

YOUTHS UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE INCREASE IN KIDNAPPING RATE IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined the effect of youths' unemployment on incessant cases of kidnapping in Ogun State. The study aims to assess the prevalence, causes and effect of youth unemployment on kidnapping rate. The study adopted survey research design. The population consisted youths in on Ijebu Ode and Sagamu Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Ogun State. The respondents were selected using purposive sampling method. The main instrument used is a questionnaire tagged: "Youths Unemployment and Kidnapping Rate Questionnaire" (YUKRQ). The data collected was analysed using simple percentage. The findings revealed that youths unemployment and kidnapping is high in Ogun state, and is caused by factors such as lack of job opportunities, poor education quality and skill mismatch, economic instability and poverty rate, corruption and poor governance and hunger to get rich syndrome are responsible for youth unemployment and the rise in kidnapping in Ogun State, which has led to economic desperation, erosion of social and moral values, increased fear and insecurity in communities, financial and emotional strain on victim and families as well as overburdened law enforcement and judicial systems in Ogun State. The study concluded that there is significance relationship with youth unemployment and increase in cases of kidnapping in the state. Based on that, the study recommends that government should create enable environment that can lead to creation of job opportunities, and also implement macroeconomic policies aimed at fostering growth, reduce inflation and create conducive atmosphere for business to thrive.

Keywords: kidnapping rate, Ogun State, Nigeria, unemployment, youth, youths' unemployment

Introduction

Crime is one of the social problems caused by social conditions. One of social conditions that have led to high rate of crimes especially among youth is unemployment. Presently, the population of Nigeria was estimated to be 217,079,601 based on Worldometers

elaboration of the United Nations data with the youth population accounting for 70 percent of the 217 million which stand at a huge 151 million youth (Agba, 2024). One widespread socioeconomic issue that has drawn a lot of attention internationally is youth unemployment. The problem is especially severe in Nigeria, where the

National Bureau of Statistics' youth unemployment rate has reached concerning heights, with 53.40% of young people jobless (National Bureau of Statistic, 2022). Business Day reports that Ogun State alone has an 8.8% unemployment rate, which translates to 260,361 jobless people (Business Day, 2024). Many young people are unemployed or underemployed as a result of the expanding population and the lack of job prospects (Virk, Nelson & Dele-Adedeji, 2024). Kidnapping is one of the social vices that have been exacerbated by this circumstance and has grown to be a serious security risk. Kidnapping is illegal taking and holding of a person for ransom or other illegal reasons, and it has alarmingly increased in recent years (Udechukwu & Ofoke, 2024). According to Akinwotu (2021), kidnapping is defined as the illegal, forceful capture and detention of a person or individuals against their will, with the full expectation of a ransom payment or the imposition of some

sort of retaliation or conflict. Although the crime is not new, citizens' safety and security are at risk because of its increased frequency and severity. The rise in kidnapping has been attributed to a number of variables, with youth unemployment emerging as a key contributor (Ashibi & Akintujoye, 2024). The lack of gainful employment often leaves young people vulnerable to exploitation by criminal networks, offering them an illicit means of income.

Kidnapping and youth unemployment have a complex relationship. Youth without jobs experience psychological stress, social rejection, and financial difficulties, which might lead them to turn to criminal activity as a coping strategy (Oluwaleye, 2021). Organised crime syndicates that prey on disillusioned and unemployed young are frequently associated with the rise in abduction (Buba & Musa, 2023). For many, kidnapping is an alluring, albeit unlawful, choice since it offers the

possibility of rapid financial gain. Kidnapping and young unemployment have significant socioeconomic repercussions. Businesses and families must constantly live in terror, and the state government's attempts to draw in foreign investment and boost tourism are thwarted. Furthermore, the state's socioeconomic problems are made worse by the cost of paying ransoms and the psychological toll that they take on victims and their families (Magaji & Abubakar, 2024).

The prevalence of youth unemployment in Ogun State is a reflection of both national and local challenges. Nationally, Nigeria faces a youth unemployment crisis, with rates consistently above 30% according to recent reports. Ogun State mirrors this trend, with thousands of graduates and school leavers unable to secure jobs. After killing at least three young girls in Ogun State, including his employer's daughter, in separate occurrences, 29-year-old Ogunnaike Philip, a suspected serial

kidnapper, was taken into custody on Friday, October 4, 2024 (Shotayo, 2024). Punch Correspondent Bankola Taiwo also reports that on Friday, November 1, 2024, the police arrested the kidnapping gang, which included 42-year-old gang leader Azeez Abolaji Alese, 34-year-old Onokrese Jacob, 34-year-old Henry Gaga Emmanuel, 42-year-old Joseph Udomah, 41-year-old Abiola Oduyemi, 34-year-old Abbey Emmanuel, and 39-year-old Jimoh Kareem. The group was accused of abducting seven individuals along the Ijebu-Ode/Sagamu expressway axis between May and September, according to Ogun State Police Commissioner CP Abiodun Alamutu. All these are caused by limited industrial expansion, the state's insufficient investment in skill acquisition and entrepreneurial development initiatives, and the discrepancy between educational attainment and labour market demands. Many young people are left idle and economically excluded due to a lack of options, which makes them more

susceptible to criminal activity. Additionally, according to Magaji & Abubakar (2024), the frequency of kidnapping incidents has caused reluctance among potential students and their families, who may view these institutions as unsafe settings. This has resulted in lower enrollment rates, which could have a negative impact on these institutions' academic vibrancy, financial sustainability, and reputation in general. According to a study by Attah and Oche (2024), young unemployment rates are a significant barrier to social integration, making marginalised youth more susceptible to social exclusion. This, in turn, poses risks to broader social cohesion and stability.

One of the most alarming consequences of youth unemployment in Ogun State is the rise in kidnapping cases (Buba & Musa, 2023). Kidnapping has changed over the last ten years from isolated episodes to a pervasive criminal organisation. The crime has now moved to other parts of Nigeria, including Ogun

State, after initially being confined in particular areas, such the Niger Delta (Ngwama, 2014). Peter and Osaat (2021) report an increase in kidnappings that target people from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds, from traders and schoolchildren to politicians and religious leaders. There is no denying the connection between the increase in kidnapping and youth unemployment. Due to financial desperation, a large number of young people are drawn into criminal acts, like as kidnapping, by the promise of immediate cash gain (Agunbiade, 2024). Criminal syndicates frequently enlist jobless teenagers in Ogun State, taking advantage of their lack of resources and social support. These gangs conduct coordinated operations, extort people and use the money they receive to fund their illegal operations (Magaji & Abubakar, 2024). Wide-ranging effects have resulted from Ogun State's high rate of kidnapping. It has caused economic disruptions, strained the state's security system, and

induced terror in the local population. Furthermore, victims and their family suffer a great deal both financially and emotionally, as ransoms frequently total millions of naira. Although the state administration and law enforcement have worked to reduce crime, the cycle of criminality is nevertheless fueled by the continued unemployment of young people (Madubuike & Dimnnajiego, 2023). Youth unemployment impedes economic progress, exacerbates social inequality, prolongs poverty, and fuels social unrest, according to a study by Eze *et al.* (2024). Accordingly, a complex interaction of socioeconomic, political, and institutional issues is responsible for Nigeria's rising youth unemployment and associated surge in abduction (Agunbiade, 2024, Oluwaleye, 2021). Developing practical strategies to deal with both issues requires an understanding of these underlying reasons. The rise in young unemployment can be attributed to numerous factors. First, the demands of the labour market are not

sufficiently reflected in Nigeria's educational system. There is a mismatch between job seekers' skills and available positions since many graduates lack the technical and vocational skills that businesses demand (Pitan & Adedeji, 2012). Secondly, a sizable portion of Ogun State's young depends on the few public sector jobs available. The need for jobs has not been adequately met by the private sector, which should ideally absorb a larger workforce (Fagge & Zubairu, 2014). Thirdly, businesses have been negatively impacted by Nigeria's general economic issues, such as inflation and currency depreciation. This has contributed to the high youth unemployment rate by reducing hiring capacity and, in certain situations, resulting in job losses (Nwaonuma & Ebubechima, 2023). Fourth, a lot of young Nigerians who want to start their own businesses have a hard time getting financing and credit facilities. Young people find it challenging to launch or grow small businesses due to the strict

conditions that financial institutions frequently apply (Gumel & Bardai, 2021).

Similar to youth unemployment, a number of reasons have contributed to Nigeria's rising abduction rate. Widespread poverty brought on by the high youth unemployment rate is a primary motivator for criminal activity, including kidnapping (Peter & Osaat, 2021). Young people without jobs are frequently lured into abduction syndicates in their pursuit of rapid financial gain (Oluwaleye, 2021). Additionally, Nigeria is now more susceptible to criminal activity due to a shortage of contemporary crime-fighting equipment and insufficient security forces. Kidnappers take use of these flaws to operate in both urban and rural regions with a fair amount of impunity (Mbam, Jacob, & Amiara, 2024). Attempts to address security issues have also been hampered by political unrest and corruption. Sometimes, when it comes to combating abduction, law enforcement organisations are either incompetent or complicit, which gives

criminals the confidence to carry on with their operations. Another factor contributing to the increase in violent crimes, such as kidnapping, is the easy access to firearms. In order to commit kidnappings, many young people without jobs obtain guns through local black markets or by working with criminal organisations (Ezemenaka, 2018). Additionally, there is a developing culture in some Nigerian communities that glorifies acquiring riches, no matter where it comes from. Some young people have turned to illegal activity, such as kidnapping, in order to satisfy the demand from society to become wealthy (Ene, 2018).

Youth unemployment has a substantial and complex effect on the rising rate of kidnapping in Nigeria, including Ogun State. A number of direct and indirect consequences of the nation's rising youth unemployment rate include an increase in kidnapping instances. Nigerian youths without jobs experience extreme financial difficulty, which frequently drives them to

turn to criminal activity as a means of subsistence. Many people who have no other viable way to make a living find kidnapping to be an alluring alternative due to the possibility of rapid cash gain (Oluwaleye, 2021). Due to this desperation, the number of kidnapping cases has increased, and many criminals now rely on ransom payments as their main source of income. Long-term young unemployment has eroded established social and moral standards by creating a sense of dissatisfaction and pessimism. Many young people without jobs feel abandoned by society and the government, which makes them more inclined to commit crimes like kidnapping (Attah & Oche, 2024). Since people are reluctant to travel or take part in business endeavors that could put them at risk of kidnapping, economic activity has also been impacted (Eze *et al.*, 2023). Similarly, the high rate of kidnapping associated with youth unemployment has discouraged potential investors and impeded Nigeria's economic development. Reduced economic

activity and a worsening of the unemployment situation result to businesses' inability to operate in areas deemed high-risk (Eze, Chikeleze & Okwueze, 2024).

Numerous studies have examined the relationship between rising kidnapping rates and young people's unemployment. Systemic corruption, insufficient financing, inadequate training, and a lack of cooperation among security organisations greatly impede efforts to prevent kidnapping and banditry, according to a research by Mbam *et al.* (2024). It also highlights the socio-economic factors that fuel these criminal activities to include poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, inadequate government presence and regional inequalities. This creates a vicious cycle where unemployment fuels kidnapping, and the fear of kidnapping stifles economic opportunities. However, despite a lot of study that has been conducted on how youth unemployment results to increase in cases of kidnapping, the problem still persist. Based on that, this study examined the effect of

youths' unemployment on incessant cases of kidnapping in Ogun State.

Theoretical Framework

The theory that supports this study is differential association theory, which was developed by American Sociologist Edwin H. Sutherland in 1939. The theory was put forth by Sutherland as a sociological explanation for how people pick up criminal and deviant behaviour. Sutherland maintained that criminal behaviour is acquired by interaction with others, especially within intimate personal groupings, and rejected the idea that it is innate or physiologically programmed. The foundation of the differential association theory is the idea that criminal behaviour is learned through social interaction. Sutherland contends that people pick up the methods of committing crimes as well as the attitudes, motives and justifications that support criminal activity (Wickert, 2023). The idea highlights that the balance of definitions that are either in favor of or against breaching the law

determines whether a person acts in a criminal or law-abiding manner.

The differential association theory is especially relevant in illustrating how youth unemployment contributes to the rise in kidnapping in Nigeria. Young people without jobs are more likely to associate with criminal groups or individuals involved in illegal acts like kidnapping because of their economic and social vulnerabilities. These organisations offer a favorable setting for acquiring the methods, plans, and excuses for committing crimes. Additionally, many young people are looking for a sense of identity and belonging due to a dearth of respectable job options. Peer groups that engage in criminal activity offer financial incentives in addition to social support. These organisations frequently exalt criminal activity by portraying it as a good substitute for lawful employment, particularly in a culture where material wealth and belongings are used to gauge success. Similarly, as unemployed youths engage in kidnapping, they become part of a

broader criminal network, further perpetuating the cycle of crime. The financial gains from ransoms provide short-term relief from unemployment but reinforce the belief that crime is a more accessible and rewarding pathway than legitimate work.

Statement of the Problems

Youth unemployment is a persistent socio-economic challenge in Nigeria, with its impact felt acutely in Ogun State. Despite several government initiatives to reduce unemployment, the youth unemployment rate is still rising, which fosters the growth of social vices like kidnapping. Kidnapping has changed over the last ten years from isolated cases to a pervasive threat that presents serious security and financial difficulties. There is an urgent need to address the link between Ogun State's high young unemployment rate and the rising number of kidnapping instances.

Young people without jobs are frequently drawn into illegal actions like kidnapping because of their financial hardship and social exclusion. Many people find kidnapping to be a captivating illegal

activity due to the cash rewards from ransom payments. In addition to endangering the security and welfare of locals, this condition hinders economic growth by discouraging investment and upsetting social harmony. The ongoing increase in kidnapping necessitates a thorough analysis of how youth unemployment contributes to this crime in order to guide governmental actions meant to address both problems. However, despite a lot of study that has been conducted on how youth unemployment leads to all form of social vices including kidnapping, the problem still persist. This is the gaps that this study thus filled.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the impact of relationship between youth unemployment and the rise in kidnapping. The specific objectives are to;

- i. determine the prevalence of youth unemployment and the rise in kidnapping.

- ii. determine factors responsible for youth unemployment and the rise in kidnapping
- iii. ascertain the relationship between youth unemployment and kidnapping rate.
- iv. Recommends solution to terminate cycle of increase rate of kidnapping.

Research Questions

- i. What is prevalence of youth unemployment and the rise in kidnapping?
- ii. What are the factors responsible for youth unemployment and the rise in kidnapping?
- iii. What are the relationship between youth unemployment and kidnapping rate?
- iv. What are the likely solutions to terminate cycle of increase rate of kidnapping?

Method

The study adopted survey research design because it enables the collection of primary data from a large sample of respondents. This helps to get the opinions,

experiences, perceptions, and insights of youths regarding youth unemployment and its link to kidnapping in Nigeria, focusing specifically on Ijebu Ode and Sagamu Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Ogun State. The population of this study includes youths who are residing in Ijebu Ode and Sagamu Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Ogun State. These areas were chosen due to their reported high rates of incidents of kidnapping by the media in recent time. A total number of three hundred and nineteen (319) youths residing in Ijebu Ode and Sagamu Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Ogun State. These areas were selected using purposive sampling. In recent time, there have been increase cases of kidnapping mostly perpetrated by youths Ijebu Ode and Sagamu Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Ogun State. Participants were selected using convenience sampling technique. Available youths during the field work within the two selected areas were selected for the study. The main instrument used for this study is a self-designed questionnaire

tagged: “Youths Unemployment and Kidnapping Rate Questionnaire” (YUKRQ). This was used collect data from respondents on the rate, causes and effect of youth

unemployment on kidnapping rate. The collected data were analysed descriptively using frequency and percentage.

Result

Table 1: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

N=319

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	190	59.6
2	Female	129	40.4
	Total	319	100

Source, Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 reveals the gender distributions of the respondents. One hundred and ninety (190) 59.6% of the respondents are male while one hundred and twenty-nine (129)

40.4% of the respondents are female. This shows that the majority of respondents are male.

Table 2: Age Distribution of the Respondents

N=319

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Under 20years	32	10
2	21-25years	101	31.7
3	26-30years	77	24.1
4	31years above	109	34.2
	Total	319	100

Source, Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 reveals the age distributions of the respondents. Thirty-two (32) 10% of the respondents are under 20years, One hundred and one (101) 31.7% of the

respondents are between age 21-25years, Seventy-seven (77) 24.1% of the respondents are between 26-30years while one hundred and nine (109) 34.2% of the

respondents are 31years above. This shows that the majority of respondents are 31years above.

Research Question1: What is rate of youth unemployment and the rise in kidnapping?

Table 3: Rate of youth unemployment and the rise in kidnapping N=319

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very High	9	2.8
2	High	251	78.7
3	Moderate	57	17.9
4	Low	2	0.6
5	Extremely low	-	-
	Total	319	100

Source, Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 reveals the rate of youth unemployment and the rise in kidnapping according to the respondents. Two hundred and fifty-one (251) 78.7% of the respondents says the rate of youth unemployment and kidnapping is high, while fifty-seven (57) 17.9% of the respondents says is moderate. The table further reveals that nine (9) 2.8% of the respondents are says the rate of youth unemployment and kidnapping is very high, while two (2) 0.6% of the respondents says is low. This means the rate of youth unemployment and kidnapping is extremely high.

Research Question 2: What are the factors responsible for youth unemployment nd the rise in kidnapping?

Table 4: Factors responsible for youth unemployment and the rise in kidnapping N=319

S/N	Variables	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
1	Lack of job opportunities	45	14.1	218	68.3	55	17.2	1	0.3
2	Poor education quality and skill mismatch	75	23.5	162	50.8	33	10.3	49	15.3
3	Economic instability and poverty rate	113	35.4	94	29.5	70	21.9	42	13.2
4	Corruption and poor governance	95	29.8	121	37.9	40	12.5	63	19.7
5	Hunger to get rich syndrome	62	19.5	174	54.5	32	10	51	16
	Total		34.1		35.8		15.3		14.9

Source, Field Survey, 2024

Table 4 reveals the factors responsible for youth unemployment and the rise in kidnapping according to the respondents. The table reveals that one hundred and thirteen (133) 35.4% of the respondents strongly agreed that and ninety-four (94) 29.5% of the respondents agreed that economic instability and poverty rate is responsible for youth unemployment and the rise in kidnapping. The table reveals also that ninety-five (95) 29.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that and one hundred and twenty-one (121) 37.9% of the respondents agreed that corruption and poor governance is responsible for youth unemployment and the rise in kidnapping. The table reveals also that forty-five (45) 14.1% of the respondents strongly agreed that and two hundred and eighteen (218) 68.3% of the respondents agreed that lack of job opportunities is responsible for youth unemployment and the rise in kidnapping.

The table reveals also that kidnapping. The table reveals also that seventy-five (55) 23.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that and one hundred and sixty-two (162) 50.8% of the respondents agreed that poor education quality and skill mismatch is responsible for youth unemployment and the rise in kidnapping. The table reveals also that sixty-two (62) 19.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that and one hundred and seventy-four (174) 54.5% of the respondents agreed that hunger to get rich syndrome is responsible for youth unemployment and the rise in kidnapping. This means that 69.9% of the respondents aligned with position that issues such as lack of job opportunities, poor education quality and skill mismatch, economic instability and poverty rate, corruption and poor governance and hunger to get rich syndrome are responsible for youth unemployment and the rise in kidnapping.

Research Question 3: What are the effects of youth unemployment on kidnapping rate?

Table 5: Effects of youth unemployment on kidnapping rate N=319

S/N	Variables	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
1	Youth unemployment can leads economic desperation	114	35.7	52	16.3	97	30.4	56	17.6
2	Erosion of social and moral	32	10	175	54.9	58	18.2	54	16.9

	values can lead to increase in kidnapping cases								
3	Kidnapping can lead to increased fear and insecurity in communities	89	27.9	179	56.1	51	16	-	-
4	Kidnapping can lead to financial and emotional strain on victim and families	74	23.2	143	44.8	53	16.6	49	15.4
5	Kidnapping can lead to overburdened law enforcement and judicial systems	95	29.8	133	41.7	66	20.7	25	7.8
	Total		26.7		31.9		14.5		27.0

Source, Field Survey, 2024

Table 5 reveals the effects of youth unemployment on kidnapping rate according to the respondents. The table reveals that one hundred and fourteen (114) 35.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that and fifty-two (52) 16.3% of the respondents agreed that youth unemployment has led to economic desperation leading to crime. The table reveals also that thirty-two (32) 10% of the respondents strongly agreed that and one hundred and seventy-five (175) 54.9% of the respondents agreed that erosion of social and moral values can lead to increase in kidnapping cases. The table reveals also that eighty-nine (89) 27.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that and

one hundred and seventy-nine (179) 56.1% of the respondents agreed that kidnapping can lead to increased fear and insecurity in communities. The table reveals also that seventy-four (74) 23.2% of the respondents strongly agreed that and one hundred and forty-three (143) 44.3% of the respondents agreed that kidnapping can lead to financial and emotional strain on victim and families. The table reveals also that ninety-five (95) 29.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that and one hundred and thirty-three (133) 41.7% of the respondents agreed that kidnapping can lead to overburdened law enforcement and judicial systems. This means 58.6% of the respondents aligned with position that the

high rate of kidnapping has led to economic desperation, erosion of social and moral values, increased fear and insecurity in communities, financial and

emotional strain on victim and families as well as overburdened law enforcement and judicial systems.

Research Question 4: What are the likely solutions to terminate cycle of increase rate of kidnapping?

Table 6: Suggestions to terminate cycle of increase rate of kidnapping N=319

S/N	Variables	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
1	Creation of job opportunities through Public-Private Partnership (PPPs) can terminate the cycle of kidnapping	121	37.9	92	28.8	87	27.3	19	6
2	Youth empowerment programmes and entrepreneurship initiatives can terminate the cycle of kidnapping	104	32.6	148	46.4	45	14.1	22	6.9
3	Strengthening of social security system and support for unemployed youth can terminate the cycle of kidnapping	137	42.9	182	57.1	-	-	-	-
4	Anti-corruption measures to ensure effective use of resources can terminate the cycle of kidnapping	113	35.4	179	56.1	27	8.5	-	-
5	Community policing and enhance security operations can terminate the cycle of kidnapping	113	35.4	167	52.4	39	12.2	-	-
Total			35.0		49.3		11.1		4.7

Source, Field Survey, 2024

Table 6 reveals the suggestion to terminate cycle of increase rate of kidnapping according to the respondents. The table reveals that one hundred and twenty-one (121) 37.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that and ninety-two (92) 28.8% of

the respondents agreed that creation of job opportunities through Public-Private Partnership (PPPs) can terminate the cycle of kidnapping. The table reveals also that one hundred and four (104) 32.6% of the respondents strongly agreed that and one

hundred and forty-eight (148) 46.4% of the respondents agreed that youth empowerment programmes and entrepreneurship initiatives can terminate the cycle of kidnapping. The table reveals also that one hundred and thirty-seven (137) 42.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that and one hundred and eighty-two (182) 57.1% of the respondents agreed that strengthening of social security system and support for unemployed youth can terminate the cycle of kidnapping. The table reveals also that one hundred and thirteen (113) 35.4% of the respondents strongly agreed that and one hundred and seventeen-nine (179) 56.1% of the respondents agreed that anti-corruption measures to ensure effective use of resources can terminate the cycle of kidnapping. The table reveals also that one hundred and thirteen (113) 35.4% of the respondents strongly agreed that and one hundred and sixty-seven (167) 52.4% of the respondents agreed that community policing and enhance security operations

can terminate the cycle of kidnapping. This means 84.3% of the respondents aligned with position that the solution to high rate of kidnapping are creation of job opportunities through Public-Private Partnership (PPPs), youth empowerment programmes and entrepreneurship initiatives, strengthening of social security system and support for unemployed youth, anti-corruption measures to ensure effective use of resources, and community policing and enhance security operations.

Discussion

The study examined the effect of youths' unemployment on incessant cases of kidnapping in Ogun State. With reference to research question one; the findings reveal that the rate of youth unemployment and kidnapping is extremely high in Ogun State. This finding is in conformity with the findings of Attah and Oche (2024) that the prevalence of youth unemployment emerges as a substantial impediment to social integration, exposing disenfranchised youth to increased vulnerability to social exclusion.

This, in turn, poses risks to broader social cohesion and stability.

The research question two findings reveal that factors such as lack of job opportunities, poor education quality and skill mismatch, economic instability and poverty rate, corruption and poor governance and hunger to get rich syndrome are responsible for youth unemployment and the rise in kidnapping in Ogun State. This finding is in conformity with the findings of Mbam *et al.* (2024) that systemic corruption; inadequate funding, poor training, and lack of coordination among security agencies significantly hinder efforts to combat kidnapping and banditry.

The research question three findings reveal that the high rate of kidnapping has led to economic desperation, erosion of social and moral values, increased fear and insecurity in communities, financial and emotional strain on victim and families as well as overburdened law enforcement and judicial systems in Ogun State. This finding is in conformity with the findings of Eze *et*

al. (2024) that youth unemployment hampers economic growth, exacerbates social inequalities, perpetuates poverty, and fosters socio unrest.

The research question four findings reveal that solution to high rate of kidnapping are creation of job opportunities through Public-Private Partnership (PPPs), youth empowerment programmes and entrepreneurship initiatives, strengthening of social security system and support for unemployed youth, anti-corruption measures to ensure effective use of resources, and community policing and enhance security operations in Ogun State. This becomes imperative because many unemployed young people, feeling abandoned by society and the government, become more willing to engage in criminal activities such as kidnapping (Attah & Oche, 2024).

The findings have shown that youth unemployment is a driving force for the escalating cases of kidnapping in Ogun state, with socio-economic consequences such as insecurity, financial losses,

emotional strain on victim and families as well as overburden of law enforcement and judiciary system. This study is limited to two local governments in Ogun State. However, further study can examine effects of unemployment on youths' propensity for criminal behaviour.

Conclusion

Youth unemployment has a profound effect on the increase in kidnapping in Ogun State. The economic desperation and lack of opportunities among young people serve as catalysts for criminal activities, contributing to a cycle of insecurity and socio-economic instability. Addressing youth unemployment is therefore critical to reducing the incidence of kidnapping and restoring safety and economic confidence in the state.

Recommendations

- i. Government should create enable environment that can lead to creation of job opportunities. This

can also be done through Public-Private Partnership (PPPs).

- ii. Government should come up with youth empowerment programmes and entrepreneurship initiatives for youths in order to get many youths engaged with lawful activities.
- iii. Government should also implement macroeconomic policies aimed at fostering growth, reduce inflation and create conducive atmosphere for business to thrive.
- iv. Government should strengthen the social security system to prevent and detect any cases of kidnapping. This should also involve enhancement of community policing and intelligence gathering to dismantle criminal networks.

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