

PARENTAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN KIDNAPPING IN CENTRAL TARABA, NIGERIA

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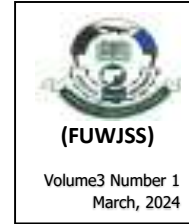
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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between parental socio-economic status (SES) and the involvement of youth in kidnapping in central senatorial district of Taraba State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study explores how the socio-economic condition of parents influence youths in central Taraba to get involved in kidnapping and other criminal activities. The study adopts social disorganization theory and differential association theory as theories that form the theoretical framework. A mixed research approach which triangulated quantitative and qualitative research methods was engaged to gather data from a sample of 1,111 youth aged 16-50 from diverse socio-economic backgrounds across the local government areas that constituted central senatorial zone of Taraba State, Nigeria. Data analysis involved statistical techniques which include frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation. The study results indicate that low parental socio-economic status leads to feelings of frustration and anger among youths, which in turn increase their likelihood of engaging in kidnapping. The study concludes that low parental socio-economic status has various risk factors that contribute to youth engagement in kidnapping in central Taraba. The study recommends the need for governments at all levels in central Taraba to address socio-economic disparities and strengthen family support systems to prevent youth engagement in criminal activities.

Keywords: Kidnapping, Parental socio-economic status, Youth Involvement, Central Taraba

Introduction

Kidnapping extends far beyond national borders as it stands out as a prevalent and worrisome global issue, carrying significant social, economic, and psychological consequences for individuals and communities. In 2020 alone, an estimated 246,000 kidnappings were reported worldwide, with children constituting a significant portion of the victims (UNODC, 2021). This number only represents a fraction of the true figure, as many cases remain unreported due to fear, stigma, or lack of access to authorities. The impact of kidnapping transcends the immediate physical harm; it sows fear, disrupts economic activity, and erodes trust within communities. Youth involvement in kidnapping is a complex issue influenced by a range of social, economic, and psychological factors. Parental socio-economic status is one such factor that has been linked to youth involvement in criminal activities, including kidnapping (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Sirin, 2005). Parents exert critical influence on molding the values, attitudes, and behaviours of their children. As the primary socialization agents, families play a crucial role, and the socio-economic conditions within the family significantly impact a child's development (Conger & Donnellan, 2007; Amato & Fowler, 2002). Higher socio-economic status parents typically have the resources to provide a stable and nurturing environment, reducing the likelihood of their children engaging in criminal activities (Evans, 2004). Conversely, lower socio-economic status parents may encounter challenges in providing a supportive atmosphere, increasing their children's vulnerability to negative influences in the community.

Farrington (2003, Tremblay and Nagin 2005) emphasize the significant influence of socio-economic factors, particularly parental income, education, and occupation, in shaping youth behavior. These scholars argue that the socio-economic context in which youth are raised plays a crucial role in their development, including their propensity for engaging in delinquent or criminal activities like kidnapping. Their research indicates that higher parental income is associated with better access to resources and opportunities for children. Families with higher income levels may be able to provide better educational opportunities, access to extracurricular activities, and a more stable home environment, which can contribute to positive youth development and reduce the likelihood of involvement in criminal behaviors. Conversely, lower parental income may limit access to these resources, increasing the risk of delinquency among youth. The type of occupation held by parents can also impact youth behavior. Parents with stable, well-paying jobs may be better equipped to provide for their children's needs and offer a more secure and nurturing environment. In

contrast, parents with unstable employment or low-paying jobs may face greater stress and financial insecurity, which can negatively impact their parenting and contribute to an increased risk of delinquency in their children.

The specter of kidnapping casts a long shadow across the globe, moving through diverse landscapes and leaving communities grappling with fear and vulnerability. This nefarious act, targeting individuals of all ages and backgrounds, holds a particularly chilling aspect when it involves youth perpetrators. UNICEF estimates 1.2 million children are trafficked annually, while kidnappings for ransom reached over 8,000 reported cases in 2020 alone (UNODC, 2022). This global phenomenon demands a nuanced understanding of the factors that drive it, particularly the role of youth involvement. In Europe, Van Dijk (2008), highlight the role of economic disparities and social exclusion in fostering criminal behaviour among the youth. Which indicates that children of low socio-economic status parents mostly engage in criminal activities than children of higher socio-economic status parents. The European scenario provides valuable insights into the impact of socio-economic inequality on criminal activities. Studies in Asia, such as the research by Li and Chu (2009), investigated the influence of parental socio-economic status on youth participation in crime and the study findings revealed that criminal activities are mostly influenced by the levels of parental social and economic backgrounds.

Across Africa, there has been a concerning rise in kidnappings involving youth perpetrators. In Nigeria alone, the number of reported kidnapping cases involving youth has been on the increase, with over 5,700 cases reported in 2022 (SBM Intelligence, 2023). This trend is not unique to Nigeria, as similar patterns have been observed in other African countries such as South Africa, Kenya, and Uganda (Onyemelukwe et al., 2022; Okumu, 2023). In South Africa, urban areas plagued by gang activity and organized crime see this crime flourish, often targeting individuals for ransom or forced labor (Okumu, 2023). Meanwhile, Kenya navigates complexities of kidnapping in rural areas, often driven by inter-communal conflicts, cattle rustling, and political tensions (UNODC, 2020). Uganda confronts a rise in kidnappings targeting young women and children for ransom or forced labor, highlighting the vulnerability of specific demographics (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Muyeba and Shumba (2016) emphasize the significance of economic factors in understanding youth criminality. Their research unveils the complex relationship between economic conditions and the involvement of young people in criminal activities, including kidnapping. The scholars argue that economic factors play a crucial role in shaping the opportunities and constraints that young people face, which in turn influence their decisions regarding criminal

behavior. Economic deprivation, lack of employment opportunities, and unequal access to resources can contribute to a sense of hopelessness and frustration among young people. These economic challenges may lead some youth to seek alternative means of survival, including engaging in criminal activities such as kidnapping. The authors suggest that by addressing economic inequalities and providing young people with viable economic opportunities, societies can reduce the risk of youth involvement in criminal behaviors.

Nigeria, with its diverse socio-economic landscape, serves as a compelling case study. Research by Odeyemi and Oseni (2018), suggests a connection between parental socio-economic status and youth engagement in criminal activities, with implications for policy and intervention strategies. Within Nigeria, Taraba State has witnessed a notable surge in youth involvement in kidnapping. A study by Yakubu and Bala (2020), explores the regional dynamics of this issue, emphasizing the need to consider local socio-economic conditions in understanding and addressing youth criminality. While numerous studies explore youth involvement in criminal activities, there's a notable gap in research specifically examining the connection between parental socio-economic status and the likelihood of youth engaging in kidnapping.

Nigeria is woven with diverse cultures and rich landscapes, is unfortunately marred by a growing shadow and surge in youth involvement in kidnapping. This nefarious activity not only disrupts social fabric and cripples economic progress but also casts a chilling fear upon communities. Understanding the factors that push young minds towards this dark path is crucial to crafting effective solutions. This study is interested in the intricate connection between parental socioeconomic status (SES) and youth participation in kidnapping in Nigeria, particularly focusing on the region of Central Taraba. Nigeria's landscape is unfortunately marked by significant socioeconomic disparities. Widespread poverty, high unemployment rates, and limited access to quality education particularly plague certain regions, creating fertile ground for criminal activity to flourish. Central Taraba, with its stunning scenery, unfortunately, also embodies these challenges. The region grapples with a poverty rate of 72%, significantly higher than the national average of 40% (NBS, 2023). This translates to limited opportunities for families, pushing many into a constant struggle for basic necessities.

The prevalence of kidnapping in Nigeria, particularly involving youth perpetrators, has reached alarming proportions. Reports indicate a dramatic increase in recent years, with statistics revealing nearly 3,000 kidnapping cases documented in 2022 alone (SBM Intelligence, 2023). This surge casts a shadow over the nation, stifling economic activities, deterring foreign

investments, and shattering the sense of security for numerous families (Nwosu & Adebayo, 2021). Given this backdrop, it becomes crucial to understand the factors influencing youth engagement in kidnapping for the development of effective preventative and intervention strategies. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the impact of parental socio-economic status on youth involvement in kidnapping in Central Taraba, Nigeria.

Socio-Economic Conditions Influencing Kidnapping in Nigeria

Parental SES refers to the social and economic standing of an individual's parents or guardians within a society. It encompasses factors such as parental education level, occupation, income, and wealth. Parental SES is often used as a proxy for the social and economic resources available to a family, which can influence various aspects of a child's development, including educational attainment, health outcomes, and social mobility. It reflects the resources and opportunities available to a family and is known to influence various aspects of a child's development, including their educational attainment, health outcomes, and overall well-being (Gupta, 2020). Youth involvement in kidnapping refers to the participation of young individuals, typically adolescents or young adults, in the act of kidnapping or abduction. This involvement can take various forms, including being perpetrators of kidnappings, accomplices, or victims. Factors that may contribute to youth involvement in kidnapping can include social, economic, and environmental influences, as well as individual characteristics and experiences (Tremblay & Nagin, 2005). Socio-economic factors are elements of society that influence the economic activity and behavior of individuals or groups. These factors include income distribution, employment opportunities, education levels, social class, and access to resources and opportunities. Socio-economic factors can have a significant impact on various aspects of life, including health, education, and involvement in criminal activities (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009).

Kidnapping is the unlawful act of seizing and detaining an individual against their will, often with the intent to demand a ransom or for other purposes such as coercion, revenge, or political motives. Kidnapping can have serious consequences for the victims and their families and is considered a serious criminal offense in most legal systems (Malmquist, 2020).

According to a report by World Bank, Nigeria is characterized by significant economic disparities between different regions and social groups. The uneven distribution of wealth and resources has created a situation where certain communities are marginalized and lack access to

basic necessities. World Bank emphasizes that economic inequality remains high in Nigeria, with significant disparities between the northern and southern regions (World Bank, 2021). High levels of unemployment and poverty contribute to the vulnerability of individuals to criminal activities such as kidnapping. Lack of employment opportunities and economic hardship can push people into illegal activities in order to survive. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported that Nigeria's unemployment rate stood at 33.3% in the fourth quarter of 2020, indicating a significant challenge in the labor market (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Corruption in Nigeria has been identified as a major impediment to economic development and a contributing factor to insecurity. Corrupt practices can undermine the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies and create an environment conducive to criminal activities. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index ranks Nigeria 149th out of 180 countries, indicating a high level of perceived corruption in the country. (Transparency International, 2021)

Nigeria faces various security challenges, including insurgency, banditry, and communal clashes. These security threats have created an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty, making it easier for criminal elements to operate. The Global Terrorism Index ranks Nigeria as the third most affected country by terrorism, highlighting the severity of security challenges in the country. (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2021)

The surge in youth involvement in criminal activities, particularly kidnapping, has become a global concern, prompting researchers to scrutinize the role of parental socio-economic status (SES) as a critical determinant. Socio-economic status, encompassing economic, educational, and occupational dimensions, is a crucial indicator influencing various aspects of child development (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Research consistently emphasizes the impact of socio-economic status on academic achievement, mental health, and engagement in delinquent behaviors (Sirin, 2005; McLoyd, 1998), prompting a closer examination of its role in youth involvement in criminal activities, specifically kidnapping. Families grappling with economic hardships often contend with limited resources, creating an environment conducive to deviant behaviors, including criminal activities (Conger et al., 2010). Youth from economically disadvantaged backgrounds may find themselves drawn to kidnapping as a means of economic gain or a way to alleviate the stressors associated with poverty. The correlation between parental socio-economic status (SES) and educational opportunities is well-established (Reardon, 2011). Higher SES families typically provide their children with quality education, fostering cognitive development and future prospects. Conversely, youth from lower

SES families may face educational challenges, limiting their avenues for social mobility and potentially leading them toward criminal activities.

Parents play a significant role in shaping their children's values, aspirations, and behaviors (Conger & Donnellan, 2007). The socio-economic conditions within a family can act as either protective or risk factors in the context of youth involvement in criminal activities. Higher SES parents often create a stable and supportive environment, reducing the likelihood of delinquent behaviors (Evans, 2004). This foundation includes access to extracurricular activities, mentorship, and positive role models, serving as protective factors against criminal involvement. Conversely, lower SES parents may struggle to provide the same level of support, residing in communities with limited resources. This exposes youth to negative influences and increases the likelihood of association with delinquent peer groups, contributing to an escalation of criminal behaviour. The scarcity of economic opportunities may lead them to perceive illicit means as a viable solution to financial challenges. The stressors associated with poverty, including restricted access to education and employment opportunities, can propel vulnerable youth toward criminal activities as a means of escape or survival (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002).

Kidnapping, in particular, may be viewed as an avenue to break free from the cycle of poverty and attain financial stability. Parental socio-economic status significantly shapes the educational opportunities accessible to children (Reardon, 2011). Families with higher SES can afford quality education, providing their children with a foundation for future success. Conversely, lower SES families often encounter challenges in obtaining educational resources, limiting the educational pathways of their children and potentially steering them toward criminal activities as an alternative route. The association between parental socio-economic status and social mobility is a crucial factor contributing to youth involvement in kidnapping (Sirin, 2005).

Limited access to quality education obstructs social mobility, leaving some youth feeling constrained in their ability to transcend the circumstances of their upbringing. Criminal activities, such as kidnapping, may be perceived as a means to overcome these limitations. Parents with higher socio-economic status often cultivate stable and supportive environments for their children (Evans, 2004). Such stability acts as a protective factor against delinquent behaviors. In contrast, lower SES families may struggle to provide the same level of support, exposing youth to negative influences in their communities. This exposure heightens the likelihood of involvement in criminal activities, including kidnapping. Parental socio-economic status emerges as a formidable force shaping the trajectories of youth involvement in kidnapping. Economic struggles,

limited educational opportunities, and the influence of family environments and communities create a complex interplay propelling some youth toward criminal behaviours.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework employed consists of social disorganization theory and the differential association theory. Social Disorganization Theory emerged in response to sociologists' efforts to comprehend the root causes of crime and delinquency in urban settings during the early 20th century. Developed by researchers at the University of Chicago, including Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay, this theory aimed to explore how neighborhood characteristics affect crime rates. Over the years, various criminologists and sociologists, such as Robert Sampson and William Julius Wilson, have expanded upon and supported this theory, contributing to its evolution and application in different contexts. At its core, Social Disorganization Theory assumes that crime and delinquency stem from the breakdown of social institutions within disorganized neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are characterized by poverty, high residential mobility, and ethnic diversity. According to the theory, these social conditions create an environment conducive to criminal behavior, including activities like kidnapping. Social Disorganization Theory is based on several key assumptions that provide the foundation for understanding the relationship between neighborhood characteristics and crime. These assumptions help to shape the theory's perspective on the causes of crime and delinquency in urban areas.

The theory assumes that crime and delinquency are linked to the breakdown of social institutions, such as family, schools, and community organizations, within a neighborhood. When these institutions fail to fulfill their functions, such as socializing individuals and maintaining social order, it can lead to an increase in criminal behavior. Social Disorganization Theory emphasizes the influence of neighborhood characteristics on crime rates. It assumes that certain features of a neighborhood, such as poverty, residential mobility, and ethnic heterogeneity, contribute to social disorganization, which, in turn, increases the likelihood of criminal behavior. The theory posits that disadvantaged neighborhoods with high levels of poverty, unemployment, and social instability are more likely to experience social disorganization. These neighborhoods lack the resources and social cohesion needed to effectively address issues related to crime and delinquency. Social Disorganization Theory considers the concept of collective efficacy, which refers to the ability of a community to work together to achieve common goals and maintain social control. The theory assumes that neighborhoods with high levels of collective efficacy are

better able to prevent crime and delinquency, as residents are more likely to intervene in problematic situations and uphold social norms. Finally, the theory assumes that the social environment of a neighborhood plays a significant role in shaping individual behavior. It suggests that individuals who grow up in disorganized neighborhoods are more likely to adopt deviant behaviors due to the lack of social control and positive role models.

One of the major strengths of Social Disorganization Theory lies in its focus on the social environment as a primary determinant of crime. By highlighting the impact of neighborhood characteristics on criminal behavior, the theory provides a framework for understanding how social factors influence individual actions. Additionally, it underscores the interconnectedness of social structures and individual behavior, emphasizing the need to consider the broader context when addressing issues related to crime and delinquency.

The Differential Association Theory

This theory emerged in the early 20th century as part of the symbolic interactionist perspective in sociology. Edwin Sutherland introduced this theory in his work "Principles of Criminology" in 1939. Edwin Sutherland is the primary proponent of the Differential Association Theory. He argued that criminal behavior is learned through interactions with others and that individuals become delinquent when they are exposed to more definitions favorable to law violation than to law-abiding behavior.

Differential Association Theory assumes that criminal behavior is learned through social interactions, particularly within intimate personal groups such as family, peers, and community members. Individuals acquire criminal behavior patterns by observing others, modeling their behavior, and receiving reinforcement or punishment for their actions. The theory posits that the learning processes involved in acquiring criminal behavior are similar to those involved in learning any other type of behavior. This means that individuals learn criminal behavior through the same mechanisms that they use to learn non-criminal behaviors, such as language, social skills, or academic knowledge. Differential Association Theory suggests that the learning process of criminal behavior includes not only the acquisition of specific techniques for committing crimes but also the development of motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes that support criminal actions. This means that individuals not only learn how to commit crimes but also why they should do so and how to justify their actions to themselves and others. The theory emphasizes the role of reinforcement and punishment in the learning of criminal behavior. Individuals are more likely to engage in criminal activities if they perceive that such actions are rewarded or if they can avoid punishment for their

actions. Conversely, if criminal behavior leads to negative consequences, individuals are less likely to repeat those behaviors.

In the context of parental SES and youth involvement in kidnapping, Differential Association Theory posits that criminal behavior is learned through interactions with others, particularly within intimate personal groups such as family, friends, and peers. In the context of parental SES and youth involvement in kidnapping, youth may learn about kidnapping through exposure to family members or peers who engage in or condone such criminal activities. For example, if a youth's family has a history of involvement in criminal behavior due to economic hardships associated with lower SES, they may be more likely to learn and adopt similar behaviors. According to Differential Association Theory, individuals are more likely to engage in criminal behavior if they perceive that such behavior is rewarded or leads to positive outcomes. In the context of kidnapping, youth from lower SES families may be exposed to criminal behavior models who are rewarded financially or gain social status through their criminal activities. This positive reinforcement can influence youth to view kidnapping as a viable means of achieving their goals, especially in the face of economic challenges.

Differential Association Theory also emphasizes the role of rationalization and justification in the adoption of criminal behavior. Youth may rationalize their involvement in kidnapping by justifying it as a means of obtaining financial resources or improving their social status, especially if they perceive limited opportunities for advancement due to their family's socio-economic circumstances. This rationalization process may be influenced by the attitudes and beliefs of their social groups, including family members and peers. The theory further suggests that individuals are more likely to engage in criminal behavior if their social environment provides them with more exposure to attitudes and behaviors that support crime rather than conformity. In the context of parental SES and youth involvement in kidnapping, youth from lower SES families may be more likely to be exposed to environments where criminal behavior is normalized or viewed as a means of survival due to economic pressures.

The Differential Association Theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how criminal behavior is learned and transmitted through social interactions. It emphasizes the role of socialization and learning processes in the development of criminal behavior, highlighting the importance of social context. Critics argue that the theory does not sufficiently address the role of individual agency and free will in criminal behavior. It may not fully account for the influence of biological, psychological, and situational factors in criminal behavior, which are also important considerations.

Research Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design. A multistage sampling technique was adopted, the purposive sampling technique was employed deliberately choose five (5) local government areas (LGAs); Bali, Gashaka, Gassol, Kurmi, and Sardauna within the Central Senatorial District of Taraba State. Additionally, the researchers utilized snowball sampling; a technique where existing study respondents assist to locate subsequent respondents from among their acquaintances for the study. This technique is often used when the population of interest is hard to reach or identify, such as in studies involving marginalized or stigmatized groups or youths involvement in criminal activities. Finally, the researchers employed convenience sampling, which involves selecting samples based on their availability and accessibility. This technique is often used when the researchers have limited resources or time constraints and need to gather data quickly and easily. Each of the LGAs was fairly represented in the study, the population distribution of each of the LGAs was utilized to draw proportional sample out of the 1,111 samples drawn for the study through Taro Yamane formula from the total population of 1,351,100 based on population projection of 2022 of the five local government areas in Central Taraba. However, only 1,073 copies of the questionnaire were completed and returned. Therefore, the analysis was based on the returned copies of the questionnaire.

Data Analysis and Discussions

The analysis displayed here focused mainly on the socio-demographic data and relationship between parental socioeconomic status and youth involvement in kidnapping in Central Taraba, Nigeria.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	881	82.1%
Female	192	17.9%
Total	1073	100%
Age		
16-25	297	27.7%
26-35	562	52.3%
36-45	110	10.3%
46-above	104	9.7%
Total	1073	100%
Qualification		
Primary	272	25.3%

Secondary	605	56.4%
Tertiary	196	18.3%
Total	1073	100%
Occupation		
Civil Servant	291	27.1%
Farming/Fishing	486	45.3%
Student	166	15.5%
Business	130	12.1%
Total	1073	100%
Marital Status		
Single	401	37.4%
Married	322	30.0%
Divorce/separated	191	17.8%
Widow	159	14.8%
Total	1073	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The data presented on Table 1; indicates the distribution of the respondents based on sex, with a total sample size of 1073 individuals. The majority of the respondents are male, comprising 881 individuals, which accounts for 82.1% of the total sample. In contrast, females make up a smaller proportion of the sample, totaling 192 individuals, or 17.9% of the total sample. The large majority of males in the sample may suggest that certain gender-specific factors or dynamics could be more pronounced in any analysis or interpretation of the data. The age distribution of the respondents indicates that the largest group falls within the 26-35 age range, with a frequency of 562 (52.3%). The 16-25 age group follows with a frequency of 297 (27.7%). The smallest groups are the 36-45 age range, with a frequency of 110 (10.3%), and the 46-above age range, with a frequency of 104 (9.7%). The age distribution of the respondents indicates a predominance of individuals in their late twenties to mid-thirties, with a significant representation of younger adults in the 16-25 age group. The smaller respondents in the 36-45 and 46-above age groups suggests a relatively younger sample population, which may have implications for the interpretation of findings related to age-related variables or life stage considerations in the analysis.

The data on qualification distribution provides insights into the educational attainment levels of the individuals surveyed. The majority of the respondents have a secondary qualification, with a frequency of 605 (56.4%). The primary qualification group follows with a frequency of 272 (25.3%). The tertiary qualification group is the smallest, with a frequency of 196 (18.3%). The data indicates that the majority of the respondents have

completed secondary education, followed by those with primary education qualifications. The smallest group holds tertiary qualifications, suggesting that a smaller proportion of the sample has pursued higher education beyond the secondary level. These findings provide insights into the educational background of the respondents, which can be valuable for understanding the educational profile of the respondents and its potential implications for various analyses or research objectives. The occupation distribution shows that the largest group is engaged in farming/fishing, with a frequency of 486 (45.3%). The civil servant group follows with a frequency of 291 (27.1%). Students account for 166 (15.5%) of the population, while those in business constitute the smallest group, with a frequency of 130 (12.1%). The occupation distribution reflects a diverse range of employment and engagement statuses among the respondents, with a significant portion engaged in farming/fishing, followed by civil servants, students, and individuals involved in business. These findings provide insights into the occupational diversity of the surveyed individuals, which can be valuable for understanding the economic activities and employment patterns within the surveyed population.

The data on marital status reveals that the majority of the respondents are single, with a frequency of 401 (37.4%). The married group follows closely behind with a frequency of 322 (30.0%). The divorce/separated group constitutes 191 (17.8%) of the population, while widows make up the smallest group, with a frequency of 159 (14.8%). The marital status distribution reflects a diverse range of marital relationships among the respondents, with a significant proportion classified as single, followed by married individuals, those who are divorced or separated, and widows. These findings provide insights into the marital diversity of the respondents, which can be valuable for understanding the social and familial dynamics.

Table 2: Ratings on Parental Socio-Economic Status and Youth Involvement in Kidnapping in Central Taraba, Nigeria

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std
Low parental socio-economic status may lead to feelings of frustration and anger among youths, which may in turn increase their likelihood of engaging in kidnapping.	777	200	35	36	25	4.48	0.940

Lack of opportunities and limited access to resources leads to the crime of kidnapping.	877	186	5	2	3	4.76	1.321
Parental socio-economic status influences youth's exposure to criminal networks and other risk factors, increasing their risk of involving in kidnapping.	521	330	112	44	66	3.82	0.899
Low parental socio-economic status lead to lack of parental supervision and monitoring, which increase the involvement of youths in kidnapping activities.	396	292	246	95	44	3.71	0.824
Low parental socio-economic status can contribute to family stress and conflict, which can increase the risk of youths engaging in kidnapping.	797	239	12	15	10	4.59	0.953
Low parental socio-economic status can lead to negative attitudes and beliefs about law enforcement and the justice system, which can further increase the risk of engaging in the crime of kidnapping.	296	600	62	21	94	3.51	0.602

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 displayed the ratings on the relationship between parental socioeconomic status and youth involvement in kidnapping in Central Taraba, Nigeria. The ratings are based on respondents' agreement with statements about how socioeconomic status may influence the likelihood of youth engaging in kidnapping. The ratings are categorized into "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Undecided," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree." Additionally, the table includes mean scores and standard deviations for each statement, indicating the average level of agreement and the variability of responses. The first statement "Low parental socio-economic status may lead to feelings of frustration and anger among youths, which may in turn

increase their likelihood of engaging in kidnapping” shows a Mean of 4.48 and Standard Deviation: 0.940, this implies that the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, indicating a perception that low parental socioeconomic status can contribute to negative emotions in youths, potentially increasing their involvement in kidnapping. The mean score of 4.48 is significantly higher than the midpoint of the rating scale, indicating a high level of agreement among respondents. On average, respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that low parental socioeconomic status can lead to feelings of frustration and anger among youths, which may increase their likelihood of engaging in kidnapping.

The standard deviation of 0.940 suggests a moderate level of variability in respondents' ratings around the mean. While there is a strong consensus, the standard deviation indicates that there are some differences in how respondents perceive the relationship between parental socioeconomic status and youth emotions in the context of kidnapping. The high mean score and the moderate standard deviation suggest that respondents perceive the emotional impact of low parental socioeconomic status on youths as a significant risk factor for their involvement in kidnapping. This perception highlights the importance of addressing the psychological well-being of young people in low-income households to prevent their engagement in criminal activities. By implications, the strong consensus among respondents regarding the influence of low parental socioeconomic status on youth emotions suggests that interventions aimed at preventing youth involvement in kidnapping should consider the emotional impact of socioeconomic challenges. Efforts to address youth frustrations and anger through counseling, mentorship, and other support programs could be beneficial in reducing their vulnerability to criminal activities. From a policy and intervention perspective, the high level of agreement suggests that addressing the emotional well-being of youth in low-income households should be a priority in efforts to prevent kidnapping and other crimes. This could involve integrating mental health services into community support programs and educational initiatives that target at-risk youth.

The second statement "Lack of opportunities and limited access to resources leads to the crime of kidnapping" received a mean score of 4.76 and a standard deviation of 1.321 in the ratings provided. These figures indicate a high level of agreement among respondents with the statement, suggesting a strong consensus that a lack of opportunities and resources is a significant factor contributing to the crime of kidnapping in the region. The mean score of 4.76 is significantly higher than the midpoint of the rating scale, indicating a high level of agreement among respondents. On average, respondents strongly agreed with the statement that a lack of

opportunities and limited access to resources lead to the crime of kidnapping. The standard deviation of 1.321 is relatively high, indicating a notable degree of variability in respondents' ratings around the mean.

While there is a strong consensus, the high standard deviation suggests that there are some differences in the extent to which respondents perceive the influence of lack of opportunities and resources on kidnapping. The high mean score and the relatively high standard deviation suggest that while there may be some variability in responses, there is a clear consensus among respondents that the lack of opportunities and resources is a significant contributing factor to kidnapping in the region. This highlights the importance of addressing socioeconomic disparities and creating opportunities for youth in the region to mitigate the risk of involvement in criminal activities. The high level of agreement suggests that efforts to prevent kidnapping and other crimes should prioritize strategies that address the root causes of socioeconomic challenges, such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of educational and vocational opportunities.

The third statement "Parental socio-economic status influences youth's exposure to criminal networks and other risk factors, increasing their risk of involvement in kidnapping" received a mean score of 3.82 and a standard deviation of 0.899 in the ratings provided. This suggests a moderate level of agreement among respondents with the statement, indicating a mixed perception of the relationship between parental socioeconomic status, youth exposure to criminal networks, and the risk of youth involvement in kidnapping. The mean score of 3.82 falls above the midpoint of the rating scale, indicating a moderate level of agreement among respondents. On average, respondents tend to agree with the statement that parental socioeconomic status influences youth's exposure to criminal networks and other risk factors, increasing their risk of involvement in kidnapping. The standard deviation of 0.899 suggests a moderate level of variability in respondents' ratings around the mean. This indicates that while there is a tendency towards agreement, there are also notable differences in how respondents perceive the relationship between parental socioeconomic status and youth exposure to criminal networks.

The moderate mean score and standard deviation suggest a mixed perception among respondents regarding the influence of parental socioeconomic status on youth's exposure to criminal networks. While there is some agreement, there are also varying degrees of uncertainty and disagreement among respondents. The higher standard deviation compared to the mean suggests that the responses to this statement varied more compared to the previous ones. This indicates that there is less consensus among respondents regarding this particular aspect of the relationship between parental socioeconomic status and youth involvement in

kidnapping. The mixed perception highlighted by the moderate mean score and standard deviation suggests that the influence of parental socioeconomic status on youth's exposure to criminal networks is complex and multifaceted. Factors such as community environment, social networks, and individual resilience may also play significant roles in shaping youth behavior. The variability in responses further suggests that interventions aimed at addressing youth exposure to criminal networks and risk factors should consider a range of factors beyond parental socioeconomic status. Comprehensive approaches that address community-level influences and provide support to at-risk youth may be more effective in preventing youth involvement in criminal activities. The fourth statement "Low parental socio-economic status leads to lack of parental supervision and monitoring, which increase the involvement of youths in kidnapping activities" received a mean score of 3.71 and a standard deviation of 0.824 in the ratings provided. This suggests a moderate level of agreement among respondents with the statement, indicating a mixed perception of the relationship between parental socioeconomic status, parental supervision, and youth involvement in kidnapping. The mean score of 3.71 falls slightly above the midpoint of the rating scale, indicating a moderate level of agreement among respondents. On average, respondents tend to agree with the statement that low parental socioeconomic status can lead to a lack of parental supervision and monitoring, which, in turn, increases the involvement of youths in kidnapping activities. The standard deviation of 0.824 indicates a moderate level of variability in respondents' ratings around the mean. This suggests that while there is a tendency towards agreement, there are also notable differences in how respondents perceive the relationship between parental socioeconomic status and parental supervision in the context of youth involvement in kidnapping.

The mean score and standard deviation suggest a mixed perception among respondents regarding the influence of parental socioeconomic status on parental supervision and youth involvement in kidnapping. While there is some agreement, there are also varying degrees of uncertainty and disagreement among respondents. By implication; the mixed perception highlighted by the moderate mean score and standard deviation suggests that the relationship between parental socioeconomic status and parental supervision is complex and multifaceted. Factors such as cultural norms, family dynamics, and community support systems may influence the extent to which parental socioeconomic status impacts parental supervision and youth behavior. From a policy and intervention perspective, the mixed perception suggests that interventions aimed at addressing youth involvement in criminal activities should consider the broader context of family dynamics and community resources. This could involve strategies

that provide support to families affected by socioeconomic challenges and promote positive parenting practices to mitigate the risk of youth engagement in criminal activities.

The fifth statement "Low parental socio-economic status can contribute to family stress and conflict, which can increase the risk of youths engaging in kidnapping" received a mean score of 4.59 and a standard deviation of 0.953 in the ratings provided. This indicates a strong level of agreement among respondents with the statement, suggesting a consensus regarding the influence of parental socioeconomic status on family dynamics and its potential impact on youth involvement in kidnapping. The mean score of 4.59 is significantly higher than the midpoint of the rating scale, which indicates a strong level of agreement among respondents. On average, respondents agreed that low parental socioeconomic status can contribute to family stress and conflict, which, in turn, can increase the risk of youths engaging in kidnapping. The standard deviation of 0.953, while relatively high, does not diminish the strength of the mean score. Instead, it indicates some variability in respondents' ratings around the mean. This variability suggests that while there is a consensus, there are still some differences in the extent to which respondents perceive the relationship between parental socioeconomic status, family stress, and youth involvement in kidnapping.

The high mean score and the relatively high standard deviation suggest that respondents generally perceive family stress and conflict resulting from low socioeconomic status as significant risk factors for youth involvement in kidnapping. This perception highlights the importance of considering family dynamics and socioeconomic context when addressing the issue of youth crime in the community. By implication, the strong level of agreement with this statement underscores the importance of addressing family stress and conflict in communities affected by low socioeconomic status. Interventions aimed at reducing family stress and improving family dynamics could potentially mitigate the risk of youth involvement in criminal activities like kidnapping. The high level of agreement suggests that efforts to address youth crime should include strategies that target family well-being and socioeconomic support. This could involve programs aimed at strengthening family relationships, providing economic support to low-income families, and addressing the underlying causes of family stress related to socioeconomic challenges.

The sixth statement "Low parental socio-economic status can lead to negative attitudes and beliefs about law enforcement and the justice system, which can further increase the risk of engaging in the crime of kidnapping" received a mean score of 3.51 and a standard deviation of 0.602 in the ratings provided. This statement received a lower mean score compared to others, indicating a less strong consensus. While there was agreement, there

was also a significant number of respondents who disagreed or were undecided about the influence of socioeconomic status on attitudes towards law enforcement and the justice system. This indicates that while there was a moderate level of agreement with the statement, there was also a notable degree of variability in respondents' opinions. The mean score of 3.51 suggests that, on average, respondents tend to agree with the statement but not as strongly as with some of the other statements in the table. This indicates that the perception of the influence of parental socioeconomic status on attitudes towards law enforcement and the justice system was less uniform compared to other factors discussed in the table.

The standard deviation of 0.602 reflects the variability in respondents' ratings. A higher standard deviation indicates that the ratings were more spread out from the mean, suggesting a wider range of opinions among respondents. In this case, the standard deviation suggests that there was a notable diversity in how respondents perceived the influence of socioeconomic status on attitudes towards law enforcement and the justice system. The lower mean score and higher standard deviation indicate that there was less consensus among respondents regarding the influence of parental socioeconomic status on attitudes towards law enforcement and the justice system compared to other factors presented in the table. While there was agreement, the variability in responses suggests that some respondents either disagreed with the statement or were undecided about its validity. The variability in responses to this statement suggests that the relationship between parental socioeconomic status and attitudes towards law enforcement and the justice system may be perceived differently by different individuals. Factors such as cultural beliefs, personal experiences, and community dynamics could contribute to this variability. The variability in responses highlights the need for nuanced approaches when addressing perceptions of law enforcement and the justice system in communities affected by socioeconomic disparities. Strategies that take into account the diverse perspectives and experiences of individuals and communities may be more effective in addressing negative attitudes and beliefs that could contribute to criminal activities like kidnapping.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the analysis of parental socioeconomic status and its relationship with youth involvement in kidnapping in Central Taraba, Nigeria, reveals several important insights. The data suggests that there is a perceived association between low parental socioeconomic status and various risk factors that contribute to youth engagement in kidnapping. Respondents generally agree that factors such as family stress, lack of

opportunities, limited access to resources, and negative attitudes towards law enforcement can be influenced by parental socioeconomic status and may increase the likelihood of youth involvement in kidnapping.

However, the analysis also highlights the complexity of this relationship, as evidenced by the variability in respondents' perceptions across different aspects of the topic. While there is general agreement on some factors, such as the influence of family stress and lack of opportunities, there is also variability in opinions regarding other factors, such as exposure to criminal networks and attitudes towards law enforcement. Based on the findings related to parental socioeconomic status and youth involvement in kidnapping in Central Taraba, Nigeria, the study recommends that there is need to implement targeted economic empowerment programs aimed at improving the socioeconomic status of families in the region. These programs could include skills training, job creation initiatives, and entrepreneurship development to provide parents with opportunities for income generation and financial stability. There is need to enhance access to quality education and skill development programs for youth. Education plays a crucial role in providing opportunities for upward social mobility and reducing the likelihood of youth engaging in criminal activities. There is need to strengthen family support services that provide assistance to families facing socioeconomic challenges. This could involve initiatives such as parenting workshops, counseling services, and financial assistance programs to help families cope with stress and improve family dynamics.

There is need to foster community engagement and collaboration to address the root causes of youth involvement in kidnapping. This could include community-based initiatives that promote positive youth development, create safe spaces for youth engagement, and build strong social networks that provide support and opportunities for young people. There is need to work towards reforming the law enforcement and justice systems to build trust and confidence among the population. This could involve initiatives to improve transparency, accountability, and fairness in the delivery of justice, as well as community policing strategies that engage with local communities to address security challenges. There is need to adopt a comprehensive approach that addresses the multidimensional nature of youth involvement in kidnapping. This approach should consider not only the economic factors but also social, cultural, and psychological aspects that influence youth behavior. There is need to invest in further research and data collection to better understand the specific factors contributing to youth involvement in kidnapping in Central Taraba, Nigeria. This could involve conducting studies to identify local risk factors,

assess the effectiveness of interventions, and inform evidence-based policymaking.

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