

Experiences of Kidnapping for Ransom and the Psycho-Spiritual Wellbeing of Affected Families in the Hausa Community of the Catholic Diocese of Katsina, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Kidnapping for ransom has become an alarming social and psychological crisis in Northern Nigeria, particularly in Katsina State, where families live in constant fear and trauma. The study explored, *Kidnapping for Ransom and the Psycho-Spiritual Wellbeing of Affected Families in the Hausa Community of the Catholic Diocese of Katsina, Nigeria*, it investigated the prevalence, experiences, and psycho-spiritual effects of kidnapping on affected families. The study examined the level and effect of kidnapping for ransom, explored the relationship between the phenomenon and the psycho-spiritual wellbeing of family members and survivals, and identified coping strategies employed by affected families. The study was guided by Judith Lewis Herman's Trauma and Recovery Theory, which emphasizes the psychological consequences of trauma, and Murray Bowen's Family Systems Theory, which views the family as an emotional unit where one member's distress affects all members. The research adopted a convergent parallel mixed-method design. The target population was 550 participants drawn from the Hausa community within the Catholic Diocese of Katsina gotten from the website of the Catholic Diocese of Katsina, dated October 20, 2024, with a sample size of 222 respondents were selected using purposive and stratified sampling techniques. Quantitative data were collected through structured Google Forms that were distributed electronically, and qualitative insights from 20 respondents were obtained through Zoom interviews and one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Data was coded and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics of Pearson's correlation coefficient aided by SPSS version 26 for the quantitative aspect, and thematic and content analysis according to general categories then summarised and presented in form of narratives and direct quotations for the qualitative aspect. The research revealed that 82% of the respondents believe that kidnapping is prevalent in their community. The research revealed that 79% of the respondents believe that God loves and care for them despite the situation, it shows a moderate level of psycho-spiritual well-being with Pearson's correlation coefficient of variables $r=0.896^{**}$, but an elevated level of anxiety, depression and stress were revealed on affected families. The study shows that psycho-spiritual therapy, counselling, community solidarity, faith based programmes can help affected families. The study may contribute to policy interventions for government, the church, the Hausa community and for future psycho-spiritual therapists who will help enhance healing and psycho-spiritual support for affected families.

INTRODUCTION

Kidnapping for ransom has become one of the most alarming security challenges confronting Nigeria in recent decades. While the phenomenon was initially concentrated in the Niger Delta region, it has increasingly spread across Northern Nigeria, particularly in the North-West geopolitical zone, including Katsina State (Adelola, 2022). The escalation of kidnapping incidents has generated widespread fear, insecurity, displacement, and socio-economic disruption among affected populations. Kidnapping for ransom involves the unlawful seizure and detention of individuals with the primary objective of obtaining financial benefits or other forms of concessions from victims' relatives, communities, organizations, or governments (Okoli & Agada, 2014). In

many communities of Katsina State, kidnapping has evolved into a recurrent criminal enterprise that threatens the social fabric and psychological stability of families.

The impact of kidnapping extends beyond the direct victims. Family members often experience prolonged periods of uncertainty, helplessness, emotional distress, and financial hardship during captivity and after the release of their loved ones. Such experiences frequently lead to psychological difficulties including depression, anxiety, traumatic stress, fear, and emotional exhaustion (Ezeibe et al., 2020). From a psycho-spiritual perspective, traumatic experiences such as kidnapping can significantly affect an individual's sense of meaning, purpose, connectedness, transcendence, and relationship with God. Psycho-spiritual wellbeing encompasses the integration of psychological health and spiritual functioning, including self-awareness, compassion, meaningfulness, connectedness, and transcendence (Fisher, 2016). Exposure to traumatic events may either strengthen spiritual commitment and resilience or generate spiritual struggles characterized by feelings of abandonment, anger toward God, and existential questioning. The Hausa community of the Catholic Diocese of Katsina presents a unique context for examining the psycho-spiritual consequences of kidnapping. Religious faith, communal relationships, and cultural values play important roles in shaping responses to adversity and trauma. Understanding how affected families experience kidnapping and maintain psycho-spiritual wellbeing can contribute to the development of culturally sensitive interventions. Therefore, this study investigated the experiences of kidnapping for ransom and the psycho-spiritual wellbeing of affected families within the Hausa community of the Catholic Diocese of Katsina, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a **Convergent Parallel Mixed-Method Design**. This design enabled the researcher to collect quantitative and qualitative data concurrently, analyze them separately, and integrate the findings during interpretation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The mixed-method approach was appropriate because it provided both numerical measures of psycho-spiritual wellbeing and rich descriptions of participants' lived experiences.

Study Area

The study was conducted within the Hausa community of the Catholic Diocese of Katsina, Nigeria. The Diocese comprises several parishes and outstations serving communities affected by insecurity and kidnapping.

Target Population- The target population consisted of 550 family members affected by kidnapping for ransom within the Catholic Diocese of Katsina.

Sample Size Determination

The sample size was calculated using **Yamane's (1967) formula**:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = Sample size

N = Population size (550)

e = Margin of error (0.05)

$$n = \frac{550}{1 + 550(0.05)^2}$$

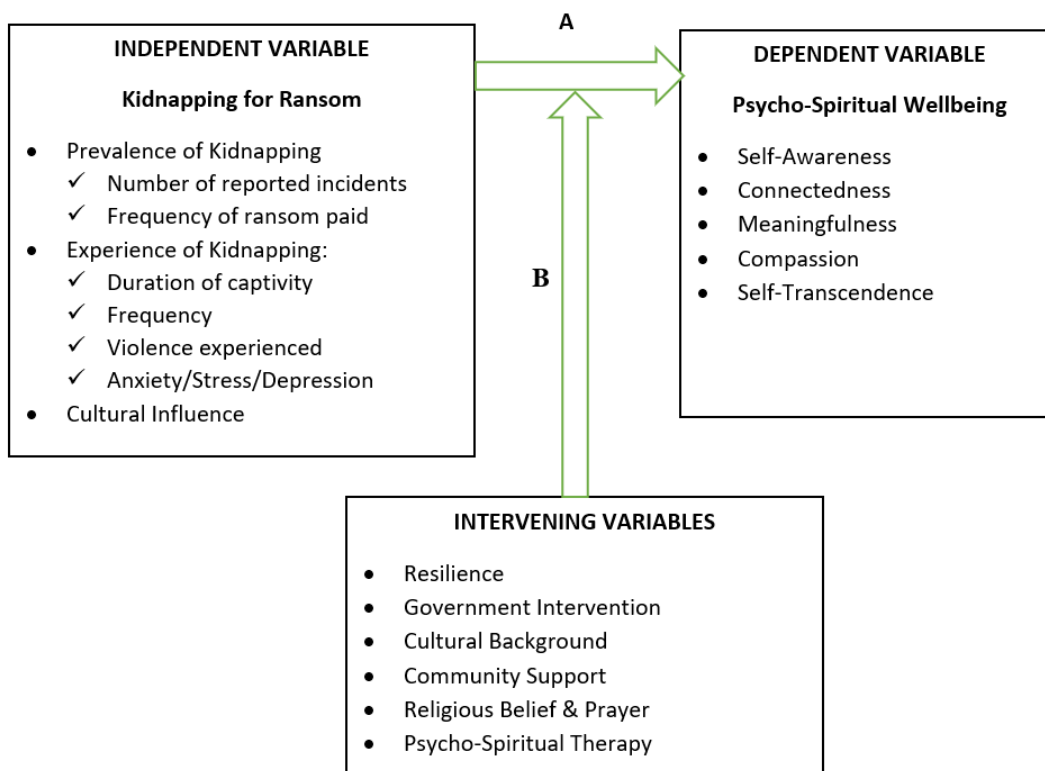
$$n = \frac{550}{2.375}$$

n = 231.58

After adjustment and response management procedures, a final sample of 222 participants was utilized for the study.

Figure 1.1 A conceptual framework illustrating how kidnapping for ransom impacts on the psycho-spiritual well-being of Affected Families.

Conceptual Framework: Kidnapping for Ransom and Psycho-Spiritual Wellbeing



The Arrows indicate direction of hypothesized causal flow consistent with theory. The arrow A shows direct effects between indicators of the Independent Variables on the Dependent Variables. The B arrow shows intervening relationships that may or may not hold. The Arrow from Independent Variables to Dependent Variables indicate specific pathways by which different dimensions of kidnapping, Prevalence, experience, duration, frequency, exposure to violent experience, Anxiety, culture and fear factors influence psycho-spiritual Well-being of both the survivors' and their immediate family members, such as, their self-awareness, connectedness, meaningfulness, compassion and self-transcendence. Whereas, the intervening variables for examples, resilience, religious coping, community support, government intervention, cultural background and psycho-spiritual Therapy have a conditional effects on the wellbeing of the affected families and treated as exploratory and the researcher tested these conditional or indirect effects using bootstrapped mediation and interaction analyses. For instance, the longer *duration of captivity* chronic *level of anxiety, stress and depression*. *Religious coping intensity* moderates the relationship between *violence experienced* and *connectedness*, such that the association is weaker at higher levels of religious coping. Also, the indirect path from *frequency of kidnapping* to *self-awareness* through *social support* was significant.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Judith Herman's Trauma Recovery Theory

The study is anchored in Judith Herman's Trauma Recovery Theory (2015). According to Herman, recovery from trauma occurs through three stages: Safety. The individual establishes physical and emotional security following traumatic exposure. Remembrance and Mourning. Victims process traumatic memories and expr-

ess associated emotions. And Reconnection. Individuals rebuild relationships and reintegrate into normal life. This theory explains how families affected by kidnapping navigate emotional distress, grief, recovery, and resilience.

Murray Bowen's Family Systems Theory

Bowen (1978) argues that the family functions as an emotional unit. When one member experiences trauma, the entire family system is affected. Key concepts include: Emotional interconnectedness, Family anxiety, Differentiation of self and Family adaptation. Kidnapping affects not only the direct victim but also spouses, children, parents, siblings, and extended family members. Bowen's theory provides an explanation for the collective psycho-spiritual impact observed among affected families.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Kidnapping for Ransom

Kidnapping refers to the unlawful seizure, detention, and confinement of an individual against his or her will for the purpose of obtaining financial, political, religious, or personal benefits (Okoli & Agada, 2014). In Nigeria, kidnapping for ransom has evolved from a localized criminal activity into a widespread security challenge affecting both rural and urban communities.

The North-West region of Nigeria, particularly Katsina, Zamfara, Kaduna, Sokoto, and Kebbi States, has witnessed a significant increase in kidnapping incidents over the past decade. These incidents have resulted in economic hardship, displacement, social instability, psychological trauma, and spiritual crises among affected families (Ezeibe et al., 2020).

Unlike direct victims, family members often experience secondary victimization through prolonged uncertainty, emotional suffering, financial losses, and social disruption. Consequently, kidnapping should be understood not merely as an individual traumatic event but as a family and community crisis.

Psycho-Spiritual Wellbeing

Psycho-spiritual wellbeing refers to the integration of psychological health and spiritual functioning that enables individuals to experience meaning, purpose, inner peace, connectedness, self-awareness, and transcendence (Fisher, 2016). The psycho-spiritual perspective recognizes that human wellbeing extends beyond physical and psychological dimensions to include spiritual experiences and existential meaning. In traumatic situations, spirituality often functions as both a coping resource and a framework for interpreting suffering. Researchers have identified five major dimensions of psycho-spiritual wellbeing: Self-awareness, Compassion, Meaningfulness, Connectedness and Transcendence. These dimensions are particularly important among religious communities such as the Hausa Catholics of Katsina Diocese where faith and communal relationships influence coping processes.

Psychological Consequences of Kidnapping

Exposure to kidnapping-related trauma frequently leads to significant psychological consequences. Studies have reported elevated levels of: Depression, Anxiety, Stress, Post-traumatic stress symptoms, Fear and insecurity and Emotional exhaustion. According to Herman (2015), traumatic experiences disrupt an individual's sense of safety, trust, and control. Families of kidnapped persons often experience prolonged psychological distress due to uncertainty regarding the victim's fate. The emotional burden may persist long after the victim's release, resulting in chronic psychological difficulties that affect family functioning and wellbeing.

Spiritual Consequences of Kidnapping

Trauma affects not only psychological functioning but also spiritual wellbeing.

Victims and their families frequently report: Questioning God's presence, Loss of meaning, Spiritual struggles, Religious doubts and Anger toward God. Conversely, some individuals report: Increased prayer, Strengthened faith, Greater dependence on God and Enhanced religious commitment. Pargament (2011) describes this phenomenon as religious coping, whereby spirituality becomes a mechanism for resilience, meaning-making, and recovery.

Empirical Review

A study by Ezeibe et al. (2020) found that families affected by kidnapping in Northern Nigeria exhibited elevated levels of psychological distress and social disruption. Similarly, Adebayo (2021) reported that kidnapping survivors and their families experienced severe anxiety, depression, and fear of future victimization. Research by Pargament et al. (2017) demonstrated that positive religious coping significantly predicted psychological adjustment among trauma survivors. Although several studies have examined kidnapping and psychological trauma, limited research has investigated psycho-spiritual wellbeing among affected families in Northern Nigeria. This study addresses that gap.

Instrumentation

Psycho-Spiritual Wellbeing Scale (PSWS)

The PSWS assessed: Self-awareness, Compassion, Meaningfulness, Connectedness and Transcendence.

Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21)

The DASS-21 measured: Depression, Anxiety and Stress

Kidnapping Experience Scale (KES)

The KES assessed: Exposure to kidnapping experiences, Duration of captivity, Financial burden, Emotional consequences and Family disruption.

Qualitative Instrument. Semi-structured interview guides were utilized to explore participants' lived experiences and coping mechanisms.

Ethics and Safety Procedures

Ethical Approval and Guiding Principles

The study were conducted in accordance with internationally recognized ethical guidelines, including the Belmont Report's principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). Ethical approval were obtained from the Institution, the Psycho-Spiritual Institute Administrative Board prior to the commencement of data collection and relevant diocesan authority. These principles guide participant recruitment, informed consent, confidentiality, selection of interview topics, and risk-mitigation procedures. Given the sensitivity of kidnapping experiences, ethical considerations were strictly observed. Egunjobi emphasizes: "Research involving victims of violence must prioritize dignity, confidentiality, and psychological safety, as participants may relive traumatic experiences during data collection" (Egunjobi, 2020,). Macharia adds: "Ethical research practice requires informed consent, voluntary participation, and the provision of emotional support where necessary" (Macharia, 2018,).

Informed Consent Procedures

Participants were provided with a clear, simple, and trauma-informed consent form explaining the purpose of the study, procedures, potential risks, benefits, and the voluntary nature of participation. In line with APA recommendations on trauma research, participants were informed that they may pause, skip questions, or withdraw completely at any time without consequences (American Psychological Association, 2021). The

consent process was emphasized: the sensitive nature of discussing kidnapping experiences; participants' freedom to choose what to disclose; the option to have a trusted support person present if desired; limits to confidentiality in cases where disclosure involves imminent danger or mandatory reporting requirements, depending on local legal frameworks. For participants who may experience anxiety or confusion due to trauma history, extra time was provided to read the consent form and ask questions. Consent was documented in writing or verbally (for those with literacy challenges).

Confidentiality and Data Anonymity

Given the security risks associated with kidnapping in Katsina State, strict confidentiality measures were required. In accordance with qualitative trustworthiness principles (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), confidentiality was maintained through: the use of pseudonyms for participants, family members, and communities; removal of identifiable details such as village names, dates of kidnapping, or references to specific perpetrators; securely storing all audio recordings and transcripts on encrypted, password-protected devices; limiting data access to the principal investigator and authorized supervisors only; destroying raw data after the required institutional retention period. Participants were informed of the limits of confidentiality, particularly in cases where there is risk of harm to self or others. Informations that could place a participant or community at security risk were redacted during transcription.

Managing Potential Risks and Emotional Distress: Because the study involves survivors' and families affected by kidnapping for ransom, an experience known to trigger psychological and spiritual distress (APA, n.d.), a comprehensive risk-management plan was implemented, in collaboration with some alumni of the Psycho-spiritual Institute who are working in a nearby Dioceses.

Trauma-Informed Interviewing- Following guidelines for trauma-sensitive research (Korstjens & Moser, 2018), interviewers avoided pressuring participants to recount traumatic details; start with less sensitive questions before gradually progressing; observe signs of distress (tearfulness, withdrawal, panic); offer breaks or termination of interview without penalty; and use grounding techniques when necessary, slow breathing and reorientation.

Handling Emotional Triggers- There were times that some of the participants became overwhelmed. The interview was paused immediately. The participant was gently grounded through calm conversation. With consent, a family member or trusted person was contacted. If needed, the participant may be referred to a mental-health professional or pastoral counsellor if the process of stabilization was not achieved. The incidents were documented and reviewed with supervisors to ensure ethical compliance. There was a referral list prepared in advance, including local mental-health practitioners, Catholic pastoral care offices, psychosocial NGOs, and community-based counsellors familiar with the Hausa religious and cultural context.

Researcher and Research Assistant Safety- Given the insecurity associated with kidnapping-prone areas, the safety of the research team is equally important. Procedures included, conducting a field risk assessment before data collection; avoiding travel to unsafe locations; selecting secure interview venues, such as, parish houses, community halls and neutral safe spaces; conducting interviews during daytime only; informing the bishop of daily movement plans; carrying communication devices; used trained local guides when necessary. The research assistants underwent training on: trauma-informed interviewing; confidentiality procedures; managing distress reactions; cultural sensitivity; personal safety precautions.

Cultural and Psycho-Spiritual Sensitivity-The participants belong to the Hausa cultural groups, whose identity is deeply connected with spiritual beliefs and community structures, interviews were conducted with cultural humility (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The interview guides allowed participants to describe the spiritual meanings, ritual coping strategies, and faith-based interpretations of kidnapping experiences. Research procedures were respected: local religious worldviews; traditional healing practices; spiritual coping rituals; sensitivities around discussing trauma in communal societies. Where appropriate and acceptable to the participant, collaboration with priests, catechists, and faith leaders helped strengthen trust and community acceptance, without compromising confidentiality.

Data Analysis. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Ethical approval and informed consent procedures were observed throughout the study.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 214)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	112	50.5
	Female	110	49.5
Age	18–30	46	20.7
	31–40	71	32
	41–50	58	26.1
	Above 50	47	21.2
Marital Status	Married	165	74.3
	Single	32	14.4
	Widowed	25	11.3
Education	Primary	54	24.3
	Secondary	93	41.9
	Tertiary	75	33.8
Religion	Christian	222	100

Table 2 Psycho-Spiritual Wellbeing of Participants

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Self-awareness	3.48	0.71	Moderate
Compassion	3.61	0.66	Moderate
Meaningfulness	3.57	0.74	Moderate
Connectedness	3.7	0.69	Moderate
Transcendence	3.76	0.68	Moderate
Overall PSWB	3.62	0.7	Moderate

Table 3 Levels of Depression, Anxiety and Stress

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Depression	21.54	5.13	High
Anxiety	22.76	4.88	High
Stress	23.84	5.21	High

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study found that participants experienced moderate psycho-spiritual wellbeing despite high levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. This finding demonstrates the complex relationship between psychological distress and spiritual resilience. The moderate psycho-spiritual wellbeing observed among participants suggests that religious faith, prayer, communal support, and cultural values function as protective factors. This finding

supports Fisher's (2016) multidimensional understanding of spiritual wellbeing and aligns with Pargament's (2011) theory of religious coping, which emphasizes spirituality as a source of resilience during adversity.

The high levels of depression, anxiety, and stress indicate the severe psychological burden associated with kidnapping experiences. Families often endured prolonged uncertainty regarding the safety of their loved ones, financial difficulties arising from ransom payments, and persistent fears of future victimization. These findings are consistent with previous studies demonstrating that traumatic events significantly increase psychological distress among affected populations (Ezeibe et al., 2020). Qualitative findings revealed themes of fear, emotional trauma, financial hardship, disrupted family functioning, and spiritual struggles. Participants reported experiencing sleeplessness, sadness, helplessness, and social withdrawal. Similar findings have been documented among families exposed to violent conflict and criminal victimization in Northern Nigeria. Despite these challenges, many participants described increased prayer life, reliance on faith communities, and strengthened trust in God following the kidnapping experience. Such findings suggest that spirituality served as a coping resource that facilitated meaning-making and emotional recovery. The findings also support Judith Herman's Trauma Recovery Theory, which emphasizes safety, remembrance, mourning, and reconnection as essential stages of trauma recovery. Likewise, Bowen's Family Systems Theory explains how kidnapping affects not only individual victims but also the entire family system.

Importantly, respondents reported having changed daily routines ($M = 2.514$) and even perceiving kidnapping as a normal part of life ($M = 2.509$). This normalisation of insecurity points to chronic exposure and adaptation to threat. Overall, the findings demonstrate that kidnapping-for-ransom in the study area is deeply embedded in community life, shaping behaviour, perceptions of safety, trust in institutions, and collective social cohesion. The high means across these items suggest that psycho-spiritual wellbeing is likely influenced not only by direct experience but also by sustained community-level exposure to insecurity. The findings on the experiences of kidnapping for ransom in the Hausa community of the Catholic Diocese of Katsina reveal patterns that are largely consistent with existing literature, while also offering important contextual and psycho-spiritual insights. The narratives from respondents indicate that kidnapping is often sudden, violent, and characterized by intense uncertainty, with victims commonly abducted under threatening conditions and held in harsh environments such as forests. This aligns with earlier studies which describe kidnapping as a traumatic event marked by violence, coercion, and an atmosphere of fear deliberately created by abductors to subdue victims (Akhigbe & Koleoso, 2013). Similarly, reports in the literature emphasize that victims are subjected to both physical hardship and psychological intimidation, reinforcing the present finding that the experience is not only physically distressing but emotionally destabilizing.

In relation to psychological experiences, the study found that victims commonly reported overwhelming fear, anxiety, helplessness, and persistent thoughts about death during captivity, with some continuing to experience distress even after release. These outcomes strongly corroborate existing scholarly positions that kidnapping victims often develop symptoms associated with trauma, including anxiety disorders, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Kayode et al., 2025; Akhigbe & Koleoso, 2013). However, beyond these commonly documented psychological effects, the current findings introduce a deeper layer by highlighting the psycho-spiritual dimension of the experience. Many respondents indicated that their survival was closely tied to prayer, faith in God, and a sense of divine protection. While the literature acknowledges coping mechanisms, it tends to focus more on clinical and psychological interventions, thereby overlooking the central role of spirituality as both a coping strategy and a source of meaning in contexts such as the Hausa Catholic community.

The experiences of families of victims, as revealed in the findings, also reflect significant emotional and socio-economic strain. Families reported living in constant fear and uncertainty regarding the fate of their loved ones, alongside the burden of raising ransom payments, often through extreme measures such as selling assets or borrowing. This supports existing literature which identifies kidnapping as a phenomenon that extends its impact beyond the individual victim to affect entire family systems, disrupting social stability and economic wellbeing as expressed by Bowen in his Family System Theory (Bowen, 1992). Nonetheless, the present study expands this understanding by demonstrating that in the Hausa communal setting, the impact is not limited to the nuclear family but is shared across extended family networks and even the wider community, thereby

intensifying the collective experience of trauma and loss. However, economically, the findings are in agreement with prior studies that highlight the severe financial implications of kidnapping, particularly in relation to ransom payments and long-term livelihood disruption (Akhigbe & Koleoso, 2013). Moreso, the current study provides a more nuanced perspective by situating these economic challenges within a rural context where financial resources are already limited. This makes the burden of ransom not only a temporary strain but a potentially devastating event with prolonged consequences on household stability and survival. Such context-specific insights are often underrepresented in broader literature that does not sufficiently differentiate between rural and urban experiences. Another important area of convergence with the literature is the recognition of coping strategies. While previous studies emphasize psychological resilience and professional intervention, the findings of this study show that victims and their families relied heavily on religious faith, prayer, and hope as primary means of coping. This introduces an important contrast, suggesting that in deeply religious communities, coping is not merely psychological but also spiritual, integrating belief systems into the process of endurance and recovery. This underscores a gap in the literature, which tends to underplay indigenous and faith-based coping mechanisms, especially within African contexts. Overall, while the findings confirm much of what has been established in existing scholarship regarding the traumatic, psychological, and socio-economic dimensions of kidnapping, they also extend the discourse by incorporating cultural, communal, and psycho-spiritual perspectives. The study therefore contributes to a more holistic understanding of kidnapping experiences, particularly within the Hausa community of northern Nigeria, where religion, communal life, and rural realities significantly shape how such experiences are perceived, endured, and interpreted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Catholic dioceses should establish psycho-spiritual counseling centers for victims and affected families.
- Trauma-informed counseling services should be integrated into parish pastoral programs.
- Mental health professionals and pastoral caregivers should collaborate in providing holistic care.
- Community support groups should be strengthened to promote collective healing and resilience.
- Government agencies should increase security measures to prevent kidnapping incidents.
- Religious leaders should be trained in trauma-informed pastoral care.
- Further research should explore long-term psycho-spiritual outcomes among kidnapping survivors and their families.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF INSTRUMENTS

Prior to data collection, a pilot study involving 30 participants was conducted.

Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were as follows:

Instrument	Alpha
PSWS	0.89
DASS-21	0.92
KES	0.87

All instruments exceeded the recommended reliability threshold of .70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Content validity was established through expert review involving psychologists, counselors, and psycho-spiritual scholars.

Construct validity was assessed through factor analysis.

ADVANCED QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

Correlation Analysis

Table 4 Relationship between Study Variables

Variable	PSWB
Depression	-.61**
Anxiety	-.57**
Stress	-.64**
Faith	.68**
Community Support	.59**

$p < .01$

The findings indicate significant negative relationships between psycho-spiritual wellbeing and depression, anxiety, and stress. Faith and community support demonstrated significant positive relationships with psycho-spiritual wellbeing.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 5 Predictors of Psycho-Spiritual Wellbeing

Predictor	β	t	P
Depression	-0.32	-5.21	<.001
Anxiety	-0.21	-3.89	<.001
Stress	-0.29	-4.76	<.001
Faith	0.41	6.78	<.001
Community Support	0.26	4.54	<.001

Model Statistics:

$R^2 = .58$

$F(5,216) = 59.31$

$p < .001$

The model explained 58% of the variance in psycho-spiritual wellbeing.

Faith emerged as the strongest positive predictor of psycho-spiritual wellbeing.

Qualitative Findings

Qualitative Interview Findings from 20 Respondents on Kidnapping for Ransom and Psycho-Spiritual Wellbeing

Table 4.17 Summary of In-Depth Interview Responses (N = 20)

S/N	Participant Code	Experience of Kidnapping	Key Psychological Response	Spiritual Response	Coping Mechanism	Theme
1	R1	Family member abducted	Fear, sleeplessness	Increased prayer	Church attendance	Fear/Insecurity

2	R2	Personal abduction	Trauma, anxiety	Trust in God	Rosary devotion	Psychological distress
3	R3	Relative kidnapped	Panic, tension	Faith strengthened	Community prayer	Spiritual resilience
4	R4	Repeated attacks	Constant fear	Reliance on God	Vigilance	Fear/Insecurity
5	R5	Paid ransom	Depression	Prayer life deepened	Clergy counseling	Psychological distress
6	R6	Kidnap threat	Hypervigilance	Scripture reading	Family support	Fear/Insecurity
7	R7	Witnessed abduction	Shock, fear	Faith questioning	Church support	Psychological distress
8	R8	Lost property	Anxiety	Prayer groups	Social support	Community coping
9	R9	Family trauma	Stress	Strong faith	Religious meetings	Spiritual resilience
10	R10	Long captivity case	PTSD symptoms	Dependence on God	Counseling	Psychological distress
11	R11	Community attack	Fear, panic	Collective prayer	Vigilante groups	Fear/Insecurity
12	R12	Financial loss	Depression	Faith in providence	Church aid	Community support
13	R13	Kidnap survival	Trauma recovery	Spiritual growth	Prayer/fasting	Spiritual resilience
14	R14	Child abducted	Severe anxiety	Reliance on clergy	Counseling	Psychological distress
15	R15	Neighbour abducted	Fear spread	Faith strengthened	Community unity	Fear/Insecurity
16	R16	Recurrent threats	Chronic stress	Religious devotion	Church groups	Psychological distress
17	R17	Kidnap escape	Shock	Gratitude to God	Testimonies	Spiritual resilience
18	R18	Family displacement	Fear, uncertainty	Prayer reliance	NGO support	Community coping
19	R19	Economic hardship	Stress	Faith in God	Church charity	Community support
20	R20	Multiple incidents	Trauma	Strong belief in God	Religious rituals	Spiritual resilience

Thematic analysis generated five major themes.

Theme 1: Emotional Trauma and Fear

Participants described intense fear and emotional suffering.

Participant 12 stated: "Every day we feared that we would receive news that our brother had been killed." Participant 25 added: "I could not sleep. I kept imagining the worst possible outcome."

Theme 2: Financial Hardship

Families experienced severe economic strain due to ransom payments.

Participant 8 explained: "We sold our farmland and livestock to raise the ransom."

Theme 3: Disruption of Family Relationships. Participants reported tension, conflict, and emotional withdrawal. Participant 16 stated: "The experience changed the atmosphere in our family."

Theme 4: Spiritual Struggles. Many participants questioned God's presence. Participant 31 remarked: "I asked God why this happened to us despite our prayers."

Theme 5: Faith and Resilience. Despite spiritual struggles, faith remained a source of hope. Participant 19 stated: "Prayer gave us strength to continue when we felt helpless." Participant 27 added: "The Church stood with us throughout the crisis."

Implications For Psycho-Spiritual Practice

The findings demonstrate the need for:

- Trauma-informed pastoral care.
- Psycho-spiritual counseling interventions.
- Parish-based support groups.
- Family-centered therapeutic programs.
- Integration of psychological and spiritual healing approaches.

The results support the application of Psycho-Spiritual Therapy in addressing trauma-related distress among affected families.

Integrated Theoretical Interpretation, Psycho-Spiritual Intervention and Comparative Implications

Integration of the Theoretical Frameworks

The findings of this study are best understood through the complementary application of Herman's Trauma and Recovery Theory, Bowen's Family Systems Theory, Frankl's Logotherapy, and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. No single theoretical perspective adequately explains the complex psychological, relational, spiritual, and social consequences of kidnapping for ransom among affected families. The integration of these theories provides a multidimensional explanation of both psychological distress and psycho-spiritual resilience.

Herman's Trauma and Recovery Theory provides the primary framework for understanding the psychological consequences of kidnapping. The experiences of fear, distressing dreams, anticipatory anxiety, emotional disturbance, and other symptoms identified in the study suggest disruption of the survivors' basic sense of safety and control. Kidnapping may therefore continue to affect individuals psychologically even after the immediate event has ended. The persistent threat of further kidnapping may further prevent affected families from experiencing a complete return to a sense of security.

Bowen's Family Systems Theory complements this perspective by explaining how the consequences of kidnapping extend from the individual to the family system. When one member is kidnapped, the entire family may experience heightened anxiety, altered responsibilities, financial pressure, communication difficulties, and changes in family relationships. The family consequently becomes both a recipient of trauma and a potential source of resilience. Strong emotional connectedness and supportive relationships may help families manage anxiety, whereas unresolved family tension may intensify distress.

Frankl's Logotherapy provides an important explanation for the moderate psycho-spiritual wellbeing observed in the study. Although participants experienced significant psychological distress, they could still retain meaning, hope, compassion, connectedness, and self-transcendence. This suggests that suffering does not necessarily eliminate the human capacity to discover meaning. In the Catholic context, religious faith, prayer,

sacramental life, pastoral relationships, and communal worship may provide frameworks through which affected families interpret suffering and maintain hope.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory broadens the analysis by demonstrating that recovery is influenced by several interconnected environments. The immediate family constitutes the microsystem, while relationships between families, parishes, schools, workplaces, and community structures constitute mesosystem influences. Broader cultural, economic, religious, political, and security conditions form part of the macrosystem. The continuing insecurity associated with kidnapping therefore means that psychological recovery cannot be separated from the wider environment in which families live.

Taken together, the four theories suggest a theoretical pathway in which kidnapping exposure disrupts individual psychological safety; psychological distress affects family functioning; family, religious, and community relationships influence coping; and meaning-making and spiritual connectedness may contribute to psycho-spiritual resilience. This integrated framework provides a stronger basis for understanding the moderate psycho-spiritual wellbeing found despite substantial psychological distress.

Implications for Psycho-Spiritual Therapy

The findings indicate that intervention should move beyond a purely individual counselling model. Because kidnapping affects psychological, family, spiritual, social, and economic dimensions simultaneously, psycho-spiritual therapy should adopt a trauma-informed and family-sensitive approach.

WHO guidance similarly recommends a layered mental-health and psychosocial response during emergencies, beginning with community and social support and extending to psychological first aid and specialized clinical care for people with significant or persistent difficulties.

For the Catholic Diocese of Katsina, the proposed intervention may be organised into five interconnected levels.

First, immediate psychosocial and pastoral support. Recently affected families should receive compassionate, non-intrusive support. Psychological first aid emphasizes practical assistance, listening without pressuring individuals to disclose traumatic experiences, helping people regain a sense of calm and connecting them with social and professional support.

Second, individual psycho-spiritual assessment and therapy. Individuals experiencing persistent anxiety, depressive symptoms, traumatic memories, sleep disturbance, or significant functional impairment should receive appropriate assessment and, where necessary, referral to qualified mental-health professionals. Psycho-spiritual therapy can complement this care by addressing questions of meaning, faith, hope, guilt, forgiveness, suffering, identity, and relationship with God.

Third, family intervention. Family sessions should address communication, emotional support, changing responsibilities, unresolved fear, financial pressures, and the rebuilding of trust. Bowen's Family Systems

Theory provides a useful conceptual foundation for helping family members understand how anxiety can circulate within the family and how healthier emotional differentiation and communication may support recovery.

Fourth, spiritual and pastoral support. Pastoral care should be offered as a resource rather than imposed as an explanation for suffering. Prayer, Scripture reflection, Eucharistic participation, spiritual direction, parish support groups, and accompaniment by trained pastoral personnel may help families reconnect with meaning and hope. Such spiritual interventions should complement rather than replace evidence-based psychological care.

Fifth, community reintegration and long-term support. Families should not be left without support once the immediate crisis has passed. Parish communities can provide continuing social connection and reduce

isolation. WHO specifically recommends strengthening community self-help and social support and establishing referral networks between specialist services, general health providers, and community structures.

Proposed Psycho-Spiritual Intervention Programme for the Diocese

A practical diocesan programme could be implemented in four phases.

Phase	Period	Main Activities	Expected Outcome
Phase I: Identification and Stabilisation	0–3 months	Identify affected families; psychological first aid; basic psychosocial support; immediate pastoral accompaniment; risk screening	Reduced immediate distress and improved access to support
Phase II: Assessment and Therapy	3–6 months	Individual psycho-spiritual assessment; counselling; trauma-informed therapy; spiritual direction; professional referrals	Improved emotional regulation and coping
Phase III: Family and Community Healing	6–12 months	Family sessions; support groups; parish-based accompaniment; meaning-making activities; community reintegration	Improved family functioning, connectedness and hope
Phase IV: Evaluation and Sustainability	12–24 months	Outcome assessment; supervision; programme review; refresher training; research and documentation	Sustainable diocesan psycho-spiritual support system

The Diocese could designate a small coordinating team consisting of a psycho-spiritual therapist, psychologist or counsellor, pastoral representative, social worker where available, and designated parish personnel. Frontline pastoral workers should be trained to recognise psychological distress, provide basic supportive assistance, maintain confidentiality, and make appropriate referrals. WHO's psychological first-aid guidance is specifically designed to help helpers provide humane, supportive and practical assistance while respecting culture, dignity, and individual capacity.

Proposed Monitoring and Evaluation

The intervention should include measurable indicators rather than relying exclusively on anecdotal reports of improvement. Baseline assessment should be conducted before structured intervention where feasible, followed by reassessment at approximately three, six, twelve, and twenty-four months.

Possible indicators include:

1. Levels of depression, anxiety, and stress.
2. Psycho-spiritual wellbeing.
3. Family functioning and perceived social support.
4. Participation in counselling and support groups.
5. Number and quality of professional referrals.
6. Participant satisfaction with services.
7. Changes in meaning, hope, connectedness, compassion, and self-transcendence.
8. Retention and completion of intervention programmes.

This evaluation structure would also provide useful longitudinal data for future academic research.

Comparative Nigerian Perspective

The findings should be interpreted within Nigeria's wider experience of kidnapping and insecurity. Kidnapping has affected several states across the north-west and north-central regions, including Katsina, Zamfara,

Kaduna, Sokoto, Niger, and Benue, although the intensity, forms, local dynamics, and consequences vary considerably between communities.

The psychological consequences identified in the present study, fear, uncertainty, sleep disturbance, anxiety, emotional distress, disruption of family relationships, and concerns about future safety, are consistent with the broader understanding of psychological responses to humanitarian emergencies. WHO notes that almost all people affected by emergencies experience some psychological distress, although many recover naturally while a smaller proportion develop more persistent mental-health conditions.

Dimension	Katsina	Zamfara	Kaduna	Sokoto	Niger/Benue
Primary psychosocial concern	Fear, anxiety and family insecurity	Recurrent insecurity and displacement	Fear, loss and disruption of community life	Family insecurity and uncertainty	Displacement, violence and livelihood disruption
Family impact	Increased anxiety and changing family roles	Economic and relational disruption	Separation and insecurity	Financial and emotional pressure	Displacement and disruption of livelihoods
Community impact	Reduced sense of safety and trust	Community displacement and insecurity	Disrupted social networks	Heightened fear and uncertainty	Displacement and weakened community structures
Potential protective resources	Family, parish and religious networks	Community and faith networks	Family and community support	Religious and community structures	Community, faith and humanitarian support
Priority intervention	Trauma-informed psycho-spiritual and family support	Integrated MHPSS and community support	Trauma, grief and family interventions	Family and community psychosocial support	Integrated humanitarian and psychosocial intervention

This comparison should be regarded as a conceptual framework rather than a claim that the listed states have identical experiences. Differences in security conditions, ethnicity, religion, rural-urban location, socioeconomic circumstances, and availability of services can substantially influence psychological and psycho-spiritual outcomes.

The distinctive contribution of the present study lies in its focus on Hausa families within a Catholic diocesan environment in Katsina. This provides an opportunity to examine how religious identity, parish relationships, pastoral care, family connectedness, and spiritual meaning interact with trauma in a culturally specific setting.

Gender-Sensitive Intervention

Gender should also be incorporated into intervention planning. The consequences of kidnapping may be experienced differently by men and women because of culturally defined family responsibilities. Women may assume increased caregiving responsibilities when a family member is abducted, while men may experience pressure associated with financial provision, protection, and decision-making.

The intervention should therefore avoid assuming that all family members experience or express distress in the same manner. Separate or appropriately structured sessions may sometimes allow men and women to discuss experiences that they find difficult to express in mixed settings. Gender-sensitive assessment should also consider caregiving burden, economic responsibility, family decision-making, and willingness to seek psychological assistance.

Ethical and Cultural Considerations

Because kidnapping is a highly sensitive experience, confidentiality and participant safety must remain central to both research and therapeutic intervention. Affected individuals should never be pressured to recount

traumatic experiences unnecessarily. Psychological first aid guidance emphasizes listening without forcing people to talk and helping them connect with practical and social support.

Cultural sensitivity is equally important. Interventions should be offered in forms that respect Hausa cultural values, family structures, religious beliefs, and preferred languages. Where appropriate, Hausa-speaking therapists or trained interpreters should be involved. Spiritual interpretations of suffering should be approached respectfully while avoiding the implication that psychological distress represents inadequate faith.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future studies should employ longitudinal and comparative designs to determine how psychological distress and psycho-spiritual wellbeing change over time. A longitudinal study could assess participants at baseline, three months, six months, twelve months, and twenty-four months following the kidnapping experience.

Comparative research could examine differences between affected communities in Katsina, Zamfara, Kaduna, Sokoto, Niger, and Benue. Variables could include gender, age, socioeconomic status, rural-urban residence, degree of exposure, family structure, social support, religious coping, and access to psychological and pastoral services.

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) would provide an appropriate method for testing the proposed theoretical relationships. A future model could examine whether kidnapping exposure predicts psychological distress, whether psychological distress predicts psycho-spiritual wellbeing, and whether social support, family functioning, meaning-making, religious coping, or community connectedness mediate or moderate these relationships.

Mixed-method longitudinal research would be particularly valuable. Quantitative measures could identify changes in distress and psycho-spiritual wellbeing, while repeated qualitative interviews could explain how participants interpret their experiences of suffering, recovery, faith, family relationships, and meaning.

OVERALL IMPLICATION

The central implication of this study is that kidnapping for ransom should not be treated solely as a security or economic problem. It is also a psychological, familial, spiritual, and community crisis. The moderate psycho-spiritual wellbeing observed among affected families suggests the presence of important resilience resources even in the context of considerable psychological distress.

The four theoretical perspectives used in this study collectively demonstrate that healing must occur at multiple levels: the individual needs psychological safety; the family needs relational stability; the person needs meaning and hope; and the community needs structures of support and protection.

For the Catholic Diocese of Katsina, this provides a strong rationale for establishing an organised psycho-spiritual care programme that combines trauma-informed therapy, family intervention, spiritual accompaniment, community support, and professional referral. Such a programme should be sustained beyond the immediate crisis and evaluated systematically. In this way, the Diocese can move from primarily responding to the immediate consequences of kidnapping toward supporting long-term healing, resilience, restored relationships, meaning-making, and psycho-spiritual wellbeing among affected families.

FINAL STATEMENT AND CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of kidnapping for ransom has emerged as a persistent and deeply disruptive security challenge in Northern Nigeria, particularly within the Hausa communities of Katsina State. This study set out to examine the psycho-spiritual wellbeing of affected families within the Catholic Diocese of Katsina, focusing on the lived experiences of victims and their immediate relatives. Drawing from both quantitative and qualitative data within a convergent parallel mixed-method framework, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how kidnapping impacts psychological stability, spiritual life, and communal relationships.

The findings of this research reveal a significant relationship between experiences of kidnapping for ransom and diminished psycho-spiritual wellbeing among affected families. Quantitative results indicated elevated levels of anxiety, depression, and stress, alongside a moderate level of psycho-spiritual wellbeing. These findings align with existing literature, which suggests that exposure to traumatic events such as kidnapping often leads to prolonged psychological distress and emotional dysregulation (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Herman, 2015). The persistent fear of reoccurrence, coupled with economic strain and uncertainty, contributes to chronic psychological vulnerability among victims and their families (Okoli & Agada, 2014). Qualitative findings further enriched this understanding by highlighting five major themes: persistent fear and insecurity, psychological distress, spiritual resilience and reliance on faith, community support and religious coping, and the role of pastoral agents and government intervention. Participants consistently described living in a state of hypervigilance, marked by fear, panic, and constant anticipation of attacks. This supports the notion that insecurity not only disrupts physical safety but also erodes emotional and cognitive stability (Adesina, 2019).

Despite these challenges, the study also found strong evidence of spiritual resilience among participants. Many affected families reported an increased reliance on prayer, faith in God, and participation in religious activities as coping mechanisms. This reflects the centrality of spirituality in the Hausa Catholic context, where faith serves as both a source of meaning and a psychological buffer against trauma (Pargament, 2011). Such findings underscore the importance of integrating spiritual resources into therapeutic and pastoral interventions aimed at trauma recovery. Community support systems, including extended family networks and church groups, were identified as critical in mitigating the negative effects of kidnapping. These support structures provided emotional comfort, financial assistance, and a sense of belonging, which are essential for resilience building (Cohen & Wills, 1985). However, participants also expressed dissatisfaction with governmental responses, citing inadequate security measures and limited post-trauma support services. This gap highlights the need for more coordinated and effective interventions at both policy and community levels.

In conclusion, this study establishes that kidnapping for ransom has profound psycho-spiritual consequences on affected families in the Hausa community of the Catholic Diocese of Katsina State. While psychological distress remains high, the presence of spiritual resilience and community support offers a pathway for recovery and adaptation. The findings call for a holistic approach to intervention, one that integrates psychological care, spiritual support, and socio-economic assistance. Pastoral agents, mental health professionals, community leaders, and government authorities must collaborate to develop culturally sensitive and contextually relevant

strategies that address both the immediate and long-term needs of victims and their families. Ultimately, addressing the crisis of kidnapping requires not only security reforms but also sustained efforts to restore the dignity, hope, and wellbeing of affected populations. By foregrounding the psycho-spiritual dimensions of this issue, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of trauma and recovery within faith-based and culturally embedded contexts, offering valuable insights for research, policy, and pastoral practice.

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