

Trauma Coping Strategies for the Catholic Religious Men and Women Survivors of Kidnapping in the Southern Ecclesiastical Provinces of Nigeria

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Abstract : The study aimed at investigating the effective trauma coping strategies among Catholic religious men and women survivors of kidnap in Southern Ecclesiastical Provinces of Nigeria. It had a phenomenological design. Twenty-one survivors of which twelve were males and nine females were interviewed in a focus group using a semi-structured interview guide. A thematic analysis of the data showed emerging themes of Relating with more people, having a wider social support network, not paying too much attention to the fact that they experienced the kidnapping, finding a rational and realistic explanation to the situation, being open to learning positive lessons from a very difficult situation, being compassionate towards their abductors, actively looking forward to ways to replace the losses they have encountered, plunging themselves into the depth of their prayers, praying for their abductors, and receiving some kind of professional counseling or therapeutic support have helped them to cope and navigate the path that leads to posttraumatic growth. Other themes that emerged from participants who seem to be struggling and are still traumatized are Inadequate understanding of their trauma by their conferrers, poor understanding of mental health issues by their superiors, fear of the costs of therapy, and that the recommendations of counselors and therapists are not often respected. The study recommends that Catholic Institutes of religious men and women, family members, and the society at large can incorporate these positive coping strategies into the trauma intervention and care of the survivors of kidnapping for them to navigate the path of posttraumatic growth.

Keywords : Trauma, coping strategies, posttraumatic growth, kidnapping, abduction, Resilience

I. INTRODUCTION

Traumatic events, regardless of their magnitude are an unavoidable part of human life. They can shake people to the heart by posing a strong challenge to their daily sense of peace, security and, the normal order in the world. There has been a great deal of effort and resources put into studying and understanding the broad range of the negative effects of trauma on mental health. Studies on the negative effects of trauma have helped people to understand trauma, develop coping mechanisms and strategies. However, there is limited knowledge on how human beings tend to flourish amid traumatic and disastrous life events; the broad range of human

potentials when it comes to living through traumatic events and afterward.

Since the Arab uprising began in 2011 which led to the collapse of many countries in the Middle East, the world has witnessed an increase in the activities of terrorists (United Nations High Commission for Refugees [UNHCR], 2014). These various forms of terrorist activities ranging from kidnapping, torture, enslavement, killings, sporadic shooting, bomb blast, and the like in different parts of the world have left a good number of people with one form of trauma or another (Dabashi, 2012). There is a continuous increase in the number of people being affected by trauma resulting from such (Asatsa, 2018).

Many African countries have experienced and are still experiencing the trauma of kidnapping. The situation is on the rise in many countries in West Africa where Boko Haram, Bandits, and Fulani herdsmen are terrorizing the people. In sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria has the most reported cases of kidnapping for ransom, followed by South Africa and Kenya respectively. It is worthy to note that the reporting environment in both South Africa and Kenya is significantly better compared to other conflict-affected countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, such as Congo, South Sudan, and Somalia (NYA, 2018). Nigeria is being ranked in the global index as one of the most notorious countries in the world because of frequent incidents of kidnapping. In recent times, Kidnapping has become one of the most dangerous and traumatic threats to many people living in Nigeria. Kidnapping to obtain ransom has become a lucrative and common practice by gangs and some insurgent and criminal groups across the country.

Godwin (2019) reported that according to the Inspector General of Police in Nigeria, a total of 365 persons were reported to have been kidnapped in the Northwest of Nigeria in the first quarter of 2019; 281 victims in Zamfara, 65 in Kogi, 51 in Niger states. Ayuba (2020) noted that the kidnappers in Nigeria demanded a total of \$27,600-276,000 in ransom for low to medium profile individuals, \$50,000 to \$1 million from high profile individuals, and \$200,000 to 950,000 from foreigners. Christian (2020) also noted that the total money spent on Ransom within nine (9) years in Nigeria

is more than USD 18.34million (equivalent to NGN 48Bn), about UDS11million was paid between January 2016 and March 2020. Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt are the most targeted areas in terms of kidnapping for ransom. He noted Kaduna has about 117cases, Borno has about 85 cases, in the northern region, while Rivers state, a part of the Southern province has about 120 kidnap cases, Delta state in the southern province has about 96 cases, Bayelsa in the southern province has about 85 cases and of kidnapping. This indicates that there are more cases of kidnapping for ransom in the oil-producing southern region.

ENACTAFRICA reported some details, that according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which collected data from the law enforcement agencies, 277 kidnap cases were reported in Nigeria in 2007, 309 in 2008, 738 in 2010, 600 in 2012, 574 in 2013, no data reported for the year 2011, in 2015, 886 kidnappings were reported, 630 in 2016 and 2017 put together, and this figure is relatively stable in 2018, however, the United Nations intelligence also noted that Kidnap cases are under-reported in Nigeria (Assanvo&Okerek, 2020). These figures put together are about 5,274 reported cases within 12years.

Many Christians and their leaders have experienced the trauma of kidnapping. Some have been committed by Fulani herdsmen and Boko Haram insurgents and other gangs of kidnapers. In April 2014, 276 students of the Government Girls' College in Chibok, Borno State, were kidnapped from their school hostel by the Boko Haram, an Islamist extremist terrorist organization based in Northeastern Nigeria, (BBC News, 2014).In Jos, North Central region of Nigeria, on September 22, 2020, a Church elder was shot and his daughters were kidnapped. In Northwest Nigeria, on a Friday, Sept. 18th, a Pastor and three other Christians were killed (Christian response, 2020). The Catholic Church also witnessed another horror when on the 8th of January, 2020, four Seminarians were abducted from the Good Shepherd Seminary, Kaduna at about 10:30 pm, two of them freed after 10 days in captivity, one killed and the other later released (Catholic News Agency, 2020).

A good number of Catholic Priests, Brothers, Sisters and lay faithful have also been victims of kidnapping in the Southern Ecclesiastical provinces; Six (6) Rev. Sisters were kidnapped on the thirteenth of November 2017 from the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus Convent in Iguoriakhi, Ovia South-West Local Government Area of Edo State. The kidnapers demanded 20 Million Naira in ransom for the Sisters who spent two months in captivity before they were released (Catholic News Agency, 2017.2018). On the 27th of October, 2018, four (4) Reverend Sisters of the Medical Missionaries of Mary (MMM) Congregation and another lady were kidnapped around the Railway Line near Agbor, Ika South Council of Delta State, along the Benin-Asaba expressway by unknown gunmen (The Guardian,2018). The southern region which is the oil-producing area remains sensitive to kidnapping due to

the anger of some youth who felt they have been marginalized and their land polluted.

Given the enormity of the situation of kidnapping and the gravity of the trauma of kidnapping on those who have experienced the menace, it is evident that the evolving problem of traumatic events on the people requires to be confronted to improve the mental health situation of the people. The Government on the Federal and State levels in Nigeria continues to engage the military and the political dimension of terrorism. However, since kidnapping is one of the weapons of terrorists, the mental health profession needs to engage the psychological dimension of kidnapping to heal the wounds of the trauma that the victims and those related to them are left with. The experience of kidnapping is capable of causing serious psychological maladjustment to the survivors ranging from anxiety, disorganization, low self-esteem, depression, and posttraumatic stress disorders, etc. However, research has also shown that people can grow and find meaning when they work through their trauma (Tedeschi& Calhoun,1996).

In Nigeria, kidnapping is still an ongoing problem, those who survive the kidnapping experience are happy to be alive, but they are traumatized, and they live in the fear of being kidnapped again. However, they continue to live their lives daily. The question remains, "how do these people cope with the traumatic outcome of their kidnapping experience?" This study sought to investigate the coping strategies that lead to posttraumatic growth (PTG) of Catholic religious men and women survivors of kidnapping. The study explored how the survivors develop the strength to live and become positive agents of change to themselves and others around them.

After a traumatic event, the individual calls on some coping strategies to deal with the effects of the trauma. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) proposed that one concept of coping is "constantly shifting cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage particular external and/or internal demands that are assessed as taxing or exceeding human resources". Informal support systems or social networks are widely used as coping mechanisms; a network that is known to an individual, such as friends, family members, and neighbors. Support networks such as family and friends are also seen as valuable resources for coping with trauma. The availability and efficiency of this social network will affect the ability of the individual to cope (Farwell, 2004).

The belief system, faith, or spirituality of the survivor of trauma can also affect their coping skills; a person's belief system can include religious, moral, political, and other views about the world around the person which affects them. According to Matheson et al. (2008), "holding a strong belief system that may include religions, social or political values can serve as a powerful shared strategy that helps individuals to confront or extract meaning from their traumas". Formal support and assistance are an additional domain outside of people's everyday lives. These are relevant in coping after a

traumatic event. Formal support can include medical facilities, mental health clinics, counseling and psychotherapy, social workers or other organizations, and workers providing services in return for payment; there are occasions where such support is discussed as being of benefit to the survivor of trauma (Asatsa, 2018).

Accumulated evidence from studies has shown that individual coping mediates between trauma and psychological distress and helps the individual navigate their way to posttraumatic growth. Adhikari and Bhagawati (2019) in their study of the prevalence of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and the use of coping strategies among adult survivors of the earthquake in Nepal have uncovered that the highest used coping strategy was active coping, survivors who did not have PTSD used more of active coping, some used self-distraction coping while those with PTSD mostly used passive coping, religious coping and substance use coping. They concluded that maladaptive coping strategies further increase the possibility of PTSD while positive coping strategies help to alleviate the symptoms of PTSD and help the survivors navigate Posttraumatic growth (Adhikari & Bhagawati, 2019).

There is study evidence that dispositional mindfulness moderated the relationship between depression and posttraumatic growth after a traumatic event. Xu et al. (2018) have found that for individuals with higher dispositional mindfulness, their depression was associated with more posttraumatic growth, while the individuals with lower dispositional mindfulness showed no such association (Xu, et al., 2018). This suggests that individuals high in dispositional mindfulness possess the potential to benefit from the process of adaptive coping in response to depression following a traumatic experience. This has implication for mindfulness-based intervention targeting depression, and also for research.

A considerable body of evidence has shown that social support may help people undergoing traumatic experiences. Ajoudani, et al. (2019) found that social support and spirituality were significant predictors of PTG after a traumatic experience in their study of the relationship between social support and PTG in Iranian burn survivors, as mediated by their perceptions of spiritual well-being. They also discovered that Spirituality partially mediated the relationship between social support and PTG, and interpreted the mediating role of spirituality to suggest that social support increases PTG, both directly and indirectly. They further suggested that the mediating role of spirituality should provide new visions for the augmentation of PTG in trauma survivors.

Research evidence has shown that the use of creative arts was a good coping strategy to help children move from posttraumatic depression to posttraumatic growth. van Westrhenen et al. (2019) evaluated the feasibility and effect of ten-session creative arts in a psychotherapy group program on posttraumatic stress symptoms, behavioural problems, and posttraumatic growth, in children who experienced a

traumatic event and found that both hyperarousal symptoms and avoidance symptoms decreased more in the treatment group compared to the control group, they concluded that the children in the creative arts group coped better and had a higher posttraumatic growth rate compared to the control group. Similar study evidence has been provided by Olabisi et al. (2020) in their research on Depression, anxiety, stress, and coping strategies among family members of patients admitted to intensive care units in Nigeria. They explained that the relatives and family members who used more task coping strategies experienced a low level of depression, anxiety, and stress (Olabisi, et al., 2020).

Even though there are studies on PTG from primary and vicarious traumas, within the African continent, information is still lacking on the lived experience of the Catholic religious men and women survivors of Kidnapping who had been affected by various kinds of trauma during and after their abduction experience.

Understanding the coping strategies and how they contribute to PTG would help trauma clinicians develop therapies that could improve the well-being of clients, thus facilitating corresponding effective coping in affected individuals. However, it remains unclear to trauma therapists from the literature reviewed whether to empower negative or constructive coping strategies of trauma interventions for survivors. More research is needed to resolve this discrepancy and to provide clarity on the formulation of trauma intervention. The goal of the current research was to make use of the findings to add to this path.

The purpose of this study is to identify the effective coping strategies that the Catholic Religious men and women survivors employ to live positively with their trauma after being kidnapped and released. This research seeks to understand the path that leads to growth for these Catholic religious persons after the trauma of kidnapping. This research hopefully will help individuals who have survived kidnapping to gain self-awareness, highlight their strengths, and develop and improve on new trauma coping strategies as they reflect on the possible traumatic growth that may have cultivated within them since they were kidnapped and released.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study was qualitative research; it adopted the phenomenological design with thematic analysis which aims to describe, understand, and interpret the meanings of experiences of the survivors. It focused on the research question “what are the effective coping strategies the paths that lead to posttraumatic growth adopted by the Catholic religious men and women survivors of kidnapping in Southern Ecclesiastical Provinces in Nigeria?” Twenty-one (21) Catholic religious men and women in the Southern Ecclesiastical provinces of Nigeria who have survived the experience of kidnapping were selected using the survey sampling method and interviewed in four focus

groups. Twelve (12) men and nine (9) women. A Semi-structured interview was designed for the study to capture the subjective experiences of the respondents as they report the coping strategies that help them navigate the paths of posttraumatic growth. Survivors were put into four focused groups for discussion.

III. RESULTS

After the focus group discussions and analysis of data collected, the following themes emerged as the effective coping strategies being adopted by the Catholic men and women religious that helped them to navigate the path of posttraumatic growth. Most of the participants in the group discussion said they found creative ways to cope with the trauma of the kidnapping.

Relating with more people: Some respondents expressed the fact that they make efforts to relate more with people, rather than keep to themselves and be depressed or re-traumatized. Some said; *"I go out of myself to relate more with people."* (P01, group3 discussion October 8, 2021). *"I didn't sit to try to feel self-pity,"* (P03, group2 discussion October 4, 2021).

A rational explanation of the event: Some spoke about finding a rational and realistic explanation to the situation of the kidnapping, this, they claimed had made them have a clear mind from day to day and they can cope well and face life again. The survivors have these to say;

It happened to me; it is not God who caused it. I can play the God-blame and then I find myself being affected negatively by it and not taking the responsibility of being creatively realistic of what happened (P03, group4 discussion October 10, 2021).

Paying less attention to the traumatic event: Some of the Catholic religious men and women survivors of kidnapping thought that not paying too much attention to the fact that they experienced the kidnapping helps them to cope better. They distract themselves with more important thoughts and activities.

"I try not to dwell on it." (P02, group2 discussion October 4, 2021). *"I don't speak too much about it, I walk away."* (P01, group4 discussion October 10, 2021). *"I try to shift my attention from it to something more positive. That happens in a small while."* (P02, group1 discussion September 29, 2021).

Openness to learning positive lessons: Some survivors believe that they can be open to learning positive lessons from a very difficult situation, if one is positive, one can grow and also be strong and be compassionate, towards the perpetrators of evil and heinous crimes. They expressed these thus;

for me, I believe that in every difficult situation there is always something positive from it. One can learn from difficult situations. That's what has helped me and every

situation." (P04, group3 discussion October 8, 2021). "There is always something to take and to grow and this is what has helped me. Yes, it has happened but there is more to life than what is happening" (P02, group4 discussion October 10, 2021).

Compassion: For others, being compassionate towards their abductors was a way of coping and finding the strength to grow through the experience. They expressed these by saying;

"One can be respectful of the self and the person who is the perpetrator of the evil. one can be very understanding, one can take a stand." (P08, group1 discussion September 29, 2021). *"I pray for myself and for them, those people who kidnapped me"* (P01, group3 discussion October 8, 2021).

Actively replacing their losses: Some respondents also believe that when they actively look forward to ways to replace the losses they have encountered, they can cope well and grow positively despite what they have been through. Some of them expressed that being available for missions and not being afraid of what they had been through but reaching out to help others, is one of the ways they cope well from day-to-day.

I cope well now by doing more of what I couldn't do at the time... I was going to give a retreat when this happened. That was a loss! So, what do I do? I make myself more available to be helpful to others to people." (P01, group4 discussion October 10, 2021). "I do not allow that experience to deter me from being relevant in my mission... the losses are there how do I replace them? By doing more! By making myself more available, by choosing to concretely assist others." (P04, group2 discussion October 4, 2021).

Prayer: Some respondents identified prayer as an effective coping strategy for them, although, many said the incident did not make them say more prayers or frequent the chapel more than usual, however, they experience some depth into their prayers, they found themselves having a deepened Spirituality in such a way that they feel more connected with God. They expressed themselves thus;

"My first positive way of coping is prayer, being in front of God, prying more, Relaxation and exercises, Watching movies, especially the ones that I like., that make me laugh." (P04, group3 discussion October 8, 2021).

Counseling and therapeutic support: Almost all the participants from every group discussion made reference to some kind of counseling or therapeutic support that has helped them to cope. Some were able to have access to professional counseling, some were lucky to be able to speak with people who listened to them and showed them empathy. *"Talking with people who can listen and help, talking with people helps a lot, I easily look for someone to talk with"* (P02, group3 discussion October 8, 2021).

“I seek for talk support. Talking to myself as if someone is talking to me(P06, group1 discussion September 29, 2021).“I was able to leave the country to go to Nairobi, to meet one of our brothers who is a counselor, I spent three weeks with him, just talking about my experience of the kidnapping .”(P02, group4 discussion October 10, 2021).

I was very lucky my congregation brought in a trauma expert from the United States of America, our sisters in the US arranged for that help and it has been a good way of dealing with the traumatic experience. I also had the opportunity to go to Uganda for a kind of sabbatical program and this program had some group therapy sessions and some individual sessions, I was able to share my trauma and cry and yell in a safe atmosphere. I think it was one day during my time in Uganda, I cried, I screamed and it felt like a breakthrough, then I was no longer afraid and was able to sleep normally” (P04, group2 discussion October 4, 2021).“From counseling, I was helped to perceive life differently, I was helped to understand that difficulty is part of life, this wisdom has really helped me(P04, group2 discussion October 4, 2021).

It is worthy of note that those who did not receive any form of professional help were somewhat silent and some of them did not want to join the group discussion. They preferred to talk privately and it was obvious that they were still hurting. Some of them are still traumatized and they are afraid. With the help of another therapist who had also been kidnapped, we were able to speak with and interact with the survivors and the following information was elicited,

Inadequate understanding of their traumaby their conferrers: Certain Attitudes that some survivors experience within their communities hurt them and make them want to give up. Some said they give up and then they relieve the experience. Their actions affect those around them negatively. And they have been made to believe that they are lazy, they are aggressive, and also, they are recalcitrant, and because they are labeled this way, other sisters or priests, or brothers around them begin to look at them that way and treat them that way, so what do they do? They are re-traumatized, or they are abused again by that same unfortunate incident.

“When I think of some comments I have heard from my sisters, I feel sad, I cry and I get very angry” (personal interview, October, 21).“ Sometimes, I want to just leave or I want to ask God to take my life, why have I experienced this? Why me?” (personal interview, October, 21). “ One council member said to me once...ah (a deep sigh...) physician heal yourself!... just that I am a psychologist does not mean I can not be traumatized.....”(personal interview, October, 21

Poor understanding of mental health issues by some superiors: those survivors who have not received professional help felt that they were not understood and that

the authorities did not understand what they had experienced. They found some of their superiors distant from them and their suffering.

“I think many superiors don’t understand these issues, these mental health issues”(personal interview, October, 21). “In all my workshops with superiors, I always say that the superior doesn’t even know what it means for a sister to be sent for counseling. They think it is like you have a headache, go and take a pill for one week. There are three phases of counseling. There is the preparation stage, diagnostic stage, and also the treatment stage. And the first stage can take about months. Many of them don’t understand this. Once I said that to a superior and she was very furious and she reacted in a very perilous way, and then she comes to say to me ‘you are very hard on us’ well I’m not superior before you.” (personal interview, October, 21).“And some superiors because they lack the knowledge of what mental health is, don’t see it as a problem. It is just a headache, take a pill and get on with life.” (personal interview, October, 21)

Recommendations of counselors and therapists are not respected very often: The advice, the suggestions that the counselors/therapists give at the end of the treatment, most times are ignored by superiors, especially when they want to see the survivor back to work. And because they are ignored by superiors, these people relieve the experience of the trauma.

“My counselor encouraged that I am given time and space to heal, but my superior said I was just being immature and wanted to just be lazy around” (personal interview, October, 21)

Fear of the costs of therapy: some of the survivors said that their communities were at some point concerned about how much they spent on therapy and this really shows that they did not understand their trauma. They felt that they were equating therapy with seeing a doctor and asking for some pills

“Sometimes, we are afraid of how much it is going to cost us” and then instead of getting real professional help, we are asked to go and talk to someone who has no clue of what one is suffering. He will just be there preaching healing and telling us to be strong”. (Personal interview, October 21)

The survivors said they would have preferred that the superior sit with them to ask them how they feel and what they would like or what can help them cope and heal.

“Well, what I want them to do is to ask the person ‘how can we help you?’ and to give them the time they need and not monetize the help. (Personal interview, October 21).

“The person should be given the time, the space to grieve, to be helped, and to listen to the counselors.”
(Personal interview, October 21)

So, superiors need to learn more about these issues. There is nobody who is not affected by traumatic experiences and the help we give to those who are affected will go a long way to help them to take control of their lives and to get well again.

IV. DISCUSSION

The results revealed that Catholic religious men and women survivors of kidnapping in the Southern Ecclesiastical provinces in Nigeria adopted various coping strategies that helped them develop a high degree of resilience in the aftermath of the traumatic experience. The emerging themes of Relating with more people, having a wider social support network, not paying too much attention to the fact that they experienced the kidnapping, finding a rational and realistic explanation to the situation, being open to learning positive lessons from a very difficult situation, being compassionate towards their abductors, actively looking forward to ways to replace the losses they have encountered, plunging themselves into the depth of their prayers, praying for their abductors, and receiving some kind of professional counseling or therapeutic support have helped the respondents of this study to cope and navigate the path that leads to posttraumatic growth.

The hopelessness theory of depression by Abramson, et al (1989) specifies the chain of distal and proximal contributors hypothesized to culminate in a proximal adequate cause of symptoms of hopeless depression when an individual experiences a traumatic event. The theory of Hopelessness also shows how the feedback received has an influence on the development of depression, if the feedback is inconsistent with negative inferences, the thought, and behaviour of the person is modified, the individual does not get depressed and as such can negotiate other paths of recovery and reduction of the depressive mode. Panzarella, et al. (2006) explain the buffering effect of social support which may occur before people experience the stressful condition or after experiencing the trauma, this helps the individual to prevent the onset of hopelessness and navigate some level of growth and degree of recovery. These Catholic religious men and women have experienced trauma due to the experience of kidnapping and yet, they are able to cope positively, it shows that they have developed some degree of resilience that enabled positive coping. The finding is in line with the study of Adhikari and Bhagawati (2019) who found positive active coping strategies in their study of the survivors of the earthquake in Nepal and interpreted their finding to mean that positive coping strategies help to alleviate the symptoms of PTSD and lead to PTG. This also is in line with the study of Asatsa (2018), who expressed that formal support which includes medical facilities, mental health clinics, counseling and psychotherapy, social workers or other organizations, and workers providing services in return for payment are of benefit to the survivors of trauma.

The belief system, faith, or spirituality of the Catholic religious men and women survivors of the trauma of kidnapping has been found to have a positive effect on their coping skills; this sheds more light on the phenomenon that a person's belief system which includes religious, moral, political, and other views about the world around the person can affect them. According to Matheson et al. (2008) holding a strong belief system that may include religions, social or political values can serve as a powerful shared strategy that helps individuals to confront or extract meaning from their traumas.

The findings of this study are in line with the proposition of Lazarus and Folkman (1984), that one concept of coping is the ability of the individual to make use of their human resources. They explained that informal support systems or social networks are widely used as coping mechanisms; a network which is known to an individual, such as friends, family members, and neighbors. Farwell (2004) has also expressed that support networks such as family and friends are also seen as valuable resources for coping with trauma, so, the ability of the individual to cope well with trauma depends on the availability and efficiency of these social networks of support.

V. CONCLUSION

The trauma of kidnapping has a very serious impact on those who have been abducted and made to face uncertainties regarding their lives, in that they were not sure if they would be released or killed, or their relatives extorted of fortune to secure their release.

Many trauma interventions focus on posttraumatic stress disorders, little has been done on the coping strategies. Even though there are studies on posttraumatic growth from primary and vicarious traumas, within the African continent, sufficient information is still lacking on the lived experience of the Catholic religious men and women survivors of Kidnapping who had been affected by various kinds of trauma during and after their abduction experience. However, those who survived and are struggling to live normal lives again have adopted some coping strategies that help them find meaning in their lives and navigate the path of growth. This study has identified the coping strategies as being positive, calling on all active resilience factors within the reach of the individual, and having a strong social support network, and the use of professional like counseling and other forms of trauma interventions.

The findings of this study contribute to how trauma interventions are being done, and how the Catholic Dioceses and Institutes of consecrated life, family members, and the society at large can respond to the trauma of the survivors of kidnapping especially the catholic religious men and women, who are pastoral agents of the Catholic church.

Studies focusing only on kidnapped individuals sometimes underestimate the real impact of kidnapping on the community. The community members of the religious men

and women survivors of this unfortunate event would have also been traumatized especially those who were abducted from the convents and presbyteries, leaving other members of the community behind. Further studies could be carried out on the traumatic effect of the kidnapping of community members, on the rest of the community and how this affects their lives, well-being, and mission.

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