

# Perceived Psychosocial Predictors of Terrorism among Militants in Some Nigerian Southern States

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## ABSTRACT

In Nigeria, militant, terrorist, and military operations have claimed lives and valuable property. Despite the high costs, Nigerians continue to clamour for violence. Socio-political events and lifestyles are giving rise to visible unethical antisocial terrorist organisations, while people are constantly in danger and fear of aggression. From various studies, it has been claimed that positive relationships exist between some psychosocial factors that contribute to the continuation of this violence. The determination of the degree of relationships in criminality becomes critical for this study in order to predict why people sought out militant adventures rather than societal well-being. The ex-post facto concept was used, with an accidental sampling technique, to select and survey n=300 participants in response to questionnaire and interview statements on kidnapping, ransom taking, human trafficking, and ritual killings, as well as their relationships with unemployment, socio-cultural pressures, peer group, and drug abuse. The findings support the existence of some strong links between these militant venturing and criminality practise variables. There are ethical limitations, but the results have practical implications for interventions by judicial, military, police, and correctional officers. Empathy allows people to see their own flaws clearly, allowing them to make changes to community corrections adaptation.

**Keywords:** Militant, Venturing, Psychosocial Determinants.

## Introduction

The spate of militant criminality and violence in recent times in Nigeria is worrisome. Militants' identities are of different labeling and logos which do not portray same goal and the same tactics to curb but globally met with same consequences of destructions and agonies. Nigeria's Niger Delta and subordinate regions in Southern Nigeria have attracted global attention over the years both in positive (for large crude oil deposit) and negative (for violence and crime) dimensions just like Northerners (on Western education). According to Akpan (2010), the Niger Delta region is a limited region in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria occupied mainly by the minorities comprising the six states of Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, & Rivers. Nigeria as a country gets more than 90% revenue derivation from this region. The rate of violence in criminal activities including; Kidnapping and Ransom, Human Trafficking and Ritual killing has become prominent (Akpan, 2010). Nigeria as a country has been facing a different kind of problems such as kidnapping, human trafficking, and killing which are often championed by the militant. These problems have negative impacts on the sustainable development of Nigeria.

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Kidnapping, ransom taking, human trafficking, and ritual killing are seen as major setbacks on national growth, socially and economically, and perhaps scaring away local and foreign investors from Nigeria. People in Nigeria are currently unable to sleep due to fear of being attacked or kidnapped (Adetula, 2005). According to Davidson (2010), the general state of insecurity in some parts of the country has undoubtedly reached a point where virtually everyone is now concerned about the direction in which the country is heading. Most of the previous empirical researchers on kidnapping, ransom taking, human trafficking and killing have been on social problems and social economic development (John & Ubong, 2013). The social issue of abduction and its effects on Nigeria's socioeconomic development were highlighted by John & Ubong (2013). Hence this research focus among Nigerians was on the influence of unemployment, social-cultural environment, peer group and drug abuse on kidnapping, ransom taking, human trafficking and ritual killing attitudes as the main objective of this study among militant groups in particular. In Nigeria, kidnapping occurs when someone is taken against their will and taken to an unidentified location where they are held in captivity (Turner 1998). However, kidnapping has been broadly classified into three major objectives by Pharaoh (2005) for the understanding of its implications as follows: Pathological kidnapping, political kidnapping, and criminal kidnapping all involve holding someone captive in exchange for a ransom (parental kidnapping and kidnapping for sexual purposes). It has been discovered that the unpredictable kidnappers engage in criminal activity for a variety of complex motives, including idleness, unemployment, rituals, retaliation, financial gain, and political motivations (Pharaoh, 2005). Ngwama (2014) claims that the first abduction and ransom demand in Nigeria occurred in 2006 when militant groups in the Niger Delta kidnapped Total Oil employees as a form of protest over their unequal access to the region's high level of living compared to other Nigerians. The insurgents contend that Nigeria is being developed at the expense of the region, which provides the nation's entire revenue flow. As a confirmation of this claim, virtually, all of the kidnappings in 2014 occurred in the South-East and Niger Delta regions, which harbor Africa's biggest oil and gas industry.

Since the militants' initial target was government expatriates, their actions have expanded to include politicians, religious leaders, and their offspring. However, the majority of the captives were freed without incident when a ransom was paid. Comparatively speaking to other significant crimes, ransom taking appears to be simpler. Davidson (2010) described a scenario in which a gang of criminals would kidnap unsuspecting victims, bring them into a remote location, and start making phone calls to various people in an effort to negotiate a release in exchange for a ransom payment.

Another variable in this study, human trafficking, has a recognised definition that may be found in the United Nations treaty to prevent, prohibit, and punish human trafficking. Human trafficking is the illicit transfer of individuals, frequently for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation or forced labour. It can be broken down into three linked parts: human movement, human control mechanisms, and human exploitation goals. The process of human trafficking is intricate, and there isn't a single, identifiable, or recognisable act that it involves. Anthony, Agnes, and Patrick (2009) claim that the rise in human trafficking in recent years has become extremely concerning in Nigeria generally and the south-south region of the country in particular. The United Nations International Children Endowment Fund (UNICEF) defines human trafficking as the act of procuring another person's cooperation in order to exploit them through the use of coercion, threats of coercion, use of force, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or a position of vulnerability, or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits.

Human trafficking is caused by a number of factors, some of which are not unique to Nigeria. These include: illiteracy, ignorance, greed, a lack of opportunities, inequality, gender-based cultural bias, long-term unemployment, poverty, large family sizes, a high demand for cheap labour, a desire for youth emancipation, insufficient political commitment, porous borders, a lack of strong political will, access to education, sex-selective immigration policies, disruption of supportive systems, Human Immune Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), AIDS Orphans, human deprivation etc. (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2004, Osakwe & Olateru-Olagbegi, 1999a, De-Dios, 1999, Aghatise, 2002, Adepoju, 2000, 2005, 2010; United Nations Educational scientific & Cultural

Organization “UNESCO, 2006”, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime “UNODC, 2006”, Eghafona, 2009, Atttoh, 2009b) etc. Many sections of Africa, including the West African subregion, are claimed to import child labour primarily from Nigeria. Boys are trafficked into the plantation's unofficial sectors, while girls are exploited for domestic labour (Adepoju 2005; United Nations International Children Endowment Fund "UNICEF" 1998, 2000). Despite the law enforcement officials' concerted efforts, there is still more to be done in the fight against human trafficking.

Ritual killing which is yet another variable in this study is linked to any offender male or female who eventually kills victims. According to Muhammad Sani Usman, chief administrative officer of the National Human Rights Commission in Nigeria, ritual killing is occasionally carried out as a form of intimidation, possibly in connection with local elections, the management of people and resources, or human trafficking. However, there are some factors which can predict or bring about tendency to kidnapping, ransom taking, human trafficking, and ritual killings such as, unemployment, permissive socio-cultural environment, peer group pressure, and drug abuse.

The fraction of the labour force that is unemployed is known as unemployment ([www.index-mundi.com](http://www.index-mundi.com) 2013). According to Olaiya (2013), any group of unemployed persons can be referred to as being unemployed. This has left many young men and women redundant and vulnerable to shady behaviour. According to Okoro (2010), it is no longer a secret that one of Nigeria's biggest problems is the alarming rate of increase in unemployment. Every society in the world has unique issues and difficulties related to unemployment, and Nigeria is no exception. Young people in Nigeria may experience criminality due to unemployment and a rising tide of crime, which have major consequences for national development (Anthony, 2013). Every year, thousands of graduates are generated in Nigeria, yet the majority of them are unable to find employment, according to Okafor (2011). Youth hawkers who would typically have found lucrative employment in some enterprise are all over the streets of Nigeria (Okafor, 2011). Unemployed youth in vast numbers pose a severe challenge to democratic practise since the political establishment employed them for covert and illegal actions, making them a serious menace (Adepegba, 2011; Ibrahim, 2011; Lartey, 2011; Olatunji & Abioye, 2011; Okafor, 2011). Though, mainstream economists have demonstrated that 100% employment is an impossibility in any economy (Ogunyomi & Oginni, 2013). According to statistics from Nigeria, about 75% of those who can and want to work cannot find productive job, forcing them to look for other opportunities. The problem has gotten incredibly awful and doesn't seem to have any solutions (Kelechi 2015).

Another element that, if left unchecked, might lead to kidnapping, ransom demands, people trafficking, and ritual killings is the permissive sociocultural context. It is a collection of widely held beliefs, traditions, moral codes, and social mores. The social structure and culture of a people make up the socio-cultural environment in its broadest sense. It generally refers to intangible factors that have an impact on how people perceive themselves and one another, how they live, and, of course, how they survive and exist. In all other words, the socio-cultural environment is comprised of all the factors, circumstances, and influences that might have an impact on a person's personality and potentially on his attitude, disposition, choices, and behaviours. These components include people's ideas, values, attitudes, behaviours, and other ways of living that have been shaped by their culture, religion, upbringing, and social conditioning (Adeleke, Oyenuga & Ogundele, 2003). Through socialisation, these components are picked up, altered, and passed down from one generation to the next within a culture.

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary, a peer group is a collection of people who are the same age or social standing (2001). People frequently gravitate toward a group merely because it accepts them, even if the group has undesirable tendencies (Smith & Pellegrin, 2000). Youth behavioural patterns have been found to be significantly influenced by peer groups (Ebochukwu & Obiunu, 2006). Peer relationships are among the best indicators of problematic conduct in adolescents, as is widely recognised. Aggression and delinquency are often tied to friendships with reckless people (Barnow, Lucht, & Freyberger, 2005). These effects have been discovered to be very constant in different nations (e.g., Beyers, Toumbourou, Catalano, Arthur, & Hawkins, 2004). There is proof that peer relationships can

influence a variety of negative life outcomes in late adolescence and early adulthood, including criminal activity, sexual promiscuity, and early parenthood (Dishion & Véronneau, in press).

Drug abuse is another factor that could influence criminal behaviors relating to, kidnapping, ransom taking, human trafficking, and ritual killing. Drug abuse is characterised as drug usage that significantly compromises a person's social and physical well-being. Drug abuse is also described by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2006) as a "state" of recurrent or ongoing intoxication that is harmful to both the individual and society. According to Okoroiye (2000), a person's drug use might be linked to influences from their parents and peers. Briggs (2000) listed the following reasons why people use and abuse drugs: young people with low self-esteem frequently can't resist peer pressure to use drugs and find that drugs provide them the positive feelings they're missing (Barnow, Schultz, Lucht, Ulrich, Preuss, & Freyberger, 2004; Nation & Heflinger, 2006; Abdulahi (2009).

The level of influences all these aforementioned psychosocial variables would make with each other were unknown, hence, by answering the following specific statements of objective the measure of relationships could be made clearer.

### ***Objectives of the Study***

1. How statistically relevant has unemployment measure makes to influence or predict the probability of an individual willing to join and participate in militant actions?
2. Is there any relationship between unemployment status and kidnapping, ransom taking, human trafficking and ritual killings behaviour exhibited as jobs by the militants?
3. Is there any relationship between permissive socio-cultural environment and the attitude towards kidnapping, ransom taking, human trafficking and ritual killings as militants behaviour?
4. What level of influence could peer group pressure generate to be a predictor of kidnapping, ransom taking, human trafficking and ritual killing as manifested in the behaviour of militant group participant?
5. What level of relationship does drug abuse has in the kidnapping, ransom taking, human trafficking, and ritual killings habits portrayed by the militant boys and girls?
6. To what extent did unemployment, socio-cultural environment, peer group pressure and drug abuse have joint influence on kidnapping, ransom taking, human trafficking and ritual killings attitudes of militants in the southern part of Nigeria?

### **Literature Review**

The strength of Social Process Theory on criminality by Okereke (2011) brought about a cluster of many theories that were useful to explain militant behaviors. It was proposed as a function of individual's socialization and attitude towards crime as such, criminality can be reduced through right and proper socialization of the individual. This suggests that the right kind of orientation adaption and socialisation pattern is needed in all human social institutions and agencies in order to prevent or society to purge people from crime, as nurture possess a stronger influence on human conduct generally and crime particularly. For instance, Siegel (2004) claimed that those who adhere to strong moral principles and regularly attend religious services would come to understand the difference between good and wrong and abstain from crime and other antisocial behaviour. According to Siegel (2004), a proponent of the social control theory, people obey the law because both internal and external factors are in control of their behaviour and passions. Self-control and devotion to compliance are just two examples of these factors. Ugwuoke (2010) threw more light on the outer or external forces as he asserts that an external supervision and punishment prepares the individual for self-discipline when they go wrong.

Nwadiora & Nkwocha (2011) respondents examined the prevalence of kidnapping among 100 participants in Imo State Nigeria and found out that the prevalence of kidnapping incidents has a lot to do

with the urbanisation process. The analysis made it quite clear that the police's inefficiency has hurt efforts to combat kidnapping. The results also showed that one of the main causes of ransom demand and taking was unemployment failure.

Oyefusi (2008) determined the options of young adults at the Niger Delta joining and participating in the rebel group actions. In Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers, the two states that produce the majority of Nigeria's oil, 1,337 youngsters participated in this study. Instances of violent conflict have also been concentrated in these regions during the past six to eight years, showing that Bayelsa and Rivers states have become particularly well-known for kidnapping and other forms of violence associated to the oil industry. Findings suggest that the availability of oil may have a corrupting effect on how civil peace is disposed. Unemployment does not appear to significantly affect the intensity of complaints or the likelihood of witnessing a propensity to rebel.

When Emejulu (2014) looked at the relationship between violent crime and rising rates of youth unemployment in Nigeria, she discovered a strong correlation between the two. According to Idemobi & Ejike's (2012) research, kidnapping caused enough instability in the targeted area to force enterprises to shut down totally. The rising rates of violent crimes, including kidnapping and armed robbery, are mostly brought on by the widespread youth unemployment in the country. On the other hand, Ajaegbu (2012) discovered that Nigerian youths will be less drawn to violent crimes if the causes of the feeling of lack and frustration brought on by unemployment are addressed.

Ndifon, Apori, and Ndifon (2012) wrote about a variety of motives for trafficking individuals of all sexes and ages. They cited domestic servitude, street begging, underpayment and forced labour in the manufacturing, construction, and agricultural industries, sexual exploitation, and organ harvesting. This implies a thorough but not complete list of human trafficking. In South-East Nigeria, Linus (2015) conducted study on the socioeconomic repercussions of kidnapping. The results show a strong correlation between kidnapping and the great need for rapid money.

Oni (2007) found that cultist organisations have transformed into gangs, producing violence all across the world. For instance, in Nigeria, they have evolved into ethnic militias that are posing severe issues in the country's oil-rich regions and inciting tension and anxiety throughout the southern region. Young people's behaviour patterns have been found to be significantly impacted by peer influence (Egbochukwu & Obiunu, 2006). Many of the young people engaging in the unrest in the Niger Delta believe they have a strong impact on one another. According to Obiunu (2014), there is a significant link between youth restiveness in the Niger Delta and peer group. Peer groups have an impact and influence on young people's restlessness, according to Egbochukwu & Obiunu (2006). This is because young people readily accept the opinions of their peers because they interact with one another on a personal basis. The statements of objectives and the reviewed literature above have given us enough pertinent statements, to formulate and test the following five hypotheses.

### ***Hypotheses***

H 1: Unemployment will positively instigate kidnapping, ransom taking, human trafficking and ritual killing attitudes of militant groups.

H 2: The socio-cultural environment will have a significant positive influence on kidnapping and ransom taking, human trafficking, and ritual killing behavior of militant groups.

H 3: Peer group influence will be positively related to kidnapping and ransom taking human trafficking ritual killing of militant groups.

H 4: Drug abuse will have a significant positive influence on kidnapping and ransom human trafficking and ritual killing taking of militant groups.

H 5: Unemployment, socio-cultural environment, peer group, and drug abuse will jointly and positively have a significant relationship with kidnapping, human trafficking, and ritual killing.

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Design***

An ex-post-facto design was adopted for the study because the researchers have access to the respondents through reliable indigenous source links who served as assistants for the collection of raw data but they do not have control over the responses or manipulate the variables of study. This survey was carried out among militant indigenes and residents of Warri and major areas open to militant operations in the Delta and Rivers States in Nigeria. Warri has a population size of three hundred and eleven thousand, nine hundred and seventy (311, 970) people approximately. The town serves as one of the areas that harbour both the militants and the victims alike, hence, provided an easy reach as the point of contact for the researchers and the respondents to elicit the needed data from the ex-militants and victims. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the 300 (149 males (53.6%) and 129 females (46.4%) individuals) participants from the 500 sample of study earmarked. The age ranged from 15 – 75 years old with a mean of 45 years. Their socio-economic status distribution includes 75 from the lower class, 167 from middle class, and 36 from the upper class. These comprised of 80 (28.8%) artisans, 129 (46.4%) students and 69 (24.8%) unemployed.

### ***Data Collection Tool***

The questionnaire used was designed to elicit people's experiences or involvement with militants. Data on equal opportunity, socio-cultural environment life events and political life styles were also sought. The questionnaire was divided into five (A, B, C, D, and E) sections. Section A: Socio-demographic information: age, gender, family, parent type, religion, social-economic and employment status. Section B: asked questions about militants Attitude towards (militant participations): Kidnapping, Ransom taking, Human trafficking, and Ritual-killing. It contained 11 items as developed by the researchers in a 4 point likert scoring format ranging from 4 Strongly agree to 1 Strongly Disagree. Items includes, working directly for people is a prolong means of making a lot of money. The Cronbach's alpha for this study is .73. Section C: permissive Socio-Cultural Environment (equal opportunity). The scale was developed to ascertain the type of environmental opportunities accorded people living in it. It consisted 11 items documented for response along a three points Likert scale of Agree, Undecided, and Disagree. Sample item includes, People are no more guided by their cultural norms and values nowadays. Section D: The Index of Peer Relation (IPR) developed to measure peer relation (political affiliations lifestyle and life-events). It is a 25 items scale developed by Hudson, Nunus, Daley & Newsom (1986). The scale was on four (4) points Likert scoring points, ranging from 1 real or none of the time to 4 most of the time, thirteen items scored inversely. Hudson et al. (1986) reported 0.90 as alpha coefficient; Anumba (1985) obtained in a divergent coefficient has 0.62 as validity against Hare (1985) but for this study, 0.78. Items in the scale include; my peers treat me badly. Section E: Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST) was a revised edition of the original 28 item scale. It contains 20 items developed by Harvey (1982) to measure people's potential involvement in drug abuse. Responses were documented along with a YES, UNDECIDED and NO format. Two items were scored inversely. Sample item include, do you abuse more than one drug at a time? The Cronbach's alpha obtain for this study was .77

The purpose of the study was explained to the participants and assurance of confidentiality and anonymity of identities and responses were promised. Instructions on how to fill the questionnaire were given by the researchers and the questionnaires were distributed after establishing a good understanding and assurance of correct response and fully completion of the questionnaire. However, participation was fully voluntary, and respondents were encouraged to give sincere answers to all items in the questionnaire. Out of the total 500 questionnaires were earmarked for distribution only 300 copies were distributed, 278 were retrieved, (indicating 92.6% of total response) and were found useful for this study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to determine the degree of relationship between the independent and the dependent variables

## Findings

Table 1: *One-Way ANOVA Test Showing the Influence of Unemployment Status on Kidnapping and Ransom taking, Human Trafficking, and Ritual Killings.*

Variable	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	P
Between groups	114.645	2	57.323	3.032	0.05
Within groups	5198.423	275	18.903		
Total	5313.068	277			
Between groups	87.683	2	43.842	3.304	0.05
Within groups	3648.791	275	13.268		
Total	3736.475	277			
Between groups	54.601	2	27.301	2.370	NS
Within groups	3167.571	275	11.518		
Total	3222.173	277			

From Table 1, it was observed that unemployment status have a significant influence on kidnapping for ransom taking ( $F(2, 277) = 3.032, p < .05$  level of significance). It was also observed that unemployment status does have a significant influence on human trafficking ( $F(2, 277) = 3.304, p < .05$  level of significance). However, unemployment status does not have influence on ritual killing by militants ( $F(2, 277) = 2.370$ , not significant).

Table 2: *A Correlation Matrix Table Showing the Relationships between Socio-Cultural Environment and Kidnapping and Ransom Taking Behaviour, Human Trafficking and Ritual Killing Among Militants.*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Kidnapping & ransom taking	1					
2. Human trafficking	0.93**	1				
3. Ritual killing	0.90**	0.95**	1			
4. Socio-cultural environment	0.20**	0.16**	0.12*	1		
5. peer group relation	0.26**	0.19**	0.19**	.20**	1	
6. drug abuse	.46**	.42**	.41**	.25**	.17**	1
Mean	23.41	18.39	18.22	18.29	89.46	46.26
Std. deviation.	4.38	3.67	3.41	3.27	18.18	7.04

N = 278\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

It was observed from the table 2 above that the relationship: socio-cultural environment and attitude to kidnapping and ransom taking ( $r = 0.20; p < .001$ ), socio-cultural environment and attitude to human trafficking ( $r = 0.16; p < .05$ ) and socio-cultural environment and attitude to ritual killing ( $r = 0.12; p < .05$ ). Table 2 shows the relationship: peer group influence and attitude to kidnapping for ransom taking ( $r = 0.258; p < .001$ ). Peer group influence and attitude to human trafficking ( $r = 0.190; p < .001$ ), and peer group influence and attitude to ritual killing ( $r = 0.187; p < .05$ ). Table 2 also shows the relationship: drug abuse and attitude to kidnapping and ransom taking ( $r = 0.461; p < .001$ ). Drug abuse and attitude to human trafficking were positively related ( $r = 0.420; p < .001$ ). Drug abuse and attitude to ritual killing also, were positively related ( $r = 0.411; p < .001$ ).

Table 3: A summary table of multivariate ANOVA showing the independent and joint influence of unemployment, socio-cultural environment, peer group and drug abuse on kidnapping and ransom taking, human trafficking and ritual killing of militants.

Source (independent variables)	Dependent variable	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Unemployment*	kidnapping and ransom taking	1326.465 <sup>a</sup>	4	331.616	22.709	Sig.
socio-cultural environment*	behavior					
peer group*	Human trafficking	721.598 <sup>b</sup>	4	180.399	16.335	Sig.
drug abuse*	Ritual killing	591.731 <sup>c</sup>	4	147.933	15.353	Sig.
Error	kidnapping and ransom taking	3986.604	273	14.603		
	behavior					
	Human trafficking	3014.877	273	11.044		
	Ritual killing	2630.442	273	9.635		
Total	kidnapping and ransom taking	157619.000	278			
	behavior					
	Human trafficking	97812.000	278			
	Ritual killing	95540.000	278			
Corrected Total	kidnapping and ransom taking	5313.068	277			
	behavior					
	Human trafficking	3736.475	277			
	Ritual killing	3222.173	277			

a. R Squared = .250 (Adjusted R Squared = .239)  
b. R Squared = .193 (Adjusted R Squared = .181)  
c. R Squared = .184 (Adjusted R Squared = .172)

It was shown in Table3 that the combine effects of unemployment, socio-cultural environment, peer group and drug abuse have significant implications for kidnapping and ransom taking ( $F(4,277) = 22.709$ ;  $P < .000$ ), human trafficking ( $F(4,277) = 16.335$ ;  $P < .000$ ) and for ritual killing ( $F(4,277) = 15.353$ ;  $P < .000$ ). About 0.001% of the variation was accounted for by the independent variables while the remaining 99.99% was not due to chance in all the cases.

## Discussion

Result confirmed that unemployment status has a significant influence on kidnapping for ransom taking. That is unemployment is indeed influences the practice of kidnapping and ransom taking. On the first hypothesis, it was discovered that unemployment status has a significant influence on kidnapping and ransom taking (Table 1). This result was supported by the findings of Nwadiora and Nkwocha (2011). They found out that unemployment and leadership failure ranked among major causative factors of kidnapping and ransom taking. The results also support the findings of Ekpenyong, Ukommi, and Agha (2010). They found out that mass unemployment is one of the factors responsible for poverty in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria. The cause of increase in the rate of kidnapping or killing of expatriates was cited as an example. Another support for this finding was Emejulu (2014) who found out that youth unemployment is related to high rates of violent crimes in Nigeria. The results were also similar to Idemobi and Ejike (2012) as they found out that prevailing youth unemployment resulted in kidnapping and armed robbery.

The same result was found with the second hypothesis. It was observed that unemployment status does have a significant influence on human trafficking. This was an indicator that unemployment is related to



the practice of human trafficking. It was discovered that unemployment status has a significant influence on human trafficking by militants (Table 1). It was observed in Table 1 that unemployment status does not have any significant influence on ritual killing by militants. Means that being unemployed is not at liberty to the practice of ritual killings as envisaged in the character of Niger Delta militants. Hence, the third hypothesis which stated that unemployment will positively influence ritual-killings was rejected on ritual killing by militants.

It was observed from the table 2 that the relationship between socio-cultural environment and attitude to kidnapping and ransom taking (0.20), socio-cultural environment and attitude to human trafficking (0.16) and socio-cultural environment and attitude to ritual killing (0.12) were positively related confirming hypothesis two hence, accepted and retained. This is an indicator that permissive socio-cultural environment can indeed have support for the practice of kidnapping, ransom taking, human trafficking, and ritual killing. Result in Table 2 has shown that the positive relationship that exists between peer group do influence attitude to kidnapping and ransom taking (0.26); attitude to human trafficking (0.19), and attitude to ritual killing (0.19). Meaning that peer group influence indeed has relationships with the practice of kidnapping and ransom taking, human trafficking and that ritual killing really exist. The Table 2 result also shows that a positive relationship of (0.46) exists between drug abuse and attitude to kidnapping and ransom taking, human trafficking (0.42) and ritual killing (0.41). A confirmation of this means that kidnapping and ransom taking, human trafficking and ritual killing depend on the level of drug abuse by the militants. Hence hypothesis two was accepted and retained.

From (Table 2), it was discovered that it was discovered that the fourth, fifth, and sixth hypotheses, socio-cultural environment were positively related with kidnapping and ransom taking, human trafficking, and ritual killing behavior portrayed by militant groups respectively hence, all the three possible hypotheses were confirmed and accepted. The results above supported the findings of Linus (2015) who found out that there is a significant relationship between kidnapping and the high quest for quick money by the people. Indicating that permissive environment do support militant haunts and participation.

From (Table 2) it was discovered that peer group influence was positively related to kidnapping, ransom taking, to human trafficking and ritual killing as manifested by militant groups, it indeed did. Hence, all of the results obtained were supported by the findings of Ebokukwu & Obiunu (2006) and Obiunu (2014). They discovered that young people in the same age group listen to and heavily influence one another when acting criminally. Obiunu (2014) discovered that in the Niger-delta, there was a substantial correlation between peer group and youth restlessness. Equally, it was supported by the studies of Bond, 2005; Henslin, 200 & Denmark, 2005). They found that there is power in peer pressure, as easily people succumb to groupthink, which is the main cause of criminal behavior by peer members.

The same Table 2 result confirmed the probability statement that drug abuse will have a significant positive influence on kidnapping and ransom taking, human trafficking, and ritual killing behaviour of the militant groups respectively. All the three probability statements were found significant hence, accepted and retained. These three results were supported by the findings of Lampitey (2006) who found out that abuse of some form of substances highly correlated with violence and criminal behaviour.

Table 3 depicted the results of hypothesis five that stated that unemployment, socio-cultural environment, peer group and drug abuse will jointly and positively have significant relationships with kidnapping and ransom taking, human trafficking, and ritual killing. It was confirmed, accepted and retained. The results showed that there was a significant combined effect of the variables on the militants that influence kidnapping and ransom taking, human trafficking and ritual killing attitudes among militant of the Niger-Delta region in Nigeria. The combined effects of unemployment, socio-cultural environment, peer group and drug abuse for each attitude is as follows; kidnapping and ransom taking ( $F(4,277) = 22.709$ ;  $P < .000$ ), human trafficking ( $F(4,277) = 16.335$ ;  $P < .000$ ) and ritual killing ( $F(4,277) = 15.353$ ;  $P < .000$ ). These results confirmed hypothesis five hence, retained as well as it has answered research question six

satisfactorily. They indeed confirmed all the variables as having significance for each other as well as for the militant behaviour or attitudes.

## Conclusion

The study examined unemployment, socio-cultural environment, peer group and drug abuse, life events as predictors of kidnapping and ransom taking, human trafficking and ritual killing lifestyles among militants in the Niger-delta region of Nigeria. The findings showed that unemployment significantly predicted kidnapping and ransom taking attitudes among male and female militants. Unemployment also predicted human trafficking behavior but did not predict ritual killing behavior. It was also discovered that socio-cultural environment predicted kidnapping and ransom taking and human trafficking behavior among Niger-delta militants. Permissive socio-cultural environment has predicted ritual killing, and kidnapping and ransom taking attitudes favourably well. Further findings from this study revealed that drug abuse, predicted kidnapping and ransom taking, human trafficking and ritual killing attitudes exhibited by the militants. These findings informed the researchers on recommendations that could be observed for precaution and attitude change;

Parents/guardians should concentrate on giving their children qualitative education and monitor the types of peer groups their wards keep.

There should be active law and orders making it possible to arrest and punish any group of people going around promoting kidnapping, ransom taking, human trafficking, and ritual killing.

Lastly, Nigerian government should provide more employment opportunities and social amenities for the residents of the Niger-delta region of Nigeria to discourage people from going into kidnapping, ransom taking, human trafficking, and ritual killing.

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## Conflict of Interest


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## ORCID iDs

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