Clinical Psychology Implications of Ritual Kidnapping Among Nigerian Youths

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Abstract: Kidnapping for ritual death has reached pandemic proportions, and the scope of the problem is far broader than it appears. Despite countless studies on kidnapping for ritual slaughter, this problem persists. It is important to explore the factors that lead to ritual kidnapping among youths in Nigeria's south-western state. A descriptive survey research approach was used in this study. There are several factors that contribute to kidnapping for ritual killing and based on this conclusion, it is suggested that capacity building and awareness campaigns be established in order to reduce kidnapping for ritual slaughter. The government should give social amenities, generate jobs, and teach young people about creativity and invention, among other programs that can increase people's economic capacity and substantially reduce kidnapping for ritual slaughter.

Keywords: Environmental Factor, Helplessness and Kidnapping for ritual killing

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, many types of abduction may be witnessed. The increased desire to comprehend the kidnappers' actions in relation to the destiny of the hostages has prompted several recent research to define abduction in Nigeria based on the distinguishing characteristics of the offenders. Thus, bandits, ritualists, scammers, baby factories, insurgents, sea pirates, and terrorists have been recognized as perpetrators of abduction in Nigeria (Oyewole 2015c: 2-4). Kidnapping in Nigeria is typically motivated by ritual sacrifice as well as economic or political gain (Osumah and Aghedo 2011:277). Concerns regarding instances motivated by ransom and political goals have dominated existing research on abduction in Nigeria (Oyewole 2015c; 2016a; Aghedo 2015; Badiora 2015; Onuoha 2014; Osumah and Aghedo 2011).

Ritual murderers' actions have heightened the potential of kidnapping in Nigeria. Kidnapping for ceremonial purposes is unusual. Victims are frequently charmed and rendered unconscious by abductors at the time of capture. After being abducted for ceremonial purposes, more victims die than survive. This event has the potential to render victims insane, dead, destitute, and disfigured, as well as some as mobile corpses (Gbinije 2014). Despite a rising record of horrors in the hostage-taking behaviors of Nigerian terrorist organizations, these actors are frequently restrained by strategic, political, and economic concerns (Oyewole 2015b & c; 2016a &b). However, criminals who kidnap for ceremonial purposes have little or no restraint that can be explained by any conventional paradigm.

Kidnapping for ritual is the illegal seizing of a person in order to murder and/or sever a portion of his or her body for ritual sacrifice. A ritual is a series of patterns or processes and directions for carrying out religious deeds or rituals. Sacrifice is an essential component of all religious rituals (Aghedo 2015). This entails giving up something valuable in exchange for something more valuable (Ayegboyin 2009:583). Human sacrifice is a blood sacrifice that involves the killing of a live being as a ceremonial gift to a deity or spirit, generally in the hope of receiving a return in the form of good fortune, whether general or specific to a specific plea (La Fontaine 2011:4).

The head, genitals, breasts, eyeballs, intestine, arms, and legs, as well as an excavated dead corpse or its dismembered parts, are some of the items of sacrifice for this rite. Ritual sacrifice is a "faith method" for acquiring money, fortune, success, renown, favor, grandeur, power, and protection from perils. Kidnapping for ceremonial purposes dates back to pre-colonial times in Nigeria and other parts of Africa. Many pre-colonial African civilizations provided ceremonial sacrifice to the deities, which included human sacrifice in certain cases. The type of victim for ritual sacrifice varies based on the aim of the sacrifice and the community.

Similarly, the methods and techniques for selecting victims differ according on civilization. In certain communities, a curfew must be declared, and the sacrificial victim is expected to have broken this ritual order. This is why strangers/immigrants are disproportionately targeted for ritual sacrifice in some societies. The victim will be apprehended by guards who enforce the ceremonial command in this circumstance. Slavery was another sort of ritual sacrifice in several other nations (Aghedo 2015). Human sacrifice is the greatest and most expensive ceremonial sacrifice used by the society, usually in times of national calamity, to appease particular divinities and purify the community (Ayegboyin 2009:584).

Adefila and Opeola (2018), for example, discovered that between the 11th and 19th centuries, the Yoruba in South-western Nigeria had a ritual custom that involved human sacrifice (primarily of the slaves) before any military excursions. Human beings were generally sacrificed not because there was a lack of regard for human life, but because a personal philosophy of life holds that it is better to sacrifice individual life for the welfare of the society than for everyone to die (Ayegboyin 2009:584). Nonetheless, human

sacrifice has never been widely accepted in Africa, and in some cases, this type of rite has been presented to the deities in a polluted version of African religion (Aghedo 2015).

Individual or group human sacrifice outside of the community rite is never permitted in African culture. In African culture, rituals are collective declarations of continuity and togetherness that serve to reflect a community definition via group involvement (Shujaa 2009:575). In the African culture, private sacrifice involving human victims is a serious rite. This goes against the African belief in the sanctity of life and the communality of society (Bell 2012). In the pre-colonial era, the enslaved were the most prevalent victims of private ceremony involving human sacrifice, because this type of ritual was exclusively practiced by dictatorial rulers, army leaders, and rich slave traffickers.

However, the colonial powers' prohibition of the slave trade and slavery, as well as the criminalization of ritual slaughter, has drove the practice underground. Children have been the primary victims of ritual sacrifice throughout Africa (Bell, 2012). This is the precursor of what is today known as gbómo gbómo (child snatching) in Nigeria's south-western region. Ritualist operations have gotten sophisticated in Nigeria in recent times as they have moved beyond child kidnapping, and the victim's age bracket no longer exists as organized organizations and kidnapping tactics have arisen to promote ritualist activities. This growth is bolstered by the emergence of private ritualist consultants and practitioners who are familiar with the use of persons or human body parts in rituals (Salawudeen, 2013).

Ritual-motivated kidnapping in Nigeria cannot be properly comprehended apart from the belief system that underpins the aims. Many observers have questioned whether individuals can be so callous as to pollute civilisation standards by kidnapping and killing fellow humans for ceremonial purposes. There are several motives for ritualistic kidnapping in Nigeria. These can be generally classified as religion and materialism motives. Because of poverty, many individuals have been drawn to execute money rituals or aid ritualists with kidnapping. Another significant advantage that many people think may be obtained by ritual sacrifice involving human blood or body parts is power. Some politicians believe that charms may make them strong and propel them into positions of power (Vanguard 2014).

Several explanations have been proposed to explain kidnapping for ceremonial purposes in Nigeria. As a result, the strain theory: This theory is a sociological belief that, pressure mounted on an individual by social structures within society (derived from social factors) such as lack of income or lack of quality education, which some may not have the means to achieve, which eventually puts strain on them and may drive an individual to commit crimes such as drug trafficking or prostitution to make wealth. Emile Durkheim proposed the hypothesis, which Merton and others expanded.

In 1939, John Dollard and his team of researchers proposed the Frustration-Aggression hypothesis. Leonard Berkowitz and colleagues extended and updated the idea in 1962. According to this hypothesis, when people or groups are denied what they perceive they legitimately seek, they are disappointed, which leads to dissatisfaction and aggressive behavior. The aggressive behavior will be aimed at people they believe are directly or indirectly responsible for such denial. It also holds that when expectations do not meet reality, individuals seek to approach those they believe are to blame for not receiving the anticipated difficulties or advantages. Failure to meet the expectation causes rage, frustration, and aggressive or violent behavior. This theory holds that when youths struggle to go through the rigors of training themselves in schools and eventually come out with flying colours, hoping to get a rewarding job at the end of the day, but the jobs are nowhere to be found, and six years after graduation, they are still forced to rely on parents who struggle to see them through schools, some may become frustrated and decide to engage in any crime just to make ends meet (Tzanelli 2016).

Nigeria is one of the world's main hotspots for abduction, accounting for over half of all kidnapping events in Africa, with thousands of incidents reported annually over the previous decade (Oyewole 2016a). There is also an increasing number of foreigners abducted in Nigeria, as well as international kidnappings by armed organizations. The abduction epidemic in Nigeria has sparked international alarm. Though abduction has garnered widespread attention in Nigeria, the spotlight has been dominated by kidnapping for ransom or political goals by rebels, terrorists, and syndicates. The problem of ritual kidnapping has sparked greater concern in Nigeria than the attention paid to it by journalists, researchers, and policymakers both inside and beyond Nigeria (Oyewole 2016b).

Since 2014, the tragedy revealed in Soka, an evil woodland that serves as a lair of kidnappers and ritualists in Ibadan city, and the subsequent one in Oyo town, have remained one of the prevailing images connected with ritual kidnapping in Nigeria. Ritualists can be found anywhere. In other cases, the attackers are known to the victims as relatives, friends, neighbors, coworkers, or priests. Many additional incidents include attackers who are not connected to the victim and are instead public transportation operators, customers, or bystanders.

A lucky 10-year-old escaped ritualist kidnapping in Igbagbo, Lagos State, and reported being taken together with ten other passengers by certain public bus operators after being rendered unconscious with a white handkerchief (Balogun 2012). Target selection of victims by perpetrators of kidnapping for ritual has no age bracket, reclusive sex, status, or geo-political boundaries. No one is too young or too old, too affluent or the poor, too far or too close for ritualistic kidnappers. On March 15, 2013, a group of five men was alleged to have raided a medical center in Irona Quartres of Ado-Ekiti, the Ekiti State capital, demanding day-old infants (Salawudeen 2013).

One of the factors that encourages kidnapping for ritual slaughter among youngsters is helplessness. Helplessness is described as a passive behavior marked by an unwillingness to act, as demonstrated by persons who are regularly subjected to stressful, uncontrolled, and unavoidable unfavorable situations (Seligman & Maier, 2016). It was characterized by Miller and Seligman (2015)

as "interference with escape/avoidance learning produced in a range of scenarios with diverse sorts of uncontrolled, unpleasant occurrences and in a wide diversity of species." Seligman and Maier (2016) noted that the individuals ceased attempting to avoid discomfort and began acting as though they were completely unable to influence the circumstance.

Individuals suffer feelings of unpredictability, uncontrollability, and dissatisfaction as a result of this response-outcome independence. Individual results are more likely to suffer when confronted with negative human emotions. Similarly, if individuals are not provided with enough skills and resources to properly reintegrate into society, they may perceive themselves as helpless and, as a result, make no attempt to alter earlier acts that may have led to ritual kidnapping.

The researcher is also interested in examining the environment's impact on ritual kidnapping. An environment is a location where juveniles reside with their parents or guardians and where they are nurtured. It is a location where young people learn about the norms and values of the society in which they live. In any civilization, the family is a social unit that provides early stimulation and experience to children (Waheed, 2014). The environment impacts the youngster at the most vulnerable point in his life, when his mind is most sensitive. It creates the first impression, which may remain for the rest of the youth's life.

The kid frequently considers his parents, siblings, and items in his surrounding environment to be the most important, and they are capable of encouraging or lowering his self-worth (Waheed, 2014). The immediate settings in which the teenagers find themselves are referred to as the environment. It is also known as the physical and psychological disorders that afflict adolescents (Uzodinma, 2014). These youngsters' parents or guardians are accountable for creating an atmosphere that allows them to be productive. Parker (2014) asserted that a harmonious setting fosters emotional stability in children at home and later in life.

Parker (2014) believes that the environment and its structure have a significant effect in teenage criminality and insecurity. To some extent, there is basic evidence to prove that environmental conflict causes criminality, instability, tension, a lack of purpose, and irritation. Clearly, these expressions have a detrimental impact on a youth abducted for ritual slaughter. Because the family is a component of the wider society, an unhealthy environmental relationship might be exceedingly harmful to the advancement of an individual/youth and/or the development of any nation. According to research results, weak interpersonal relationships, along with crises, frequently result in environmental conflict, with severe effects for the marriage, their children, and the nation (Olaitan, 2014).

A number of arrests and prosecutions of alleged ritualists and abduction syndicates have been documented. However, the fear of kidnapping for ceremonial purposes persists in Nigeria. The police continue to lack capability in real-time circumstances, which is critical for deterring or countering the danger. There has been insufficient effort to investigate occurrences, seek for and rescue victims, or implement pre-emptive policing in Nigeria, which includes searching for and destroying dens of ritualists and abduction syndicates.

Unfortunately, there are a number of well-known claims in which arrested criminals were freed by police without being tried as a consequence of a corrupt inducement or an order from on high. Even when individuals are charged in court, the cases are frequently overburdened by a succession of appeals (Olaitan, 2014). Furthermore, cases that prosecute politicians and their connections frequently expire on their own. Against this backdrop, the purpose of this study is to investigate the factors of ritual kidnapping among youths in Nigeria's.

Statement of the Problem

Kidnapping for ceremonial purposes has been a major source of concern for many Nigerians due to the destiny that most victims face. The sufferer may become insane, die, become destitute, disfigured, or become a mobile corpse (Gbinije 2014). According to The Sun (2013), over 90% of recent cases of missing individuals were not located, and the remains of a tiny proportion of those who were finally found were abandoned on roadsides, bush pathways, or within gutters, mangled, and their essential organs taken.

More than 20 human skulls and decaying remains were allegedly discovered at an abandoned house, in the wilderness, or on a road route. Kidnapping for ceremonial purposes is a transient phenomena that results in victim oppression. However, research has found a variety of causal variables that drive perpetrators to include, among others, economic, political, cultural, poverty, and a lack of productive job. All of these sociocultural reasons might have accelerated the epidemic of ritual kidnapping in Nigeria. Concerns have been raised over which key cause is driving abduction in the region. In Nigeria, kidnapping has jeopardized societal stability and even inter-group harmony.

It endangers everyone in Nigerian society: residents and visitors, young and old, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, rulers and the ruled, politicians and non-politicians, legislators and even security operatives, and so on. Previously, the trend and pattern of kidnapping was common among people of high status. Almost every socioeconomic category has recently been threatened with kidnapping. In Nigeria, many types of abduction patterns have emerged. Concerns have also been raised over which pattern or trend of kidnapping is more widespread. Groups plagued by the problem of ritual kidnapping no longer feel secure, and social activities within such communities are frequently fraught with fear, therefore people continually glance over their shoulders, limiting most social activities. Recently, patterns of ritual kidnapping have arisen, leaving concerned communities and authorities perplexed as to what degrees of danger these movements bring to society. Based on the intensity of the hazards of abduction for ritual killing among youths in south-western Nigeria and society at large, this study aimed to investigate the determinants of kidnapping for ritual among youths in south-western Nigeria.

Clinical Psychologist Implication

The clinical psychologists' profession in Nigeria should be able to give victims with post-incident counseling services to assist them in overcoming the challenges of uncertainty, dread, anxiety, desperation, and mistrust of their immediate surroundings. This goal is achievable based on the past experiences themes found; psychologically, the Nigerian government or university should establish a rehabilitation center where professionally trained counselors will use various psychotherapy techniques to reduce or eliminate the victims' psychological trauma, which includes feelings of guilt, stress, helplessness, and incompetence. Once freed, sexually abused victims of kidnappers should be transported to a specialist medical center for numerous testing, particularly to determine their HIV/AIDS status for correct treatment before being recruited into their immediate and greater community. Physically abused victims of kidnappers should be sent to a medical center for adequate medical care to determine their fitness or unfitness to be reunited with their families.

Furthermore, kidnapped victims may experience psychological problems in other areas of their lives. One of the most commonly reported psychological effects of abduction is difficulty sleeping, since victims are terrified to fall asleep and let their guard down for fear of being kidnapped again. Sexual deformities are also more frequent in kidnappings involving sexual abuse. Survivors may find it difficult to trust their companions or to be vulnerable. Victims of abduction may require years of counseling to recover from the sexual trauma of abduction and build healthy sexual relationships.

The current effort is motivated by the fact that news coverage and general information made available to the public often give a distorted picture of the reality of kidnappings and their consequences. Unfortunately, the news media chooses to focus on only a few chosen kidnapping incidents, causing the public to assume that kidnappings are unusual and only occur among the wealthy. The fact is that kidnappings occur in all areas and at all levels, and each case requires equal attention. By only hearing about rich or middle-class kidnappings, the public may forget that people and children are taken on a daily basis in poorer communities and low-income locations.

Clinical Psychologists often advocate cognitive behavioral therapy to help people recover from the psychological stress of being a kidnap victim. CBT entails allowing the victim to modify their way of thinking, replacing negatives with positives, until their worldviews are no longer the same. Abduction may create extremely deep negative associations inside a victim's psyche, and these connections must be rewired in order for the victim to return to normalcy.

To aid in the defeat of kidnappers and abduction attempts, parents and society as a whole must be more attentive about where their children and vulnerable loved ones are, as well as continue to teach them about avoiding harmful circumstances. This is especially critical in the age of the Internet, since predators utilize it every day to obtain access to youngsters and potential victims. Furthermore, the news media should take greater responsibility in covering kidnapping cases, providing equal exposure to high-profile and low-profile instances. Only by recognizing the hazards that exist in all communities will we be able to begin to eliminate the threats that our children and loved ones face.

According to Ellis (2003) Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy, in which victims are taught how to identify their irrational beliefs and behaviours, question them and replace them with rational ones, can be very useful in this regard. However, it is imperative to note that several factors affect how victims react. Knowledge of such factors as immediacy, effectiveness and appropriateness of interventions, intensity and length of time of exposure, nature and history of the violence, context in which it occurs, those involved and how victims and significant others are likely to react, individual differences, and gender dynamics in the society are very crucial in planning appropriate interventions.

Conclusion

Kidnapping for ceremonial purposes has emerged as a major security problem in Nigeria. Given the poor understanding about the hotspot, as well as the potential offenders and victims, this illegal behavior has proven difficult to prevent through enforcement. The state's reaction to this threat has been hampered by a lack of real-time situation knowledge and limited policing commitments. Given the difficulties of examining the spiritual part of the crime by police or prosecuting a suspect under the traditional legal system, it is impossible to prevent the danger. It is sometimes difficult to demonstrate to a court that someone was rendered unconscious by a charm or that there is a movable corpse working for a suspected ritualist. Although these situations may not have much appeal in the Western culture imposed on Africa by colonization, they are real concerns for the people. This contributes to Nigeria's contradictory views on security. The issue of ritual kidnapping can be better understood, and it is profoundly entrenched in the concept that magical potions created with human heads, breasts, tongues, eyeballs, and genitals may improve one's political and financial fortunes, as well as guard against all types of perils. In the face of widespread poverty, instability, political alienation, and ceremonial traditions, this belief system has thrived in Nigeria and other areas of Africa.

Recommendations

Clinical psychologist professionals at the center participating in the rehabilitation of abduction victims should use a variety of methods. Mental health counseling, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and other psychosocial therapies such as community reintegration programs are examples of such methods. According to Termmeman (2008), the period of psychotherapy should be determined by the complexity and severity of each individual's difficulties, and it should frequently be guided by the local culture. For example, in Mozambique, silence regarding the past has become a method of surviving after decades of harsh and horrifying civil conflict. As a result, the belief that verbalizing emotions is an essential aspect of decreasing psychological suffering may not be true for all cultures (Kagee & Del Soto, 2003).

Problem resolution and developing self-soothing, anger control, emotion communication, and social skills are all extremely important. In addition to the establishment of community support networks and an education system sensitive to their special needs, organized and appropriate tension-relieving activities such as games and sports, dances, culturally appropriate counselling and therapy (such as cleansing rituals) are recommended. Above all, what the future holds for the victims is critical to their needs.

The various therapies will not restore hope in victims who already perceive the future as dismal and hopeless, and the community into which they will be reintegrated as impoverished. More study, particularly case studies, on individual victims is needed to establish the intensity of their reactions, how to assist individual victims in coping with their experiences, and therapy regimes within a clearly defined cultural context.Money-ritual and syndicate kidnapping will become less tempting to ritualists if there is a commitment to poverty alleviation, job opportunity, and human security. Democratization and transparency in public spaces will also return power to the people, making ritual slaughter less enticing to those who desire to serve the people. On this premise, the ethic of hard effort may be advocated as an alternative to undeserved reputation, favor, power, and fortune derived through rituals. Human security improvements would also lessen the attraction of ritual protection in Nigeria. This set of legislative measures will lessen the attraction of kidnapping for ritual and the religion that underpins it as a practice, while also improving the state's enforcement power to address its danger.

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