

## Kwara-Central undergraduates' perceived peer pressures on youths involvement in kidnapping

Rasheed Shofiu Adewuyi, Abdulaziz Isiaka  
Social Sciences Education Department, University of Ilorin, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined Kwara central undergraduates' perceived peer pressure on youths' involvement in kidnapping. This study was a descriptive survey. The population comprised of all undergraduates in Kwara Central Senatorial District. The target population was undergraduates from University of Ilorin and Alhikmah University, 500 students were randomly selected. A researcher design questionnaire was used for data collection while data collected were analyzed using frequency and percentage, mean, standard deviation (SD), ranking T-test and one-way analysis of variance. Research hypotheses were tested using independent T-test and also one-way analysis of variance at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that peer pressure influences youth involvement in kidnapping in Nigeria; there was no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on youth's involvement in kidnapping as perceived by undergraduates based on academic level and school type. It was concluded that peer pressure influences youths' involvement in kidnapping in Nigeria. We recommend both school and home adequate monitoring of students peers and friends at home and schools to prevent them from bad groups, adequate legislation to curb youth participation in kidnapping, good leadership examples for young ones to emulate and value reorientation of youths should be given top priority in educational curriculum.

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### Corresponding Author:

Rasheed Shofiu Adewuyi  
Social Sciences Education Department  
University of Ilorin  
PMB 1515, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria  
Email: rasheed.sa@unilorin.edu.ng

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The advent of 21<sup>st</sup> century ushered in an unprecedented era of development in Nigeria. For instance, the nation has experienced laudable improvements in terms of science and technology, medicine, literature, peace, human resource development, international co-operation and socio-economic development. Nevertheless, Nigeria is still grappling with a plethora of daunting contemporary challenges such as terrorism, ethno-religious conflicts wars, internal displacement, massive corruption, human trafficking, electoral violence and kidnapping. Consequently, kidnapping is a social menace that has taken a worrisome dimension in the Nigerian society in recent times [1].

Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that there is no singular definition of kidnapping in Nigeria due to its very complex situation and multi-dimensional nature. Armed robbers, terrorists, political thugs, have adopted kidnapping at one time or the other to carry out their devilish act. Hence, Okafor [2] and Abraham [3] separately defined kidnapping as the unlawful and forcible seizure of a person without his or her consent. In a like manner, Fage, *et al.* [4] defined kidnapping as any form of activity or action that culminates into the

forceful abduction of any individual or a group of people for economic, political and religious reasons. Similarly, Akpan [5] noted that kidnapping applies to all situations where persons are forcibly seized and transported to a destination where they are held against their will in unlawful confinement, which may involve the use of force. Asuquo [6] also averred that kidnapping means to seize and detain unlawfully a person by force and fraud and to remove a person to an undisclosed location against his will and usually for use as a hostage or to extract ransom. Uzorma, *et al.* [7] also defined kidnapping as the act of seizing and detaining or carrying away a person by unlawful force or by fraud, and often with a demand for ransom. In other words, kidnapping is a broad term that encompasses the use of force or fraud to detain a person as a hostage with a view for demanding for ransom from family members, employers, government officials, national companies, multinational companies, political leaders, religious leaders, community leaders or civil organizations. Generally, persons are kidnapped in Nigeria for a plethora of purposes, which includes forceful marriage, ransom, revenge, selling or vital body organs, slavery, murder, ritual killings, adoption, begging, prostitution, commercial purposes and a host of others [8].

The evidences of youth's participation in kidnapping are numerous. Sunday [9] reported that assailants of Bokoharam insurgency were young people drawn largely from Nigeria's emerging kidnapping cartels. Also Uchenna [10] opined that men dominate kidnapping enterprise in their youthful age. The foregoing is an indication that youths actually involve in kidnapping. Involvement of youths in kidnapping is no longer debating issue considering the evidences in literatures. Reasons or causes that prompt youth's involvement in kidnapping have been undertaken by several studies. For instance, Nwadiorah, *et al.* [11] traced the youth involvement in kidnapping to unemployment, poverty, rituals and social factors. Diara, *et al.* [12] attributed youth involvement in kidnapping to unemployment, greed and inordinate ambition to amass wealth. Chinwokwu, *et al.* [13] noted that youth involvement in militancy and kidnapping for ransom has become common and is a booming business in most cities across Nigeria. He further opined that the prime cause of kidnapping in Nigeria was the widespread corruption among politicians and police officers. Akpan [5] also opined that effect of economic hardship is responsible for youth's prevalent involvement in kidnapping. Ibrahim, *et al.* [14] also observed that youths may be tempted to kidnap a person or a group of people for ransom if their group deems the act as appropriate and a viable means of earning a living. Obarisiagbon & Aderinto [15] also opined that youth's involvement in kidnapping is associated with political liberation and struggle among political godfathers who use the youth as political thug during the period of election to kidnap their political opponents. Jegede [16] observed that many political thugs (youths) explore preventive spiritual measures through ritual, and charms to protect themselves against opponents attack. It is worthy to note that all these political thugs usually are motivated by the use of charm and taking of hard drugs, which are mostly given to them by political godfathers or shared amongs their peers. Mike [17] opined that kidnapping is a drug-related violence in Mexico. B. Ibrahim, *et al.* opined that there is relationship between insurgency and kidnapping, this implies that youth's participation in terrorist act will amount to eventual involvement in kidnapping.

From time immemorial peer pressure has, constituted reasons and actions embarked upon by a group of people or individual. Is like the case my mates or group members are doing it, then I must do it. The psychology theory of kidnapping as cited in Anazonwu, *et al.* [18] indicated that what commonly found within kidnappers is a need for belonging. The influence of association needs to be appreciated here because people only act when they are in-group. No wonder! Ibrahim, *et al.* [14] observed that youths are generally prone to the social pressure by their peer group to take a certain action, adopt certain values or otherwise conform to certain order of the group. This implies that youths are subjective to peer influence negatively or positively. This is corroborated by Ajaegbu [19] that assimilation of the knowledge and required skills and means of perpetrating and engaging in criminal behaviours could be the process of association of peer group to engage in criminal acts like kidnapping.

Adeyemi [20] also opined that the peer pressure has a great influence on youths' disposition to engage in criminal behaviours like kidnapping. Associating with bad group may account for the source of some youths' involvement in certain bad behavior. Peer pressure could be spoken and unspoken. The spoken ones deal with educating, enlightenment and possibly instruction, while the unspoken ones deals with imitation or copying of attitude. Peer groups are formed to press for certain demand or to protect specific interest. Abdulkabir [21] opined that youths are p-ressurized by the use of money to be conscripted into bad gangs or secret cults where they are exposed to some dangerous techniques to inflict pains on other innocent people. The group may thus adopt a criminal act like kidnapping to show their grievances to the society. In this case, it may not be for economic reasons to collect ransome. It could be politically motivated to influence political system in order to change or maintain the status-quo. This is emphasized by Gravira, *et al.* [22] that peer groups sometimes want their members to deviate from the norms of the society in order to protect their interest, values, norms and expectations. This may account for the reasons of kidnapping in militancy and insurgency. In other words, the members of a peer group that place much premium on engaging in acts of

kidnapping or other related crimes may be under pressure to conform to peer subculture because the group consists of friends and people that they value highly and depend on for getting along in life.

The prevalence cases of kidnapping in North Central geo-political zone of Nigeria in which the locale of this study belong is worrisome. As reported by [www.channelstv.com](http://www.channelstv.com) [23] that the north-central geopolitical zone of Nigeria is the zone with topmost in the national armed robbery profile. He observed that 79.8% of the national totals of kidnappings were recorded in the three northern geopolitical zones including north central which Kwara State is inclusive. The contagious effects of kidnapping in the North central zone has permeated Kwara State especially Kwara Central. Several cases of kidnapping in Kwara central have been associated with economic reasons ranging from poverty, unemployment, and money ritual. For instance, the media is inundated with several cases of kidnapping that were perpetrated by youths in Kwara State. Prominent among these was the kidnapping of a 12-year-old girl in Ilorin who was later found by the police in Oye-Ekiti. Likewise, the police nabbed eight kidnappers including youths with eleven human skulls in some areas of Kwara Central Senatorial District. In a similar development, there was a report of tension in Kwara State University, Malete over the kidnapping of some undergraduate students in the University [23]. Jacob, *et al.* [24] observed that Nigeria as a nation has witnessed unprecedented series of agitation in the forms kidnapping and abduction. Ogbuehi [25] opined that poor are mostly kidnapped for ritual purpose while the rich are kidnapped for extortion through the payment of ransom in millions and billions)

Several studies have been undertaken on the issues of kidnapping. For example, Uzorma, *et al.* [7] examined “challenges of hostage-taking and kidnapping in the South-eastern Nigeria,” [10] “Kidnapping in the South-eastern States of Contemporary Nigeria,” [9] examined “Nigeria’s Kidnapping Cartels Thrive in the Absence of Governance.” However, there is a paucity of extant studies as regard to find out influence of peer pressure on youth involvement in kidnapping especially in Kwara Central, It is in the light of the foregoing that this paper tries to examine Kwara-Central Undergraduates’ Perceived Peer Pressures on Youths Involvement in Kidnapping.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study was a descriptive research of survey. All undergraduates in Kwara Central Senatorial District of Kwara State were the main population for the study. Hence, 500 respondents were target population selected for the study. Selection of five faculties each in University of Ilorin and Al-Hikmah University was foremost considered using simple random technique in order to capture a representative sample of undergraduates across Departments. The second stage involved selection of 50 respondents from each of the five faculties in booths sampled institutions to make 500 respondents for the study. A researcher-designed questionnaire tagged “Influence of Peer Pressure on Youths’ Involvement in Kidnapping Questionnaire (IPPYIKQ)” was used for data collection. The Likert type of scoring was adopted because it has the advantage of giving the respondents the freedom to answer each of the items in instruments.

The scoring procedure was done by the use of 4-point Likert type rating thus: Strongly Agree (SA)=4, Agree (A)=3, Disagree (D)=2, Strongly Disagree=1. Face and content validity of the instrument were ascertained through corrections and suggestions of three lecturers in the Department of Social Sciences Education in University of Ilorin. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by the use of the test-retest method at the interval of two weeks. The two sets of scores obtained from the two administrations were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The correlation coefficient obtained was at obtained at 0.05 alpha levels. This thus made the instrument reliable for the study. Data collected were analyzed using frequency and percentage, mean, standard deviation (SD), ranking T-test and one-way analysis of variance. Research hypotheses were tested using independent T-test and one-way analysis of variance at 0.05 level of significance.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Descriptive analysis of the undergraduates bio data

The distribution of undergraduates that participated in this study by school type as shown in Table 1 indicates that out of the 500 (100.0%) of students sampled, 250 (50.0%) each was selected from public and private universities in Kwara central senatorial district. This implies distribution of undergraduates from both public and private institutions for this were equally represented.

Table 1. Distribution of the undergraduates by school type

School Type	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Public	250	50.0
Private	250	50.0
Total	500	100.0

The distribution of undergraduates that participated in this study by academic level as shown in Table 2 indicates that out of the 500 (100.0%) students sampled, 156 (31.2%) were in 100 level, 123(24.6%) were in 200 level, 113(22.6%) were in 300 level while 108(21.6%) were in 400 level in the university. It is shown from this distribution that undergraduates from all the levels in the university were represented in the study.

Table 2. Distribution of the undergraduates by academic level in the university

Level	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
100 Level	156	31.2
200 Level	123	24.6
300 Level	113	22.6
400 Level	108	21.6
Total	500	100.0

### 3.2. Research question and hypotheses

One research question and two hypotheses formulated for this study are presented as follow; 1) What is influence of peer pressure on youths' involvement in kidnapping as perceived by undergraduates in Kwara Central Nigeria? (research question); also 1) There is no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on youths' involvement in kidnapping as perceived by undergraduates in Kwara Central Nigeria based on academic level (1<sup>st</sup> research hypothesis); and 2) There is no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on youths' involvement in kidnapping as perceived by undergraduates in Kwara Central, Nigeria based on school type (2<sup>nd</sup> research hypothesis).

The influence of peer pressure on youths' involvement in kidnapping as perceived by undergraduates in Kwara Central, Nigeria based on the research question is addressed in Table 3. Given the average grand mean of 2.90, it is shown that the perceived peer pressure had influence on youths' involvement in kidnapping in Kwara Central, Nigeria. Based on this result, item 1 is ranked 1<sup>st</sup> with mean scores of 3.34. This implies that youths were motivated to involve in kidnapping because their friends are rich as a result of doing it. The item 3 is also ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> with mean scores of 3.08. This result implies that the youths were pressurized to involve in kidnapping as a result of drug addiction. The item 5 is ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> with mean scores of 3.06, and this implies that youths were pressurized to involve in kidnapping due to the oath of secrecy they have taken with their friends. These three items ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> positions were thus considered as very serious peer pressure influence on the youth involvement in the Kwara Central Nigeria.

Table 3. Influence of peer pressure on youths' involvement in kidnapping as perceived by undergraduates in Kwara Central, Nigeria

/N	Peer pressure influences on youths' involvement in kidnapping	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Youths involve in kidnapping because their friends that are doing it are rich.	3.34	0.88	1st
2	Youths involve in kidnapping because their friends told them is appropriate and viable means of employment.	2.93	0.85	6th
3	Youths involve in kidnapping because their friends encourage drug addiction.	3.08	0.86	2nd
4	Youths involve in kidnapping because their friends teach them how to avoid the arrest by law enforcement agencies.	2.95	0.91	4th
5	Youths involve in kidnapping because their friends make them to swear to oaths of secrecy.	3.06	0.86	3rd
6	Youths involve in kidnapping because their friends supply them with weapons to work with.	2.81	0.98	11th
7	Youths involve in kidnapping because their friends facilitate collection of ransoms from the victim relations.	2.95	0.92	4th
8	Youths involve in kidnapping because their friends provide them with spiritual protection charm.	2.89	0.95	9th
9	Youths involve in kidnapping because their friends have initiated them in cult activities.	2.90	0.98	8th
10	Youths involve in kidnapping because their friends are political thugs.	2.86	1.03	10th
11	Placing much value on greed and inordinate ambition to amass wealth among its members.	2.80	0.92	12th
12	Youths involve in kidnapping because their friends facilitate sales of human parts for rituals.	2.92	0.94	7th
	Grand Mean	35.49		
	Average Grand Mean	2.957		

Cut off Point: 1.00-2.49- Peer pressure do not influence, 2.50-4.00- Peer pressure influences

Item 4 and 8 were ranked 4<sup>th</sup> position respectively with their mean score of 2.95. This implies that youths were pressurized to involve in kidnapping based on the assurance of escaping arrest and opportunity to promptly receive ransom from their victims' relation. The item 2 ranked 6<sup>th</sup> position which is an indication that youth were pressurized to involve in kidnapping because of the awareness from their friends that kidnapping is a means of employment. Item 13, 10, and 9 were ranked 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> position respectively

with mean scores of 2.92, 2.90 and 2.89. Since these mean scores are greater than cut off point of 2.50. It implies that youth were involved kidnapping because of the awareness from their friends that they could sell human parts for rituals. Youths also involve in kidnapping because of the fact their friends had initially initiated them into cult group and youths were involved in kidnapping because of confidence they have over the protective charm from their friends. These entire six item 4, 8, 2, 13, 10, and 9 were thus considered as serious peer pressure influence on the youth involvement in the Kwara Central Nigeria.

In another perspective, item 11, 6, and 12, were ranked 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup>, respectively with their mean scores of 2.86, 2.81, and 2.80. The implications of these results are that youths involve in kidnapping because they are used as political thugs, they have access to weapons from their friends to work with, and they have greediness and inordinate ambition to get wealth like their friends. Although, these result were considered as mild serious influence of peer pressure on youth's involvement in kidnapping in Kwara Central, Nigeria because the results were ranked from 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>.

A one-way between groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the difference in undergraduates' perceived influence of peer pressure on youths' involvement in kidnapping based on academic level in order to test the first research hypothesis. It can be observed from Table 4 that there was no statistically significant difference in undergraduates' perceived influence of peer pressure on youths' involvement in kidnapping based on academic level as determined by one-way ANOVA ( $F(3,496)=1.780$ ,  $p=.150$ ). Since the P-value is less than 0.05, this result therefore concludes that there was no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on youths' involvement in kidnapping as perceived by undergraduates in Kwara Central, Nigeria based on academic level.

Table 4. One-way analysis of variance test of significant difference in undergraduates' perceived influence of peer pressure on youths' involvement in kidnapping based on academic level

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between groups	346.998	3	115.666			Do not Reject
Within groups	32232.752	496	64.985	1.780	.150	Ho <sub>3</sub>
Total	32579.750	499				

The T-test of significant difference in undergraduates' perceived influence of peer pressure on youths' involvement kidnapping based on school type was carried out test the second hypothesis of this study. It can be observed from the Table 5, that there was no significant difference in undergraduates perceived influence of peer pressure on youths' involvement kidnapping from public ( $M=42.86$ ,  $SD=9.49$ ) and private,  $M=44.24$ ,  $SD=6.30$ ;  $t(498)=-1.926$ ,  $p>.05$  universities. Since the p-value is greater than .05 thresholds, we therefore do not reject the stated null hypothesis. The result concludes that there was no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on youths' involvement in kidnapping as perceived by undergraduates in Kwara Central, Nigeria based on school type. This result suggests that there is similarity in the perception of undergraduates in public and private universities on the influence of peer pressure on youths' involvement in kidnapping.

Table 5. T-test of significant difference in undergraduates' perceived influence of peer pressure on youths' involvement in kidnapping based on school type

Type	N	Mean	SD	SEM	T	Df	P	Decision
Public	250	42.86	9.49	.60	-1.926	498	.055	Do not Reject Ho <sub>3</sub>
Private	250	44.24	6.30	.39				

Arising from the analysis of this study, the university undergraduates in Kwara Central, Nigeria perceived peer pressures as having influence on youths' involvement in kidnapping. These pressures have been categorized into very serious, serious and mild serious because of their ranking orders. Nevertheless, they all have influence on youths' involvement in kidnapping. The result showed that youths were very seriously involving in kidnapping because of peer pressures: desire to become rich like their friends at all cost, acting under influence of hard drug they take from friends and to comply with secrete of oath taking they take with friends. Indeed the rate at which the youths are struggling to emancipate wealth nowadays is worrisome; kidnapping is seen as quick means of getting money. This is confirmed by Abdulkabir [21] that negative influence of peer pressure is responsible for area boy's participation in some acts of criminality like kidnapping. Diara, *et al.* [12] also confirmed this result in view of the fact that youth involvement in kidnapping is attributed to, greed and inordinate ambition to be wealthy. In the same vein, every nook and crannies of society today witness the high consumption of dangerous substances by the youth. This would

make them high to perpetrate evils. This ugly trend among the youths is in line with the thought of Anazonwu, *et al.* [18] that kidnapping is a drug-related violence in Mexico. Oath taking is among very serious pressures that make youth to involve in kidnapping, this is a means of binding youths with their kidnapping group, in fact there is death threaten for any members willing to pull out of the group. This result is in line with the view of Obarisiagbon and Aderinto [15] that peer pressure has a significant influence on criminal behavior exhibited by an adolescent.

In addition, the finding also revealed that among the serious peer pressures that connect youths to kidnapping in Kwara Central is desire to trade in human parts for rituals. This is a barbaric mission in the society; many innocents have been abducted not only for ransom but also sometimes for selling them for ritual. Nwadiorah, *et al* and Anazonwu, *et al.* [11, 8] confirm that the youth involvement in kidnapping is traceable to rituals and selling of vital body organs. More so, the study revealed the initiation of youth into cult group as a serious pressure that prompts them into kidnapping. It is obvious that the kidnappers group is cultic in nature because of its secrecy and difficulty to be identified in the society. Governments have not been able to unveil exact composition of Bokoharam group in Nigeria. [www.channelstv.com](http://www.channelstv.com) [23] also confirm that youths are pressurized by the use of money to be conscripted into bad gangs or secret cults where they are exposed to some dangerous techniques to inflict pains on other innocent people. Another area of serious youth pressure to involve in kidnapping as revealed in the study is the search for the use of charm and hamlet among themselves. The motive behind this is to prevent them from being shooting and pierced by cutlass. Their confidence in the charm adds more to their intention of going into the kidnapping because they feel prevented and secured. This result is likened to the opinion of Mike [17] that many political thugs explore preventive spiritual measures through ritual, and charms to protect themselves against opponents attack.

Other findings of this study revealed mild serious peer pressures on the youth's involvement in kidnapping. The first one is the use of youths by politician as political thug. This further complicates the trend of crime in the society. The thugs see themselves as errand boys for the political gladiators and thus feel free to break the law and commit crime. This result is confirmed by observation of Jegede [16] that youth's involvement in kidnapping is associated with political liberation and struggle among political godfathers who use the youth as political thug during the period of election to kidnap their political opponents. Chinwokwu, *et al* and Ibrahim, *et al.* [13, 4] also linked causes of kidnapping to political reasons. Secondly, youth greediness for wealth acquisition among their peers is another mild serious peer pressure found out in this study. The youths indulgence in quick rich syndrome is noticeable everywhere, kidnapping is perceived as a means to get rich and accumulate wealth. This is in line with the observation of Uzorma, *et al.* [7] that link youth involvement in kidnapping to economic reason in which they usually demand for ransom to become rich.

The result of this study also revealed no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on youths' involvement in the menace of kidnapping as perceived by undergraduates in Kwara Central Senatorial District, Kwara State based on academic level. This shows that academic level does not determine undergraduates' perception of the influence of peer pressure on youths' involvement in the menace of kidnapping. This accounts for the same view of undergraduates, on consequences of peer pressure across the academic level. This result supported by opinion of Diara, *et al.* [12] that peoples' opinion about peer pressure is general irrespective academic qualification or status. It can be inferred that regardless of youth level of education, they are subjective to peer influence to participate in kidnapping.

The finding further showed that there was no significant difference in the influence of peer pressure on youths' involvement in the menace of kidnapping as perceived by undergraduates in Kwara Central, Nigeria based on school type. This means that school type is immaterial in the assessment of the influence of peer pressure on youths' involvement in the menace of kidnapping. This result confirmed the [21] who found that type of school does not change peoples' opinion about the presence of peer pressure in the workplace, at school or within the society and the fact that it can affect people of all ages.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study it was concluded that peer pressure can trigger youths' involvement in the menace of kidnapping in Nigeria, and that undergraduates' perception of the influence of peer pressure on youths' involvement in the menace of kidnapping is independent of academic level and school type. We recommend that home and schools should monitor students' peers and friends at home and schools to disassociate them from bad groups, effective legislation should be in place to curb youth participation in kidnapping, there should be good leadership examples for young ones to emulate and value reorientation of youths should be given top priority in educational curriculum.

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