

Residents' Perception of Radio Coverage of Kidnappings in Selected Towns of Akoko North-West Local Government, Ondo State, Nigeria

Raphael Olugbenga ABIMBOLA, Ph.D^{*}, Mary Folayemi ADEBOYE

*Department of Mass Communication, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria
Corresponding Author**

Abstract: This study examines residents' perception of radio coverage of kidnappings of residents of selected towns of Akoko North-West Local Government, Ondo State, Nigeria, by bandits who are mainly herders, through the stations' news bulletins and other programmes. Two stations operating in the state: Sunshine F.M 96.5 Alalaye, a government owned station and Adaba 88.9 FM, privately owned station were used. It adopts survey method, using questionnaire and interview guide as instruments to collect data from a sample of 255 respondents' resident in the sleepy towns of Arigidi, Erusu, Ibaram, Ikaram, and Ajowa in the local government area. Findings revealed that respondents are, to a large extent, exposed to Sunshine F.M 9.5 Alalaye and Adaba 88.9 F. M's news bulletins and programmes. Respondents perceive the two stations' reportage on kidnapping as adequate but emphasise the need for a much wider network of information and government intervention in the security network of the affected areas. The study recommends that reportage of news and other programme contents that are kidnapping related should be presented in a manner to shed light on the achievement of government and its agencies towards ending the insecurity as well as sensitizing the citizens on protective and preventive measures. It also asks government to deploy a combined team of security agencies including the army, the police, the state security network code named Amotekun and local villangte personnel.

Keywords: Perception, Kidnapping, Radio coverage, News, Programmes

I. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Nigeria, as the most populous and endowed black nation in the world in recent times, has been decked in several security challenges of insurgency, banditry, abduction (popularly referred to as kidnapping) and hostage taking. There has been frequent incidence of particular crimes, such as sectarian violence, ethno-religious conflict, political assassination, ransom kidnapping, campus cultism and electoral thuggery to human rights violations (Ezemenaka, 2018). Apparently, insecurity is widespread in Nigeria as Oarhe and Aghedo (2010) observed that Nigerian security agencies have largely been ineffective in tackling the menace thus leading to a colossal amount of violence and casualties in the country. Ngwama (2014) is of the view that kidnapping as a security discourse is not new in Nigeria. Similarly, Inyang (2013) maintained that kidnapping has become endemic in the Nigerian society. It is fast becoming a lucrative alternative to armed robbery offence. The gravity of kidnapping is so

intense that it has virtually affected most persons in the society. Kidnapping cases became alarmed in the Niger Delta region when militants in February 2006 abducted some oil workers, apparently to draw global attention to the dire situation in the oil rich Niger Delta region of the country, the victims were mostly foreigners. Since then the social problem of kidnapping has spread like wild-fire in most parts of the country; example is the Kaduna to Abuja road, which has become very unsafe for both road and rail travels. In 2018, Nigeria was placed sixth on the global kidnap index. This rating puts Nigeria among countries with serious kidnapping problems behind Philippines, Venezuela, Columbia, Brazil and Mexico (Ezemenaka, 2018). Also, Ezemenaka (2018) reported that Nigeria recorded 512 cases of kidnapping and 30 dead persons in kidnappers' den against 353 cases recorded throughout 2015. Similarly, Kyrian (2017) also reported that the former Inspector General of Police in Nigeria had noted that kidnappers and hostage takers got \$15 million in ransom (about N8 billion) between 2015 and 2017.

Kidnapping is an offence punishable by the law in Nigeria. Anybody caught involved in the act is expected to face a penalty of 10 years imprisonment (Kyrian, 2017). Apparently, the media are often in liberal theory referred to as the "Fourth Estate of the Realm" and the "watchdog of the society", meaning that the media exist as an organ of information sourcing and dissemination, educational promotion, surveillance, social enlightenment and mobilization. These functions set the media apart as an important link or factor in the relationship between the government and the governed and make them a sine qua non to societal growth and development. Thus, the expectation is that, the media will be vibrant in reporting kidnapping cases so that the government can be able to take proper action. It is in this perspective that this study sets to analyse the following radio stations Sunshine 96.5 F.M Alalaye and Adaba F.M 88.9's coverage on kidnapping in selected areas of Akoko North-West, Ondo State.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Nigeria, it is now a normal phenomenon to wake up to the news of bombings, butchering of children in their sleep, communal clashes and Fulani herdsmen fuss. Empirical

evidence shows that studies have discussed mass media coverage of issues as matters of national and international interests. There are other studies conducted on the kidnapping phenomenon. Okoro and Odoemelam (2013) investigated the problem of kidnapping but focused mainly on print media framing of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. Another study was conducted by Muobike (2018) on the framing of the abduction of Chibok girls in Nigeria. Their study narrowed it to the Southern Nigeria, where the causal factors might be limited to economic while the dominant factor for kidnapping in the South-south is environmental struggle and in the Northwestern and Northeastern parts could be poverty and terrorism, respectively. Some of these studies revealed that kidnapping is worthy of reporting by the media. However, the degree of prominence, frequency and direction given to such events or issues by the press goes down to a lower position as captured in the literature by (Inyang, 2013). Also, the degree of prominence given to kidnapping cases by the press in Nigeria determines what Nigerians feel and think about kidnapping and its attendant consequences. As the “Fourth Estate of the Realms”, the mass media is expected to bring forth kidnapping cases into discourse, thereby setting the agenda and keeping its diverse audiences abreast of the situation. Thus, going by the gap in the literature, the researchers examined the perception of the residents of selected towns in Akoko North-West local government on the reportage of kidnapping of residents in the area by Sunshine 96.5 F.M Alalaye and Adaba F.M 88.9’ FM.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

For the purpose of this study, the following specific objectives are drawn.

1. To examine the general awareness level of residents of Akoko North-West Local Government on kidnappings in the area.
2. To determine the extent to which residents of Akoko North-West Local Government are exposed to Sunshine 96.5 F.M Alalaye and Adaba F.M 88.9’s coverage on kidnappings in their area.
3. To determine the perception of Akoko North-West Local Government residents on Sunshine 96.5 F.M Alalaye and Adaba F.M 88.9’s radio coverage on kidnappings in the area.

IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions will guide this study;

1. What is the general awareness level of residents of Akoko North-West Local Government on kidnappings in the area?
2. To what extent are residents of Akoko North-West Local Government exposed to Sunshine 96.5 F.M Alalaye and Adaba F.M 88.9’s radio coverage on kidnappings in the area?
3. What is the perception of Akoko North-West Local Government’s residents on Sunshine 96.5 F.M

Alalaye and Adaba F.M 88.9’s radio coverage on kidnappings in the area?

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

a. Conceptual Review

1. Kidnapping in Nigeria

Kidnapping has now become a generic word both in public and private discourse going by its prevalence in the country. Literarily, the word, which has become notorious, putrid and nauseating in the ears of virtually everyone is derived from “kid” meaning; child and “nab” which means to snatch. Adewale (2009) pointed out that kidnapping now appears to be an emerging concern in Nigeria though it is not a new phenomenon, it is as old as the world and has been used to the practice of stealing of children for use as servants or laborers in the American colonies. So it has come to mean any illegal capture or detention of a person or people against their will, regardless of age. The kidnapers, who can be very erratic, have been found to engage in the criminality for several complex motives ranging from unemployment, idleness, vengeance, rituals, mortuary gains and political reasons. Kidnapping is also the taking away of a person against his own will, usually to hold that person in false imprisonment, a confinement without the persons’ consent. Economic kidnapping: also called the kidnapping business is where a financial demand is made in either hard cash or some financial resource. Political kidnapping: this made for political concessions such as the release of prisoner, changes to the law and policy retreat are demanded (Briggs, 2009). Kidnapping for ransom and Banditry are two of the biggest organized or gang crime in Nigeria and are seen as a national security challenge. The kidnapping are often violent and resistance always result in the death of victims. Thousands of Nigerians have fallen victims of the crime and have had to pay millions of dollars in ransom for their freedom. Kidnapping is seen as a lucrative business and the shortest means to wealth by those involved in this crime. The current wave of abductions across the country makes every person a potential target regardless of social class or economic status, unlike political kidnapping which started in the Nigeria's oil rich Niger Delta region in the early 2000s and the one by terror group, Boko Haram in the Nigeria's northeast and northwest that began in 2009 when the conflict there started. Abductions by Islamist terrorist, Boko Haram was done to further recruit fighters, instill fear, gain more international popularity and force government to negotiate with it for ransom which is one of the means of generating funds for its terrorist operations. Kidnapping for ransom on a commercial scale which became rampant in Nigeria in 2011, spreading across all the 36 states and the Nigeria capital, Abuja. In the northwest states of Zamfara, Katsina and Kaduna hundreds of local community members mostly young women and children were often abducted by bandits operating from forests.

Ade (2013) in an article entitled ‘Kidnapping business in Nigeria’ as cited in Oyedeyi (2014, P.18) painted a picture of

the current state of kidnapping and hostage-taking in the most populous black nation. Her piece goes thus:

During church service on Sunday before my pastor began his sermon, he spent his first ten minutes on the podium talking to the congregation about the recent surge of kidnappings in Lagos state.. Speaking like a father to his children, he yelled passionately “these are perilous times.” “Don’t stay out late alone, go out in groups.” “Practice sitting in the passenger’s seat next to your driver when you are in traffic at night”, he said. As he wrapped up his sermon he called out a woman and her family who had a testimony and thanksgiving. The woman presumably in her 60’s danced to the altar with her children and grandchildren and she spoke in detail of her ordeal in the hands of kidnappers. She had been kidnapped for 11 days with no food, or medication to treat the fracture she suffered while trying to get away from her abductors. She had been taken from her place of work in broad day light as she was making her exit at closing time.’ While describing her experience she said: “I was the only one they kidnapped, and every morning when they woke up, one of them will lead in prayers asking God that my family pay the ransom they demanded.” There are some sick and twisted groups of individuals and one may think this a rare and isolated incident. I wish this were the case. I have read of a Yaba College of Technology student, Ejiro who was abducted and taken to the nearest ATM machine and forced to fork over her life savings. During the stop at the bank another man who was standing in front of the bank minding his business and probably waiting for his driver to pull up was also kidnapped. This could have been anyone.

On 14 April, 2014, Government Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State, Nigeria, was attacked of which about 276 female students (mostly Christians) were kidnapped by the Boko Haram sect, an Islamic Jihadist and Takfiri terrorist organization based in North-East Nigeria. This group of insurgents, are opposed to the "westernization" of Nigeria, which they maintain is the root cause of criminal behaviour in the country. Thousands of people have been killed in attacks perpetrated by the group, and the Nigerian federal government declared a state of emergency in May 2013 in Borno State in its fight against the insurgency. The resulting crackdown has led to the capture or killing of hundreds of Boko Haram members, with the remainder retreating to mountainous areas from which they have increasingly targeted civilians. However, the campaign has failed to stabilize the country. Since 2010, Boko Haram has targeted schools, killing students in their hundreds. The group’s spokesman said such attacks would continue as long as the Nigerian government continued to interfere with traditional Islamic education. About 10,000 children have been unable to attend school as a result of the

activities by Boko Haram. Boko Haram has also been known for kidnapping of girls in recent times, who it believes should not be educated, and use them as cooks or sex-slaves, thus the kidnap of over 200 secondary school girls in Chibok, Borno state. Four years after the Chibok School Girls’ kidnap, a similar incident occurred when, on February 19, 2018, Boko Haram kidnapped 110 schoolgirls from the Government Girl’s Science and Technical College at Dapchi, Yunusari Local Government area of Yobe state. Five schoolgirls were said to have died on the same day of their abduction. The then state governor, Ibrahim Gaidam, reportedly blamed the Nigerian Army for the attack, saying they removed a military checkpoint from the town. A month after, the girls were freed except one, a Christian girl named Leah Sharibu, believed to have not been released by the terrorists because she refused to abandon her faith and convert to Islam. Since then, several individuals and advocacy groups have been criticizing the Federal Government for failing to secure Leah’s release almost three years after the incident.

One of the kidnap cases that also shook the country was that of the lecturers of the University of Maiduguri, Borno State in July 2017. Boko Haram terrorists had ambushed the lecturers, who were part of an oil exploration team of the Nigerian national petroleum Corporation, on an oil prospecting mission to the Lake Chad Basin. The team comprised UNIMAID staff, members of the Civilian Joint Task Force, and military personnel. The terrorists killed five staff members during the ambush and abducted four others, the UNIMAID chapter of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) confirmed the incident. The university said the deceased comprised two geologists, two technologies and a driver. The Nigerian Army also confirmed that nine soldiers and one other person were killed in the ambush.

In December 2020, an unfortunate episode happened at Kankara, the headquarters of Kankara Local government area of Katstina state, when gunmen invaded the government science secondary school in the town and abducted over 340 pupils. About 800 students were said to be at the school on December 11 when the attack occurred, but some of the pupils were able to scale the fence of the school and run to safety as the school’s security personnel tried to repel the bandits. Although the schoolboys were freed about six days later, the incidence brought back to memory the kidnappings of schoolgirls at Chibok (Borno state) and Dapchi (Yobe State) in 2014 and 2018, respectively.

In recent years, the country has also witnessed a series of kidnapping by armed groups and terrorists with a 2020 report by SB Morgan showing that between 2011 and 2020, over \$18m (N6.9bn) had been paid in ransom to kidnappers by their victims. Out of this figure, SBM stated that around \$11m (N4.2bn) was paid between 2016 and 2020, which makes it appear that kidnapping has become a business.

2. Kidnapping in Ondo State

According to report by Josiah Oluwole published on December 23, 2018; Ondo State, well known for its tranquil and peaceful environments, contrary to this, is now a hellhole for travelers and residents alike, many of whom have been victims of kidnappers. In 2018, a 13-day old baby was kidnapped from its family in the wee hours of the night by daredevil kidnappers without a trace after many days. Also, politicians and citizens have been paying ransom to kidnappers, boosting a trade that has been outlawed by both the federal and state legislative institutions. The rate of kidnapping is now on the increase, not only in Ondo State but also in some other states of the South-west. Four persons along Akure-Owo Expressway, also were abducted by kidnappers specifically at Amurin Village in Owo Local Government Area of the state. Among the victims was a lecturer of the Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo (RUGIPO), Taiwo Akinyemi. Mr. Akinyemi was not freed after six days in captivity, despite the payment of ransom to the kidnappers. Although the others, members of staff of the Federal Medical Centre Owo, were freed after payment of ransom. Sadly, the body of the 52-year-old, Mr. Akinyemi was found in a bush tied to a tree on a Sunday evening. He was killed by the kidnappers, reportedly for the failure of his family members to produce the ransom on time. In November 2018, five persons including the senatorial candidate for the Ondo North senatorial district on the platform of African Democratic Congress, Jide Ipinsagba, and the party chairman, Bisi Ogungbemi, were kidnapped along Owo-Oba Akoko road amidst a retinue of toll collecting police checkpoints. They were fortunate to be released days later after a huge amount was paid as ransom.

Another incident was that of Ayomide Ogunsuyi, a 23-year old student of Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo, who narrowly missed hell, when on November 29, vigilant "Good Samaritans" spotted her being taken away by kidnappers right at the heart of the capital, Akure, to an unknown destination. The kidnappers sedated her as soon as she got into what she thought was a taxi taking her to her destination. They made a detour from the main expressway and headed back to the town, an action that drew the attention of other commuters who felt the girl had actually indicated a different direction when she boarded the taxi. A police patrol at the area was immediately alerted and the girl was rescued.

Concurrently, In July 2018, a former Chairman of Akure North Local Government, Dele Fagoriola, was kidnapped in his farm in a border village between Ondo and Ekiti State. He was said to have been trailed to his farm where he was abducted at about 3 p.m. He was, however, released after a ransom was paid to the abductors. Following this recent abductions were the abduction of the Oba Joel Daodu, Oniyani of Iyani Akoko along Ikare-Owo expressway at Oba Akoko, it will also be recalled that a former regent of Akungba-Akoko was also kidnapped on that same route in 2015, this and more has sparked several protests from groups

and associations, demanding the government's action and the commitment of security agencies. Another case of kidnapping that particularly happened in the Northwest region of Akoko, Ondo state is the abduction of a secondary school teacher Alhaji Jamiu Zakariyahu who was on his way back home from the mosque at around 8 in the evening where he was bundled into a waiting vehicle and was dragged into the forest. Just recently, A family of five were also abducted at gunpoint by kidnappers from Ajowa-Akoko and Ayere in Akoko Northwest west Local Government Area of Ondo State, they were said to be on their way back to Abuja, after the Easter holiday, when they were kidnapped between Ondo and Kogi States.

The above, states series of abductions and the reports goes on and on, causing the resident of these communities to live in fear. It therefore shows that kidnapping is fast becoming the business of the day thereby disrupting the peace, stability, security and safety of the citizens of Ondo State. The towns of Akoko North West Local Government selected for this study form the cluster of area worse hit by frequent abductions of the young and the old by bandits suspected to be herders.

3. Radio as a medium

Radio refers to the activity or industry of broadcasting sound programmes to the public via transmission and reception of electromagnetic waves. According to UKEssays (2018), radio is the transmission of signals by modulation of electromagnetic waves with frequencies below those of visible light. During the 1930s, radio was considered an intimate and credible medium. The public used it as a news source and expected it to provide factual information. Radio was the first truly mass medium of communication, reaching millions of people instantly and altering social attitudes, family relationships, and how people related to their environment. Radio is an attractive medium among the various mass communication media because of its special characteristics.

Characteristics of Radio

- i. *Radio makes pictures:* Remember the example of the running commentary on radio of the Independence Day Parade in Abuja? As you heard the commentary, you could visualize or 'see' in your mind what was being described. You could actively 'see' pictures in your mind of the parade even as you listened to the sounds of bands playing patriotic tunes or the sounds of marching and commands. You use your power of imagination as you follow the running commentary.
- ii. *The speed of radio:* Radio is the fastest medium. It is instant. As things happen in a studio or outside, messages can be sent or broadcast. These messages can be picked up by anyone who has a radio set or receiver which is tuned into a radio station.
- iii. *Simplicity of radio:* Compared to all other media, radio is simple to use. As mentioned in the previous sections, radio needs very simple technology and equipment.

- iv. *Radio is inexpensive:* As it is simple, it is also a cheaper medium. The cost of production is low and a small radio can be bought for as low a price as say fifty rupees.
- v. *Radio does not need electric power supply:* You can listen to radio using dry battery cells even if you do not have electric power supply or a generator. So in a country like ours, where electricity is epileptic, radio is a great blessing.
- vi. *A radio receiver is portable:* Don't you move your radio set at home from the living room to the kitchen or as you go out somewhere? You can't do that very easily with television. This facility of moving an object which is called 'portability' gives radio an advantage. These days if you have a car and a radio in it, you can listen to it as you drive or travel. Can you think of watching television, when you drive?
- vii. *One does not have to be literate to listen to radio:* Unless you are literate, you can't read a newspaper or read captions or text on television. But for listening to radio, you need not be literate at all. You can listen to programmes or news in any language on the radio.
- viii. For a majority of Nigerians in the rural areas, radio is the only source of news and entertainment. Radio news can be heard anywhere using an inexpensive receiver. Even the most economically backward sections can afford to use the medium of radio.

b. Empirical Review

A study by Inyang and Abraham (2013) was conducted to investigate the problem of kidnapping and its consequences on Nigerians in general and Uyo dwellers in particular. The research was conducted through collaboration with specific objectives, which among them included to examine the effect of kidnapping in the lives of people in Uyo metropolis, identify the role of government in checking the problem of kidnapping, find out the strength of the Nigerian constitution towards the problem of kidnapping, ascertain whether kidnapping in Uyo metropolis has political dimension and proffer useful suggestion as remedies to the problem of kidnapping in Nigeria in general and Uyo in particular based on the study recommendations. The research design adopted for this study was survey, using the questionnaire and interview responses. A systematic random sampling was adopted to select 150 respondents representing members of the general public who were then administered copies of the questionnaires. Findings reveal that there are serious negative implication on the peoples culture that although government at both the federal and state level have adopted diverse measures to check the menace, yet the problem lies with the laxity on legal implementation over the act. Also that the proliferation of kidnapping in Uyo metropolis has little to do with political activities, the main motive is economic gain by way of ransom payment of money. Therefore, it is recommended that families and relatives of victims should reject payment of ransom to kidnappers, because ransom

payment has been found to be the motivational factor for the criminal activities and operation of the criminals.

Furthermore, Ezemenaka (2018) examined a relatively new dimension of kidnapping, known as ritual kidnapping, which has been battling security and peace in Nigeria Interviews were conducted on the key respondents are the religious clergies, an African native priest more commonly known as herbalists (wanting anonymity), academics and scholars in security studies in Nigeria, a major stake holder respondent from the Nigerian Police Force and younger respondents. The information gathered from the clergies revealed that some 'men of God' engage in ritual human sacrifice in order to attract many members to attend their churches. This leads to the generation of lots of money and proceeds during offerings and tithes from their members. From results acquired in the study, it can be argued that while the concept of security is yet to be agreed on internationally to suit the needs of different states, Nigeria should adopt a hybrid security in addressing issues such as ritual kidnapping and other crimes in the country.

Also, Nwabueze, C. and Ebeze, E. (2013) examined the critical role of the mass media in combating the upsurge of crime which has led to a state of insecurity in the country, especially in the North, South Eastern and South Southern parts of the country. This discourse adopted the qualitative approach in appraising the correlation between the mass media and the insecurity in Nigeria with emphasis on practical measures relevant in this direction. The study however concluded that the Mass media use in combating rising insecurity in Nigeria is not without challenges. The researcher therefore encouraged the media and the general public to rise to the challenge of combating rising insecurity in the nation by embarking on communication-based approaches that would effectively stigmatize such acts in the society. It recommends that journalists should be trained regularly on terrorism and conflict reporting to always keep them abreast of modern techniques that could be used in ensuring effective use of the mass media in combating insecurity in Nigeria.

Adebiyi (2020), investigated on the impact of media reporting of terrorism on counter-terrorism and develop approaches to minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts of that reporting. This project investigated: How the #BringBackOurGirls campaign played out across Nigeria's media ecosystem; its impact on perceptions of Boko Haram and of the Nigerian government; if the campaign had a different impact domestically compared to internationally; if the campaign had a direct impact on rescue operation; and whether lessons could be learnt from the Nigerian government's response to the incident. Analysis of media coverage also showed that much of the information given to journalists by government communicators on issues of security cannot be verified by the media as a result of restricted access, except in a few cases when international research or non-governmental organisations release evidence-based reports. It was unanimous among respondents that when

the #BringBackOurGirls campaign emerged as a direct result of the Nigerian government's poor response to the kidnapping and the media's ineffective coverage, the group was regarded as a third force with its own agenda. One of the findings of this research is that the Nigerian media did not fully support the #BringBackOurGirls communication campaign because it did not set that agenda and only started highlighting its activities when the foreign media helped transmit it to a larger international audience. The research also showed that many of the challenges faced by Nigerian journalists reporting terrorism stem from poor welfare, lack of a standard code of ethics for reporting on terrorism, inadequate capacity and training, poor military-media relations, lack of post-incident access to areas attacked by terrorists, corruption, and media ownership structure. In a bid to end the negative trend, he strongly recommended that firstly, constructive engagement be initiated between the government of Nigeria, media regulators, media owners, and media workers in order to review and revitalise codes of ethics and codes of professional conduct and practice.

Perception of the Nigerian Television Authority and Channels Television Reportage of the Chibok School Girls Abduction among Residents of South-East Nigeria conducted by Orlu (2017) of the department of linguistics and communication studies, university of Port-Harcourt, Choba, Rivers State, investigates the perception of television audience on how the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and the Channels Television reported over 200 female students at Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok, Borno State of Nigeria. The survey research method was adopted in the study through to elicit views of 384 residents of South-East Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, it was revealed that NTA's reports on the abduction of the Chibok school girls are often in favour of government while Channels Television's reports on the abduction are often balanced. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) must wake up and endeavor to properly give account of the girls' abduction. The report should be devoid of ethnic, religious or political sentiment as doing this will fundamentally lead to believability, which will consequently raise the credibility level of the reports.

c. Theoretical Framework

The study employed the Individual Difference Theory/Attitude Change Theory developed by Carl Hovland whose studies concluded that people are very selective in how they use media; in the topics they expose themselves to, in how they interpret information, and in how they retain information obtained through the media. Individual differences theory or Attitude change Theory of mass communication proposes that individuals respond differently to the mass media according to their psychological needs, and that individuals consume the mass media to satisfy those needs. The theory gives importance to the individual audiences and states that an individual's values, needs, beliefs and attitudes play a major role in how they react and use

media. The individual difference theory is an important theory based on psychological approach to understand mass media effects. According to this theory, different personality variables result in different reactions to the same stimuli.

In other words, the psychological makeup of a person is very much responsible for how he or she will consume media. Therefore, different people will react differently to same information or message. In other words, reaction of media message or content will differ according to motivation of audience members, their predisposition to accept or reject a given message, their prior believes, values, bias, intelligence level, moods etc. A category for communication research generally known as attitude change research has focused on the phenomenon that different individuals may receive the same message but act on it quite differently. This research is grouped under the heading of selectivity, the studies of American researcher Carl Hovland cited in Athira K.M, concluded that people are very selective in how they use media; in the topics they expose themselves to, in how they interpret information, and in how they retain information obtained through the media. Thus, the theory points out that people are selective about their use of media. The most important aspects of selectivity are the theories of selective exposure, selective perception and selective attention, retention. Selective exposure and selective perception act as barriers between message and effect, thus limiting the direct impact of mass communication on people. Suresh (2003) in his study of theories of communication, also helped analysed the selectivity;

Selective Attention: The media are full of competing messages. The process of screening vast amount of information in which one has no interest through mental filters is called selective attention, for example an adult will be more tuned to listen to the news while a child would rather watch a cartoon show.

Selective Exposure theory: Selective Exposure means that people expose themselves and access only those communications which are in accordance with their established beliefs and convictions. They tend to avoid those messages which are against their point of view. People seek out not only topics of interest to them but more importantly viewpoints with which they expect to agree. Thus, they use to the media to reinforce existing biases. On occasions when people seek out opposing points of view, they often do so for the purpose of hearing the arguments so that they can refute it later messages according to their psychological predisposition.

Selective Perception theory: Selective perception observes that people often interpret facts to suit their existing biases. Once the individuals have selectively exposed themselves to the messages in accordance with their preference, they tend to read into the message, whatever suits their needs. This process is called selective perception. Selective perception implies that the audience members tend to misinterpret media the famous "Mr Biggot experiments" are classic examples which show that prejudiced people misinterpreted the meanings of

anti-prejudice propaganda in such a way that it reinforced their existing biases. People hear what they want to hear and what they expect to hear. Thus the same information may carry different meaning for different people, particularly people with differing political, religious, cultural, ethnic, national or other substantial differences.

Selective Retention Theory: Selective retention notes that people remember messages that support their opinion longer than they remember opposing messages, which often unconsciously are forgotten and set aside. As with selective exposure and selective perception, selective retention is likely to reinforce existing beliefs and attitudes. Such tendencies make it less likely that the media can play a solo role in changing attitudes and behavior. Melvin L. De Fleur and Sandra Ball Rokeach have concluded, "From the vast available content, individual members of the audience selectively attend to, interpret and retain messages, particularly if they are related to their interest, consistent with their attitude, congruent with beliefs and supportive of their values".

Opinion leaders /change agents: The opinion in a group is influenced by what they hear from "opinion leaders".an individual who is a member of a group manifests certain characteristic in his thinking and behavior that contribute to the formation of "public opinion". The opinion of the leader is based on rational thinking due to education and experience. They weigh the pros and cons of the information they receive and then give their judgement on it. In application, the perception theories has the potential and scope of aiding one's understanding of how people react to media messages by selective retention, selective exposure and selective perception ,which further assist in analyzing people's level of awareness, exposure and perception towards Sunshine F.M 96.5 Alalaye and Adaba F.M 88.9's on kidnappings in Akoko North-west local government.

VI. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted survey as its research method.

a. Study Population

Owing to the fact that this research work is dealing with humans and particularly residents within the selected towns of Akoko North-West Local Government, namely Arigidi, Erusu, Ibaram, Ikaram and Ajowa; the population of this study is thus all residents of these communities. Hence, the population all together stands to be a total of 322,453. (*Ondo State Bureau of Statistics*).

b. Sample Size

The sample for this study is 255 residents of the five selected towns in Akoko North-West, where 50 residents was picked from the five towns and 1 key personality or officer which includes leaders of the community such as village heads, local government officials, school principal, etc. from each town. Sample is a subset of the population that is representative of

the entire population. Sample size become relevant in a research study in other to generate a manageable proportion of the entire population from which relevant data can be sourced and generalized to the entire population.

c. Sampling Technique

The study adopted quota and purposive sampling techniques. Disproportional quota sampling was used to select respondents (51 each) from the five towns while purposive sampling was used to pick the 51 respondents from each town based on their exposure to kidnapping occurrences as well as radio coverage of same in the area. See Table 2 for details.

Table 2: Breakdown of Sample Size According To Selected Towns.

| Name of towns | Number of residents | Interviewees | Sum total |
|---------------|---------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Arigidi | 50 | 1 | 51 |
| Ikaram | 50 | 1 | 51 |
| Ibaram | 50 | 1 | 51 |
| Erusu | 50 | 1 | 51 |
| Ajowa | 50 | 1 | 51 |
| Total | 250 | 5 | 255 |

d. Instrument of Data Collection

The instruments used for collecting data for this research work are Questionnaire and Interview Guide. The Questionnaire is a research instrument that consists of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. This questionnaire is divided into two sections, the first contains questions relating to the profile of respondents (demographics) while the other part consist of the research questions under study. The Interview Guide consist of six items, where the first three are about the demographic profile of the interviewees and the other three are questions meant to answer the research questions in the chapter one in order to help get solid information about kidnappings in the area.

e. Method of Data Collection

Copies of questionnaire were self-administered and also retrieved by the researcher, in line with the purpose of questionnaire-based survey. In addition, interviews were also thoroughly conducted by the researcher, with the use of the interview guide and also recorded alongside transcribed by the researcher for analysis.

VII. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study are in relation to the research questions raised in chapter one of the study and linked together to other similar studies and theories reviewed in the chapter two of this study. In research question one, the study sought to find out the general awareness level of residents of Akoko North-West Local Government on kidnappings in the area. The analysis shows that majority of the respondents with 29.9%, had a very low level of awareness of kidnapping and

that it re-occurrences in the area were rare. On the contrary 24% of the total respondents had an average level of awareness, while 21% had a high level of awareness and 13% had a very high level of awareness on kidnapping in their area. Responses from the interview revealed that respondents from the five selected towns from Arigidi, Erusu, Ikaram and Ajowa (R1, R2, R4 and R5) were very familiar to kidnapping in their area, while the respondent from Ibaram (R3) was not. The outcome is in line with Suresh (2003) study of the theories of communication that shows that the media are full of competing messages and respondents screen vast amount of information in which they have no interest through mental filters, this is called Selective attention theory. It helps to understand the difference between the various level of awareness exhibited by residents and justify the interviewee response from Ibaram (R3) who was not familiar with kidnapping occurrences in the area owing to the fact she was more interested in religious programs than news programmes that could contain news on kidnapping and that she only hears of it from other people in which the credibility of their information cannot be ascertained.

In research question two, the researchers sought to know the extent to which the residents of Akoko North-West Local Government are exposed to Sunshine 96.5 F.M Alalaye and Adaba F.M 88.9's radiocoverage on kidnappings in the area. From the data analysis, it was revealed that respondents agreed and strongly agreed with 59% and 84.1% respectively, to a great extent that they were exposed to Sunshine 96.5 F.M and Adaba F.M 88.9's news on kidnapping in the area, although 41.2% and 15.4% disagreed and strongly disagreed to being exposed, it was evident that majority of the respondents has to a great extent been exposed to both stations's report on kidnapping. Responses from the interviewees showed that residents were very familiar with both stations' news reports on kidnappings except for the respondent from Ibaram-Akoko who was not, due to preference in programme she listens to. It also showed that Adaba F.M 88.9 in particular has really been doing a lot of work when it comes to kidnapping report in the area and that the other stations also need to do more. The findings are in line with Osadolor (2001) cited in Nwabueze, C. and Ebeze, E. (2013) study that the most critical role of the media should be in helping to prevent or at least reduce the severity of conflicts. Publicity is critical in exposing and checking vices. As Joseph Pulitzer, the legendary journalist and creator of the Pulitzer prizes for excellence in journalism had said, "publicity may not be the only thing that is needed but it is the one thing without which all other agencies will fail" (cited in Olayede, 2011, p. 64). Similar to this is, findings from the studies of American researcher Carl Hovland cited in Athira K.M, confirms the result of the findings in this research that people are very selective in how they use media; in the topics they expose themselves to, in how they interpret information, and in how they retain information obtained through the media. People seek out not only topics of interest to them but more importantly viewpoints with which they expect to agree.

In research question three, the researchers sought to know the perception of Akoko North-West Local Government's residents on Sunshine 96.5 F.M Alalaye and Adaba F.M 88.9's radio coverage on kidnappings in the area. Findings revealed that majority of the respondents agree that Sunshine 96.5 F.M and Adaba F.M 88.9 covered kidnapping reports frequently; it also revealed that both stations broadcasted kidnapping related stories through news and other programmes. It was also evident that majority of the respondents with 74.2% agreed and strongly agreed to Adaba 88.9 F.M's adequate coverage and report of kidnapping related news in the area, while respondents agreed to Sunshine 96.5 F.M Alalaye's adequate coverage and report of kidnapping related news in the area with 57.9%, 25.8% respectively and 41.2 of the respondents strongly disagreed to both stations adequate coverage and reportage. The data also revealed that Sunshine 96.5 F.M Alalaye accurately covered and reported kidnapping related news with 57.9% and 69.3% respectively, while 42.1% and 30.7% revealed that Sunshine 96.5 F.M Alalaye and Adaba F.M 88.9 did not accurately cover and report kidnapping related news. From the interview, the respondents from R1-R5 indicated that the stations have been doing a great job in giving updates on the kidnappings in the area. They also agreed that the both stations covered and reported kidnapping related news stories frequently and adequately. However, they were not so sure about the accuracy of the reports. Their responses evidently clamoured on the need for the government to work on the security situation of the area to further reduce its consistent occurrences. In line with the outcome of this research, is the recommendation made by Adebisi (2020) stating that to increase mutual trust and confidence between the media and government, there is the need to deliver a free, more accurate, and more balanced flow of information between the Nigerian government and the Nigerian people. Also, just as Pulitzer cited in Nwabueze, C. and Ebeze, E. (2013) observes "get all these things (acts of terrorism and other acts of insecurity) out in the open, describe them, ridicule them in the press and sooner or later, public opinion will sweep them away". This could be a gradual but effective process to reduce the spate of kidnapping in Nigeria.

VIII. CONCLUSION

From the data analysis, as presented in chapter four of this report, it is found that: majority of respondents have a very low level of awareness on kidnappings in the area, while quite a few number of them have an average level of awareness. But do not all agree that it frequently occurs in each of their areas, particularly interviewees from Erusu and Ibaram (R2 and R3). Also, majority of the respondents were to a great extent exposed to news reports on kidnapping in the area, most of which came from Adaba 88.9 F.M. Respondents from the in-depth interview also revealed that they are familiar with both news reports on kidnapping but gave credits to Adaba 88.9 F.M more for job well done in updating them on kidnapping in their area. More so, it is concluded that both Sunshine F.M 96.5 Alalaye and Adaba 88.9 F.M news

reportage were frequent and adequate. However, majority of the respondents were not so certain about the accuracy of reports, but were certain that the concerned stations reported cases of kidnapping through news and other programmes.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above conclusions, the following recommendations were made;

1. Since the essence of journalism and the media (Television, Radio, newspaper and others) is to serve the society and keep the people informed always about happenings in their environment, therefore news contents, especially concerning kidnapping menace should be encouraged to further shed light on the achievement of government and its agencies towards ending the issue in the society.
2. Security agencies should also be willing and up to their task by disclosing the information needed by the media when gathering news in order to enhance new accuracy.
3. Members of the public should try as much as possible to pay attention to happenings in their environment so as not to fall victim of criminal activities reoccurring in the country as a whole.
4. Establishment of rural community radio to ease access to radio frequencies and increase the awareness of residents to happenings in the environment.
5. Accuracy and increase in frequency of reports should be encouraged in order to strengthen the credibility of the stations' report.

REFERENCES

- [1] Ade, O. (2013), 'The kidnapping business' in Oyedeyi. (2014) Press coverage of the prevalence of kidnapping in Nigeria Chp.2.P.18.
- [2] Adewale, K (2009). The Bad Business called Kidnapping in mongabay.com <http://allafrica.com/stories/200901090767.html>
- [3] Alagbe J. (2021) Nigeria's 10 unforgettable kidnapping cases retrieved 10th January, 2021 <https://www.google.com/amp/punchng.com/nigerias-10-unforgettablekidnapping-cases/%3famp>.
- [4] Briggs, R. (2009). The Kidnapping Business. Guide of Security controllers Newsletter.
- [5] Canagarajah, S. (2010). "Internationalizing Knowledge Construction and Dissemination". *The Modern Language Journal*. 94 (4): 661–664. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.2010.01105. x.
- [6] DeFleur, M., & Ball-Rokeach, S. (1989). *Theories of mass communication*. White Plains: New York: longman
- [7] Ezemenaka, K.E. 2018. Kidnapping: a security challenge in Nigeria, *Journal of Security and Sustainability Issues*, 8(2): 233-246. [http://doi.org/10.9770/jssi.2018.8.2\(10\)](http://doi.org/10.9770/jssi.2018.8.2(10))
- [8] Iduh, S. (2011). "The key challenges to peace in Nigeria". *International Journal of Vocational and Technical Education*. 3 (8) 121-134.
- [9] Inyang, D.J. & Abraham, U.E. (2013), The social problem of kidnapping and its implications on the socio-economic development of Nigeria. *A study of Uyo metropolis, Mediterranean journal of social sciences*, 5(6), 531-544. Doi:10.5901/mjss,2013v4n6p5n31
- [10] Kayode A. (2020) Strategic Communications Project Report. Mitigating the Impact of Media Reporting of Terrorism – Case Study of the #BringBackOurGirls Campaign
- [11] Kolawole.S. & Umejei E. (2021) History of Radio in Nigeria, retrieved from <https://medialandscapes.org/country/nigeria/media/radio>.
- [12] Kyrian, I. (2017). Intelligence reports and kidnapping. *Dawn*, May 17, 9.
- [13] Muobike, O. I. (2018). The Guardian and the Nation newspapers framing of the abduction of Chibok girls. *International Journal of Communication Studies*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication>.
- [14] Nwabueze, C. & Ebeze, E. (2013), "Mass media relevance in combating insecurity in Nigeria", *International Journal of Development and Sustainability*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 861-870.
- [15] Nwadiorah, C. E. and Nkwocha, I. B. (2011). "Kidnapping for Ransom: A prevalent urban Pandemic Available: <https://www.umes.edu/AJCJS/Content/Forms/CFP-Form/mofoluwawo-o-m-AJCJS-docx/>
- [16] Ngwama, J.C. (2014). Kidnapping in Nigeria: An Emerging Social Crime and the Implications for the Labour Market. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 4(1), 1-13.
- [17] Oarhe, O. Aghedo, I. (2010). The Open Sore of a Nation: Corruption Complex and Internal Security in Nigeria. *African Security*, 3(1), 127- 147.
- [18] Okoro, N., & Odoemelam, C. C. (2013). Print media framing of Boko haram insurgency in Nigeria: A content analytical study of the Guardian, Daily Sun, Vanguard and Thisday newspapers. *Research on Human and Social Sciences*, 3(11), 86-95.
- [19] Olayede, I. B. (2011), Mass Media, Public Interest and national Security in a Democracy: An Examination of correlation. In Oso, I. Soola, D. and Pate, U. (Eds.), *Media, Governance and Development: Issues and Trends*. Mushin: Primus Prints & Communication, pp. 61-68.
- [20] Oluwole. J. (2018) Kidnapping in Ondo State retrieved December 23, 2018. from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-west/302572-ondo-under-siege-of-kidnappers-ritual-killers.html>
- [21] Orlu, H. C. (2017). Perception of the Nigerian Television Authority and Channels Television reportage of the Chibok school girls abduction among residents of South-East Nigeria. *European Scientific Journal*. 13(23), retrieved on August 8, 2020 from <https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2017.v13n23p176>
- [22] Oshio, E. (2009). The challenge of national security and development. P.13 Retrieved May 13 2021 from <http://www.nigerianlawguru.com/articles/constitutional%20law/challenge%20of%20national%20security%20and%29development.pdf>
- [23] Suresh, K. (2003) *Theories of Communication*, retrieved July 30, 2021 from <https://www.peoi.org/Courses/Coursesen/mass/fram2.html>
- [24] Wikipedia. (2013). "Kidnapping": <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/kidnapping> (accessed April 1, 2021).
- [25] UKessays. (November 2018). *Theories of perception*. Retrieved from <https://www.ukessays.com/essays.com/essays/psychology/theories-perception-2618.php?vref=1>

APPENDIX: TABLES

Table 1: Showing the Demographic Data of the Interview Respondents

| Community | Respondents | Status | Percentage% |
|-----------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Arigidi | R1 | Vice principal | 20 |
| Erusu | R2 | Traditional ruler | 20 |
| Ibaram | R3 | Traditional ruler | 20 |
| Ikaram | R4 | Opinion leader | 20 |
| Ajowa | R5 | Vice principal | 20 |
| Total | 5 | 5 | 100% |

Source: Field survey, 2021.

Table 2: Showing the Level of Respondents' Awareness of Kidnapping in the Area

| Variables | Responses | Percentage (%) |
|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| Very low | 66 | 29.9 |
| Low | 27 | 12.2 |
| Average | 52 | 24 |
| High | 47 | 21 |
| Very high | 29 | 13 |
| Total | 221 | 100 |

Source: Field survey, 2021

Table 3: Showing How Often Kidnapping Occurs In Their Area

| Variable | Responses | Percentage (%) |
|------------|-----------|----------------|
| Always | 27 | 12.2 |
| Very often | 38 | 17.2 |
| Often | 64 | 29 |
| Rarely | 92 | 42 |
| Total | 221 | 100 |

Source: Field survey, 2021.

Table 4: Showing the Station Respondents Listen To

| Variable | Responses | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Sunshine 96.5 F.M. Alalaye | 19 | 8.6 |
| Adaba F.M 88.9 | 142 | 64.3 |
| Both | 60 | 27.1 |
| Total | 221 | 100 |

Source: Field survey, 2021.

Table 5: Shows Which Station Reports News on Kidnappings in Their Area

| Variable | Responses | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Sunshine 96.5 F.M. Alalaye | 21 | 9.5 |
| Adaba F.M 88.9 | 132 | 59.7 |
| Both | 68 | 31 |
| Total | 221 | 100 |

Source: Field survey, 2021.

Table 6: Showing How Often Respondents Listen To Sunshine 96.5 F.M. Alalaye's Report on Kidnapping in the Area

| Variable | Responses | Percentage (%) |
|------------|-----------|----------------|
| Very often | 37 | 16.7 |
| Often | 89 | 40.3 |
| Rarely | 95 | 43 |
| Total | 21 | 100 |

Source: Field survey, 2021.

Table 7: Showing How Often Respondents Listen to Adaba F. M's Report on Kidnappings in Their Area

| Variable | Responses | Percentage (%) |
|------------|-----------|----------------|
| Very often | 51 | 23.1 |
| Often | 84 | 38 |
| Rarely | 86 | 39 |
| Total | 221 | 100 |

Source: Field survey, 2021.

Table 8: Showing How Sunshine 96.5 F.M. Alalaye Has To A Great Extent Exposed Residents to Kidnapping Occurencies in Their Area

| Variable | Responses | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Strongly Agree | 46 | 21 |
| Agree | 84 | 38 |
| Disagree | 83 | 37.6 |
| Strongly Disagree | 8 | 3.6 |
| Total | 221 | 100 |

Source: Field survey, 2021.

Table 9: Showing How Adaba F.M 88.9 Has To A Great Extent Exposed Residents to Kidnapping Occurencies in Their Area

| Variable | Responses | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Strongly Agree | 126 | 57 |
| Agree | 60 | 27.1 |
| Disagree | 34 | 15.4 |
| Strongly Disagree | - | - |
| Total | 221 | 100 |

Source: Field survey, 2021.

Table 10: Showing If Sunshine 96.5 F.M Alalaye And Adaba F.M 88.9 Cover Kidnapping Reports Frequently In Their Area?

| Variable | Responses | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Strongly Agree | 52 | 24 |
| Agree | 83 | 37.6 |
| Disagree | 67 | 30 |
| Strongly Disagree | 19 | 8.6 |
| Total | 221 | 100 |

Source: Field survey, 2021.

Table 11: Showing If Respondents Agree That Both Stations Broadcast Kidnapping Related News Stories through News Programmes.

| Variable | Responses | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Strongly Agree | 82 | 37 |
| Agree | 118 | 53.4 |
| Disagree | 21 | 9.5 |
| Strongly Disagree | - | - |
| Total | 221 | 100 |

Source: Field survey, 2021.

Table 12: Showing If Respondents Agree That Both Station Broadcast Kidnapping Related News Stories through Other Programmes.

| Variable | Responses | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Strongly Agree | 69 | 31 |
| Agree | 91 | 41 |
| Disagree | 53 | 24 |
| Strongly Disagree | 8 | 4 |
| Total | 221 | 100 |

Source: Field survey, 2021.

Table 13: Showing If Respondents Agree That Sunshine F.M 96.5 Alalaye Adequately Covers and Reports Kidnapping Related News Stories.

| Variable | Responses | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Strongly Agree | 63 | 28.5 |
| Agree | 72 | 32.6 |
| Disagree | 66 | 30 |
| Strongly Disagree | 20 | 9 |
| Total | 221 | 100 |

Source: Field survey, 2021.

Table 14: Showing If Respondents Agree That Adaba F.M 88.9 Adequately Covers and Reports Kidnapping Related News Stories.

| Variable | Responses | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Strongly Agree | 82 | 37.1 |
| Agree | 82 | 37.1 |
| Disagree | 42 | 19 |
| Strongly Disagree | 15 | 6.8 |
| Total | 221 | 100 |

Source: Field survey, 2021.

Table 15: Showing If Respondents Agree That Sunshine F.M 96.5 Accurately Covers and Reports Kidnapping Related News Stories.

| Variable | Responses | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Strongly Agree | 42 | 19 |
| Agree | 86 | 38.9 |
| Disagree | 80 | 36.2 |
| Strongly Disagree | 13 | 5.9 |
| Total | 221 | 100 |

Source: Field survey, 2021.

Table 16: Showing If Respondents Agree That Adaba F.M 88.9 Accurately Covers and Report Kidnapping Related News Stories.

| Variable | Responses | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Strongly Agree | 75 | 34 |
| Agree | 78 | 35.3 |
| Disagree | 56 | 25.3 |
| Strongly Disagree | 12 | 5.4 |
| Total | 221 | 100 |

Source: Field survey, 2021.