



Kidnapping and food security in the federal capital territory Abuja, Nigeria

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Abstract

Kidnapping has emerged as a significant security challenge in Nigeria and FCT in particular, disrupting social and economic activities, including agriculture and food supply chains. The persistent threat of kidnapping in the region undermines farmers' safety, hampers food production, and affects transportation and market accessibility. It was against this background that this study employed Security–Development Nexus Theory to examine kidnapping and food security in FCT Abuja. Methodologically, the study adopts cross sectional survey design. The sample size for the study was 422, questionnaire and interview formed instrument for data collection. Finding from the study revealed that kidnapping has substantially hampered agricultural output in Federal Capital Territory Abuja thereby discouraging farmers from attending to their farms, abandonment of agricultural activities due to fear of been kidnapped, and at the same time disrupting farming schedules and supply chains. Finding further shows that the incident of kidnapping shows concerning escalation, with an initial increase in reports of abductions targeting individuals and communities, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. This rise has significantly impacted agricultural activities, as farmers and transporters face heightened risks, leading to disruptions in food production and supply chains. The persistent threat of kidnapping has caused farmers to reduce or halt their activities out of fear, thereby diminishing food output and access in the region. The study recommended that Nigerian government should prioritize strengthening security infrastructure and intelligence capabilities in rural and farming communities to prevent kidnapping incidents and protect agricultural activities. Establishing dedicated security patrols and community policing initiatives can foster trust and facilitate early intervention. There is a need to enhance collaboration between security agencies, local leaders, and agricultural stakeholders to develop targeted strategies for safeguarding farmers and transportation routes. Government and development partners should focus on addressing underlying socio-economic issues, such as poverty and unemployment, which often contribute to insecurity, by creating livelihood opportunities and promoting food security.

Keywords: Food Security, Kidnapping, Security-Development Nexus Theory, Supply Chain Disruption

Introduction

Kidnapping has become a pervasive security challenge in Nigeria, with significant implications for social stability, economic development, and national security. In particular, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, which serves as the political and administrative heart of Nigeria, has experienced a concerning rise in kidnapping incidents over recent years. These acts of criminality are often driven by various motives such as ransom demands, political agendas, or insurgent activities, and have led to widespread fear and insecurity among residents and visitors alike. According to the Nigeria Security Tracker (2022), Abuja has seen an alarming increase in kidnapping cases, reflecting a broader trend of insecurity across the country. The proliferation of kidnapping not only endangers lives but also hampers economic activities, disrupts social order, and undermines confidence in governance and security institutions.

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The impact of kidnapping extends beyond immediate safety concerns; it also significantly affects food security within the region. Food security, as defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2015), entails ensuring that all people have consistent access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to lead healthy lives. In the context of Abuja, insecurity hampers agricultural productivity, disrupts supply chains, and hampers market activities, thereby reducing the availability and accessibility of food for residents. For example, farmers and traders face threats of kidnapping while transporting goods, which discourages agricultural production and trade. Additionally, fear of insecurity discourages investment in food-related ventures and hampers community efforts to improve food systems. These disruptions are particularly detrimental in a city like Abuja, where a significant proportion of the population depends on urban markets for food supplies, and where rural-urban linkages are vital for food distribution.

Furthermore, the socio-economic disruptions caused by kidnapping exacerbate vulnerabilities among marginalized groups, including smallholder farmers, traders, and urban poor populations, who are most dependent on stable food systems for their livelihoods and well-being. The psychological trauma associated with kidnapping incidents can also deter agricultural activities and reduce productivity, further threatening food security objectives. The intertwining of insecurity and food insecurity underscores the necessity for a comprehensive understanding of how criminal activities like kidnapping influence food systems, especially in urban and peri-urban contexts within the FCT. Therefore, understanding the dynamics of kidnapping and its impact on food security in Abuja is crucial for informing policy interventions that foster sustainable peace and resilience in Nigeria's capital become imperative.

Statement of the Problem

The escalating incidence of kidnapping in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, has become a major security challenge that threatens the safety and stability of its residents, government institutions, and business activities. Despite ongoing efforts by security agencies to curb these criminal activities, the persistent rise in kidnapping cases continues to create a climate of fear and insecurity across the city. This heightened insecurity has a profound impact on the region's food systems, as it disrupts agricultural activities, hampers transportation and distribution of food supplies, and limits access to markets for farmers and traders. Consequently, these disruptions threaten the availability, accessibility, and affordability of food for residents, thereby undermining food security in Abuja. The problem is compounded by the fact that Abuja serves as both a political and economic hub, making its food security vital for national stability. This study aims to explore the extent to which kidnapping activities influence food security within the city, identifying key mechanisms through which insecurity hampers food systems. The findings will provide critical insights to inform policymakers, security agencies, and development stakeholders on effective strategies to reduce

insecurity and promote resilient, sustainable food systems in Abuja, ultimately ensuring the safety and well-being of its inhabitants.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- i. To examine the effect of kidnapping on agricultural productivity in the FCT
- ii. To investigate the trends of kidnapping incidents on food security in the FCT

Conceptual Review

Kidnapping

Kidnapping is widely recognized as a serious form of criminal activity involving the unlawful seizure, confinement, or abduction of an individual against their will, typically carried out with the intent of extracting ransom, achieving political objectives, or exerting coercive control (Okafor, 2018). This criminal act not only infringes on an individual's personal freedom and human rights but also undermines societal stability and peace. The motivations behind kidnapping can vary significantly, ranging from financial gain through ransom demands to politically motivated acts aimed at destabilizing governments or creating fear among the populace (Akinrinade, 2020). It often involves the use of violence, threats, or intimidation tactics to ensure compliance or to prevent escape, thereby increasing the trauma experienced by victims and their families. In recent years, the prevalence of kidnapping has surged in many regions experiencing insecurity, economic hardship, and political unrest, which further complicates efforts to combat this menace (Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2021). The socio-economic impacts are profound, as kidnapping can disrupt daily life, deter investment, and strain law enforcement agencies. Understanding the concept of kidnapping in its various forms and motivations is critical for policymakers, security agencies, and communities to develop effective strategies for prevention, rescue, and rehabilitation of victims. Recognizing its multifaceted nature helps in designing targeted interventions that address both the immediate threats and the underlying causes fueling this criminal behavior.

Food Security

Food security is a multifaceted concept encompassing the availability, access, utilization, and stability of food at all levels from individual households to national and global scales. It's not simply about having enough food to eat, but rather ensuring all people have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs for an active and healthy life (FAO, 2023). Availability refers to the physical presence of food, including adequate production, import capacity, and storage. Access focuses on the economic and social capacity of individuals and households to acquire food, encompassing affordability, infrastructure, and social safety nets. Utilization involves the proper processing, preparation, and consumption of food, taking into account nutritional requirements, knowledge of food

preparation, and hygienic practices. Finally, stability refers to the ability to maintain access to food over time, including in times of crisis such as droughts, floods, or economic shocks.

Achieving food security requires a multi-sectoral approach, addressing factors such as agricultural productivity, distribution systems, economic policies, social protection mechanisms, and environmental sustainability. For instance, increasing agricultural yields through sustainable farming practices is crucial for availability, while targeted social programs and improved infrastructure can enhance access. Addressing issues like food safety, nutrition education, and proper storage and handling strategies improves utilization, and building resilience to climate change and economic volatility is essential for stability. Ultimately, food security is not just a matter of food production, but a complex issue deeply intertwined with social, economic, and environmental factors.

Empirical Review of Related Literature

Kidnapping and Food Security in Nigeria

Kidnapping has emerged as a significant security challenge in Nigeria, affecting various aspects of social, political, and economic life across the country. Predominantly prevalent in northern and eastern Nigeria, kidnapping is often motivated by a combination of socio-economic disparities, insurgency, and organized criminal activities (Akinwale, 2020). The pervasive nature of this menace has profound implications for food security, especially considering Nigeria's heavy reliance on agriculture as the backbone of its economy. The ongoing insecurity disrupts agricultural activities such as planting, harvesting, and transportation of food products, thereby impairing local food production and distribution networks (Olaoye & Adebayo, 2019). For instance, farmers are often unable to access their farms safely, leading to decreased crop yields, abandonment of farmland, and destruction of food storage facilities, which collectively diminish the overall food supply (Eze et al., 2021).

In addition to direct physical disruption, the psychological trauma inflicted by kidnapping creates an environment of fear and insecurity that discourages investment in agriculture and rural development. This discouragement extends to both smallholder farmers and larger agribusinesses, leading to reduced productivity and innovation in food production systems (Ogunleye & Adeyemi, 2022). The economic impact of kidnapping also manifests through increased food prices, inflation, and scarcity, which disproportionately affect vulnerable populations who rely heavily on local food sources for their sustenance (Adebisi & Ojo, 2020). Displacement caused by kidnapping further exacerbates food insecurity by uprooting families from their agricultural livelihoods, forcing them into internally displaced persons (IDP) camps where access to adequate food is often limited and insecure (Nwaji, 2021).

Research indicates that insecurity, including kidnapping, severely undermines efforts to achieve sustainable food security in Nigeria. It destabilizes rural livelihoods, reduces food production, hampers trade and market access, and increases the cost of food items, thereby making nutritious food less accessible to low-income households (Adebisi & Ojo, 2020). The cyclical nature of insecurity and food insecurity suggests that addressing one without the other may be insufficient; therefore, security interventions must be integrated with rural development and agricultural policies. Community-based security strategies, such as local vigilance groups and partnerships with law enforcement agencies, have shown promise in reducing insecurity and creating a more conducive environment for agricultural activities (Nwaji, 2021). Additionally, socio-economic development initiatives aimed at poverty reduction, education, and employment can help mitigate the root causes of kidnapping and rural insecurity, fostering resilience and stability in vulnerable communities.

It therefore concluded that, kidnapping significantly hampers Nigeria's food security by disrupting agricultural productivity, destabilizing rural economies, and increasing food prices. To effectively combat these intertwined challenges, a holistic approach that combines enhanced security measures with socio-economic development, community engagement, and agricultural support is essential. Such integrated efforts can help restore confidence in rural areas, promote food production, and ensure food availability and access for Nigeria's growing population.

Kidnapping and Food Security in Federal Capital Territory Abuja

The issue of kidnapping in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja has garnered increasing scholarly attention due to its significant implications for food security within the region. Abuja, as Nigeria's political and administrative hub, has experienced a surge in kidnapping incidents, often linked to criminal gangs seeking ransom and political motives, which undermine the safety and stability necessary for sustainable agricultural and economic activities (Akinwale, 2020). Kidnapping in Abuja and its environs has disrupted both rural and peri-urban agricultural activities, leading to decreased food production, reduced labor participation, and the destruction of food supply chains (Olaoye & Adebayo, 2019). Farmers and traders become reluctant to operate in insecure areas, resulting in diminished access to land, inputs, and markets, which directly affects food availability and affordability (Eze et al., 2021). Furthermore, the psychological trauma inflicted on victims and their families creates an environment of fear, discouraging investment in agriculture and food-related enterprises, thereby further threatening food security (Ogunleye & Adeyemi, 2022).

Research indicates that the implications of kidnapping extend beyond immediate economic losses; they also threaten social cohesion and community resilience. Displacement of farmers and traders due to fear of

abduction leads to reduced agricultural productivity, especially in peri-urban areas where food is often produced for both local consumption and urban markets (Nwaji, 2021). The disruption of food supply chains results in increased food prices within Abuja, disproportionately affecting low-income households and vulnerable populations who depend on local markets for their daily sustenance (Adebisi & Ojo, 2020). Additionally, the insecurity hampers government and development agencies' efforts to promote food security initiatives, as security concerns divert resources and attention away from agricultural development programs (Eze et al., 2021).

Olaoye and Adebayo (2019) provide a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between insecurity and food insecurity in Nigeria's northern region, highlighting the profound impact that various forms of insecurity have on agricultural productivity and food availability. Their study underscores that the northern region, which is predominantly agrarian, has experienced escalating insecurity issues, including insurgency, banditry, and kidnapping, which severely disrupt farming activities and food supply chains (Olaoye & Adebayo, 2019). The authors argue that these security challenges limit farmers' access to land, inputs, and markets, leading to decreased crop yields and food production deficits. They also emphasize that insecurity induces displacement of rural populations, forcing many farmers to abandon their farms or relocate to safer areas, which further diminishes local food production capacity (Olaoye & Adebayo, 2019).

Furthermore, Olaoye and Adebayo explore how insecurity elevates the costs of food transportation and trade, making food items more expensive and less accessible, particularly for vulnerable groups. They note that the fear of attacks on transportation routes and markets discourages traders from engaging in food trade, thereby exacerbating food scarcity and malnutrition in the region (Olaoye & Adebayo, 2019). The authors also discuss the psychological and socio-economic effects of insecurity, such as loss of livelihoods and increased poverty rates, which contribute to a cycle of food insecurity and social instability. Their analysis concludes that addressing insecurity is vital for improving food security in Nigeria's northern region, and they advocate for integrated security and development strategies that involve community participation, government intervention, and sustainable livelihood programs (Olaoye & Adebayo, 2019). Overall, the study emphasizes that insecurity remains a critical barrier to achieving food security in Nigeria, particularly in regions most affected by violence and instability.

Adebisi and Ojo (2020) provide an insightful examination of the impact of insecurity on food supply chains in Nigeria, emphasizing how various forms of insecurity such as armed conflict, banditry, and kidnapping disrupt the smooth flow of agricultural products from producers to consumers. Their study highlights that insecurity significantly hampers agricultural activities by restricting farmers' access to land, inputs, and markets, which collectively reduce overall food production and availability (Adebisi & Ojo, 2020). They

point out that insecurity-induced transportation challenges lead to delays and increased costs in moving food supplies, thereby escalating food prices and limiting access for vulnerable populations (Adebisi & Ojo, 2020). The authors further argue that these disruptions not only affect rural farmers but also have ripple effects on urban markets, leading to shortages and inflation in food prices, which exacerbate food insecurity among low-income households (Adebisi & Ojo, 2020).

The study also discusses how insecurity discourages private investment in agriculture and food processing sectors, resulting in reduced productivity and innovation within the food supply chain. Adebisi and Ojo (2020) emphasize that the fear of attacks on transportation routes and market centers leads to decreased trade activities, which in turn destabilizes local economies dependent on food trade. Additionally, the authors explore the psychological effects of insecurity on farmers and traders, noting that fear and trauma diminish productivity and participation in agricultural and trading activities (Adebisi & Ojo, 2020). To mitigate these challenges, the study advocates for strengthened security measures, improved infrastructure, and community-based safety initiatives to secure food supply chains and ensure food security across Nigeria. Overall, their research underscores the critical need for a coordinated approach involving security reforms and development policies to safeguard food supply chains and enhance resilience against insecurity-related disruptions (Adebisi & Ojo, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

Security –Development Nexus Theory

A prominent theoretical framework used to explain the relationship between kidnapping and food security in Nigeria is the Security-Development Nexus Theory. This theory posits that security and development are mutually reinforcing; insecurity, such as kidnapping, undermines development processes, including agricultural productivity and food security. Proponents argue that persistent insecurity hampers farmers' access to land, inputs, and markets, leading to decreased food production, increased costs, and food shortages (Adewale & Akinyele, 2018). The major assumption of this theory is that insecurity directly disrupts socio-economic activities, particularly in rural agricultural communities, by instilling fear, causing displacement, and discouraging investment in agricultural activities. Consequently, kidnapping, as a form of insecurity, not only endangers lives but also destabilizes food supply chains, intensifying food insecurity in Nigeria. Supporters of this framework emphasize that without addressing security threats like kidnapping, efforts to improve agricultural productivity and food security are likely to be ineffective, as insecurity perpetuates a cycle of poverty and hunger (Adewale & Akinyele, 2018). Therefore, the theory underscores the importance of integrating security measures into development policies to foster sustainable food security.

The Security-Development Nexus Theory has been widely advocated by scholars and security experts who emphasize the intrinsic link between stability and sustainable development. Major advocates include scholars like Paul Collier (2007), who argue that persistent insecurity such as kidnapping, insurgency, and banditry directly impairs economic activities, especially in rural areas where agriculture is the primary livelihood. Collier posits that insecurity creates a cycle of conflict and underdevelopment, which hampers efforts to improve food production and distribution, thereby exacerbating food insecurity (Collier, 2007). Similarly, scholars like Robert Muggah (2012) have emphasized that insecurity disrupts social and economic networks, making it difficult for farmers to access markets, inputs, and land, which are vital for food security. They advocate that addressing security threats is fundamental for development initiatives to succeed, emphasizing that without adequate security, investments in agriculture and rural infrastructure are unlikely to yield sustainable results.

In the context of Nigeria, proponents such as Adebisi and Ojo (2020) draw upon this framework to demonstrate how kidnapping and other forms of insecurity directly impair food supply chains, leading to shortages and increased prices. They argue that insecurity discourages farmers from cultivating land, reduces market activities, and causes displacement, all of which threaten food security. The major assumptions underlying this theory are that insecurity directly impacts socio-economic activities and that sustainable development cannot occur without first establishing a secure environment. Advocates believe that security reforms, combined with development policies, are essential to breaking the cycle of insecurity and underdevelopment, ultimately fostering food security in Nigeria and similar contexts (Adebisi & Ojo, 2020; Collier, 2007).

Methodology

This study utilised across-sectional survey design. Under survey design, descriptive and explanatory research methods were utilized. The descriptive method enabled the researcher to carefully describe the perception of causal factors and consequence of kidnapping among residents of Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. This was complemented by explanatory research approach. The combination of these methods will require the use of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches which in itself, reflects the principle of triangulation.

The study population include all adults who are 18 years and above, both male and female residing in three Area Councils across the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria. The selected Area Councils include Abaji, Bwari, and Kuje Area Councils of Federal Capital Territory, Abuja-Nigeria. Also, the study population will consist of community leaders, traditional leaders, religious leaders, women leaders, opinion leaders, Nigerian Police Force, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corp, Nigeria military, Non-

Governmental Organizations' (NGOs) officials, and Government Officials and others relevant stakeholders that are considered knowledgeable and have vast experience on the subject of the study, from the selected Area Councils of the study location.

Table 1: Total Population of Selected Area Councils in FCT Abuja, Nigeria

Area Councils	Population of Adult as at 2023
Abaji	127, 951
Bwari	500, 142
Kuje	188,182
Total	816,275

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, 2023

The formula for determining sample size for an unknown population by Cochran (1977) used to determine the number of respondents for the study was perception of casual factors and consequence of kidnapping among residents of Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria in this study. This is explained below as thus:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 P(1-P)}{d^2}$$

Where:

n=the sample size

Z=means the standard normal score corresponding to 95% confidence level (1.96)

P=the estimated proportion of an attribute that is presenting the population under study (0.5)

d=desired level of precision 5% or 0.05 $n = 1.96^2 \times 0.5(1-0.5)$

$$n = \frac{0.05^2}{3.84 \times 0.5 \times 0.5} = \frac{0.0025}{0.0025} = 384$$

$$n = \frac{3.84 \times 0.25}{0.0025} = 384$$

$$n = \frac{0.96}{0.0025} = 384$$

From the above calculation, three hundred and eighty-four (384) questionnaires will be distributed disproportionately.

However, to account for non-responses rate and ensure robustness, the sample was expanded by 10%. That is: $384 \times 10 \div 100 = 38$. The sample size for the study becomes 422 participants. Therefore 410 was allocated to questionnaires while 10 was meant to oral interview. Out of the 410 questionnaire administered only 400 were completed and returned and analysis was done based on the 400 respondents.

Table 2 Distribution of Sample Size

Area Councils	Population of Adult as 2023	Sample size
Abaji	127, 951	<u>127, 951</u> $816,275 \times 384 = 60$
Bwari	500, 142	<u>500,142</u> $816,275 \times 384 = 235$
Kuje	188,182	<u>188,182</u> $816,275 \times 384 = 89$
Total	816,275	384

Source: Field Survey, 2025**Data Presentation/ Analysis**

This section of the study analysis the data generated from the field and it was discuss and interpreted base on the two research objectives of the study

Table 3: The effect of kidnapping on agricultural productivity in the Federal Capital Territory.

Statements	Frequency and Percentage of Respondents									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Kidnapping incidents in the Federal Capital Territory have significantly reduced my interest in engaging in agricultural activities	173	43	112	28	30	8	43	11	42	10
The threat of kidnapping has caused farmers in the Federal Capital Territory to decrease their farming activities or abandon farms altogether	185	46	120	30	32	8	35	9	28	7
Kidnapping has led to increased costs of security measures for farmers in the Federal Capital Territory, negatively impacting their productivity	173	43	103	26	35	9	49	12	40	10
Fear of kidnapping has limited access to markets and agricultural inputs for farmers in the Federal Capital Territory	196	49	99	24	36	9	35	9	34	9
Kidnapping has a detrimental effect on agricultural productivity in the Federal Capital Territory	181	45	90	23	37	9	47	12	45	11

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The table above reveals a nuanced perception among respondents regarding the impact of kidnapping on agricultural productivity in the Federal Capital Territory. While a significant proportion of farmers (43%)

strongly disagree that kidnapping reduces their interest in engaging in agriculture, a considerable number (28%) agree, indicating that for some farmers, security threats do influence their motivation. Similarly, about 46% strongly agree that kidnapping leads to decreased farming activities or abandonment, yet 30% concur that such threats cause them to reduce or cease farming altogether. When examining the influence of kidnapping on security costs and market access, nearly half of the respondents (69%) strongly agree or agree that these issues are affected, but there remains a notable minority (around 22%) that disagrees, suggesting that security concerns do impact some farmers' productivity.

Overall, nearly half of the respondents (45%) strongly agree that kidnapping has a detrimental effect on agricultural productivity, but a significant portion (23%) strongly disagree or disagree that it does. These mixed responses imply that the perceived impact of kidnapping varies among farmers and may depend on individual circumstances, location, or farm size. The implications for the study are substantial: security threats appear to influence agricultural productivity for a subset of farmers, particularly through increased costs and restricted market access. Addressing security challenges could, therefore, foster a more conducive environment for agricultural development in the region. The data also highlights the importance of targeted interventions and policies that consider the diverse perceptions among farmers, emphasizing the need for further research to understand contextual factors influencing these perceptions and to develop effective security and support strategies. Adewale, and Ojo, (2016) affirm the above submission by asserting that insecurity leads to a decline in farming activities as farmers are deterred from working on their farms due to safety concerns. More so, farmers incur higher security-related expenses, which reduce their net income and motivation to continue farming. The threat of violence and the risk of farm abandonment are significant, with many farmers opting to abandon their farms temporarily or permanently to avoid danger. These findings support the survey results indicating that kidnapping and insecurity influence farm abandonment and reduce overall productivity, highlighting the importance of addressing security challenges to sustain agricultural development in insecure regions.

Corroborating from questionnaires with those of key informant there was no significant difference as majority argue that kidnapping hamper agricultural production as people are often afraid to go to their farm for the fear of been kidnaped. One of the respondent identified as Dr. Aisha Bello, an agricultural extension officer based in Lugbe, FCT, Nigeria, was interviewed on May 15, 2025. She explained that:

kidnapping has had a profound impact on farmers in her region, leading to decreased planting activities and farm abandonment. She noted that many farmers are reluctant to venture into remote or insecure areas due to the threat of kidnapping for ransom, which not only endangers their lives but also discourages investment in agricultural inputs and infrastructure. This insecurity has resulted in reduced crop yields and a decline in overall productivity in the area (Key Informant Interview, 2025).

Similarly, Mr. Chukwuemeka Nwosu, a smallholder farmer from Byari, FCT, Nigeria, was interviewed on May 20, 2025. He shared that

My farm operations have been severely hampered by recent kidnapping incidents along transportation routes, making it difficult to access markets and farm inputs. He mentioned that several of his neighbors have abandoned their farms altogether out of fear, leading to a noticeable decline in local food production. Mr. Nwosu emphasized that the constant threat of kidnapping has increased security costs and lowered farmers' morale, ultimately affecting their capacity to sustain productive farming activities (KII,2025).

In another development Mrs. Funke Oladipo, an agricultural policy analyst based in Kuje, Nigeria, was interviewed on May 25, 2025. She stated that

the pervasive insecurity, particularly kidnapping, has disrupted the entire agricultural supply chain in Nigeria. She highlighted that farmers and traders are hesitant to participate fully in the market due to safety concerns, which results in decreased market participation and reduced income for farmers. Mrs. Oladipo pointed out that the government needs to prioritize security reforms to restore confidence among farmers and secure agricultural livelihoods, as the current insecurity directly hampers Nigeria's agricultural development (KII,2025).

It can therefore be deduced from the above that, kidnapping hamper agricultural activities in the area of study. These data collectively support the notion that insecurity, including kidnapping, has tangible negative effects on farmers' motivation, costs, market access, and overall productivity, aligning with the findings of the survey and emphasizing the need for security-enhanced strategies to promote agricultural development. As the Food and Agriculture Organization (2018) emphasizes that security is a critical factor for agricultural growth, as insecurity discourages investment, increases operational costs, and causes farmers to divert resources toward security measures, consistent with the respondents' perceptions of increased costs impacting productivity.

The Trends of Kidnapping Incidents in the FCT from 2019 to 2025 on Food Security

The data in Table 4 underscores the significant negative impact of kidnapping incidents on food security in the FCT between 2019 and 2025. An overwhelming majority of respondents, ranging from 66% to 69%, strongly agree or agree that the rise in kidnappings has led to a decline in agricultural productivity, reduced food availability, and accessibility. Specifically, 170 respondents (43%) strongly agree that kidnapping has significantly hampered agricultural output, and 185 respondents (46%) believe it has caused a decline in food availability. Additionally, 179 respondents (45%) agree that farmers are abandoning their farms due to security concerns, which directly threatens food supply stability. The perception that kidnapping-related insecurity has increased farming and transportation costs is also prominent, with 182 respondents (46%) affirming this. However, only 39% of respondents believe that efforts to curb kidnapping have been effective in improving food security, indicating a perceived inadequacy of current measures. These findings imply that

kidnapping not only endangers individual safety but also severely disrupts agricultural activities, inflates operational costs, and compromises food availability, thereby threatening overall food security in the region. This highlights the urgent need for more effective security interventions and policies tailored to protect farmers and ensure the resilience of the food supply chain in the FCT.

Table 4: The Trends of Kidnapping Incidents in the FCT from 2019 to 2025 on Food Security

Statements	Frequency and Percentage of Respondents							
	Strongly Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree			
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
The increase in kidnapping incidents in the FCT from 2019 to 2025 has significantly reduced agricultural productivity in the region	170	43	90	23	40	10	54	13
Kidnapping activities in the FCT have led to a decline in food availability and accessibility for residents.	185	46	91	23	32	8	55	14
The rising trend of kidnapping in the FCT has caused farmers to abandon their farms, thereby negatively affecting food security	179	45	79	20	45	11	57	14
Security concerns related to kidnapping have increased the costs of farming and food transportation in the FCT	182	46	78	20	35	9	58	14
Efforts to curb kidnapping in the FCT have been effective in improving food security and agricultural productivity	156	39	100	25	40	10	56	14
							48	12

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study reveal a concerning correlation between the rise in kidnapping incidents and the decline in agricultural productivity in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). A significant majority of respondents strongly agree or agree that kidnapping has substantially hampered agricultural output in the region. This perception is supported by the high percentage of respondents (43%) who strongly agree and an additional 23% who agree that kidnapping has led to a reduction in productivity. The underlying reasons for this include heightened insecurity discouraging farmers from tending to their farms, abandonment of

agricultural activities due to fear of kidnapping, and the disruption of farming schedules and supply chains. Moreover, farmers face increased costs associated with securing their farms and transporting produce, which further diminishes profitability and incentives to engage in farming. The psychological impact of insecurity, such as fear and trauma, also hampers farmers' ability to work effectively. Collectively, these factors contribute to reduced food production, threatening food security in the FCT. The study's findings underscore the critical need for improved security measures that specifically address the safety of farmers and agricultural workers. Without such interventions, the region risks persistent declines in agricultural productivity, which could have far-reaching socio-economic implications, including increased food insecurity and economic instability. Addressing kidnapping and related security challenges is therefore essential for restoring and sustaining agricultural productivity in the FCT.

Regarding the trend of incident kidnapping during the period under review in FCT has shown a concerning escalation, with an initial increase in reports of abductions targeting individuals and communities, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas. This rise has significantly impacted agricultural activities, as farmers and transporters face heightened risks, leading to disruptions in food production and supply chains. The persistent threat of kidnapping has caused farmers to reduce or halt their activities out of fear, thereby diminishing food output and access in the region. Despite some efforts to improve security, the trend indicates that kidnapping remains a substantial threat, with the potential to further undermine food security if not effectively addressed. The period also reflects a growing pattern of insecurity that correlates with increased food insecurity, emphasizing the urgent need for targeted interventions to curb kidnapping incidents and protect food systems in the FCT.

Conclusions

It can therefore be concluded that kidnapping remains a significant and complex threat to food security in Nigeria, with far-reaching implications for the country's agricultural sector and overall food systems. The pervasive insecurity caused by kidnapping activities directly disrupts agricultural activities by intimidating farmers, leading to reduced cultivation, abandonment of farmlands, and lower crop yields. This not only diminishes local food production but also creates shortages that affect both rural and urban populations. Moreover, kidnapping incidents often target transportation routes and supply chains, causing delays, increased transportation costs, and reduced availability of food in markets. As a result, food prices tend to rise, making it difficult for vulnerable and low-income households to access sufficient and nutritious food. The atmosphere of fear and insecurity discourages investment in agriculture and hampers economic development within rural communities, further exacerbating food insecurity. Additionally, the psychological and physical toll on farmers and traders diminishes productivity and sustains a cycle of poverty and hunger.

Overall, the ongoing kidnapping crisis severely undermines Nigeria's efforts to achieve food security and sustainable development. Addressing this issue requires a multi-faceted approach that combines improved security measures, community engagement, and socio-economic interventions to protect agricultural livelihoods, restore confidence in food supply chains, and ensure that all Nigerians have reliable access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food.

Recommendations

Based on the findings regarding the impact of kidnapping on food security in FCT, Nigeria,

- i. Firstly, the FCT administration should prioritize strengthening security and intelligence infrastructure capabilities in rural and farming communities to prevent kidnapping incidents and protect agricultural activities. Establishing dedicated security patrols and community policing initiatives can foster trust and facilitate early intervention.
- ii. Finally, the government and development partners should focus on addressing underlying socio-economic issues, such as poverty and unemployment, which often contribute to insecurity, by creating livelihood opportunities and promoting inclusive economic growth. Implementing these recommendations can help restore confidence among farmers, secure food supply chains, and ultimately improve food security across Nigeria. Additionally, providing farmers with access to insurance schemes and financial support can help cushion the economic impact of insecurity and encourage continued agricultural productivity.

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