?
4. What are the broader implications of kidnapping and ritual killings for Nigeria's economic development and what policy measures can effectively address these challenges?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant both academically and practically as it addresses the critical issue of insecurity in Nigeria, particularly kidnapping and ritual killings, and their effects on productivity and economic development. The findings will assist the government in recognizing the urgency of strengthening internal security through effective law enforcement and targeted policies that address root causes such as unemployment, poverty, and moral decline. It will also guide policymakers and educational authorities in integrating security considerations into planning and administration, especially as insecurity continues to disrupt school operations, attendance, and the overall learning environment.

Furthermore, the study will benefit a wide range of stakeholders including community leaders, parents, and security agencies by increasing awareness of the socio-economic consequences of insecurity and encouraging collective responsibility in addressing it. Security institutions will be able to reassess their strategies toward more proactive and community-based approaches, while

training institutions and international organizations can utilize the findings for policy development and intervention programs. Ultimately, the study will contribute to existing literature and serve as a useful reference for future research aimed at providing sustainable solutions to Nigeria's security and development challenges.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on security challenges in Nigeria with particular emphasis on kidnapping and ritual killings and their effects on productivity and economic development. Geographically, the study covers Nigeria as a whole, while making references to regions and states where these crimes have been more pronounced, including the Niger Delta, Lagos State, Ogun State, and Nigeria. These areas are considered due to their reported experiences with kidnapping and ritual-related crimes.

Literature Review

Conceptual Clarification

This section examines key concepts guiding the study, namely security, security challenges, kidnapping, terrorism, and armed robbery. Rather than presenting multiple similar definitions, emphasis is placed on conceptual synthesis and critical interpretation.

Security

Security is broadly understood as a condition of safety from threats to life, property, and societal stability (Magaji, 2020; Jafaru, 2024). While earlier definitions, such as Kari (2020), emphasize "freedom from fear," modern perspectives extend security beyond physical protection to include social, economic, and psychological well-being. The Turkish Language Society (2021) similarly frames security as the uninterrupted maintenance of social order. However, Maslow's hierarchy (Ozcan, 2024) adds a developmental dimension by linking security to human needs and motivation. Contemporary literature shows a shift from a state-centered military view of security to a broader human security approach. This suggests that security is not only about protecting the state but also about ensuring conditions that enable development. Thus, insecurity directly threatens both individual welfare and national progress.

Security Challenges

Security challenges refer to threats that disrupt safety, stability, and development. In Nigeria, these include insurgency, kidnapping, armed robbery, and ritual killings (Adebayo & Oladipo, 2024). Rather than treating these as separate issues, literature shows they are interconnected

symptoms of deeper structural problems such as poverty, unemployment, and weak institutions (Onuoha, 2025). For example, while Adebayo & Oladipo (2024) focus on operational disruptions caused by insecurity, Onuoha (2025) emphasizes socio-economic drivers, suggesting that insecurity is both a cause and consequence of underdevelopment. This implies that security challenges should be understood as a cycle where economic hardship fuels crime, and crime further weakens development.

Kidnapping

Kidnapping refers to the unlawful seizure and detention of individuals for ransom or other gains (Okoli & Agada, 2020). Earlier studies trace its origin in Nigeria to the Niger Delta militancy, where it was initially politically motivated but later commercialized (Onuoha, 2020). Alemika and Chukwuma (2020) further argue that it has evolved into organized criminal networks operating across states. However, while previous studies agree on its expansion, they differ in emphasis: some focus on its historical roots, while others highlight its economic motivation. This study integrates both views, showing kidnapping as a product of structural inequality and institutional weakness. Its persistence is linked to unemployment, poverty, and weak law enforcement, making it a major disruptor of agriculture, education, and commerce (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2023).

Terrorism

Terrorism involves the use of violence to achieve political or ideological goals by creating fear among civilians (Hoffman, 2020). Enders and Sandler (2020) emphasize its strategic nature, where attacks are designed for maximum psychological and media impact. In Nigeria, Boko Haram represents the most prominent case, with severe impacts on lives, infrastructure, and displacement (Onuoha, 2024). While Akinola (2024) attributes terrorism largely to poverty and marginalization, other studies emphasize ideological extremism. A synthesis of both views suggests that terrorism in Nigeria is driven by a combination of socio-economic exclusion and radicalization, making it both a governance and security challenge.

Armed Robbery

Armed robbery is the violent theft of property using weapons or force (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2024). Ogunleye (2025) links its rise to unemployment and inequality, while empirical reports from the Nigeria Police Force confirm its persistent prevalence across states. Although earlier

literature often describes armed robbery as a major crime category, more recent studies highlight its economic drivers and organized nature. The synthesis suggests that armed robbery is not merely opportunistic crime but a structured response to economic deprivation and weak enforcement systems.

The literature shows that security threats in Nigeria are interconnected rather than isolated phenomena. While different scholars focus on different dimensions historical, economic, or institutional the dominant explanation converges on structural insecurity rooted in poverty, unemployment, and weak governance. These conditions collectively reinforce criminal activities such as kidnapping, terrorism, and armed robbery, which in turn undermine national development and economic productivity.

Theoretical Framework

Theory is the combination of interrelated concepts that help to achieve the procedure. This study is anchored on three theories which are strain theory, Social Disorganization and Human Security Theory. The theories which are discussed as follows;

Strain Theory

Strain Theory, Originally proposed by the American sociologist Robert K. Merton in 1938, is rooted in Émile Durkheim's earlier thought of anomie, which defined a state of normlessness that often rises during periods of social or economic disruption. Merton argued that in societies like the United States, and by extension other modern societies, there exists a strong cultural emphasis on achieving success, wealth, and upward mobility, yet not all individuals have equal access to the legitimate means of attaining these goals due to structural barriers such as unemployment, poverty, inequality, corruption, and weak institutional systems.

According to the theory, when people are unable to achieve culturally approved goals (such as wealth or success) through legitimate means due to structural barriers like unemployment, poverty, and inequality, they may resort to deviant behaviors, including kidnapping. In the context of Nigeria, and specifically Nigeria, many youths face limited economic opportunities and social mobility. The resulting frustration and pressure to meet societal expectations of wealth and status can push individuals toward criminal acts as alternative means of achieving success. Ritual killings, often believed to bring supernatural wealth, and kidnapping for ransom have become perceived as viable options for survival and status among some marginalized groups.

Social Disorganization Theory

Developed by Shaw and McKay, Social Disorganization Theory emphasizes the breakdown of community institutions and social norms as key contributors to criminal behavior. It argues that crime thrives in communities where social institutions such as the family, education system, and law enforcement are weak or ineffective. In Nigeria, the erosion of moral values, weakening of traditional family structures, poor governance, and ineffective policing contribute to a climate where crime can flourish. Ritual killings and kidnapping are symptoms of broader social disorganization characterized by a lack of community cohesion, poor infrastructure, and absence of effective social control mechanisms. Both Strain Theory and Social Disorganization Theory help to explain the socio-economic and political conditions that give rise to kidnapping and ritual killings. These crimes are not merely acts of individual deviance but are linked to structural problems such as poverty, unemployment, corruption, and weakened institutions. Understanding these underlying causes is crucial for developing policies that can mitigate their impact and promote sustainable development in Nigeria.

Social Disorganization Theory was first developed by sociologists Clifford R. Shaw and Henry D. McKay in the early 20th century as part of the Chicago School of Criminology. The theory emerged from their study of urban neighborhoods in Chicago, where they observed that crime was not evenly distributed but tended to be concentrated in communities characterized by poverty, high residential mobility, ethnic diversity, and weak social institutions. According to the theory, crime and deviance flourish in areas where the traditional institutions of social control such as the family, schools, religious organizations, and community associations are weak or ineffective. In such environments, there is limited collective efficacy, meaning residents are unable to work together to maintain order, enforce norms, or prevent criminal behavior.

Furthermore, political elites and wealthy individuals seeking power or influence during electioneering periods often exploit these weakened community structures, thereby fueling crimes such as kidnapping for political or economic gain. Thus, Social Disorganization Theory provides a useful framework for linking the socio-economic and cultural breakdown in communities with the rise of kidnapping, and it underscores the importance of rebuilding strong social institutions, reinforcing family values, and promoting community-based initiatives as

strategies for curbing these crimes and fostering sustainable socio-political and economic development in Nigeria.

Human Security Theory

A relevant theoretical perspective for explaining the increasing security challenges in Nigeria is the view presented by Omede (2022) on the nature and dynamics of insecurity in contemporary African states. Omede emphasizes that modern security threats such as terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, and organized crime have become complex phenomena that require coordinated national and regional responses. According to Omede (2022), many African countries, including Nigeria, have become vulnerable to security threats because of weak institutional capacity, poor governance, and the inability of state institutions to effectively respond to emerging security problems. Omede argues that insecurity in many African states is closely linked to structural weaknesses within governance systems. These weaknesses include inadequate security infrastructure, corruption, poor intelligence coordination, and limited collaboration among security agencies. As a result, criminal groups and terrorist organizations exploit these weaknesses to carry out activities such as kidnapping, banditry, ritual killings, and insurgency. Omede (2022) explains that when state institutions fail to provide adequate protection for citizens, criminal groups tend to gain influence and operate freely, thereby threatening national stability and development.

Another important aspect of Omede's theoretical perspective is the idea that insecurity is not only a security problem but also a development challenge. According to Omede (2022), persistent insecurity in African countries negatively affects economic growth, investment, and productivity because businesses and individuals cannot operate effectively in an environment characterized by fear and violence. Furthermore, Omede (2022) stresses the need for comprehensive security strategies that involve cooperation among governments, regional organizations, and communities. He argues that addressing contemporary security challenges requires coordinated policies such as intelligence sharing, stronger law enforcement institutions, community participation in security management, and socio-economic reforms that address poverty and unemployment.

In relation to the present study on security challenges in Nigeria: an assessment of kidnapping and ritual killings and their effects on productivity and economic development, Omede's perspective provides an important explanation of how weak institutional structures and socio-

economic problems contribute to the rise of criminal activities. The theory helps explain why crimes such as kidnapping, ritual killings, and armed robbery persist in Nigeria and how these activities disrupt economic productivity and national development. By highlighting the relationship between security, governance, and development, Omede's framework supports the argument that improving security institutions and addressing socio-economic inequalities are essential for achieving sustainable development and productivity in Nigeria.

Strain Theory explains kidnapping through economic pressure indicators, Social Disorganization Theory explains it through weak community and spatial crime concentration indicators, and Human Security Theory explains it through broader development and governance indicators. Together, the three theories provide a comprehensive measurable framework for analyzing kidnapping and its persistence in Nigeria.

Empirical Review

Empirical studies on kidnapping in Nigeria have increasingly focused on its causes, patterns, and devastating effects on socioeconomic development, productivity, and national economic growth. Recent scholarly works consistently show that kidnapping has become a major security threat that disrupts economic activities, reduces investment confidence, and weakens national productivity.

Empirical evidence across Nigeria indicates that rising unemployment, poverty, and inequality are major drivers of kidnapping. A study conducted in Katsina State by Gana and Yusufu (2023) found that unemployment and poverty significantly contribute to the increasing rate of kidnapping for ransom, which in turn affects farming, business operations, and local economic development. The study further revealed that fear of abduction forces many individuals to abandon productive activities such as agriculture and trade, thereby reducing overall productivity in affected regions. Empirical studies have also established that kidnapping directly affects workforce stability and industrial productivity in Nigeria. Onwuka and Achebe (2025) found that frequent abductions create fear among workers, leading to absenteeism, relocation of businesses, and reduced efficiency in productive sectors such as manufacturing and services. The study concluded that insecurity, particularly kidnapping, significantly undermines industrial output and discourages both local and foreign investment. Several empirical studies have shown that kidnapping disrupts business environments and slows down economic development. Research on

socio-economic development in Nigeria indicates that kidnapping increases the cost of doing business, discourages entrepreneurship, and leads to capital flight as investors seek safer environments. It has also been observed that frequent abductions result in the closure of businesses, interruption of supply chains, and reduced agricultural productivity, especially in rural areas affected by insecurity.

Studies further show that kidnapping contributes to a general atmosphere of fear and instability, which negatively affects national productivity. Research using survey-based and econometric approaches revealed that worsening economic conditions, weak security institutions, and poor policing systems significantly increase the perceived severity and occurrence of kidnapping in Nigeria. These conditions reduce citizens' participation in economic activities and weaken trust in governance structures, thereby slowing down economic development processes. Empirical literature also highlights the wider economic consequences of kidnapping, including increased ransom payments, loss of lives, disruption of education, and destruction of livelihoods. In many cases, victims' families and businesses are forced to pay huge sums of money, which reduces household savings and limits investment capacity. Additionally, repeated kidnapping incidents discourage agricultural activities in rural communities, contributing to food insecurity and reduced economic output.

From the reviewed empirical studies, it is evident that kidnapping has severe consequences on productivity and economic development in Nigeria. However, most existing studies have focused more on causes and security implications, with less emphasis on its long-term macroeconomic effects and regional productivity differences. There is also limited integrated research linking kidnapping directly with national economic development indicators in a comprehensive manner. This gap justifies the need for further empirical investigation into how kidnapping affects productivity and economic development in Nigeria.

This study therefore addresses the gap by providing a more integrated empirical analysis of how kidnapping affects productivity and economic development in Nigeria, with particular attention to sectoral and regional productivity variations as well as broader macroeconomic implications.

Research Methodology

This chapter described the procedures adopted in carrying out the study. It focused on the research design, population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, instrument for data

collection, validity and reliability of the instrument, procedure for data collection, and method of data analysis.

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. According to Creswell (2014), survey design is effective for describing population characteristics and examining relationships among variables. Similarly, Kothari (2004) noted that it is suitable for studies involving large populations where generalization of findings is required. The design was considered appropriate because it allowed the use of structured questionnaires and statistical tools such as frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores for analysis.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised individuals directly or indirectly affected by security challenges in Nigeria, particularly kidnapping and related crimes. These included farmers, traders, civil servants, students, and business owners in selected communities. Due to the large and dispersed nature of the population, the study focused on a manageable accessible population within selected local government areas. The total population was estimated at 500 individuals, while a sample of 200 respondents was used for the study. The sample size was considered adequate because it provided sufficient representation of the population and allowed for reliable statistical analysis without compromising data quality.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A total of 200 respondents were selected from the population of 500 individuals. The study adopted a multi-stage sampling technique, combining purposive and simple random sampling methods. Purposive sampling was first used to select communities that were most affected by insecurity, particularly kidnapping. This ensured that respondents had relevant experience with the phenomenon under study. Thereafter, simple random sampling was used to select individual respondents within the selected communities, ensuring that every member of the population had an equal chance of selection. This approach reduced sampling bias and improved the representativeness of the sample.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents

S/N	Categories of Respondence	Total Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
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1	Farmers	120	50	Purposive & Random
2	Traders/Business Owners	100	40	Purposive & Random
3	Civil Servant	100	35	Random
4	Students	100	45	Random
5	Others (Artisans, Transporters, etc.)	80	30	Purposive & Random
Total	All Respondents	500	200	

Source: *Field Research 2026*

Research Instrument

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed in line with the study objectives on kidnapping and its effects on productivity and economic development in Nigeria. The questionnaire was divided into five sections: Section A: Demographic characteristics of respondents (age, gender, education, occupation, and location). Section B: Nature, patterns, and causes of kidnapping in Nigeria. Section C: Socio-economic and institutional factors contributing to kidnapping (e.g., unemployment, poverty, corruption, weak security systems). Section D: Effects of kidnapping on productivity in agriculture, education, commerce, and investment. Section E: Implications for economic development and policy measures. A 4-point Likert scale was used to measure responses as follows: Strongly Agree (SA = 4), Agree (A = 3), Disagree (D = 2), Strongly Disagree (SD = 1). A decision rule was adopted using a mean benchmark of 2.50, where any item with a mean of 2.50 and above was regarded as agreed, while below 2.50 was regarded as disagreed.

Validity of the Instrument

Content validity was established through careful construction of the questionnaire based on literature review, empirical studies, and relevant theories on security challenges and economic development. The instrument was reviewed by the researcher's supervisor and two other experts in the Department of Political Science and Conflict Resolution. Their corrections ensured clarity, relevance, and adequate coverage of the study variables. Ambiguous items were modified or removed to improve validity.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was determined through a pilot study. The questionnaire was administered to 150 respondents in selected areas outside the main study locations (Kwara, Lagos, and Ogun States). The data collected were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha to test internal consistency. A reliability coefficient of **0.87** was obtained, indicating a high level of reliability and internal consistency of the instrument.

Procedure for Data Collection

An introductory letter was obtained from the Head of Department, Political Science and Conflict Resolution, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin. The letter was presented to relevant community leaders and respondents for approval. The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher with the assistance of two trained research assistants. The assistants were trained on proper questionnaire administration and ethical data collection procedures to ensure consistency and accuracy.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Specifically, frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores were used to answer the research questions. For hypothesis testing, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used at a 0.05 level of significance to examine the relationship between kidnapping and economic development indicators. The analysis procedure was applied consistently across all research questions and hypotheses to ensure uniformity and reliability of results.

Distribution of Respondents

Results / Data Presentation

This section presents the results and the data analysis on the assessment of kidnapping and their effects of on the productivity and economic development of Nigeria, and it is presented as follows:

Table 2: Nature, Patterns, and Causes of Kidnapping

S/N	Statements	Mean (X)	Std. Deviation
Q1	Kidnapping has become increasingly widespread across Nigeria.	3.24	0.43
Q2	Certain regions in Nigeria experience higher rates of kidnapping than others.	3.29	0.45
Q3	Kidnapping has significantly expanded from the Niger Delta to other parts of Nigeria.	3.15	0.40

Q4	Ransom-taking is the most common form of kidnapping in Nigeria.	3.17	0.38
Q5	Unemployment and poverty are major causes of kidnapping in Nigeria.	3.06	0.24

Source: Field Research 2026

The results in Table 1, above presented in the table show respondents' perceptions of the nature and causes of kidnapping in Nigeria using mean scores and standard deviations. For Q1 ($\bar{X} = 3.24$, $SD = 0.43$), respondents agreed that kidnapping has become increasingly widespread across Nigeria. The high mean indicates strong consensus that the phenomenon is growing in scale, while the relatively low standard deviation shows that responses were closely clustered around the mean, indicating agreement among respondents. For Q2 ($\bar{X} = 3.29$, $SD = 0.45$), respondents strongly agreed that some regions experience higher rates of kidnapping than others. This is the highest mean score in the table, suggesting that regional variation in kidnapping prevalence is widely recognized. The standard deviation also indicates moderate consistency in responses.

In Q3 ($\bar{X} = 3.15$, $SD = 0.40$), respondents agreed that kidnapping has expanded from its earlier concentration in the Niger Delta to other parts of Nigeria. This reflects a perceived geographical diffusion of the crime, with relatively low variation in responses, suggesting general agreement. For Q4 ($\bar{X} = 3.17$, $SD = 0.38$), respondents agreed that ransom-taking is the most common motive for kidnapping in Nigeria. The closeness of responses (low SD) suggests a shared understanding that economic gain is the dominant driver of kidnapping activities. Finally, Q5 ($\bar{X} = 3.06$, $SD = 0.24$) indicates agreement that unemployment and poverty are major causes of kidnapping. Although this has the lowest mean among the items, it still falls within the agreement range, and the very low standard deviation suggests a high level of consensus among respondents.

Table 3: Socio-Economic and Institutional Factors

S/N	Statements	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std. Deviation
Q6	High unemployment rates contribute significantly to the rise of kidnapping in Nigeria.	3.14	0.46
Q7	Poverty is a key factor influencing individuals to engage in kidnapping.	3.16	0.42
Q8	Nigerian security agencies are ineffective in curbing kidnapping activities.	3.17	0.38
Q9	Corruption within government institutions contributes to the persistence of kidnapping.	3.12	0.33

Q10	Lack of education and awareness promotes the spread of kidnapping activities.	3.21	0.51
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Source: Field Research 2026

The results presented in the table 2, above reflect respondents' perceptions of the socio-economic and institutional factors contributing to kidnapping in Nigeria. For Q6 ($\bar{X} = 3.14$, $SD = 0.46$), respondents agreed that high unemployment rates significantly contribute to the rise of kidnapping. The mean score indicates general acceptance of unemployment as a key driver, while the moderate standard deviation suggests reasonable consistency in responses. For Q7 ($\bar{X} = 3.16$, $SD = 0.42$), respondents also agreed that poverty is a major factor influencing individuals to engage in kidnapping. The closeness of responses indicates a shared perception that economic deprivation plays a central role in the crime.

In Q8 ($\bar{X} = 3.17$, $SD = 0.38$), respondents agreed that Nigerian security agencies are ineffective in curbing kidnapping activities. This reflects a widely held concern about institutional weakness, and the relatively low standard deviation shows strong agreement among respondents. For Q9 ($\bar{X} = 3.12$, $SD = 0.33$), respondents agreed that corruption within government institutions contributes to the persistence of kidnapping. The low standard deviation indicates a high level of consensus, suggesting that corruption is consistently viewed as an enabling factor. Finally, Q10 ($\bar{X} = 3.21$, $SD = 0.51$) shows that respondents agreed that lack of education and awareness promotes the spread of kidnapping activities. This item recorded the highest mean score in this section, indicating strong agreement that educational deficiency plays a significant role, although the slightly higher standard deviation suggests mild variation in opinions.

Table 4: Effects of Kidnapping on Productivity

Q/N	Statements	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std. Deviation
Q11	Kidnapping has negatively affected agricultural productivity in Nigeria.	3.16	0.42
Q12	Kidnapping has disrupted educational activities such as school attendance and learning.	3.17	0.38
Q13	Business operations and commercial activities are negatively impacted by kidnapping.	3.12	0.33
Q14	Kidnapping discourages both local and foreign investment in Nigeria.	3.21	0.51

Q15	Kidnapping reduces workers' productivity and overall economic output.	3.20	0.52
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Source: Field Research 2026

The results in the table present respondents' views on the effects of kidnapping on productivity and economic activities in Nigeria. For Q11 ($\bar{X} = 3.16$, $SD = 0.42$), respondents agreed that kidnapping has negatively affected agricultural productivity in Nigeria. This suggests that insecurity has reduced farming activities, while the low standard deviation indicates a relatively consistent perception among respondents. For Q12 ($\bar{X} = 3.17$, $SD = 0.38$), respondents agreed that kidnapping has disrupted educational activities such as school attendance and learning. The closeness of responses shows a shared understanding that insecurity significantly affects the education sector.

In Q13 ($\bar{X} = 3.12$, $SD = 0.33$), respondents agreed that business operations and commercial activities are negatively impacted by kidnapping. The low standard deviation reflects strong agreement that kidnapping disrupts economic transactions and market stability. For Q14 ($\bar{X} = 3.21$, $SD = 0.51$), respondents agreed that kidnapping discourages both local and foreign investment in Nigeria. This item recorded one of the highest mean scores, indicating strong consensus that insecurity reduces investor confidence, although the slightly higher standard deviation suggests minor variation in responses. Finally, Q15 ($\bar{X} = 3.20$, $SD = 0.52$) shows agreement that kidnapping reduces workers' productivity and overall economic output. The high mean indicates strong recognition of its impact on labour efficiency and national output, while the moderate standard deviation reflects some variation in respondents' opinions.

Table 5: Economic Implications and Policy Measures

Q/N	Statements	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std. Deviation
Q16	Kidnapping has a negative impact on Nigeria's economic growth and development.	3.03	0.34
Q17	Insecurity caused by kidnapping reduces government revenue generation.	3.21	0.44
Q18	Kidnapping has serious long-term consequences for Nigeria's economy.	3.12	0.36
Q19	Current government policies are ineffective in addressing kidnapping in Nigeria.	3.23	0.42
Q20	Stronger policy measures and security reforms can effectively reduce kidnapping in Nigeria.	3.22	0.44

Source: Field Research 2026

The results presented in the table reflect respondents' perceptions of the broader economic implications of kidnapping and the effectiveness of policy responses in Nigeria. For Q16 ($\bar{X} = 3.03$, $SD = 0.34$), respondents agreed that kidnapping has a negative impact on Nigeria's economic growth and development. Although this item recorded the lowest mean in the section, it still falls within the agreement range, indicating a general consensus that kidnapping undermines economic progress. The low standard deviation suggests that responses were fairly consistent. For Q17 ($\bar{X} = 3.21$, $SD = 0.44$), respondents agreed that insecurity caused by kidnapping reduces government revenue generation. This implies that reduced economic activities and investment negatively affect tax revenues and public income, with moderate consistency in responses.

In Q18 ($\bar{X} = 3.12$, $SD = 0.36$), respondents agreed that kidnapping has serious long-term consequences for Nigeria's economy. This reflects awareness that the impact of kidnapping extends beyond immediate disruptions to broader structural economic effects. For Q19 ($\bar{X} = 3.23$, $SD = 0.42$), respondents agreed that current government policies are ineffective in addressing kidnapping in Nigeria. This item recorded one of the highest mean scores, indicating strong dissatisfaction with existing policy responses, with relatively consistent views among respondents. Finally, Q20 ($\bar{X} = 3.22$, $SD = 0.44$) shows that respondents agreed that stronger policy measures and security reforms can effectively reduce kidnapping in Nigeria. This suggests optimism that improved governance and security reforms could mitigate the problem, although the moderate standard deviation indicates slight variation in opinions.

Recommendations

The study recommends a more targeted, multi-layered security and governance approach to effectively address kidnapping in Nigeria. First, security agencies such as the police, military, and civil defense should be strengthened through improved funding, modern equipment (e.g., surveillance systems, tracking technologies, and communication tools), and continuous professional training. There is also a need for better inter-agency coordination to ensure rapid response and intelligence sharing during kidnapping incidents. Second, the national intelligence system should be restructured and modernized to enhance early warning and prevention mechanisms. Real-time data collection, digital surveillance, and community-based intelligence networks should be integrated to detect and disrupt kidnapping operations before they occur.

Third, meaningful judiciary reforms are required to ensure swift prosecution and strict punishment of kidnappers. Delays in trials and weak sentencing frameworks should be addressed to strengthen deterrence and restore public confidence in the justice system. Fourth, the implementation of community policing should be intensified. Local communities should be actively involved in security management through structured neighborhood watch systems, improved police-community relations, and the empowerment of traditional and local leaders to support intelligence gathering. Finally, broader socio-economic policies remain essential. Government should expand job creation programmes, vocational training, and youth empowerment schemes to reduce the economic motivation for kidnapping. In addition, creating a stable and investment-friendly environment will help address the structural drivers of insecurity. A coordinated approach combining security agency reform, intelligence modernization, judiciary strengthening, community participation, and economic empowerment is necessary for sustainable reduction of kidnapping in Nigeria.

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