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FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR KIDNAPPING, PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS ON VICTIMS, AND THE NEED FOR GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING INTERVENTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Kidnapping remains a pervasive and traumatic crime that has far-reaching consequences for victims, their families, and society at large. This paper explores the multifaceted factors contributing to the prevalence of kidnapping, including poverty, insecurity, corruption, and drug abuse, which serve as underlying causes of this crime. The analysis further examines the profound psychological effects on victims, such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), emotional trauma, acute anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and suicidal ideation. In light of the mental health challenges faced by victims, the paper emphasises the critical role of guidance and counselling interventions in mitigating these effects. Trauma-informed psychological support, along with family and community-based counselling programmes, is essential to address the emotional and psychological distress experienced by victims and their families. The paper therefore highlights the concept, types, and prevalence of kidnapping, the factors responsible for its occurrence, its psychological effects, the impact of trauma on victims, and the need for guidance and counselling interventions. Based on the suggestions provided; government and relevant agencies should prioritise poverty reduction, enhance security, and implement community-wide education campaigns on personal safety, while making psychological counselling services accessible to victims of kidnapping to facilitate their recovery and reintegration.

Keywords*:* Kidnapping, Psychological effects, Trauma, Guidance and counselling

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria faces numerous challenges, which kidnapping emerges as a serious concern. This crime involves the illegal abduction and holding of individuals, typically for ransom, political power, or exploitation. Kidnapping has become a pressing societal issue, frequently caused by financial pressures, insecurity, unemployment, or power conflicts. Although the circumstances surrounding kidnapping may vary, it consistently instills fear and insecurity within communities. Kidnapping threatens more than just personal safety; it disrupts families and communities, creating tension and distrust that undermines social stability.

There are several types of kidnapping, each with its distinct motives and approaches. Common types include ransom kidnapping, where individuals are held captive until a monetary demand is met, and political kidnapping, where victims are taken to push political agenda or force concessions from governments (Musa, Ibrahim & Cholli, 2024). Other forms include human trafficking, which involves abducting individuals for exploitation, and domestic kidnapping, often arising in family disputes or custody battles. Each type has unique characteristics but collectively highlights the widespread risk and potential harm affecting diverse groups (Omojemite, 2025).

Kidnapping leaves a profound impact, causing lasting psychological trauma for victims and their families (Eze & Nnaji, 2021). Survivors often face Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, and intense fear, making it difficult to return to normal life. Many struggle with sleep disruptions, like insomnia and recurring nightmares, and live in a heightened state of alertness, unable to feel safe even in familiar places (Ogbonna & Obasi, 2023). Relationships with loved ones may also suffer, as survivors withdraw emotionally and struggle to share their experiences. In some cases, victims may turn to maladaptive coping mechanisms, such as substance abuse, to find relief from overwhelming emotions. These challenges underscore the need for guidance and counselling interventions to support recovery, provide healthy coping strategies, and help survivors regain a sense of safety and control (Ejiofor, 2025).

Guidance and counselling is a meaningful nomenclature for a double edged functional academic and professional discipline. Guidance is the process of helping individual to understand himself and his world, while counselling is involving the development of interaction between a trained therapist (counsellor) and a troubled person (client or counselee) in a perceived temporary state of indecision, confusion, malfunction, habit disorder, distress or despair. Counselling is a therapeutic relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families and groups to accomplish

mental health, wellness and education and career goals. Yusuf and Afolabi (2020) defined counselling as the application of mental health, psychological or human development principles, through cognitive, effective, behavioural or systematic intervention strategies that address wellness, personal growth or career development as well as pathology.

Thus, counselling interventions are crucial in addressing the trauma associated with kidnapping, providing vital support to survivors as they work to rebuild their lives and regain a sense of control. Trauma-informed therapy and Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT) play key roles in supporting survivors by helping them identify and restructure negative thought patterns, gradually reducing anxiety and lessening the impact of intrusive memories (Yusuf & Afolabi, 2020). Similarly, Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy helps victims in processing traumatic memories, allowing them to confront and integrate these memories without becoming overwhelmed, thereby facilitating more effective emotional healing (Nwankwo & Ijeoma, 2020).

Family therapy also plays a vital role, as the impact of kidnapping often extends to the family members who experience secondary trauma (Oladele & Adebayo, 2021). By involving families, counsellors can foster communication, provide coping strategies, and rebuild trust within the family unit. Group therapy offers another means for healing, allowing survivors to connect with others who have had similar experiences, reducing feelings of isolation and building a supportive network (Ike & Onyekachi, 2019). Psycho-education is also an essential component of counselling, empowering survivors and their families to understand trauma responses, identify triggers, and develop self-regulation techniques to manage stress (Oladele & Adebayo, 2021). Together, these diverse counselling interventions create a comprehensive approach that promotes long-term recovery, resilience, and reintegration into society for those affected by kidnapping.

CONCEPTUALISING KIDNAPPING IN NIGERIA

Kidnapping is defined as the unlawful abduction or detention of a person against his/her will, typically for ransom, political motives, or other forms of exploitation. According to Yusuf and Afolabi (2020), kidnapping involves the intentional deprivation of an individual's freedom, often accompanied by threats or violence. Kidnapping is a common law offense characterised by an act committed against the victim's will (Inyang & Abraham, 2013). It involves seizing, detaining, or forcibly carrying away a person through unlawful force or deception, often accompanied by a ransom demand. Legally, Nigerian law recognises kidnapping as a criminal act

punishable by imprisonment or even death in some states, as per the Criminal Code Act of Nigeria (Cap C38, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004). The Anti-Kidnapping Act in some regions, like Lagos and Rivers States, imposes severe penalties to deter this crime. Kidnapping is often categorised under violent crimes due to the psychological trauma it inflicts on victims and their families, making it a serious threat to societal well-being (Abadinsky, 2022). Despite various legal measures, the prevalence of kidnapping remains high, indicating the need for a more holistic approach to addressing its root causes.

TYPES OF KIDNAPPING

The following are common types of kidnapping in Nigeria:

1. Abduction for ransom: this type of kidnapping involves unlawfully capturing an individual to demand money or valuables for his or her release. Kidnappers often conduct surveillance before the abduction to ensure success. Once the victim is taken, he or she may be threatened to compel payment from his or her family or associates. The negotiation process can be tense, as kidnappers subject the victim to harsh or dangerous conditions to create urgency, pressuring his or her loved ones, including friends and relatives, to comply with ransom demands quickly (Babalola & Akindele, 2024).

2. **Express kidnapping**: express kidnapping involves the quick abduction of a victim to obtain money or valuables within a short time frame. Perpetrators typically target vulnerable individuals in situations like withdrawing cash from ATMs. Victims are held for a brief period, during which threats are made to ensure ransom payment (Abadinsky, 2022). This type of kidnapping can be highly traumatising, as victims experience intimidation and violence.

3. **Political kidnapping**: Political kidnapping involves the abduction of individuals, particularly prominent figures, to gain political leverage or influence. Perpetrators, including terrorist groups or political organisations, use these abductions to make statements or achieve specific goals. Victims serve as bargaining chips in negotiations or as tools to draw attention to political causes. Such kidnappings instill fear and disrupt societal stability (Ogbonna & Obasi, 2023).

4**. Sexual kidnapping**: political kidnapping involves the abduction of individuals, particularly prominent figures, to gain political leverage or influence. Perpetrators, including terrorist groups or political organisations, use these abductions to make statements or achieve specific objectives. Victims serve as bargaining chips in negotiations or as tools to draw attention to political causes. Such kidnappings instill fear and disrupt societal stability (Ogbonna & Obasi, 2023).

5. **Kidnapping for organ trade**: this illegal activity involves abducting individuals to harvest their organs for transplantation. Victims are targeted based on vulnerability, such as being lured with promises of employment. The conditions faced by victims are often horrific, as they await the illegal sale of their organs. Organ trafficking raises serious ethical concerns and constitutes a grave violation of human rights. However, raising awareness and enforcing stringent laws are essential to combating this heinous crime (Ibrahim, 2021).

6. **Gang kidnapping**: gang kidnapping occurs when organised criminal groups abduct individuals as part of their criminal enterprises, typically linked to drug trafficking or extortion. Victims are targeted based on their connections or perceived value to the gang. These kidnappers use violence and intimidation to ensure compliance with their demands. The presence of gangs creates an atmosphere of fear, making communities hesitant to report such crimes (Abadinsky, 2022).

7. **Virtual kidnapping**: virtual kidnapping is a form of extortion where perpetrators create the illusion of kidnapping to demand ransom without actual abduction. This can involve threats made over the phone or online, claiming to have taken the victim and demanding payment. Often, the victim remains unharmed and unaware of the situation until after the fact (Ike & Onyekachi, 2019). The psychological impact on victims and their families can be severe, leading to anxiety and distress.

PREVALENCE OF KIDNAPPING IN NIGERIA

Kidnapping has become a pervasive security challenge in Nigeria, as incidents are increasing across various regions. Between July 2023 and June 2024, at least 7,568 individuals were abducted in 1,130 incidents nationwide. Kidnappers demanded nearly ₦11 billion in ransom but received only about ₦1.05 billion, which is 9.5% of the requested amount. A report by the National Bureau of Statistics indicated that over 11,000 thousand Nigerians were kidnapped within a year, with 7,000 abductions occurring in rural areas and 4,000 in urban regions (Omojemite, 2025). These alarming figures underscore the escalating threat of kidnapping, which has been exacerbated by factors such as poverty, unemployment, inadequate law enforcement, and political instability. Several high-profile cases illustrate the severity of the crisis, including the abduction of 32 passengers at a train station in Edo State in January 2023, the kidnapping of 287 school children in Kaduna State in March 2024, and the abduction of more than 100 individuals in Zamfara State in May 2024. In August 2024, at least 20 medical and dental students were taken hostage in Benue State, adding to the growing insecurity (Ibrahim, 2025). The widespread fear and

anxiety resulting from these abductions have significantly hindered social and economic development in the affected areas, making kidnapping a persistent threat to national stability.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Psychoanalytic Theory

Psychoanalytic theory, developed by Sigmund Freud in the early 1900s, provides insight into kidnapping by exploring unconscious drives and unresolved childhood conflicts that might influence criminal behaviour (Ibrahim, 2021). According to this theory, individuals may resort to kidnapping as a way to gain control or power, often stem from repressed anger or unmet needs from their early experiences. Unresolved childhood trauma, such as neglect or abuse, can lead to feelings of insecurity and a need for dominance, potentially driving some individuals to control others forcefully (Eze & Nnaji, 2021). Kidnapping may be an expression of underlying desires or frustrations, surfacing in actions that fulfill unconscious impulses, like revenge or validation. Through this perspective, the act of kidnapping is seen as an external manifestation of internal struggles, where unconscious drives are projected outward, influencing the individual's behaviour without their awareness (Adekoya & Alade, 2019).

Furthermore, psychoanalytic theory suggests that the individual's relationships with parental figures (such as biological parents, adopted parents, guardians, or other caregivers who play a significant role in a child's development) and early attachments might play a role in their later actions (Nwankwo & Ijeoma, 2020). Individuals with unstable relationships may seek attention or validation through extreme actions like kidnapping, attempting to regain a sense of control or recreate familiar emotional patterns. This theory also considers the role of defense mechanisms, such as displacement, where unresolved conflicts are redirected onto others (Usman & Bala, 2022). Kidnappers may use projection to justify their actions, attributing hostile motives to their victims as a way to legitimise their aggression. Ultimately, psychoanalytic theory interprets kidnapping as a complex behaviour rooted in the unconscious mind, shaped by unresolved internal conflicts and shaped by deep-seated emotional needs from early development stages.

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR KIDNAPPING IN NIGERIA

There are many factors that contribute to the prevalence of kidnapping and these include:

1**. Poverty**: poverty remains a significant cause of kidnapping among youths in Nigeria. The lack of economic opportunities pushes many young people into criminal activities as a means of survival. With limited access to education and employment, some youths see kidnapping as a

lucrative way to make quick money (Ogbonna & Obasi, 2023). Kidnapping is most prevalent in regions with high poverty rates, where desperation among youths is widespread. Economic deprivation further drives criminal behaviour, contributing to the rising incidence of kidnapping in Nigeria (Finkelhor & Jones, 2023).

2**. Corruption**: corruption within law enforcement and judicial systems exacerbates the kidnapping problem among youths (Ajayi & Funmilayo, 2020). When law enforcement officials are compromised, kidnappers are often able to evade punishment, encouraging more youths to involve in the crime. Many kidnappers are emboldened by the perception that they can bribe their way out of trouble (Ogbonna & Obasi, 2023; Babalola & Akindele, 2024). The failure to enforce strict penalties against kidnappers and corrupt officials allows the practice to continue in Nigeria. Corruption within the judiciary also means that justice is often delayed or denied, contributing to a culture of impunity. Without reforming the legal system and curbing corruption, kidnapping will continue to be an appealing option for young criminals.

3**. Insecurity and poor law enforcement**: the lack of adequate security and ineffective law enforcement systems in many parts of Nigeria contributes to the rise in kidnapping. In regions where security forces are either under-resourced or corrupt, kidnappers operate with little fear of being caught or prosecuted (Ogbonna & Obasi, 2023). This emboldens criminal gangs and encourages more youths to engage in kidnapping, as the perceived risk of punishment is low. Weak law enforcement creates an environment where kidnappings can thrive, especially in rural areas with minimal government presence (Eze & Nnaji, 2021).

4. **Drug abuse**: drug abuse is another contributing factor to the rise of kidnapping among youths in Nigeria. Youths involved in drug abuse are more likely to engage in violent criminal activities, including kidnapping, to support their addiction (Babalola & Akindele, 2024). Drug abuse often impairs judgment and leads to impulsive decision-making, making youths more prone to criminal behaviour. Additionally, many drug-using youths become indebted to drug dealers, leading them to commit crimes like kidnapping to repay their debts. This vicious cycle of drug abuse and crime is difficult to break without adequate rehabilitation services (Finkelhor & Jones, 2023).

5**. Broken family structure**: a broken or dysfunctional family structure can contribute to youth involvement in kidnapping. Children from homes with absent parents, domestic violence, or neglect are more likely to engage in criminal activities, including kidnapping, as a means of seeking attention or financial gain (Adeleke & Usman, 2020). Without proper parental guidance,

many youths turn to gangs or peers for support, increasing their likelihood of engaging in illegal activities. Additionally, youths from unstable family backgrounds may feel hopeless about their future prospects, leading them to view kidnapping as a way to escape poverty.

EFFECTS OF KIDNAPPING IN NIGERIA

The effects of kidnapping are very devastating and these include:

1. **Psychological trauma**: kidnapping can lead to severe psychological trauma for victims and their families. Many victims experience anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) following their ordeal (Abadinsky, 2022). The fear of being kidnapped can also create a pervasive sense of insecurity within communities, leading to long-term mental health issues. Families often struggle with feelings of helplessness and fear, impacting their daily lives and relationships (Abadinsky, 2022). The psychological scars can persist long after the physical ordeal has ended, affecting victims' ability to reintegrate into society. This mental health burden places additional strain on healthcare systems, which may be ill-equipped to address the specific needs of trauma survivors.

2. **Economic impact:** The prevalence of kidnapping in Nigeria has significant economic consequences at both the individual and national levels (Ike & Onyekachi, 2019). Families of victims may face financial ruin due to ransom payments, medical expenses, and long-term psychological care. Businesses suffer from reduced productivity and increased security costs, which can deter investment and hinder economic growth (Babalola & Akindele, 2024). In regions with high kidnapping rates, tourism and trade may decline, further straining local economies. The fear of kidnapping also restricts mobility, limiting access to education and employment opportunities. Hence, the economic impact of kidnapping contributes to a cycle of poverty and instability within affected communities (Ogbonna & Obasi, 2023).

3. **Disruption of social cohesion:** kidnapping creates a climate of fear and distrust within communities, disrupting social cohesion and relationships. Neighbours may become suspicious of each other, leading to a breakdown in the sense of community and mutual support. Families may withdraw from social interactions, isolating themselves due to fear of potential abductions. This erosion of social bonds can hinder community efforts to address security issues and support one another (Abadinsky, 2022). As trust diminishes, the community's ability to work together for positive change becomes severely compromised. The long-term effects can lead to increased crime rates and social unrest as people become disillusioned with their surroundings.

4. **Impact on education**: the fear of kidnapping significantly affects access to education for children and young adults in Nigeria. Schools in areas plagued by kidnapping may close or implement strict security measures, limiting students' ability to attend classes (Babalola & Akindele, 2024). Parents, concerned for their children's safety, may choose to keep them at home rather than risk abduction. This disruption can lead to increased dropout rates and a decline in overall educational attainment. As education becomes less accessible, the long-term prospects for youth diminish, perpetuating cycles of poverty and limited opportunities (Yusuf & Afolabi, 2020). The impact on education can have generational consequences, affecting the country's future workforce and economic stability.

5**. Political consequences**: kidnapping poses serious challenges to governance and security in Nigeria, undermining public confidence in the government's ability to protect its citizens (Abadinsky, 2022). High-profile abductions can prompt widespread public outcry and demands for action, creating pressure on political leaders to respond effectively. Failure to address the issue can lead to increased civil unrest and disillusionment with political institutions. Furthermore, the rise of kidnapping can contribute to the proliferation of vigilante groups and militia, which may further destabilise the region. This erosion of trust in government institutions can hinder effective law enforcement and criminal justice processes (Babalola & Akindele, 2024). Ultimately, the prevalence of kidnapping can threaten national security and hinder development efforts.

THE IMPACT OF TRAUMA ON KIDNAPPING VICTIMS

Kidnapping in Nigeria has profound traumatic effects on both victims and their families, deeply affecting mental, emotional, and physical well-being. Victims often experience symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), such as flashbacks, nightmares, and severe anxiety, as they struggle to cope with the terror and helplessness they felt during captivity (Ike & Onyekachi, 2019). These symptoms can persist long after release, impacting the victim's ability to return to daily life. The fear and isolation experienced during captivity often lead to depression and feelings of hopelessness, which make it difficult for victims to trust others or feel safe again. Kidnapping is a profound violation of personal security, leaving lasting scars that can be difficult to heal (Yusuf & Afolabi, 2020).

Families of kidnapped individuals also endure emotional trauma, living in constant fear for their loved one's life and struggling with uncertainty and powerlessness. The ransom demands and prolonged negotiations lead to intense financial and emotional strain, causing family members to

experience chronic stress and anxiety (Ibrahim, 2021). Children, spouses, and extended family members may face a lasting sense of insecurity, fearing that they or their loved ones could be taken as well. This collective trauma extends beyond the immediate family to the larger community, with the incident creating a ripple effect that disrupts social networks and heightens a general sense of fear and instability in society (Ogbonna & Obasi, 2023).

At the societal level, the prevalence of kidnapping contributes to a widespread atmosphere of distrust and anxiety that affects communities and the nation's overall social fabric. This trauma-driven social withdrawal impacts people's willingness to engage in public life, affecting businesses, tourism, and community relationships (Ibrahim, 2021). As fear and distrust grow, individuals may change their routines, avoiding certain areas or events, which negatively impacts economic and social activities (Abadinsky, 2022). The pervasive psychological impact of recurring kidnappings undermines social cohesion, creating an environment where individuals feel constantly threatened. This atmosphere has wide-ranging effects on mental health and social stability throughout Nigeria.

NEEDS FOR GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING INTERVENTIONS

Guidance and Counselling interventions are essential to support victims of kidnapping through:

1. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is a widely used intervention that helps individuals identify and modify negative thought patterns and behaviours. It is particularly effective for those dealing with anxiety, depression, and trauma-related issues (Ajayi & Funmilayo, 2020). In a CBT, clients learn to recognise how their thoughts influence their feelings and actions. The counsellor works collaboratively with clients to challenge distorted thinking and develop healthier coping strategies. Techniques such as journaling and thought-stopping are often employed to facilitate this process (Yusuf & Afolabi, 2020). For victims of kidnapping, CBT can help them process traumatic experiences and reduce symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). By focusing on present thoughts and behaviours, CBT empowers clients to regain control over their lives (Okafor & Obinna, 2021). The structured nature of CBT allows for measurable progress, making it easier for clients to see their improvements over time. Ultimately, CBT equips individuals with lifelong skills to manage stress and improve their mental health.

2. **Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (TF-CBT)**

Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (TF-CBT) is an adaptation of CBT specifically designed for individuals who have experienced trauma. This intervention combines cognitive-behavioural, humanistic, and family therapy principles to address the psychological impact of traumatic events (Adekoya & Alade, 2019). TF-CBT is particularly beneficial for children and adolescents, helping them process their trauma in a supportive environment. The intervention involves gradual exposure to trauma-related thoughts and feelings while teaching coping mechanisms to manage distress. Techniques like narrative exposure and relaxation skills are utilised to help clients articulate their experiences safely (Ike & Onyekachi, 2019). In cases of kidnapping, TF-CBT can assist victims in processing their trauma and developing resilience. Family involvement is a critical component, as it promotes healing within the familial unit (Amadi & Eze, 2022). This approach helps caregivers understand the child's needs and provides them with tools to support recovery. TF-CBT aims to reduce symptoms of PTSD and improve overall functioning in the aftermath of trauma.

3. **Narrative Therapy**

Narrative therapy is a therapeutic approach that encourages victims of kidnapping to tell their personal stories and reframe their experiences (Chukwu & Mohammed, 2019). This intervention allows clients to separate themselves from their problems, viewing them as external challenges rather than intrinsic flaws. By articulating their narratives, clients can gain a deeper understanding of how their experiences shape their identities and beliefs. In the case of kidnapping, narrative therapy helps victims reframe their trauma as a part of their life story rather than a defining moment (Eze & Nnaji, 2021). This shift in perspective fosters empowerment and encourages individuals to explore alternative paths forward. The counsellor acts as a guide, helping clients identify strengths and weaknesses within their narratives. This process can lead to increased self-awareness and resilience, enabling individuals to envision a future beyond their trauma (Eze & Nnaji, 2021). Narrative therapy also emphasises the importance of social support and community, allowing clients to reconnect with their values and beliefs. Ultimately, this intervention provides a framework for healing and personal growth through storytelling.

4. **Family Therapy**

Family therapy involves working with families to address issues affecting the entire unit, promoting healthier communication and relationships (Finkelhor & Jones, 2023). This intervention

is particularly valuable in cases where trauma, such as kidnapping, impacts family dynamics. Family therapy sessions encourage open dialogue, allowing members to express their feelings and experiences related to the trauma. By fostering understanding and empathy among family members, this approach can help reduce conflict and improve overall family functioning (Nwankwo & Ijeoma, 2020). The counsellors facilitate discussions that explore individual roles and perspectives, promoting collaborative problem-solving (Yusuf & Afolabi, 2020). In the context of kidnapping, family therapy can assist families in coping with the aftermath of trauma, addressing feelings of fear, anger, and helplessness. This intervention also provides education on the effects of trauma and strategies for supporting one another. Strengthening family bonds can lead to increased resilience and a supportive environment for recovery (Nwankwo & Ijeoma, 2020). Ultimately, family therapy emphasises the importance of healing and psychological support.

5. **Art Therapy**

Art therapy is a creative intervention that uses artistic expression to facilitate emotional healing and self-discovery. This approach allows individuals to explore their feelings and experiences through various artistic mediums, such as painting, drawing, or sculpture (Chukwu & Mohammed, 2019). For victims of trauma, art therapy can provide a non-verbal outlet for expressing complex emotions that may be difficult to articulate. The creative process can help individuals process their trauma, reduce anxiety, and improve self-esteem (Eze & Nnaji, 2021). In the context of kidnapping, art therapy can enable victims to externalise their feelings of fear, anger, and sadness in a safe and supportive environment. The counsellor guides the creative process, encouraging clients to reflect on their artwork and its meaning. Art therapy can also promote mindfulness and relaxation, helping individuals manage stress and anxiety (Nwankwo & Ijeoma, 2020). This intervention fosters a sense of agency and empowerment as clients take control of their narratives through art. Ultimately, art therapy serves as a powerful tool for healing and self-exploration.

6. **Mindfulness-Based Interventions**

Mindfulness-based interventions focus on cultivating awareness and acceptance of the present moment, which can be particularly beneficial for individuals experiencing stress and trauma. Techniques such as meditation, deep breathing, and body awareness exercises help individuals develop greater emotional regulation and resilience (Ajayi & Funmilayo, 2020).

Mindfulness can assist victims of kidnapping in managing anxiety and intrusive thoughts related to their trauma. By fostering a non-judgmental awareness of their feelings, individuals can learn to respond to stressors more effectively (Amadi & Eze, 2022). Mindfulness practices can also promote relaxation and reduce symptoms of Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Incorporating mindfulness into counselling approaches provides clients with practical tools to manage distress and enhance well-being (Ibrahim, 2021). Over time, these techniques can lead to improved focus, emotional stability, and overall mental health. Mindfulness-based interventions are adaptable and can be integrated into various therapeutic methods, making them a valuable addition to counselling practices (Ike & Onyekachi, 2019). These interventions empower the victims of kidnapping to cultivate inner peace and resilience in the face of adversity.

CONCLUSION

The persistence of kidnapping in Nigeria could be attributed to factors such as poverty, unemployment, corruption, insecurity, and weak law enforcement. The psychological effects on victims and their families are severe, often resulting in trauma, anxiety, and long-lasting emotional scars. Addressing these psychological impacts requires counselling interventions to support recovery, foster resilience, and restore mental well-being. From a psychoanalytic perspective, it is crucial to explore unconscious factors that may contribute to the trauma and distress experienced by victims. By addressing these deep-seated emotional responses, counselling can facilitate healing and reintegration. Comprehensive approaches that include both preventive measures and counselling interventions are essential to reduce the occurrence of kidnapping and help those affected rebuild their lives, emphasising the importance of both conscious coping strategies and the deeper work of resolving unconscious trauma.

SUGGESTIONS

Sequel to the earlier discussions, the paper therefore suggested that;

1. The government and relevant agencies should focus on reducing poverty, insecurity, corruption and unemployment, which are major factors to kidnapping in Nigeria.

2. Law enforcement agencies should be equipped and trained by the government or relevant state or federal authorities to handle kidnapping cases more effectively, ensuring swift response and deterrent measures.

3 There should be community-wide campaigns to educate people on personal safety measures and the dangers associated with kidnapping.

4. Rehabilitation or psychological counselling should be accessible to victims of kidnapping, providing trauma-informed care to address mental health challenges like Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, emotional stress, anxiety, and depression.

5. Counselling interventions should also focus on family and community support, as the effects of kidnapping extend beyond the individual victim.

6. Counsellors should use evidence-based therapies, such as cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), trauma-focused CBT, mindfulness-based interventions, narrative therapy, art therapy, and family therapy, to help victims cope with the aftermath of kidnapping.

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