Perceived Effects of Kidnapping on Security and Public Safety in Nigeria: Evidence from Ondo State

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ABSTRACT

Kidnapping has metamorphosed from an isolated criminal act into a structured and organised threat that shapes how Nigerians experience security and public safety, and Ondo State, once regarded as one of the most peaceful states in south-western Nigeria, has in recent years witnessed a disturbing escalation of abductions along the Akure–Owo–Benin corridor and the forested axes of Akoko, Ose and Idanre. This study examined residents' perceptions of the effects of kidnapping on security and public safety in Ondo State, Nigeria. Anchored on Routine Activity Theory and Social Contract Theory, the study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive survey design. Five kidnapping-prone local government areas (Akure South, Akure North, Owo, Ose and Akoko South-West) were purposively selected, and 400 adult residents were sampled from them through proportionate stratified random sampling with systematic selection within wards and communities; 384 copies of a structured four-point Likert questionnaire were correctly completed and analysed (96.0% response rate; pilot Cronbach's alpha = 0.81). Data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, and Chi-square tests of independence at the 0.05 level, with Cramér's V reported as the effect size. Respondents perceived unemployment, porous forest reserves, weak inter-agency intelligence coordination and the lucrative ransom economy as the most important drivers of kidnapping (grand mean = 3.39); reported that kidnapping has heightened fear, reduced confidence in security agencies and restricted free movement (grand mean = 3.34); perceived severe socio-economic and psychological costs for victims and communities (grand mean = 3.30); rated the effectiveness of security agencies as low (grand mean = 2.31); and rated community policing, intelligence-led technology, youth economic empowerment and stricter law enforcement as the most viable strategies (grand mean = 3.52). The perceived frequency of kidnapping incidents was significantly associated with perceived public safety ($\chi^2(9, N = 384) = 42.586$, $p < .001$, Cramér's $V = 0.19$), as was trust in security agencies with perceived effectiveness ($\chi^2(4, N = 384) = 51.203$, $p < .001$, $V = 0.26$), whereas education level was not significantly associated with perceptions of kidnapping's effects on security ($\chi^2(6, N = 384) = 8.114$, $p = .230$, $V = 0.10$). These are associations among self-reported perceptions in a cross-sectional sample and do not establish causal relationships. The study concludes that kidnapping is perceived as a structural threat to security and public safety in the sampled areas of Ondo State, with no significant difference by education level, and recommends intelligence-driven community policing, forest security reform, youth empowerment and strengthened multi-agency coordination as measures for restoring public safety.

Keywords: Kidnapping, Security, Public Safety, Perception, Ondo State, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Security of life and property is the foundational obligation of every modern state, and Section 14(2)(b) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) explicitly makes the security and welfare of the people the primary purpose of government (Wahlrab, 2023). Yet, over the past decade, Nigeria has witnessed a disturbing normalisation of kidnapping as a dominant mode of criminal enterprise, evolving from sporadic, politically motivated abductions in the Niger Delta into a nationwide, highly organised and

commercially driven "ransom economy" that today touches virtually every geopolitical zone of the country (Okwuwada, 2023; Osegboun & Oladipo, 2023).

Recent statistics underscore the scale of the crisis. The Nigeria Watch report indicates that the country recorded 3,620 kidnapping incidents in 2023, a 7 percent rise from 2,143 cases in 2022, while the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) documented over 1,200 kidnapping cases between January and June 2024 alone, with ransom payments reportedly reaching ₦5.1 billion in 2023 and average per-victim ransom demands climbing above ₦10.5 million. The Financial Action Task Force (2024) similarly identified kidnap-for-ransom as a significant and fast-growing channel of illicit financial flow within Nigeria's criminal economy, while the National Bureau of Statistics (2022) crime statistics report confirmed a year-on-year rise in reported abduction cases across the federation.

Southwestern Nigeria, long perceived as relatively peaceful compared to the North-West and North-Central regions, has not been spared. Ondo State in particular has, within the last three years, transitioned from what residents describe as a "haven of peace" into what local commentary now calls a "hotbed of fear" (Adediran & Alabi, 2026). The Akoko axis has witnessed the kidnapping and, in some cases, killing of traditional monarchs, an affront to customary authority structures that has deepened public anxiety (Adediran & Alabi, 2026). Communities in Akure North, Ose, Idanre and Owo have similarly recorded a wave of abductions of farmers, surveyors, traders, clergy and schoolchildren, prompting the Ondo State Government to activate a joint emergency security response involving the Amotekun Corps, the Nigeria Police Force, the Department of State Services, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps and the military under initiatives such as Operation Daadaa.

Despite these interventions, public commentary continues to characterise the state's response as fragmented and reactive rather than intelligence-led and preventive, with criminal networks reportedly adapting faster than the multi-agency coordination structures meant to contain them. It is against this backdrop that the present study interrogates how residents of Ondo State themselves perceive the effects of kidnapping on their security and public safety, an empirical question that existing commentary, largely descriptive and journalistic, has not systematically addressed through structured survey evidence.

Statement of the Problem

Existing scholarship on kidnapping in Nigeria has tended to concentrate on the North-West and North-Central axis of banditry and terrorism-linked abduction (Welsh, 2024; Bamidele et al., 2024), or on the Niger Delta's historically ransom- and resource-conflict-driven pattern of kidnapping, leaving the emergent and rapidly escalating South-West experience, particularly in Ondo State, comparatively under-researched. Where Ondo-focused studies exist, they tend to rely on secondary or qualitative document analysis of policy inefficiency (Adediran & Alabi, 2026) rather than on primary, quantifiable evidence of how ordinary residents perceive and are affected by the phenomenon.

This gap is problematic for at least three reasons. First, policy responses designed without grounding in citizens' lived perceptions risk misallocating scarce security resources toward measures the public does not consider effective. Second, the socio-economic and psychological toll of kidnapping on residents, ransom-related impoverishment, disruption of farming and trading, trauma among victims and their families, and displacement from rural communities, remains poorly documented at the sub-national level despite growing national attention to these consequences (Ejirefe & Egwuaba, 2023; Osegboun & Oladipo, 2023). Third, it is unclear whether the erosion of public safety that residents associate with kidnapping is perceived uniformly across social and demographic groups, or whether it varies by education, occupation or locality within the state, an issue with direct implications for how differentiated interventions ought to be designed.

It is this triple gap, empirical, sub-national and analytical, that the present study seeks to fill by examining, through a structured survey of residents across five kidnapping-affected local government areas, the perceived causes of kidnapping, its effects on security and public safety, its socio-economic and psychological toll, the perceived effectiveness of security agencies, and the strategies residents regard as most viable for restoring public safety in Ondo State.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the perceived effects of kidnapping on security and public safety in Ondo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

i. examine residents' perception of the causes and dynamics of kidnapping in Ondo State;

ii. assess residents' perception of the effects of kidnapping on security and public safety in Ondo State;

iii. evaluate the socio-economic and psychological effects of kidnapping on residents of Ondo State;

iv. determine residents' perception of the effectiveness of security agencies in curbing kidnapping in Ondo State; and

v. identify strategies perceived by residents as capable of enhancing security and public safety against kidnapping in Ondo State.

Research Questions

i. What are residents' perceptions of the causes and dynamics of kidnapping in Ondo State?

ii. What are the perceived effects of kidnapping on security and public safety in Ondo State?

iii. What are the perceived socio-economic and psychological effects of kidnapping on residents of Ondo State?

iv. How effective do residents perceive security agencies to be in curbing kidnapping in Ondo State?

v. What strategies do residents perceive as capable of enhancing security and public safety against kidnapping in Ondo State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. They concern statistical association between self-reported variables and make no causal claim:

H01: There is no statistically significant association between the perceived frequency of kidnapping incidents and residents' perceived level of public safety in Ondo State.

H02: There is no statistically significant association between residents' level of education and their perception of the effects of kidnapping on security in Ondo State.

H03: There is no statistically significant association between residents' trust in security agencies and their perceived effectiveness of security agencies in curbing kidnapping in Ondo State.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant to policymakers and security agencies in Ondo State, as its findings offer citizen-grounded evidence to guide the allocation of security resources and the design of intelligence-led, preventive rather than purely reactive interventions. It is significant to traditional and community leaders, who play a frontline role in vigilance and early-warning systems, by clarifying which community-based strategies residents themselves consider most credible. It is also significant to the academic community, as it extends the sub-national empirical literature on kidnapping beyond the more frequently studied North-West and Niger Delta contexts (Welsh, 2024; Bamidele et al., 2024) to the emergent South-West experience, and provides a quantifiable baseline against which future trends in Ondo State can be measured.

Scope of the Study

The study is delimited to residents aged 18 years and above in five local government areas of Ondo State identified in recent security reporting as kidnapping-prone axes, namely Akure South, Akure North, Owo, Ose and Akoko South-West (Adediran & Alabi, 2026). The study focuses specifically on perceived rather than officially recorded effects of kidnapping, and covers the period of heightened kidnapping activity in the state between 2023 and 2026.

Operational Definition of Terms

Kidnapping: the unlawful seizure and detention of a person, typically for ransom, political leverage or other criminal gain, against their will.

Security: the state of being free from threat, danger or violence to life and property, encompassing both the objective absence of threat and the institutional capacity to prevent and respond to threats.

Public Safety: the collective wellbeing and freedom of members of a community from harm, danger or injury in their everyday movement and activities.

Perception: the subjective understanding, interpretation or evaluation that residents hold regarding the causes, effects and management of kidnapping, as distinct from officially recorded statistics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Concept of Kidnapping

Kidnapping derives etymologically from “kid” (a child) and “nab” (to seize by force), although its contemporary usage in Nigeria extends to the abduction of persons of any age or status (Okwuwada, 2023). Historically, kidnapping in Nigeria can be traced through pre-colonial practices of capturing persons for ritual or enslavement purposes, through the colonial suppression of such practices, to its re-emergence in the post-independence era first as a tool of Niger Delta resource-conflict agitation and later as a nationwide, commercially rational criminal enterprise (Osegboun & Oladipo, 2023). Okwuwada (2023) situates contemporary kidnapping alongside banditry and terrorism as overlapping and mutually reinforcing forms of violent crime that share similar financing structures, recruitment pathways and territorial logics, particularly the exploitation of forest reserves and other ungoverned spaces as staging and holding grounds.

Concept of Security

Security has traditionally been understood in state-centric terms as the protection of a nation's territorial integrity and political sovereignty, but contemporary scholarship increasingly favours a human security framing that centres the individual's freedom from fear and want (Charles et al., 2025). Within this framing, security is not merely the absence of armed conflict but encompasses the everyday capacity of citizens to move, trade, farm, worship and raise families without the imminent threat of abduction or violence. Andrew et al. (2024) similarly argue that community-level security is best understood as a co-produced outcome involving formal security agencies, informal vigilante structures and the community itself, rather than as a service delivered exclusively by the state.

Concept of Public Safety

Public safety refers to the collective condition in which members of a community can carry out their lawful activities without exposure to preventable harm, and is typically assessed through indicators such as freedom of movement, trust in law enforcement, and the prevalence of self-protective or avoidance behaviour (Badmus, 2025). Where kidnapping becomes sufficiently frequent, residents begin to alter routine behaviour, avoiding

travel after dark, withdrawing children from boarding schools, or curtailing farming activities in outlying areas, behavioural adaptations that themselves constitute evidence of diminished public safety even in the absence of direct victimisation (Ejirefe & Egwuaba, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

Routine Activity Theory

Routine Activity Theory, originally propounded by Cohen and Felson (1979), posits that crime occurs at the convergence in time and space of a motivated offender, a suitable target and the absence of a capable guardian. Applied to kidnapping in Ondo State, the theory illuminates how the convergence of economically desperate, motivated actors, unguarded farm settlements, surveyors, clergy and commuters along forested highways as suitable targets, and the thinly spread, under-resourced presence of formal security agencies across the state's expansive rural terrain jointly create the structural conditions within which kidnapping thrives. This theoretical lens is consistent with residents' widely reported perception that porous forest reserves and weak surveillance, rather than any single motivational factor, are central to the persistence of kidnapping in the state (Adediran & Alabi, 2026). In this study the three components are operationalised as follows. Motivation is represented by the perceived roles of unemployment, poverty, the ransom economy and insider collusion (Table 2, items 1, 4 and 5). Target suitability is represented by the exposure of farmers, traders and commuters on rural roads, reflected in perceived restrictions on movement and disruption of farming and trading (Tables 3 and 4). Capable guardianship is represented by the perceived porosity of forest reserves, the quality of intelligence coordination, and the promptness, personnel and equipment of security agencies (Table 2, items 2 and 3; Table 5). The theory therefore leads to the expectation that residents who perceive more frequent convergence of these elements will perceive public safety to be lower (H01).

Social Contract Theory

Social Contract Theory holds that citizens cede a measure of their natural freedom to the state in exchange for the state's guarantee of security and the protection of life and property (Wahlrab, 2023). Where the state persistently fails to fulfil this obligation, as reflected in the perceived policy inefficiency documented in Ondo State's kidnapping response (Adediran & Alabi, 2026), the implicit terms of the social contract are strained, manifesting in eroded public trust in government institutions and, in some cases, the rise of community-based and vigilante alternatives to formal security provision (Badmus, 2025; Andrew et al., 2024). In this study, Social Contract Theory is operationalised through residents' trust in security agencies and their ratings of agency effectiveness (Table 5; H03), their reported loss of confidence and resort to self-help and vigilante arrangements (Table 3, items 2 and 3), and their endorsement of community policing as a strategy (Table 6). It leads to the expectation that residents who trust the state's security apparatus will rate its effectiveness more favourably (H03), and that, because the state's protective obligation is owed to all citizens, perceptions of insecurity will not be confined to particular educational groups (H02). Routine Activity Theory is used to interpret the situational and spatial conditions that sustain kidnapping and the perceived link between its frequency and public safety (H01). Because the study is a cross-sectional perception survey, it can show whether findings are consistent with the two theories but cannot test their causal mechanisms.

Linking the Theories to the Study Variables

Table 2.1 sets out how each theoretical element is linked to the variables measured in this study, to the research questions (RQ) and hypotheses (H), and to the interpretation that is applied to the findings in Section 4.5.

Table 2.1: Linkage between the Theoretical Frameworks and the Study Variables

Theoretical element	Study variable or indicator	Where tested	Interpretive expectation
RAT: motivated	Unemployment and poverty; ransom economy; insider collusion (Table 2, items 1,	RQ1	High agreement indicates that motivation is perceived as

offender	4, 5)		widespread
RAT: suitable target	Exposure of farmers, traders and commuters; perceived restriction of movement and disruption of farming and trading (Tables 3 and 4); occupation (Table 1)	RQ2, RQ3	Agreement indicates perceived exposure and avoidance behaviour
RAT: absence of capable guardian	Porous forest reserves; weak intelligence coordination (Table 2, items 2, 3); response promptness, personnel and equipment, satisfaction (Table 5)	RQ1, RQ4	Low effectiveness ratings indicate a perceived guardianship deficit
RAT: convergence of elements	Perceived frequency of kidnapping incidents by perceived public safety	H_{01}	More frequent perceived incidents are expected to coincide with lower perceived safety (association only)
SCT: state's duty to protect	Trust in security agencies by perceived effectiveness of agencies (Table 5)	H_{03}, RQ4	Higher trust is expected to coincide with higher perceived effectiveness
SCT: strain on the contract	Reduced confidence in agencies; self-help and vigilante arrangements (Table 3, items 2, 3); community policing as a strategy (Table 6)	R_{Q2}, RQ5	Agreement indicates perceived partial failure of state protection and a turn to alternatives
SCT: protection owed to all citizens	Education level by perceived effects of kidnapping on security	H_{02}	No systematic difference by education is expected if insecurity is perceived as a general failure

Note: RAT = Routine Activity Theory; SCT = Social Contract Theory. Source: Authors' conceptual synthesis.

Empirical Review

Trends and Dynamics of Kidnapping in Nigeria

National data confirm a sustained escalation in kidnapping activity. The Nigeria Watch report documented 3,620 kidnapping incidents in 2023, a 7 percent increase over the 2,143 cases recorded in 2022, while the National Bureau of Statistics (2022) national crime statistics report similarly registered a rising trajectory in reported abduction offences. The Financial Action Task Force (2024) traced the financial architecture sustaining this trend, identifying kidnap-for-ransom as a structurally significant and growing channel of illicit financial flow within Nigeria, with ransom payments functioning as a self-reinforcing incentive for continued criminal recruitment. Okwuwada (2023) further situates kidnapping alongside banditry and terrorism as interlinked forms of violent crime with comparable causes, financing structures and territorial patterns across Nigeria's geopolitical zones.

Kidnapping in Ondo State

Ondo State's experience of kidnapping has been most closely documented by Adediran and Alabi (2026), whose study of policy inefficiency in the state's response to kidnapping found that the Akoko axis in particular has witnessed a disturbing pattern of abduction and, in some instances, killing of traditional monarchs, alongside a broader climate of fear that has challenged customary authority structures. Their findings align with contemporaneous news reporting describing coordinated joint security operations, involving the Amotekun Corps, the Nigeria Police Force, the Department of State Services, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps and the military, launched in response to abductions in Akure North, Ose and Idanre local government areas. Commentary on the state's security coordination architecture has consistently characterised kidnapping in Ondo State as increasingly structured, involving local informants, movement tracking and organised ransom negotiation, rather than as a series of isolated, opportunistic acts, and has attributed the persistence of the threat less to an absence of security action than to fragmentation and slow intelligence fusion across the several agencies involved.

Effects of Kidnapping on Security and Public Safety

Across the wider Nigerian literature, kidnapping is consistently linked to a deterioration of both objective security conditions and subjective public safety. Charles et al. (2025), examining Anambra State between 2014 and 2023, found that improved community policing was associated with measurable gains in residents' sense of security, implying, by extension, that the absence or weakness of such structures corresponds with heightened insecurity. Andrew et al. (2024) similarly linked the rise of vigilantism in Cross River State to residents' loss of confidence in the capacity of formal security agencies to curb property-related crime, a dynamic with clear parallels to the emergence of community-based security responses in kidnapping-affected parts of Ondo State. Welsh (2024), examining the strategic logic of kidnapping in conflict settings more broadly, observed that the tactic is deliberately deployed to generate maximum public fear and to signal the weakness of state authority, a dynamic that helps to explain why even relatively localised kidnapping incidents can produce disproportionately wide reverberations in public perceptions of safety.

Socio-Economic and Psychological Effects of Kidnapping

The socio-economic toll of kidnapping is well documented. Ejirefe and Egwuaba (2023), in a study of Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State, found that kidnapping significantly disrupted residents' access to education, with parents withdrawing children from school or relocating away from affected communities. Osegboun and Oladipo (2023) documented the psychological toll on victims, including sleep disturbance, impaired concentration, flashbacks, hypervigilance and, in severe cases, symptoms consistent with post-traumatic stress, alongside the broader reputational and economic cost of kidnapping to Nigeria's investment climate, tourism and migration patterns. The Financial Action Task Force (2024) further noted that ransom payments frequently deplete household savings and productive assets, pushing already vulnerable families deeper into poverty, a finding consistent with anecdotal reporting of Ondo State families selling land and valuables to meet ransom demands during recent abduction incidents in Akure South and Idanre local government areas.

Security Agencies' Response and Public Trust

A recurring theme in the recent literature is the gap between the visible activity of security agencies and residents' confidence in their effectiveness. Adediran and Alabi's (2026) analysis of policy inefficiency in Ondo State attributes the persistence of kidnapping less to inaction than to weak coordination, slow intelligence fusion and reactive rather than preventive deployment across the Police, the Department of State Services, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, the military and the Amotekun Corps. This is corroborated by continuing news commentary describing Ondo State's kidnapping challenge as fundamentally a coordination problem rather than an absence of security infrastructure. Bamidele et al. (2024), examining kidnapping and hostage negotiation practices more broadly in Nigeria, similarly observed that the state's frequent recourse to ransom negotiation, in place of more assertive rescue and prosecution strategies, has itself entrenched a criminal expectation of profitability and contributed to diminished public confidence in the deterrent capacity of formal law enforcement.

Community-Based Approaches and Strategies

Given persistent doubts about the effectiveness of formal security responses, community-based and hybrid strategies have attracted growing scholarly attention. Badmus (2025), studying the Oke-Ogun axis of Oyo State, found that community-based security structures, operating in coordination with formal agencies, contributed meaningfully to curbing kidnapping incidents, particularly through local intelligence gathering and rapid response capacity that state agencies alone could not match. Charles et al. (2025) reached a comparable conclusion in Anambra State, associating community policing with improved public safety outcomes over a near-decade period. These findings collectively suggest that residents in kidnapping-affected states increasingly perceive hybrid, intelligence-led and community-anchored approaches, rather than conventional reactive policing alone, as the more credible path to restoring public safety.

Gap in Literature

While the reviewed literature offers valuable insight into the national trends, financing structures and socio-economic consequences of kidnapping in Nigeria, and while Adediran and Alabi (2026) have begun to document policy inefficiency specific to Ondo State, the existing scholarship remains predominantly qualitative, document-based or focused on other geopolitical zones. There remains a paucity of primary, quantifiable survey evidence capturing how ordinary residents across multiple local government areas of Ondo State perceive the causes of kidnapping, its effects on security and public safety, its socio-economic and psychological toll, and the effectiveness of the multi-agency security response. This study addresses that gap through a structured, cross-sectional survey of residents in five kidnapping-affected local government areas of the state.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which is appropriate for systematically capturing the perceptions, attitudes and self-reported experiences of a defined population regarding a contemporary social phenomenon (Adediran & Alabi, 2026). The design permitted the quantification of residents' perceptions through a structured questionnaire and the statistical testing of relationships among key variables. Associations between categorical variables were examined with Chi-square tests of independence. Because the design is cross-sectional and the data are self-reported perceptions, the study can identify associations but cannot establish causal relationships.

Area of Study

The study was conducted in Ondo State, located in the South-West geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Specifically, the study focused on five local government areas identified in recent security reporting as kidnapping-prone axes within the state: Akure South and Akure North (the state capital corridor), Owo, Ose, and Akoko South-West, all of which have recorded notable abduction incidents between 2023 and 2026, including the abduction of surveyors, farmers, clergy, a monarch's relations and, in one widely reported case, a minor, along with attacks on rural communities that prompted the activation of joint state security operations.

Population of the Study

The target population comprised adult residents (18 years and above) of five selected local government areas (LGAs) of Ondo State: Akure South, Akure North, Owo, Ose and Akoko South-West. The five areas had a combined population of 1,078,990 persons in the 2006 National Population Commission (NPC) census. Projecting this figure to 2026 at an annual growth rate of about 2.7 percent gives approximately 1,850,000 persons, which was adopted as the population size (N). Because this figure covers all residents, it overstates the adult population. This does not affect the sample size, since Taro Yamane's formula returns about 400 for any population above roughly 100,000 at a 5 percent margin of error.

The sampling frame consisted of [the ward and settlement lists of the five LGAs, with household listing in the selected wards and communities]. The accessible population was the adult residents of the selected wards and communities during data collection August, 2026.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria. Respondents were included if they (i) were aged 18 years or above; (ii) had been resident in one of the five LGAs for at least [state, e.g. 12 months]; and (iii) gave informed consent [verbal/written: confirm] and were able to complete the questionnaire in English, with interpreter assistance in Yoruba where needed [confirm]. Persons below 18 years, visitors and non-residents were excluded. Separately from these criteria, 16 of the 400 distributed questionnaires were not returned or were not correctly completed and were dropped at the data-cleaning stage.

Table 3.1: Proportionate Allocation of the Sample across the Five Local Government Areas

Local Government Area	2006 census population	Projected population, 2026 (Ni)	Proportion (Ni/N)	Copies allocated (400 × Ni/N)	Usable responses (n)	% of usable responses
Akure South	353,211	605,604	0.3274	131	96	25
Akure North	131,587	225,615	0.122	49	62	16.1
Owo	222,262	381,083	0.206	82	78	20.3
Ose	143,547	246,120	0.133	53	68	17.7
Akoko South-West	228,383	391,579	0.2117	85	80	20.8
Total	**1,078,990**	**1,850,000**	**1**	**400**	**384**	**100**

Source: National Population Commission (2006 Population and Housing Census), projected to 2026 at about 2.7 percent annual growth; Field Survey, 2026. Usable responses are those in Table 1.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Perceived Effects of Kidnapping on Security and Public Safety Questionnaire (PEKSPSQ)", which the researchers developed from issues identified in the reviewed literature. The instrument has six sections (Table 3.2). Section A captured the respondents' demographic characteristics (gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, occupation and local government area). Sections B to F each contained five statements. They measured, respectively, the perceived causes and dynamics of kidnapping, its effects on security and public safety, its socio-economic and psychological effects, the perceived effectiveness of security agencies, and strategies for improving security. This gave 25 attitudinal items in total.

All attitudinal items were rated on a five-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). Negatively worded items, if any, were reverse-coded before analysis.

The categorical variables used in the hypotheses were derived from these Likert items in three steps. First, each respondent's score on a variable was computed as the mean of the five items in the relevant section. Second, the mean score was recoded into two categories using the scale mid-point of 3.00 as the cut-off: scores of 3.00 and above were classed as "High/Agree" and scores below 3.00 as "Low/Disagree". Third, the two categories were cross-tabulated against the demographic and other categorical variables in the chi-square tests. The categories were collapsed to two so that the expected cell counts in the cross-tabulations would meet the minimum of five. Table 3.2 shows how each variable was derived.

Table 3.2: Structure of the Research Instrument

Section	Content	Items	Response format	Variable derived for hypotheses
A	Demographic characteristics	6	Categorical options	Gender, age, marital status, education, occupation, LGA
B	Causes and dynamics of kidnapping	5	5-point Likert	Perceived frequency of kidnapping incidents (High/Low)
C	Effects on security and public safety	5	5-point Likert	Perceived level of public safety (High/Low)
D	Socio-economic and psychological effects	5	5-point Likert	Perceived socio-economic and psychological effects (High/Low)
E	Effectiveness of security	5	5-point	Trust in security agencies; perceived

	agencies		Likert	effectiveness (High/Low)
F	Strategies for improving security	5	5-point Likert	Perceived strategies (High/Low)
Total		**31**		

Source: Researchers' design, 2026.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Validity. The face and content validity of the instrument were established through review by three experts in Sociology, Criminology and Political Science at Achievers University, Owo. They assessed the relevance, clarity and coverage of the items against the research questions. Their comments informed the refinement of item wording and the removal of ambiguous statements.

Pilot test. The instrument was pilot-tested on 30 respondents in Ondo West Local Government Area, which lies outside the five study areas [state the pilot date and whether the pilot respondents met the inclusion criteria]. The pilot respondents were not included in the main analysis.

Reliability. Internal consistency was assessed with Cronbach's alpha using the pilot data, with a coefficient of 0.70 or above taken as acceptable (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Section-level coefficients ranged from 0.78 to 0.86, and the overall coefficient for the 25 attitudinal items was 0.81 (Table 3.3). The instrument was therefore considered sufficiently reliable for the study. [If available, also report Cronbach's alpha for each section in the main survey (n = 384).]

Method of Data Analysis

Data were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26. Research questions one to five were answered using frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviations, with item and grand means compared against the criterion mean of 2.50. The three null hypotheses were tested using Chi-square tests of independence at the 0.05 level of significance. For each test, the contingency table of observed counts (Tables 7a, 8a and 9a) is presented together with the Pearson Chi-square value (χ^2), degrees of freedom (df), sample size (N), exact p-value and Cramér's V (Cramér, 1946) as the effect-size measure, where $V = \sqrt{[\chi^2 / (N \times \min(r - 1, c - 1))]}$, r and c being the numbers of rows and columns. V was interpreted using Cohen's (1988) benchmarks adjusted for degrees of freedom ($df^* = \min(r - 1, c - 1)$): for $df^* = 2$, 0.07 small, 0.21 medium and 0.35 large; for $df^* = 3$, 0.06 small, 0.17 medium and 0.29 large. The Chi-square approximation requires that no more than 20% of cells have expected counts below 5 and none below 1. A null hypothesis was rejected where $p < 0.05$. A significant result indicates statistical association only and was not interpreted as evidence of causation.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Response Rate

Of the 400 copies of the questionnaire administered across the five sampled local government areas, 384 were correctly completed and found usable for analysis, representing a response rate of 96.0 percent, which is considered adequate for the analysis, with generalisation limited to the five sampled local government areas.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents (n = 384)

Variable / Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	214	55.7
Female	170	44.3

Age (years)		
18 – 27	88	22.9
28 – 37	122	31.8
38 – 47	96	25
48 and above	78	20.3
Marital Status		
Single	142	37
Married	206	53.6
Widowed/Divorced	36	9.4
Educational Qualification		
SSCE/NCE	96	25
OND/HND	88	22.9
BSc/BA	148	38.5
Postgraduate	52	13.5
Occupation		
Trading/Business	118	30.7
Civil/Public Service	96	25
Farming	74	19.3
Student	58	15.1
Others	38	9.9
Local Government Area		
Akure South	96	25
Akure North	62	16.1
Owo	78	20.3
Ose	68	17.7
Akoko South-West	80	20.8
Total	**384**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 1 shows that male respondents (55.7%) slightly outnumbered female respondents (44.3%), and that the majority of respondents (56.8% combined) fell within the economically active 28-47 age bracket. More than half of the respondents (53.6%) were married, and over half (52.0%) held a first degree or postgraduate qualification, suggesting a fairly literate sample capable of providing informed responses on security matters. Traders/business owners (30.7%) and civil/public servants (25.0%) constituted the largest occupational categories, while respondents were fairly evenly distributed across the five sampled local government areas, with Akure South (25.0%) contributing the largest share, consistent with its status as the state capital and most populous axis.

Answering the Research Questions

Research Question One: Perceived Causes and Dynamics of Kidnapping

Table 2: Perceived Causes and Dynamics of Kidnapping in Ondo State

Item	Mean	SD	Decision
Unemployment and poverty drive youths into kidnapping	3.42	0.61	Accepted
Porous forest reserves and ungoverned spaces provide hideouts for kidnappers	3.51	0.58	Accepted

Weak intelligence gathering and inter-agency coordination enable kidnapping to thrive	3.35	0.66	Accepted
Ransom payment sustains kidnapping as a lucrative criminal enterprise	3.47	0.6	Accepted
Insider collusion between local informants and criminal networks aids the planning of kidnapping	3.2	0.71	Accepted

Criterion mean = 2.50. Source: Field Survey, 2026.

With a grand mean of 3.39, all five items on the perceived causes of kidnapping were accepted, indicating that respondents strongly attribute the persistence of kidnapping in Ondo State to porous forest reserves and ungoverned spaces, the lucrative ransom economy, unemployment and poverty, weak inter-agency intelligence coordination, and, to a comparatively lesser but still notable extent, insider collusion between local informants and criminal networks.

Research Question Two: Perceived Effects on Security and Public Safety

Table 3: Perceived Effects of Kidnapping on Security and Public Safety

Item	Mean	SD	Decision
Kidnapping has heightened fear and insecurity among residents	3.58	0.52	Accepted
Kidnapping has eroded public confidence in the ability of security agencies to protect lives and property	3.3	0.68	Accepted
Kidnapping has increased self-help, vigilante and community policing arrangements	3.12	0.73	Accepted
Kidnapping has restricted residents' free movement, especially at night and along rural roads	3.44	0.63	Accepted
Kidnapping has normalised insecurity such that residents now reorganise their daily lives around fear	3.26	0.69	Accepted

Criterion mean = 2.50. Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The grand mean of 3.34 indicates that respondents perceive kidnapping as having substantially heightened fear and insecurity, eroded confidence in security agencies, restricted free movement, particularly at night and along rural roads, and driven a shift toward self-help and community policing arrangements, with a notable normalisation of insecurity in respondents' daily routines.

Research Question Three: Socio-Economic and Psychological Effects

Table 4: Perceived Socio-Economic and Psychological Effects of Kidnapping

Item	Mean	SD	Decision
Kidnapping has caused financial hardship to victims' families through ransom payment	3.49	0.59	Accepted
Kidnapping has disrupted farming, trading and other economic activities in affected communities	3.4	0.64	Accepted
Victims of kidnapping experience trauma, anxiety and other psychological effects after release	3.36	0.66	Accepted
Kidnapping has led to displacement of residents from rural and farming communities	3.18	0.72	Accepted
Kidnapping has discouraged investment and reduced property values in affected areas	3.05	0.75	Accepted

Criterion mean = 2.50. Source: Field Survey, 2026.

With a grand mean of 3.30, respondents strongly perceived kidnapping as a source of financial hardship through ransom payment and as a disruptor of farming, trading and other economic activities, alongside

significant psychological effects, including trauma and anxiety, among victims. The comparatively lower, though still accepted, means for displacement and reduced property values suggest these effects, while real, are perceived as somewhat less pervasive than the immediate financial and psychological toll.

Research Question Four: Perceived Effectiveness of Security Agencies

Table 5: Perceived Effectiveness of Security Agencies in Curbing Kidnapping

Item	Mean	SD	Decision
Security agencies respond promptly to kidnapping incidents in my community	2.1	0.74	Rejected
The Amotekun Corps has been effective in the joint effort to curb kidnapping	2.68	0.79	Accepted
Collaboration among the Police, DSS, NSCDC, military and Amotekun has improved response to kidnapping	2.74	0.77	Accepted
Security agencies have adequate personnel and equipment to tackle kidnapping in forest and rural areas	1.98	0.7	Rejected
I am satisfied with the overall performance of security agencies in curbing kidnapping	2.05	0.72	Rejected

Criterion mean = 2.50. Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The grand mean of 2.31, below the criterion mean of 2.50, indicates an overall perception that security agencies are not effective in curbing kidnapping in Ondo State. Respondents rejected the items on promptness of response (2.10), adequacy of personnel and equipment for forest and rural terrain (1.98) and overall satisfaction (2.05). The items on the effectiveness of the Amotekun Corps (2.68) and on improved collaboration among the Police, DSS, NSCDC, military and Amotekun (2.74) were accepted, but only modestly above the criterion mean. Residents therefore appear to distinguish between the existence of a multi-agency framework and its operational performance on the ground.

Research Question Five: Strategies for Enhancing Security and Public Safety

Table 6: Perceived Strategies for Enhancing Security and Public Safety

Item	Mean	SD	Decision
Strengthening community policing and Amotekun-vigilante collaboration	3.6	0.51	Accepted
Improved intelligence gathering and use of surveillance/tracking technology	3.55	0.55	Accepted
Economic empowerment and youth employment programmes to reduce recruitment into crime	3.48	0.6	Accepted
Stiffer prosecution and enforcement of the Anti-Kidnapping Law	3.51	0.57	Accepted
Increased forest guard deployment and clearing of ungoverned spaces	3.44	0.62	Accepted

Criterion mean = 2.50. Source: Field Survey, 2026.

With a grand mean of 3.52, respondents strongly endorsed the strengthening of community policing and Amotekun-vigilante collaboration, improved intelligence gathering and surveillance technology, stiffer prosecution and enforcement of anti-kidnapping legislation, economic empowerment and youth employment programmes, and increased forest guard deployment as the most viable strategies for enhancing security and public safety against kidnapping in the state.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H_{01}: There is no statistically significant association between the perceived frequency of kidnapping incidents and residents' perceived level of public safety in Ondo State.

Table 7: Chi-square Test of the Association between Perceived Frequency of Kidnapping Incidents and Perceived Public Safety (H01)

Variables	χ^2 calculated	df	χ^2 critical	p-value	Decision	Cramér's V
Perceived frequency of kidnapping incidents × Perceived level of public safety	42.586	9	16.919	< .001	Rejected	0.19

Significant at $p < 0.05$. Source: Field Survey, 2026 (SPSS v.26 output).

Table 7a gives the observed counts. The Pearson chi-square test showed a statistically significant association between the perceived frequency of kidnapping incidents and residents' perceived level of public safety, $\chi^2(9, N = 384) = 42.586$, $p < .001$. The calculated value exceeds the critical value of 16.919 at 9 degrees of freedom, so the null hypothesis is rejected.

The strength of the association was medium by Cohen's (1988) benchmarks (Cramér's V = 0.19; for df* = 3 the medium benchmark is 0.17), although in practical terms it was modest: perceived frequency accounts for only a small part of the variation in perceived public safety ($V^2 \approx 0.04$). Table 7a, for example: "Respondents who perceived kidnapping incidents as very frequent were more likely to report low perceived safety (X percent) than those who perceived incidents as rare (Y percent).

Because both variables are self-reported perceptions measured at one point in time, the result shows only that the two perceptions go together. It does not show that kidnapping incidents cause lower perceived safety. The relationship could run in either direction, or reflect other factors such as direct victimisation, media exposure or place of residence.

Hypothesis Two

H_{02}: There is no statistically significant association between residents' level of education and their perception of the effects of kidnapping on security in Ondo State.

Table 8: Chi-square Test of the Association between Education Level and Perception of Kidnapping's Effects on Security (H02)

Variables	χ^2 calculated	df	χ^2 critical	p-value	Decision	Cramér's V
Educational level × Perception of effects of kidnapping on security	8.114	6	12.592	0.23	Not Rejected	0.1

Not significant at $p > 0.05$; V = Cramér's V. Source: Field Survey, 2026 (SPSS v.26 output).

Table 8a: Contingency Table of Education Level by Perception of Kidnapping's Effects on Security (n = 384)

Columns: perception of the effects of kidnapping on security. Cells: observed counts [with row percentages]. Row totals are from Table 1. Source: Field Survey, 2026 (SPSS crosstabs output).

Table 8a gives the observed counts. The Pearson Chi-square test showed no statistically significant association between education level and perception of the effects of kidnapping on security, $\chi^2(6, N = 384) = 8.114$, $p = .230$. The calculated value is below the critical value of 12.592 at 6 degrees of freedom, so the null hypothesis

is not rejected. The effect size was small (Cramér's V = 0.10; for df* = 2 the small benchmark is 0.07). The data therefore give no statistical evidence of an association between education and these perceptions in this sample. This should not be read as proof that perceptions are identical across educational groups, only that a difference was not detected.

Hypothesis Three

H_{03}: There is no statistically significant association between residents' trust in security agencies and their perceived effectiveness of security agencies in curbing kidnapping in Ondo State.

Table 9: Chi-square Test of the Association between Trust in Security Agencies and Perceived Effectiveness (H03)

Variables	χ^2 calculated	df	χ^2 critical	p-value	Decision	Cramér's V
Trust in security agencies × Perceived effectiveness of security agencies	51.203	4	9.488	< .001	Rejected	0.26

Significant at $p < 0.05$; V = Cramér's V. Source: Field Survey, 2026 (SPSS v.26 output).

Table 9a gives the observed counts. The Pearson Chi-square test showed a statistically significant association between residents' trust in security agencies and their perceived effectiveness, $\chi^2(4, N = 384) = 51.203$, $p < .001$. The calculated value exceeds the critical value of 9.488 at 4 degrees of freedom, so the null hypothesis is rejected. The effect size was medium (Cramér's V = 0.26; for df* = 2 the medium and large benchmarks are 0.21 and 0.35). The association is plausibly reciprocal, since trust may shape how performance is judged and judged performance may shape trust, and the cross-sectional data cannot separate the two.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Residents most strongly perceived porous forest reserves and ungoverned spaces, the ransom economy, unemployment and poverty, and weak inter-agency intelligence coordination as drivers of kidnapping (Table 2). This is consistent with Okwuwada's (2023) characterisation of kidnapping, banditry and terrorism as sharing common economic and territorial roots, and with Adediran and Alabi's (2026) account of the vulnerability of the Akoko axis to abduction linked to ungoverned forest terrain. In the terms of Routine Activity Theory, the highest-rated items map onto two of the three elements of the theory: motivated offenders (unemployment, poverty and the lucrative ransom economy) and the absence of capable guardians (porous forests and weak coordination), while the perceived disruption of farming and the restriction of movement along rural roads (Tables 3 and 4) indicate how suitable targets are perceived to be exposed (Table 2.1). The findings are therefore consistent with the theory's emphasis on opportunity structures. Because the survey measures perceptions rather than offender behaviour or recorded incidents, it does not test the theory directly.

The strong perception that kidnapping has heightened fear, eroded confidence in security agencies and restricted free movement (Table 3) mirrors Welsh's (2024) observation that kidnapping is often strategically effective precisely because it generates fear disproportionate to the number of persons directly victimised, and aligns with Andrew et al.'s (2024) finding in Cross River State that eroding confidence in formal security provision drives residents toward self-help and vigilante alternatives, a pattern also evident in respondents' endorsement of community policing in the present study. Read through Social Contract Theory, the reported loss of confidence in security agencies (3.30) and the increase in self-help and vigilante arrangements (3.12) suggest that residents perceive the state's protective obligation as only partly met, which is the strain that the theory associates with the search for alternative providers of security.

The socio-economic and psychological effects documented in Table 4, financial hardship from ransom payment, disruption of farming and trading, and trauma among victims, closely parallel Ejirefe and Egwuaba's (2023) findings on the disruption of educational access in Rivers State and Osegboun and Oladipo's (2023)

documentation of post-traumatic psychological symptoms among kidnap victims nationally, suggesting that residents perceive the toll of kidnapping in Ondo State as extending beyond the immediate incident to household livelihoods and community wellbeing.

Respondents' low rating of the effectiveness of security agencies (Table 5) reinforces Adediran and Alabi's (2026) diagnosis of policy inefficiency in Ondo State's kidnapping response, and is consistent with the recurring characterisation, in recent commentary on the state's security architecture, of the challenge as one of coordination and speed rather than the complete absence of security presence. The comparatively higher, though still modest, ratings given to inter-agency collaboration relative to personnel adequacy and promptness of response suggest that residents distinguish between the existence of a multi-agency framework and its operational effectiveness on the ground. Read through Routine Activity Theory, the low ratings for response promptness and for personnel and equipment point to a perceived deficit of capable guardianship, particularly in forest and rural terrain. Read through Social Contract Theory, they point to a perceived shortfall in the state's performance of its protective obligation.

The strong endorsement of community policing, intelligence-led technology, youth empowerment and stricter enforcement as strategies (Table 6) is consistent with Badmus's (2025) finding that community-based security structures meaningfully complemented formal agencies in curbing kidnapping in Oyo State's Oke-Ogun axis, and with Charles et al.'s (2025) finding that community policing improved public safety outcomes in Anambra State over a near-decade period, suggesting that residents of Ondo State view hybrid, community-anchored strategies as more credible than reliance on formal security agencies alone.

The significant association between the perceived frequency of kidnapping incidents and perceived public safety (H01; Cramér's V = 0.19) is in line with Routine Activity Theory's expectation that more frequent convergence of motivated offenders, suitable targets and weak guardianship coincides with lower safety, and with the established link between crime frequency and fear of crime. It is, however, a medium-sized association between two perceptions and not evidence that incident frequency lowers safety. The non-significant association between education and perceptions of kidnapping's effects on security (H02; V = 0.10) means that no difference by education level was detected. This is compatible with the Social Contract Theory view that the state's protective obligation, and so the experience of its failure, concerns citizens generally, but it is a null result from one sample and should not be over-interpreted. Finally, the significant association between trust in security agencies and perceived effectiveness (H03; V = 0.26) is consistent with the centrality of the social contract dynamic identified by Wahlrab (2023): residents who trust the security apparatus rate its performance more favourably, and those who rate its performance poorly trust it less. The direction of influence cannot be established from cross-sectional data. The result supports confidence-building, transparent and demonstrably responsive security interventions as a subject for further study as well as policy attention.

Taken together, the findings are consistent with a view in which both opportunity conditions (Routine Activity Theory) and perceived state performance (Social Contract Theory) are relevant to residents' sense of safety (Table 2.1). The data do not allow the relative contribution of either to be assessed, and no causal pathway is claimed.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

This study examined residents' perceptions of the effects of kidnapping on security and public safety in Ondo State, Nigeria, using a structured survey of 384 residents across five kidnapping-affected local government areas. Residents perceived unemployment, porous forest reserves, the ransom economy and weak inter-agency intelligence coordination as the most important drivers of kidnapping; reported that kidnapping has heightened fear, reduced confidence in security agencies and restricted free movement; perceived substantial socio-economic and psychological costs for victims and their families; rated the effectiveness of security agencies as low; and most strongly endorsed community policing, intelligence-led technology, youth economic empowerment and stricter law enforcement. The perceived frequency of kidnapping incidents was

significantly associated with perceived public safety (Cramér's V = 0.19), trust in security agencies was significantly associated with perceived effectiveness (V = 0.26), and no significant association was found between education and perceptions of kidnapping's effects on security (V = 0.10). These are associations among perceptions and are not evidence of causation.

Conclusion

The study concludes that, in the five sampled local government areas, residents perceive kidnapping as a structural threat that undermines their sense of public safety and that is perceived across educational groups. The persistence of the phenomenon is perceived to reflect less a total absence of security intervention than a gap between the visible activity of security agencies and residents' confidence in the promptness, adequacy and coordination of that activity. If left unaddressed, such a gap may further strain the social contract between the Ondo State Government and its citizens and encourage reliance on community-based and self-help alternatives to formal security provision. These conclusions rest on self-reported perceptions and statistical associations, not on tests of causal effects.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

i. The Ondo State Government and its security agencies should institutionalise and adequately resource intelligence-led, technology-supported surveillance of forest reserves and other ungoverned spaces identified by residents as principal staging grounds for kidnapping.
ii. Formal multi-agency coordination structures involving the Police, the Department of State Services, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, the military and the Amotekun Corps should be strengthened through joint operations rooms, shared intelligence protocols and clearer command lines to reduce the fragmentation identified by residents and prior policy analysis.
iii. Government at state and local levels should formally integrate community policing and vigilante structures, which residents consider more credible and responsive than certain formal channels, into the state's security architecture, with appropriate training, oversight and resourcing to prevent abuse.
iv. Targeted youth economic empowerment and employment programmes should be expanded in the identified kidnapping-prone local government areas to reduce the pool of economically desperate persons available for recruitment into criminal networks.
v. The judicial and prosecutorial handling of apprehended kidnapping suspects should be strengthened and expedited to enhance the deterrent effect of the state's Anti-Kidnapping Law and to rebuild public confidence in the consequences of the crime.
vi. Government and civil society organisations should institute structured psychosocial support and trauma counselling services for victims of kidnapping and their families, given the psychological toll documented in this study.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge by providing one of the first structured, quantitative, resident-level accounts of the perceived effects of kidnapping on security and public safety specific to Ondo State, extending the sub-national literature on kidnapping in Nigeria beyond the more frequently studied North-West and Niger Delta contexts. It also reports, with effect sizes, that no statistically significant association was detected between educational attainment and perceptions of kidnapping's effects on security, an observation that should be tested in further studies before it is used to design broad-based public safety interventions.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is limited by its cross-sectional design, which captures perceptions at a single point in time and cannot establish causal trends over time; by its focus on five local government areas, which, though selected for their relevance as kidnapping-affected axes, may not fully represent the experience of the entire state; and by its reliance on self-reported perception data, which, while methodologically appropriate for the study's

objectives, may be subject to recall and social desirability effects. The Chi-square results indicate association rather than causation, and the categorical variables used in them are themselves self-reported perceptions. Because the five local government areas were purposively selected, the findings cannot be generalised to the whole state. Reliability was established on a pilot sample of 30 respondents, and the non-significant result for H02 may partly reflect small cell sizes.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Future studies should consider a longitudinal design to track changes in residents' perceptions of security and public safety in Ondo State over time, particularly in response to specific policy interventions such as Operation Daadaa; a comparative study across all local government areas of the state; and a mixed-methods approach combining structured survey data with in-depth qualitative interviews of kidnapping victims, security personnel and traditional rulers to enrich the perception-based findings reported here.

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