

## THE IMPACT OF INFORMATION DISSEMINATION BY INFORMANTS ON KIDNAPPING IN NIGERIA: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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### **Abstract**

*Kidnapping for ransom has emerged as a significant security challenge in Nigeria, affecting individuals, families, and communities at large. This literature review explores the effect of informants' information dissemination on the dynamics of kidnapping incidents in Nigeria. The role of informants' individuals who provide critical information to both kidnappers and law enforcement agencies has been pivotal in shaping the outcomes of kidnapping cases. The review synthesizes existing research on how information flow influences the planning and execution of kidnappings, as well as the subsequent responses from law enforcement. It highlights various channels through which information is disseminated, including social media, community networks, and traditional communication methods. It examines the motivations behind informant behavior, such as financial incentives or social ties to either victims or perpetrators. Additionally, this review discusses the implications of effective information dissemination for prevention strategies and policy formulation aimed at combating kidnapping in Nigeria. Analyzing case studies and statistical data seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how informants can either exacerbate or mitigate the risks associated with kidnapping incidents. In conclusion, this literature review underscores the critical need for improved communication strategies among stakeholders involved in addressing kidnapping in Nigeria. It calls for further empirical research to develop targeted interventions that leverage positive information dissemination while minimizing potential misuse.*

**Keywords:** Information Dissemination, Informants, Kidnapping, Information, Nigeria

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### **Introduction**

Kidnapping for ransom has become a significant security challenge in Nigeria, with various factors contributing to its prevalence. One critical aspect that influences the dynamics of kidnapping is the role of information dissemination by informants. This literature review aims to explore how informants affect kidnapping incidents, focusing on their methods of

information sharing, motivations, and the implications for law enforcement and community safety.

The rise of kidnapping for ransom in Nigeria can be traced back to the early 2000s, but it gained prominence around 2011 with increased insurgency activities and socio-political instability. Criminal gangs began to target individuals for ransom as a lucrative business model. According to reports from the Nigerian Police Force and various NGOs, thousands of kidnappings have occurred annually, with victims ranging from schoolchildren to prominent figures (Ogunleye & Adebayo, 2020).

The economic ramifications of kidnapping for ransom are profound. Businesses face increased operational costs due to heightened security measures. Insurance premiums rise as companies seek coverage against potential losses from kidnapping incidents (Adeleke & Ojo, 2021). Moreover, foreign direct investment is adversely affected; investors are often deterred by the perceived risk associated with operating in a high-crime environment. The World Bank estimates that insecurity could reduce Nigeria's GDP growth by up to 2% annually (World Bank, 2022).

The social fabric of communities is severely impacted by kidnapping incidents. Families are torn apart as victims are often held for extended periods under traumatic conditions. The fear generated by these crimes leads to community disintegration; people become distrustful of one another and may avoid public gatherings or communal activities (Nwankwo, C., Okeke, I., & Uchekukwu, O. 2021). Politically, the prevalence of kidnapping undermines governmental authority and public trust in law enforcement agencies. Citizens may perceive their government as ineffective in providing security, leading to civil unrest and calls for political change (Ezeani & Nwankwo, 2022). Additionally, local governments may struggle to allocate resources effectively when addressing both immediate security concerns and broader developmental issues.

### **Research Problem**

The phenomenon of kidnapping for ransom has escalated dramatically in Nigeria over the past decade, becoming a significant security challenge that affects individuals, communities, and the nation as a whole. The role of information dissemination by informant individuals who provide critical intelligence regarding potential kidnapping threats or activities has emerged as a pivotal factor in understanding and mitigating this issue. This research problem seeks to explore how the flow of information from informants influences the dynamics of kidnapping incidents in Nigeria.

Kidnapping in Nigeria is often linked to various socio-economic factors, including poverty, unemployment, and political instability. Informants can play a crucial role in either facilitating or preventing these crimes through their knowledge and communication networks.

Kidnapping is the unlawful seizure and carrying away of a person by force or fraud, often with the intent to hold them for ransom or other demands. In Nigeria, this phenomenon has escalated into a widespread crisis affecting various demographics, including students,

travelers, businesspeople, and even religious leaders. The motivations behind kidnapping in Nigeria are multifaceted and can be categorized into several key influences.

One of the primary drivers of kidnapping in Nigeria is socioeconomic hardship. The country has been grappling with high levels of poverty, unemployment, and inflation. As of recent reports, approximately 63% of Nigerians live in multidimensional poverty. This dire economic situation pushes individuals towards criminal activities as a means of survival. Kidnapping for ransom has become perceived as a viable and profitable venture for many desperate individuals.

The lack of political will to effectively combat kidnapping also plays a significant role in its prevalence. Many experts argue that there is insufficient commitment from government officials to address the root causes of insecurity and implement effective security measures. Additionally, corruption within law enforcement agencies undermines efforts to tackle crime effectively. Reports suggest that some state governments have engaged in negotiations with kidnappers, which may inadvertently embolden these criminal groups.

Nigeria's centralized security architecture poses challenges in responding to kidnapping incidents swiftly and effectively. The concentration of authority at the federal level limits local policing capabilities and hampers collaboration between different security agencies. This lack of coordination results in delayed responses to abductions and contributes to the overall ineffectiveness of security measures.

The roots of kidnapping behavior can be traced back to earlier instances in Nigeria's history, particularly during the 1990s when armed groups began abducting foreign oil executives in the Niger Delta region as a means to pressure the government regarding environmental concerns. Over time, this practice evolved into a broader trend where vulnerable populations are targeted for ransom payments.

Psychological factors also influence kidnapping behavior among perpetrators. Many kidnappers may feel justified in their actions due to perceived grievances against society or government neglect. This mindset can lead individuals to rationalize their criminal behavior as a form of protest or retribution.

Social dynamics play an important role as well; communities facing marginalization or social exclusion may see an increase in criminality as residents seek alternative means to assert power or gain resources through illegal activities like kidnapping.

However, there is limited empirical research that systematically examines how information dissemination by these informants impacts the frequency and nature of kidnapping incidents.

## **Literature Review**

### **The Role of Informants in Kidnapping**

Informants play a crucial role in the criminal underworld, particularly in facilitating kidnappings. They provide essential information about potential victims, their routines, and

vulnerabilities. According to a study by Olojo (2017), informants often operate within communities and leverage local knowledge to identify targets. This insider perspective allows them to relay accurate information to kidnappers, increasing the likelihood of successful abductions.

The following ways are instances in which informant's aids criminals in facilitating their kidnapping activities:

- a. **Facilitation of Kidnapping Operations:** Informants may provide kidnappers with vital information about potential victims, including their daily routines, locations, and vulnerabilities. This intelligence allows criminals to plan and execute kidnappings more effectively.
- b. **Corruption and Complicity:** Some informants may have ties to criminal organizations or may be complicit in the crimes they report. This dual role can create a conflict of interest where informants prioritize their relationships with criminals over their obligations to law enforcement.
- c. **Undermining Trust in Law Enforcement:** The reliance on informants can lead to public distrust in law enforcement agencies if it becomes known that some informants are aiding criminals. This erosion of trust can discourage community members from cooperating with police efforts to combat kidnapping.
- d. **Increased Violence against Victims:** When kidnappers are tipped off about police operations or investigations due to leaks from informants, they may resort to increased violence against victims as a means of intimidation or retaliation against law enforcement efforts.
- e. **Misleading Information:** Not all information provided by informants is accurate; false leads can divert resources away from genuine investigations and allow real threats to continue unabated.

### **Case Studies and Evidence**

Several case studies illustrate the negative impact of informant involvement in kidnapping cases across Nigeria:

- a. In 2020, a high-profile kidnapping case revealed that an informant had provided crucial details about the victim's movements to the kidnappers. This incident not only resulted in a successful abduction but also highlighted how easily accessible personal information could be exploited by criminals (Ogunleye & Adebayo, 2021).
- b. Research conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) indicated that regions with higher rates of reported informant activity also experienced increased incidents of kidnapping (NBS Report, 2022). This correlation suggests that rather than deterring crime, the presence of informants may inadvertently encourage it.
- c. Interviews with local law enforcement officials reveal concerns about the reliability and motivations behind many informants' claims. Officers noted instances where

informants provided misleading information that led to failed rescue attempts and further victimization (Ibrahim & Mohammed, 2023).

### **Information Dissemination Mechanisms**

Informants utilize various channels to disseminate information. These can include direct communication with kidnappers, social media platforms, or even word-of-mouth within communities (Olojo, A. 2017). A report by the National Bureau of Statistics (2020) highlights that social media has become an increasingly popular tool for criminals to share intelligence regarding potential victims. The rapid spread of information through these platforms can lead to a surge in kidnapping incidents as perpetrators act quickly upon receiving tips.

The mechanisms through which information is disseminated vary widely. Traditional methods include word-of-mouth communication within communities, while modern methods involve social media platforms and mobile technology (Nwankwo et al., 2021). Social media has emerged as a double-edged sword; it can facilitate rapid information sharing but also spread misinformation that may exacerbate panic among communities.

Research indicates that effective communication strategies can significantly reduce the incidence of kidnappings. For instance, community awareness programs that educate citizens about reporting suspicious activities can empower them to act as informants without fear (Ogunleye & Afolabi, 2019).

### **Challenges Faced by Informants**

Despite their potential benefits, informants face numerous challenges when disseminating information about kidnappings. Fear of retaliation from kidnappers is a primary concern; many potential informants hesitate to come forward due to threats against their lives or those of their families (Ezeani & Ezeani, 2020). Additionally, distrust towards law enforcement agencies can hinder cooperation between communities and police forces. Moreover, there are ethical considerations regarding confidentiality and the treatment of informants by authorities. Ensuring that informants feel safe when providing information is crucial for fostering a collaborative environment where community members actively participate in crime prevention efforts (Ibrahim & Adetunji, 2021).

### **Motivations behind Informant Behavior**

Understanding why individuals choose to become informants is essential for comprehending their impact on kidnapping. Research indicates that motivations can range from financial gain to personal grievances against victims (Adeleke & Ojo, 2019). Some informants may be coerced into providing information due to threats or intimidation from criminal groups. Others may see it as an opportunity for monetary compensation or social status within their communities.

### **Implications for Law Enforcement**

The presence of informants complicates law enforcement efforts in combating kidnapping. While some informants may cooperate with authorities to provide valuable intelligence about criminal activities, others may work directly with kidnappers, undermining police operations (Ezeani & Nwankwo, 2021). This duality poses challenges for law enforcement agencies as they must navigate relationships with potential informants while ensuring community safety.

### **Community Impact and Response**

The involvement of informants in kidnappings creates a climate of fear within affected communities. Residents may feel vulnerable and distrustful of one another if they suspect someone is providing information to criminals (Ogunleye et al., 2022). Community responses often include increased vigilance and self-policing measures; however, these actions can lead to further tensions and mistrust among residents.

### **Methodology**

A comprehensive literature review was conducted using academic databases, including Google Scholar, JSTOR, and Scopus. Relevant keywords, such as "kidnapping in Nigeria," "informants," "information dissemination," and "crime prevention," were used to search for articles. Scholarly articles were selected for review, including peer-reviewed journals, conference papers, and book chapters.

### **Findings**

The literature reveals that informant-based information dissemination has a significant impact on kidnapping in Nigeria. Informants provide valuable information that can:

- a. Prevent kidnapping: Timely information from informants can help prevent kidnapping by alerting potential victims and law enforcement agencies,
- b. Aid investigations: Informants' information can aid investigations, leading to the arrest and prosecution of kidnappers,
- c. Reduce kidnapping rates: Studies show that communities with active informant networks experience lower kidnapping rates.

### **Conclusion**

Informant-based information dissemination is a crucial tool in preventing and solving kidnapping cases in Nigeria. Law enforcement agencies and communities must encourage and protect informants to ensure effective information sharing. Further research should explore strategies to enhance informant networks and information dissemination channels.

### **Recommendations for Addressing Informant-Related Issues**

To mitigate the negative effects associated with informants in kidnapping cases, several strategies can be implemented:



1. Community Awareness Programs: Educating communities about the dangers posed by informants can help reduce their influence and empower residents to report suspicious activities without fear.
2. Strengthening Law Enforcement Tactics: Law enforcement agencies should develop better intelligence-gathering techniques that do not rely solely on community informants but rather utilize technology and data analysis to track patterns related to kidnapping incidents.
3. Support Systems for Victims' Families: Establishing support systems for families affected by kidnapping can help alleviate some psychological impacts while fostering community resilience against crime.
4. Legal Reforms against Informant Activity: Implementing stricter laws against those who act as informants for criminal organizations could deter individuals from engaging in such activities out of fear of legal repercussions.
5. Collaboration with NGOs: Partnering with non-governmental organizations focused on crime prevention can enhance community engagement efforts aimed at reducing kidnapping rates through collective action.
6. Promoting Economic Opportunities: Addressing underlying socio-economic issues that drive individuals toward crime such as poverty and unemployment can reduce both the supply of potential informants and the demand for kidnapping services.

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