Unemployment, Consumption of Dangerous Drugs, and the Cost of Kidnapping in South East Nigeria

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Abstract

The failures of successive government since 1999 has cast doubt on the ability of current political leaders to generate development. Impunity and brazen theft of national and subnational resources are drifting the country toward a failed status. Bad governance, corruption, ethnic politics, and unemployment have driven the national economy to an all-time low. Youths are frustrated, engage in sale and consumption of dangerous drugs and the cost of this misrule has elevated criminality to a frightening height, particularly kidnapping. In exploring this behemoth, research adopts the system and frustration-aggression theories to define the indices of bad governance, loss of hope by youths, resort to hard drugs and the implication of kidnapping on national development. Using a qualitative method that relies more on key informants and secondary data, this paper revealed that bad governance and frustration motivated the sale and consumption of dangerous drugs which elevated kidnapping to a more dangerous level that has had unbearable consequences. Data were content analyzed.

KEYWORDS: **Bad governance; Cost of Kidnapping; Dangerous drugs; Frustration; Youth unemployment**

Introduction

Crises in Nigeria have been attributed to failures of successive governments to embark on proper policy-driven development actions, unfortunately the entire system seem to have collapsed owing to bad governance. Political actors capitalize on the manipulated ethnic, religious and regional differences to enrich themselves at the expense of the citizens. As it stands, the industrial sector is in comatose, the thriving agricultural sector that holds the key to food security and provision of raw materials have not been protected as criminal elements have taken over both governable and ungovernable land spaces for agriculture, (Ijioma, et al. 2025). There is no strategic plan to revive moribund industries such as the textile, vehicle assembly plants, agro-based, iron and steel, refineries, aluminum, fertilizer, and other strategic industries that served as the pillar of the country's economy. All these had provided jobs for a very large population but since the successive governments relied basically on revenue from the oil and gas, those who were gainfully employed in all these sectors have been thrown into the unemployment market. This situation is made worse with the rate at which foreign companies are divesting from the country's economy. In July 2024, the Director-General of Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association, NECA, Adewale Oyerinde, affirmed that 15 multinational companies have either divested or partially closed operations in the country in the last three years. He asserts that the 15 companies have a combined value-chained staff strength of over 20,000 employees, leading to massive job losses. Some of these companies were Diageo, Kimberley-Clark, manufacturers of Huggies and Kotex brand of diapers; US based Procter and Gamble (P&G); GlaxoSmithkline (GSK); Unilever and Sanofi-Awenti Nigeria. He also argues that 'we cannot be talking of growing our economy when the real investors are leaving' (Oso, 2024: 13). Oyerinde laments that their exit has "dire consequences not only for organized businesses but also for labour, government revenue and the households; massive job losses across sectors, which would continue to create insecurity challenges". If the survival prospects of these companies are at stake, what about individuals in this chaotic economic environment the country faces. The unemployment market keeps expanding due

to the annual turnover of graduates from the tertiary institutions, without practical measures to equip them.

Added to bad governance is corruption which has dominated national discourse as public office holders use state resources as their personal estate. Ijioma et al (2020); Ijewereme (2015) & Okoye (2012), affirm the view that corruption is a constant phenomenon because in 2012, it was estimated that the country lost over $400 billion to corruption since independence and this evil has impaired development of both citizens and the country. It is alleged many politicians, senior military officers and economic saboteurs in the banking sector collude with government preferred importers and investors to steal the country dry. These prominent individuals dominate the oil and gas industries, have shares in tax collected by subnational governments because they had the opportunity of being former governors or presidents, and this primitive accumulation of ill-gotten wealth has entrenched vote rigging, abuse of right and disobedience to the rule of law, the hijack of the judiciary, demoralization of the morale in the security agencies, and budgets have become mere finial exercise. All these have frittered away the country's wealth, (Ralby (2017); Naijabeat.com 2022).

Unemployment has become a debilitating cancer which the youths thought could be pampered with dangerous drugs, unfortunately, the sale and consumption of these drugs is fast destroying a large proportion of the productive population. Many have decided to succumb to its destructive powers while others use it to motivate their criminal operations. No wonder, Boko Haram, Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP), terrorists in the North West, Lakurawa in the Sokoto axis, Mehmuda in Kwara State, terrorist herdsmen seizing lands violently from indigenous groups in North Central, Unknown gunmen in the South East and militants in the Niger Delta, embark on daily routine of violence. These groups adopt kidnapping as a financial drive to equip themselves with adequate resources.

Okoli and Aina (2024) and Barnett, J (2021), implicated the role of drugs in banditry in northern Nigeria. They argued that "the nexus between drugs and banditry resonates prominently within the prevailing public discourse in Nigeria and beyond". According to the Director of media in Nigeria's National Drug Law

Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Mr. Femi Babafemi, 'insurgents and bandits arrested often show withdrawal symptoms after days in custody of law enforcement agents', (Barnett, Rufai & Abdulaziz, 2022). Literature have revealed that many of these criminals who indulge in drug consumption to enable them accomplish their heinous acts such as kidnapping, arson, murder or even organ harvest, are well educated youths. It is therefore the concern of this paper to explore the nexus between bad governance and unemployment on one hand, then explain how frustration has increased the consumption of dangerous drugs by criminals. Finally, the paper examines the cost of kidnapping on the development of citizens and the country's economy.

Statement of the problem

Several literatures have given explanation to plethora of challenges facing Nigeria as a country and they all point to leadership crises. The history of Nigeria since independence has been dominated by poor leadership resulting from ethno-religious and regional politics. Evidently, successive governments have not had the political will to implement people-conceived and centred policies without recourse to where the leadership comes from. Due to these factors, the fragmented elite have promoted self-enrichment policies and poverty has remained ingrained in the DNA of ordinary Nigerians. Professor Alemika of Federal University Lokoja argued that Nigeria's insecurity crisis is rooted in poor governance and corruption, (Yahaya 2025). The systemic corruption, weak institutions, lack of accountability, and those socio-ethnic and religious division are further escalated by poverty, unemployment, and insecurity. It is against this background that this paper tries to extrapolate the nexus between unemployment and the consumption of dangerous drugs in promoting crime with particular reference to the cost of kidnapping in Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. In what ways have bad governance forced youths to indulged in sale and consumption of dangerous drugs in Nigeria?
2. How has the use of dangerous drugs impacted on the crime of kidnapping in Nigeria and South East in particular?
3. What are the costs of kidnapping on the development of the South East region?

4. In what ways could the crime of kidnapping be curbed and in if possible eradicated?

Conceptual clarification of leadership and bad governance, unemployment, dangerous drugs, and crime of kidnapping

The Nigerian problem has always been that of leadership; the inability of leaders to generate development through policies designed to actualize such. Achebe in his book, "The trouble with Nigeria," succinctly puts it that the bane of development:

> is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land, climate, water, air, or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to their responsibility, to the challenge of personal example, which is the hallmark of true leadership (Achebe, 1984:1).

Achebe views Nigerian leadership as destructive than constructive. Instead of coordinating all the resources available in the country for the good of all, they resort to ethnic, religious and corrupt ways which have been the bane of the country's development. But Schriesheim, et al (1978), conceptualized leadership as 'a social influence process in which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of subordinates in an effort to reach organizational goals'. And this is reinforced in GLOBE's research which argues that leadership is "the ability of an individual to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of organizations of which they are members' (House, et al (1997).

From GLOBE's definition, leadership is more than wielding power, and exercising authority as exhibited by Nigerian politicians, rather it entails positive and result oriented mentoring, coaching, inspiring and motivating. The Russian leadership trait includes leadership motivation (power and responsibility); drive (achievement, ambition, initiative, energy and tenacity); honesty and integrity (dual ethical standard and using connections) and self-confidence, (Puffer, 1994:42). In assessing the political and economic leaders in Nigeria using all the traits, none is aimed at galvanizing the resources available in the country to generate development for all devoid of ethnic, religious, regional and self-serving

sentiments. Every leader who appears on the scene always rely on his selfish aggrandizement while pretending to favour his ethnic, religious and regional attachment. The end result has always been a complete corruption of the system that create more development challenges. No wonder, every new government is worse than its predecessor. Fact check this position. Unfortunately, Nigerian political office holders wield so much power that they are worshipped, they negate the positive form of mentoring by converting state resources to their private property, and they inspire their followers to steal, praise-singing, and that the country does not belong to the ordinary citizens but those who have the ability to grab power at all cost. In this situation, citizens are not given the opportunity to contribute toward effectiveness and success of the country though constructive criticism, and participating in an election where votes count. Rigging of election, hijacking of power at both the central and subnational levels are the bane of leadership in Nigeria, while public funds meant for development are diverted into private pockets. These are the culture upheld by leaders which invariably destroys the people's faith in government and the country. Therefore. The human element in the leadership concept in Nigeria has corrupted the system of governance. The economy is sabotaged by those who should rebuild it: industries are closing up due to inclement political atmosphere, there is insecurity instigated by the political class in 2014 in order to remove a sitting president and since then, unemployment has become behemoth raising an army of criminal elements terrorizing the country. Frustration has lured wicked businessmen and women to import dangerous drugs which the youths consume to alleviate their sufferings but many have been recruited into all forms of crime using drugs in executing their heinous activities. Therefore, the notion of leadership has been corrupted and there is nobody that can provide positive leadership for development.

Corruption

Corruption is a pervasive behavior that is more dangerous than ethnic politics. It destroys generations by the fact of the senseless stealing of public funds and the shortchanging of people by others. It includes the manufacture of fake products; the deprivation of essential infrastructure for all citizens; the deprivation of opportunities meant for ordinary citizens by those in positions of authority. This pervasion stifles both individual and collective development of the society. Lewis (2006) defines corruption as "an impairment of virtue and moral principles", while

the World Bank and Transparency International cited in Ogbeidi (2012), view it as the abuse of public office for private gains for the benefit of the holder of the office or some third party. Heidenheimer and Johnson (1993:6) argue that this unethical behavior violates the norms of the system of political order. They insist that political corruption can be for private and group enrichment and for power preservation purposes. This type of corruption threatens good governance, sustainable development, democratic process, and fair business practices. Drawing from the conceptualization of this debilitating cancer, it becomes difficult to design and implement policies that would promote the development of the individual and the country. It breeds the abuse of rights, neglect of government institution and economic infrastructure; increases greed and all manner of criminality; citizens lose their economic opportunities, and resort to crude means of survival. In this regard, those who should have reengineered and sustained the wheel of development, invariably creating perverse influence on the frustrated citizens sustained by the consumption of dangerous drugs. Several literatures have shown a nexus between frustration and consumption of hard drugs and criminality.

Presently, the Nigerian state has been encumbered by terrorism, banditry, armed robbery, self-agitation, kidnapping for ransom and organ harvest. With many hiding under the cloak of political, ethnic, economic, and religious struggle for survival. The modus operandi of the herdsmen show a defined process of land grabbing through the elimination of indigenous owners. All these are promoted by some political office holders to cover up their corrupt practices. A prominent member of the All Progressive Congress (APC), Alhaji Kawu Buraje on national television openly claimed that his party brought Fulani militias from sierra Leone, Mali, Senegal, Niger and Chad for election purposes in 2015 (Obinna Nwachukwu reporting in BusinessDay, August 2, 2022). Apparently, politicians can destroy their country deliberately for want of power. Today, communities on the Plateau, Benue, Zamfara, Sokoto, Enugu, Ebonyi, and recently in Oguta area of Imo State are sacked, citizens murdered and resources destroyed without the security agencies responding with greater fire power.

Successive governments, both military and civilian have not taken any positive action towards fighting corruption and this has affected the key sectors of the

country's economy leaving trails of unemployment, food insecurity, poverty, high level criminality, which have impacted negatively on the country's national security, (Ijioma, et al 2025). Thus the vulnerable nature of the country has been made possible by years of corruption with little effort made in fighting the scourge. Cases of consumption of dangerous drugs have either rendered many youths useless leading to increase in suicide, crisis in marriages, general insecurity and signs of state failure.

Dangerous drugs and its consumption has become another social crisis in the history of Nigeria; this has attracted much attention since Muhammadu Buhari and Bola Ahmed Tinubu's governments since 2015.

Deitch et al (2000:393) revealed that the association between alcohol, drugs and crime exists outside America as well. The rates of crime have been escalating in all developed countries, with exception of South Korea and Japan. The crime rate in both of those industrial nations has been in as well, but not as rapidly as it has in other countries. They attributed the rise to cocaine crisis and that criminal behavior comes before drugs although both complement the other. Their study further revealed manipulation, low tolerance for frustration, and other factors attract youths to drugs. Their study supported Andrews & Bonta's 1998, list other criminogenic risk factors as alienation from general socialization, identifying with whole groups of people who have been socialized into gang behavior, an entitlement mentality, features of rage appropriate to a victim, egocentrism, the absence of empathy or remorse, blaming and externalizing as a common way of handling life, attachment to criminal activities as a form of self-definition, etc. they argued that "there is no one more dangerous than someone who is paranoid and afraid he is going to get caught. Therefore, he just has to violent in carrying out his criminal activity. In this regard, crime is aided by drugs, just as drugs also reinforces crime. Another important connection between drugs and violence is the economic-impulsive. If a drug addict runs out of money and drug, he might take any dangerous arm to rob anyone he sees. This is motivated by economic deprivation. Many Nigerian youths who cannot follow the societal slow means of sustaining themselves in the face of the biting economic crisis, have been lured into drugs or crime and each complements the other. Some of these dangerous drugs are alcohol, fentanyl, heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, Xanax,

oxycodone, ketamine, morphine, diazepam, cannabis (marijuana), etc. are used consumed as stimulants.

Theoretical framework

The study is anchored on the system, frustration-aggression and cultural violence theories.

The systems theory was strengthened by Parsons in which he conceived the society as an interlocking network of acting systems. He came up with four functional prerequisites, which must be performed in a given social system: pattern maintenance, adaptation, goal attainment and integration. Pattern maintenance means the capacity of the society or social system to maintain itself against hostile environment; adaptation involves the ability to maintain a stable equilibrium irrespective of the crises within the environment, that is the ability to adjust to changes; goal attainment constitutes the ability of a society to provide the needs of members and to assist them to achieve their personal goals in life, while integration refers to the interaction among the members of the society through socialization. All these combine to maintain a workable system, but in Nigeria, mal-administration, corruption, violence have made the country a disorganized system where citizens do not exist in the eyes of public office holders. Governance has remained a disaster that has led to continued frustration and destruction of the future of youths. There is no positive pattern to be maintained and instead of a well-crafted form of socialization, society is stratified along ethnic, religious and regional lines, resulting in marginalization, economic hardship, aggravated poverty, and violence aided by drugs.

The frustration-aggression theory encapsulates a deprived state of being experienced by citizens. It is often dismissed as a transient by-product of thwarted aspirations, a disruptive and uncivilized behavior attributed to Cain. While it has been used to explain the behaviour of animals (Berkowitz, 1988; Scott, 1948), it has been adopted to examine human behavior. As proposed by John Dollard, when people are denied opportunities they resort to other unlawful means to achieve their goals. In Nigeria, due to bad governance characterized by corruption, the economy has been depressed resulting in unemployment and poverty. Youths are depressed, resorting to consumption of dangerous drugs and those who are

inclined to crime have had to use it to aid the criminal act of kidnapping. Violence has dominated daily news and the cost of this criminal act has taken a toll on the general population.

The culture of violence theory has been adopted to clarify the theme of this paper. The culture of violence theory conceptualizes the pervasiveness of specific violent patterns within a society. It explains how cultures and societies can sanction violent behavior, (Galtung, 2016. In Nigeria structural violence has taken the form of deprivation of the ordinary citizens by the elite and political office holders. Corruption has become an entrenched violent culture depriving the Nigerian people of funds for the provision of infrastructure, development of the economy through industrialization, good and adequate education, and creation of a clement environment for individual development and national development. Cases of corruption has dominated the history of Nigeria starting from the colonial to date, thereby creating environmental obstacles to growth. Unemployment has rendered the youths idle without a motivating environment and proper leadership to promote growth. The educational model does not produce self-reliant graduates in an environment where there is no effort to develop the economy through motivating the individuals who form the private sector. Galtung argues that there are situations where acts of violence are built into systems of society, legitimized as entails in the country through adopting different standards for different people. The federal government marginalizes the South East in national employment in the civil services and political sector. There are positions reserved for people from the North West, North East and the South West, and may be North Central, while others from the South East, and South-South are excluded. There are different cut-off marks in Federal tertiary institutions and for those entering Federal government colleges. The so-called federal character principle has since been jettisoned. And the South East has been marginalized since the end of the civil war. Different narrations and intimidating statements inflame the already dangerous situation. With the prevalence of unemployment, all forms of cultural violence like production, sale and consumption of dangerous drugs have motivated the kidnapping culture whose cost is enormous. Victims pay millions when captured and tortured, and several have died from torture or killed and their bodies dismembered. The unchecked use of drugs has created mental issues as it has produced demented humans who have killed many innocent citizens.

Literature Review

Several scholars have enriched literature on the activities of kidnapping in Nigeria but they segmented their study. However, current paper would investigate the cost, which is holistic in attempting to look at the general impact of this scourge on the development of Nigeria. Akagu, et al. (2024) investigated the Effect of kidnapping on socio-economic development in Nigeria and the study revealed that kidnapping is a serious threat to the socio-economic development of the country particularly to the people of Dekina in Kogi State who have lost several lives and their means of livelihood. This has prevented prominent individuals from visiting home. The study was anchored on the social structure and anomie theories. Findings established that the activities of kidnappers have caused serious danger to the lives and properties of people in Dekina. Against this challenge, study recommended massive sensitization of the public about kidnapping or hostage taking and the strategies adopted by kidnappers. It further recommended job creation and proper funding of law enforcement agencies as adequate measures to curb kidnapping.

Okoli & Aina (2024) in Pills, substances and brigandage: Exploring the drug factor in Nigeria's banditry crisis examines the role of drugs in the prevailing banditry crisis in Nigeria. It investigated this against the deteriorating trajectory of the banditry crisis in northern Nigeria in which the issue of drugs and substances has featured greatly. This study established that some existing literature have revealed the complex nexuses between the organized crimes, such as terrorism, arms trafficking, illicit mining, mercenary militancy, and banditry without much work on the linkage between banditry and illicit drug proliferation and abuse. Therefore, there was the need for the present discourse. Using a qualitative method that relies on desk research and key informant interviews, the paper posits that the (ab)use of drugs and toxic substances by bandits has been a critical catalyst for the banditry crisis in Nigeria. Yusufu, et al (2023) investigated kidnapping for ransom and its socio-economic effects in Nigeria's North-West (2010-2022): Evidence from Katsina. The study deployed Routine Activity Theory (RAT) as its framework of analysis while methodologically the paper adopted a mixed method with quantitative dominating in data collection and analysis. Research hypotheses were tested at 5% level of significance using chi-square. Findings revealed that unemployment and poverty were the major factors for the rise in kidnapping in

Katsina State. It also showed that loss of lives, financial loss through payment of ransom, forceful closure of business, forceful closure of schools, and restrictions in farming activities were the major socio-economic effects of kidnapping in the state. Study further revealed that the State adopted the amnesty programme and dialogue to curtail their activities but this has not yielded any positive result because their sponsors are yet to be identified. However, study recommends a new government policy on employment and poverty alleviation, and to identify their sponsors and deal with them. Inyang & Ubong (2013) studied The Social problem of kidnapping and its implications on the socio-economic development of Nigeria: A study of Uyo Metropolis and elicited data through questionnaire from 260 randomly selected respondents comprising policemen/women from various departments at the state police headquarters, Ikot Akpan, lawyers from state judiciary headquarters as well as clergy men and members of the public. Data were analyzed using chi square at 0.05 level of significance. The hypotheses showed that there is a significant relationship between the recurring rates of kidnapping and the people's culture. It also revealed that there is a correlation between kidnapping and the disposition of government. Findings revealed that kidnapping is a result of laxity in implementation process to prosecute offenders. The study discouraged payment of ransom by victims' relatives and that government should create job opportunities for the teeming population of youths to checkmate their recruitment. The gap that current paper wants to fill is the general cost this menace has had on Nigeria generally.

Discussion

The corollary between bad governance and unemployment in Nigeria: Frustration-aggression and the complementary role between drugs and criminality

General Christopher Musa, the Chief of Defence Staff of the Nigerian army made startling revelation about the terrorists in Northern Nigeria:

> A significant number of insurgents and terrorists encountered on the battle field are under the influence of hard drugs, which not only dulls their sense of fear but also makes them uncontrollably violent and irrational. … this often leads to a dangerous resistance even after being shot.

He further said that:

> They are heavily drugged, and that's why you see some of them still coming at you even after being wounded. These substances cloud their judgment. That's why after arrest, we don't immediately begin interrogation. We isolate and hold them for at least three days to allow the drugs to clear from their system. Their state of mind and tactics used by terrorists fighting against Nigerian forces, stressing the grave danger they pose to national security.

The history of terrorism in Nigeria beginning with the Boko Haram challenge has always been linked to the drugs which has aided their atrocious activities. And their modus operandi have been to combine mass murder with kidnapping for ransom and forceful marriage to satisfy their evil craving for sex. Consumption of hard drug has strong relationship with their activities as confirmed by General Christopher Musa. The kidnapping of school children like the 270 Chibok girls 14 April 2014; raiding of Government Girls Science and Technical College in Yobe; on 17 February, 2021, 42 students from Government Science College in Niger were kidnapped; other schools affected were Bethel Baptist Secondary School, UBE Rama Primary School, and Federal College of Forestry Mechanization in Kaduna state; Government Girls Secondary School in Zamfara state Government Science in Niger state; Islamic school, and Government Science Secondary school in in Katsina State; Kakara students in Katsina State on 11 December 2020, (Onuoha & Akogwu, 2022; Mosadomi, 2021; Yusuf, 2021; France24, (2020) Odunsi, 2022).

Cost of kidnapping on the growth and development of Nigeria

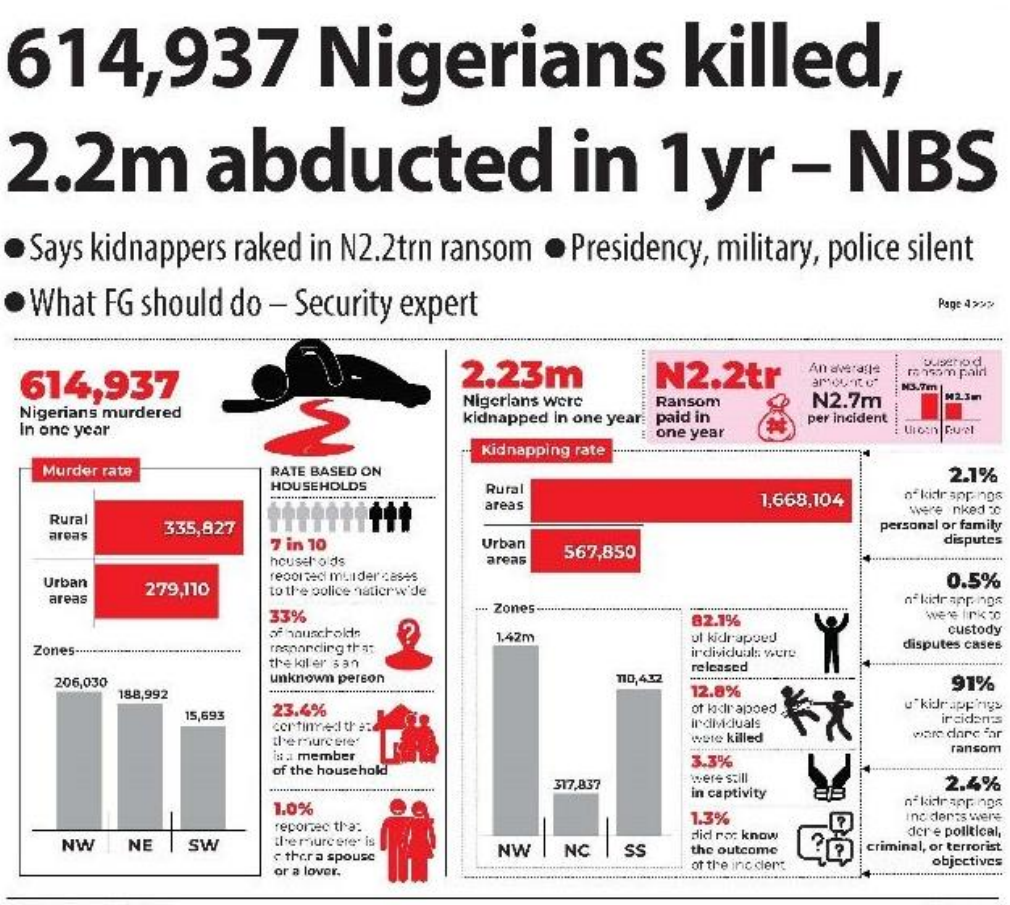
In December 18, 2024 Daily Trust Newspaper report, 614,937 Nigerians were killed, 2.2million abducted in 1 year and it was estimated that kidnappers raked in N2.2trn ransom (NBS, 2024). There are unreported cases of kidnapping and death of citizens in very remote areas whose reportage has remained a mirage. Besides these tangible cases, there is fear of being kidnapped on Nigerian roads and Nigerian security have allowed the criminals to adopted their crude mode of dressing when arresting criminals. The criminals shield their identities by not revealing their faces and they wear uniforms of security agencies. Kidnapping has

been depleting the population of the country and has graduated to a level of organ and human parts trade for whatever reason that they do it.

In daily Trust of 22 May, 2020, reported that Nigerians paid $18.34million ransom to kidnappers in 9 years, that is between 2011 and April 2020 to secure the release of their loved ones (SBM Intelligence, 2020). According to this report, between January 2016 and March 2020, $11million exchanged hand between kidnappers and their victims. An analysis of this report showed that River State had the highest number of kidnap incidents with 120, while Kaduna came second with 117. Three other states from the South-South region joined Rivers to in the top 10: Delta 96, Bayelsa 85, and Edo with 55 kidnap incidents. The report noted that insecurity had become a profitable venture for its merchants which seem to rival the illegal arms running businesses in the region. On fatalities, it reported that the high fatality rate of kidnap attempts has close link with the Boko Haram terrorist and Fulani herdsmen militia. But this has been made more complex with the activities of other terrorist groups in the North West ravaging Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Sokoto, Kogi, Benue, Enugu, and Ebonyi. The terrorists in the North West swoop on communities and schools carting away hundreds of citizens. Destruction of lives no longer mean anything to them. In November 2011, SBM reports that $545,000 was paid to secure the freedom of Ernest Ohunyon in Edo State; $6868 was paid to free Ojo Ekundayo and Benjamin Iluyomade in Ondo State at the end of March 2020. At least, $18,343,067 changed hands between victim and kidnappers. All these have been linked to what the report described as the 'democratization of the kidnap industry' because the kidnap economy makes more money.

The SBM report further listed some of the kidnap kingpins such as Hamisu Bala, aka Wadume in the North West and North Central, Chukwudi Onuamadike aka Evans in the Lagos axis. Wadume was said to have collected N106.3million as ransom after kidnapping Usman Garba, a petrol dealer in Takum, Taraba State on 16 February 2019 from an initial demand of N200million. Yet the victim was killed. Major highways have become insecure as they mount road blocks pretending to be security agencies wearing police and army uniforms on 'stop and search'. These roads remain nightmares to users. Many of the high profile victims include the chairman of Basic Education Commission (UBEC), Dr. Mohammed Abubakar and

his daughter, Mike Ejiofor, a former Deputy Director of Directorate of State Services, Brigadier General Tsigar, former Director-General, National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), justice Abdul Dogo of the Federal High Court, justice Chioma Nwosu-Iheme of the Court of Appeal, Benin division in October 2019, with her orderly shot dead, Alhaji Adamu Mohammed, the elder brother to the Bauchi state Governor, Bala Mohammed, after paying N50million ransom,



Source: NBS and Daily Trust, Dec. 18th 2024

Daily Trust report of 18 December. 2024 analyzed further the cost of kidnaping in Nigeria with a graphic description employing bar charts and other symbolic

representations. It revealed that kidnappers collected N2.2trnransom in one year and killed 614,937 citizens comprising 335,827 rural dwellers while 279,110 were urban dwellers. According to zones, the number according to deaths include the North West was 206,030, North East 188,992, South West 15,693; and those kidnapped by zones include North West 1.42m, North Central 317,837, South-South 110,452 comprising 1,668,104m rural dwellers and 567,850 urban dwellers. Out of these, those released constituted 82.1%, those killed 12.8% and the ones that cannot be determined 1.3%. Of N2.2trn recorded as ransom paid, the average of N2.7m per incident was revealed. However, Wycliff (2025; ICIR 2023) reported that between 2013 and 2023, the south east recorded 791 kidnapped victims with a ransom of N650,250,000 ($2,134,592).

Besides the financial and human losses adumbrated above, this has affected education in Nigeria, as many students have been abducted or stayed away in the North East and North West as a means of extorting money from government. This was corroborated by Yusufu et al (2023). Imagine the two region which have been grappling poor enrolment in schools even at the tertiary level have been hit by another wave of backwardness initially promoted by the Boko haram who abducted students in large number while preaching their philosophy of western education is haram. Umar et al (2024:3225) argued that kidnapping has posed a severe threat to the safety and academic stability of higher institutions in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Academic environments contribute immensely to the academic growth of students but when security agencies can no longer guarantee the safety and stability of institutions of learning, education would suffer and lecturers cannot discharge their duties efficiently. Omojemite (2025) further argued that kidnapping disrupts students' academic performance through poor attendance and the students are demotivated generally because of increased anxiety and fear. The economy has been significant and detrimentally affected by creating a climate of fear and instability that discourages investment: foreign direct investment and domestic investment have decreased drastically including infrastructure. It has also disrupted business operation, and hinders growth generally. Productivity has reduced in the industrial and agricultural sectors leading to workforce migration, and a drastic reduction in food supply and other necessaries. Many youths from the North have moved down South abandoning their farms and this has created

food crisis. It has undermined agricultural activities in the country creating limited resources and increased government expenditure.

The high incidence of Kidnapping has weakened governance by undermining public trust in government and institutions as government keep pampering, and negotiating with them without unleashing its force against them. It does seem as if the security agencies are either afraid to confront them or ill-equipped to protect the people, unless government is complicit in the business. As a result, insecurity pervades everywhere. The roads are generally not safe as they swoop on victims in almost all Nigerian highways. Few years ago, the rail line from Abuja to Kaduna was attacked and commuters abducted while others were killed. Victims narrated their ordeal as the terrorists kept releasing videos of torturing the victims were subjected to. This has created serious psychological fear in the minds of Nigerians. Also the dilapidated nature of the highways has compounded the security threat because these criminals block roads and operate without security personnel having control of this government infrastructure. They capitalize on government inefficiency to unleash terror on the people. Respondents argued that some of these kidnappers operate some 50 metres after the stop and search spots of security agencies, while also alleging that many some of the agency personnel collude with the criminals.

Kidnapping has intensified gun running, and this goes hand in hand with the sale and consumption of drugs. Many accomplices have been arrested trying to supply arms and hard drugs to these dare-devil human beings. Nwogu (2022) avers that hard drugs decrease cognitive operations, making it difficult, and impossible for young people to develop functional set of values and ideals. The detrimental state produced in its usage has increased the propensity of youths engaging in crime. One of the consequences is the increase in kidnapping in Nigeria which has been seen as an alternative means of achieving one's goals. Many young people have been recruited and the nature of violence they wreak on victims shows that they are under the influence of drugs. If not, how could we explain how a normal human can be dismembering the body of a fellow human while the victim is still alive? No doubt, this act of violence can be explained from the point of view of use of hard drugs. Therefore, this poses grave challenge to nation building and development of the society (Nwogu, 2022).

Conclusion

In Nigeria, the nexus between bad governance, unemployment, consumption of hard drugs and the cost of kidnapping has hindered the growth and development of Nigeria. The study traced the indices of bad governance such as ethnic politics, poor planning, bad leadership and corruption. It argues that the mismanagement of the economy and politics of this country have created unemployment whose frustration lured many to indulge in the use of hard drugs. This usage has aided several criminal behavior, one of which is kidnapping. Study explored the cost of this criminal enterprise on the growth and development of Nigeria which are loss of lives, ransom payment that has enriched the criminals, a demoralization in the education sector, and general insecurity.

Recommendations

To effectively redress the challenges of bad governance, unemployment, frustration, drug abuse and the crime of kidnapping in Nigeria, the following are recommended:

1. There should be a re-definition of the country's leadership goals in order to develop people-oriented policies and programmes that would curb ethnic, religious and regional politics.
2. Good governance must be tailored towards re-invigorating the Nigerian economy to restore a clement climate for wealth and job creation as a panacea to frustration and to promote less dependent on drugs for psychological healing.
3. Government of Nigeria must have the political will to curb and if possible destroy all non-state actors terrorizing the country.
4. The education sector must be well protected against attacks from haters of education.
5. Modern technology must be applied in curbing insecurity in the country.
6. There should be a strong legal framework against bad governance. It must be effective to punish severely offenders.

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