The impact of Christian educational and socio-ethical interventions in preventing youth kidnapping in Lagos

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Abstract

The mentality of kidnapping for ransom among youths is a contemporary social challenge in Lagos State, South Western Nigeria. If this issue is not addressed, it will negatively impact people psychologically, emotionally, economically, politically, socially, and morally. The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of Christian education on youths' behavioural training and investigate how ethical training provided by churches can contribute to the reduction of kidnapping incidents among youths. The study employed a descriptive quantitative method, gathering data from 120 respondents, including Christian students, mature adults from the University of Lagos, and church members from various denominations across Lagos State. Twelve churches were purposively selected to represent different denominations. The questionnaire comprised 15 items under two sections: demographics and Christian ethics in behavioural training and kidnapping prevention. Responses were measured using a 4-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). A total of 116 completed questionnaires were analysed, representing a return rate of 96.7%. Quantitative analysis included descriptive statistics such as frequency

count, percentages, mean, and standard deviation. The results show that Christian education training, the adoption of societal ethical values, and the promotion of character transformation leading to responsible decision-making are significantly correlated with the decrease in youth kidnappings in Lagos State. The study advocates for early, proactive, and consistent teaching of Christian values and rules, encouraging the use of ethical tools such as reward and punishment to motivate selfless and good decision-making by youths.

Mentalitas penculikan untuk memperoleh tebusan di kalangan pemuda menjadi tantangan sosial kontemporer di Lagos State, Nigeria Barat Daya. Jika tren tidak sehat ini tidak diatasi, maka akan berdampak negatif bagi warga secara psikologis, emosional, ekonomi, politik, sosial, dan moral. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat efek pendidikan Kristen pada pelatihan perilaku pemuda serta kontribusi pelatihan etika yang diberikan oleh gereja terhadap pengurangan insiden penculikan di kalangan pemuda. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif deskriptif, dengan mengumpulkan data dari 120 responden, termasuk mahasiswa Kristen, orang dewasa dari Universitas Lagos, dan anggota gereja dari berbagai denominasi di Lagos State. Dua belas gereja dipilih secara purposive, mewakili berbagai denominasi. Kuesioner terdiri dari 15 item dalam dua bagian: demografi dan etika Kristen dalam pelatihan perilaku dan pencegahan penculikan. Respons diukur menggunakan skala Likert 4 poin (sangat setuju, setuju, tidak setuju, sangat tidak setuju). Total 116 kuesioner dianalisis, mewakili tingkat pengembalian 96,7%. Analisis kuantitatif dilakukan melalui statistik deskriptif meliputi hitungan frekuensi, persentase, rata-rata, dan standar deviasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pelatihan pendidikan Kristen, adopsi nilai-nilai etika masyarakat, serta promosi transformasi karakter yang mengarah pada pengambilan keputusan yang bertanggung jawab berkorelasi signifikan terhadap penurunan penculikan pemuda di Lagos State. Penelitian ini mendorong adanya indoktrinasi secara dini, proaktif, dan konsisten dalam pendidikan Kristen beserta aturannya, serta penggunaan *reward and punishment* untuk memotivasi para pemuda agar tidak mementingkan diri sendiri dalam pengambilan keputusan.

Keywords: *Church education, Church ethics, Kidnapping church, Ethical agenciy.*

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Introduction

Kidnapping is a big problem in Nigeria. It happens a lot and makes people scared. It is caused by different things like not having enough money, problems with the government, and being unsafe. A report from the United Nations says that kidnapping has increased a lot in Nigeria recently (UNODC, 2020). This is bad because it makes it hard for people to feel safe and for businesses to grow. Kidnapping often mixes with other crimes like terrorism and human trafficking, which makes things even worse (Nwagboso & Oluwatoyin, 2020). The government is trying to stop it, but it needs to do more. They should also work on fixing the reasons why kidnapping happens, like making sure people have enough money and feel safe. Everyone needs to work together – the government, communities, and other countries – to make Nigeria safer and stop kidnapping.

The end of the Nigerian Civil War marked a troubling increase in criminal activities, notably the use of dangerous weapons for robbery and violence (Chinwokwu, 2014). This surge in violence also witnessed the emergence of various other crimes such as rape, kidnapping for ransom and rituals, trans-border crime, cultism, militancy, and terrorism (Igbo & Anugwom, 2002). The root causes of these crimes are complex, influenced by factors such as inequality, injustice, ethnic and religious conflicts, porous borders, rural-urban migration, poverty, and high unemployment rates (Abdu & Okoro, 2016, as cited in Ojewale & Nyamekye, 2018).

Government ineptitude and mismanagement of resources have exacerbated these social problems (Olulowo, Babawale, & Anani, 2021). Kidnapping, in particular, has become pervasive, fueled by moral decay and the allure of quick wealth among Nigerian youth. The societal acceptance of unexplained wealth further erodes the value of honest labour, pushing youths towards unlawful activities like kidnapping (Inyang, 2009; Inyang & Abraham, 2013).

The economic motivation behind kidnapping is evident in the staggering ransom payments made over the years. Between 2011 and 2020, nearly $18.34 million was paid to kidnappers, with the primary targets being students and educational institutions, especially in northern Nigeria (www.aljazeera.com). The endemic poverty in Nigeria has driven many to resort to criminal activities for survival, with the history of kidnapping tracing back to the oil-rich Niger Delta region in the early 2000s (Opasina, 2016).

Education emerges as a crucial factor in addressing these societal ills. A significant proportion of criminal activities are perpetrated by youths with limited education (Ajaja, 2012; Jonck et al., 2015). Studies across Africa highlight the correlation between crime and educational attainment, emphasizing the need for educational interventions to deter youth involvement in criminal behavior (Asante & Bartha, 2022; Shavisa et al., 2015; World Bank, 2012).

Education, with its emphasis on the dignity of labor, personal growth, and intercultural understanding, offers a potential solution to the pervasive issue of kidnapping among Lagos youth. By integrating religious education and socio-ethical training into educational curricula, there exists an opportunity to instill values of integrity, empathy, and community responsibility among the youth.

To sum up, the prevalence of kidnapping in Lagos State, Nigeria, underscores the urgent need for comprehensive interventions. This paper aims to explore the efficacy of religious education and socio-ethical training in deterring youth involvement in kidnapping and other criminal activities. By addressing the root causes and providing youths with alternative pathways to success, such interventions have the potential to foster a safer and more prosperous society for all.

The prevalence of kidnapping in Lagos State, Nigeria, presents a critical challenge that necessitates comprehensive interventions aimed at deterring

youth involvement in such criminal activities. The underlying factors contributing to this phenomenon include socio-economic issues, peer pressure, and a lack of effective law enforcement. Addressing these root causes through religious education and socio-ethical training could provide alternative pathways for youth, fostering a safer society.

Research indicates that socio-economic factors such as unemployment and greed significantly contribute to youth involvement in kidnapping. Diara et al. highlight that many youths are driven by a desire to amass wealth quickly, often resorting to kidnapping as a lucrative option in the absence of legitimate opportunities (Shofiu & Isiaka, 2020). Furthermore, the pervasive corruption among political figures and law enforcement in Nigeria exacerbates the situation, as it undermines the effectiveness of legal frameworks designed to deter such crimes (Ezemenaka, 2018). This environment creates a breeding ground for criminal activities, including kidnapping, which has become a booming business in many Nigerian cities, particularly in Lagos (Shofiu & Isiaka, 2020; Chinwokwu & Michael, 2019).

Peer pressure also plays a crucial role in influencing youth behavior towards criminal activities. Patchin & Hinduja emphasize that the fear of social ostracism can lead to increased participation in wrongdoing among youth, particularly when they perceive that their peers are engaging in such behaviors without facing consequences (Patchin & Hinduja, 2016). This dynamic suggests that interventions must not only focus on individual behavior but also address the broader social context in which these youths operate.

Religious education and socio-ethical training can serve as effective interventions to counteract these influences. By instilling moral values and a sense of community responsibility, such programs can help youths develop a stronger ethical framework that discourages engagement in criminal activities. For instance, integrating teachings that emphasize the sanctity of life and the importance of community welfare can reshape the attitudes of young people

towards crime (Ezemenaka, 2018). Additionally, programs that involve community leaders and religious figures in mentoring roles can enhance the credibility and acceptance of these interventions among youths.

Moreover, the implementation of these educational programs should be participatory, involving youths in the design and execution of the initiatives. This approach not only fosters ownership but also ensures that the interventions are relevant and engaging for the target population (Maina et al., 2022). By creating an environment where youths feel empowered to make positive choices, the likelihood of their involvement in kidnapping and other criminal activities can be significantly reduced

The aim of this research is to assess the influence of Christian education and ethical training on youths in Lagos State with the goal of reducing the incidence of kidnapping for ransom. To achieve this objecticve, the following specific aims are outlined: to examine the effect of Christian education on the behavioral training of youths; and to investigate how ethical training provided by churches can contribute to the reduction of kidnapping incidents among youths.

This study employed a descriptive quantitive method, gathering data from 120 respondents: Christian students, mature adults from the University of Lagos, and church members from various denominations across Lagos State. Twelve churches were purposively selected to represent different denominations. The questionnaire comprised 15 items under two sections: demographics and Christian ethics in behavioral training and kidnapping prevention. Responses were measured using a 4-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). A total of 116 completed questionnaires were analyzed, representing a return rate of 96.7%. Quantitative analysis included descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentages, mean, and standard deviation.

This study employs rational choice theory. This theory, first articulated by Adam Smith in 1776, posits that humans have an inherent tendency towards selfishness. According to this perspective, when an individual commits a crime, it is typically done with a deliberate and strong intention. Proponents of this theory argue that humans are rational actors who carefully consider the costs and benefits of their actions, making choices based on these evaluations (Cornish and Clarke, 1986). Consequently, to dissuade individuals from engaging in wrongful and selfish behaviour, proponents advocate for the implementation of stringent punishments. The rationale is that harsh penalties would serve as deterrents for those contemplating similar actions.

Understanding kidnapping and ethical intervention

Kidnapping is defined as the act of forcibly seizing a person or persons and transporting them to an unknown destination unlawfully against their will, or luring individuals away and holding them illegally. This criminal activity poses significant threats to the safety and well-being of individuals and communities. The psychological, emotional, economic, political, social, and moral impacts of kidnapping are profound, creating a pervasive sense of fear and insecurity among the populace. Addressing this issue requires a multifaceted approach that includes both preventive and corrective measures.

Church education, encompassing both formal and informal organizations of officers, teachers, and pupils, aims to impart moral and religious instructions under the supervision of a local church. This educational framework is crucial in shaping the moral and ethical compass of individuals from a young age, fostering a sense of community and shared values. Christian ethics, which involves the duty to announce the gospel, confess the faith, and worship God, also emphasizes living according to God's will, promoting integrity, compassion, and service to others. Ethical agencies, including parents, elders, community leaders, teachers, and government officials, play a pivotal

role in promoting societal ethics, moderating selfishness, and upholding moral standards. These agents act as custodians of moral values, ensuring that ethical principles are instilled and practiced within the community. By understanding these components, stakeholders can develop comprehensive strategies to address and mitigate the issue of youth kidnapping, fostering a safer and more ethical society.

The role of ethical agents in upholding societal values

Ethical agents, whether individuals, organizations, or institutions, are pivotal in upholding societal values across various domains (Hartman & DesJardins, 2017). In business ethics, leaders and employees are responsible for prioritizing ethical considerations alongside company interests (Hartman & DesJardins, 2017). Similarly, in politics, elected officials and public servants safeguard democratic principles and citizen rights (Walzer, 1983), while healthcare professionals prioritize patient welfare amidst moral dilemmas (Beauchamp & Childress, 2019). In technology, ethical agents ensure responsible development and deployment of new technologies (Bostrom, 2014).

Ethical agents encompass parents, community leaders, educators, and governmental authorities, collectively imparting ethical values (Chinwokwu, 2014). Elders and community leaders reinforce societal norms and values (Igbo & Anugwom, 2002), while educators shape ethical awareness among students (Abdu & Okoro, 2016). Governmental authorities uphold ethical governance and legislative frameworks (Olulowo et al., 2021).

They mediate between individual inclinations and societal expectations, guiding virtuous behavior and mitigating selfish tendencies (Cornish & Clarke, 1986; Inyang & Abraham, 2013). Religious leaders play a pivotal role in guiding adherents towards ethical living (Opasina, 2016), contributing to moral edification through preaching and instruction.

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Comprising parents, community leaders, educators, and governmental authorities, ethical agents collectively impart values (Chinwokwu, 2014). Elders reinforce norms and values (Igbo & Anugwom, 2002), while educators shape ethical awareness (Abdu & Okoro, 2016). Governmental authorities uphold ethical governance (Olulowo et al., 2021).

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Ethical agents transmit ethical principles, fostering integrity and social responsibility (Hartman & DesJardins, 2017; Walzer, 1983; Beauchamp & Childress, 2019; Bostrom, 2014). They balance individual autonomy and collective well-being, upholding society's ethical fabric (Chinwokwu, 2014; Igbo & Anugwom, 2002; Abdu & Okoro, 2016; Olulowo et al., 2021; Cornish & Clarke, 1986; Inyang & Abraham, 2013; Opasina, 2016). This underscores the indispensable role of religious and spiritual leaders in guiding adherents towards righteous conduct (Opasina, 2016). Through preaching and moral instruction, religious figures contribute to the moral edification of their followers, fostering a collective commitment to ethical living.

In this vein, ethical agents play a vital role in shaping and preserving societal values, serving as conduits for the transmission of ethical principles

across generations. Through their guidance, influence, and enforcement mechanisms, ethical agents foster a culture of integrity, empathy, and social responsibility within society. As guardians of moral conduct, they navigate the delicate balance between individual autonomy and collective well-being, thereby upholding the ethical fabric of society.

Nurturing ethics and preventing crime through Christian education

Christian Religious Education is education which is Bible-based, Christ-centered, Holy Spirit-controlled, people related, and socially applied with the Scriptures being the authority in all things. The main purpose of Christian education is to create people with God's character and act it out in their lives. Thus, the foundation of the Christian education is based on Jesus' principles which are to seek and save man. (Luke 19: 20). The Bible presents education as a path to wisdom and understanding. It's not merely about acquiring knowledge or skills but focuses more on gaining wisdom. This wisdom, viewed as an understanding of what is true, right, and lasting, is at the heart of moral and spiritual development.

Education in the Bible is depicted as a transformative journey of the mind, heart, and soul, emphasizing wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. Proverbs 1:7 asserts, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction," underscoring the centrality of reverence and humility in learning. Moreover, Deuteronomy 6:6-7 exhorts believers to diligently teach God's commandments to future generations, emphasizing the integration of faith into education. Jesus Himself, in Matthew 28:19-20, commands His disciples to make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey His teachings, highlighting the global mandate for education in the Christian faith. Education in the Bible is not merely about acquiring information but about cultivating character, discernment, and spiritual maturity. It emphasizes

the holistic development of individuals, shaping them to be faithful stewards of God's truth and agents of His redemptive work in the world.

Nurturing ethics through Christian education is foundational in fostering moral integrity and societal harmony. The Bible, in Ephesians 4:24, advocates for believers to "put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness," highlighting the transformative power of Christian education in shaping character. Furthermore, Proverbs 22:6 emphasizes the importance of early instruction, stating, "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it" (ESV).

Scholarly sources such as "Christian Education: Foundations for the Future" by Robert E. Clark and Lin Johnson underscore the vital role of Christian education in moral development, stressing its impact on shaping ethical behavior and preventing societal ills (Clark & Johnson, 2011). By instilling biblical principles and values, Christian education equips individuals to make ethical choices, thereby contributing to the prevention of crime and the promotion of a just society.

Religious education serves as a cornerstone in moral development, fostering critical thinking and empathy. It integrates individuals into communities, aligning them with ethical values. This educational approach facilitates interfaith understanding, promotes moral reasoning, and enables individuals to navigate ethical dilemmas (archive.org) Despite potential limitations in public schools, religious education contributes significantly to shaping moral character and societal values, fostering honesty, fairness, and trustworthiness (Udoidem, 1992; Autin et al., 2015). Christian ethics plays a pivotal role in guiding moral conduct and societal values, emphasizing virtues aligned with Christian principles. It redirects individuals from criminal activities, fostering respect, responsibility, and compassion (Aba, 2008). Christian ethical training promotes honesty, fairness, and justice, crucial for societal cohesion (Ilechuckwu, 2015; Autin et al., 2015). Additionally, it encourages economic

empowerment and community development, promoting the dignity of labor and discouraging social vices (Ilodigwe, 2000).

Saint Augustine's ethical theory underscores the intrinsic connection between righteousness and divine morality, emphasizing the centrality of God's will to ethical standards (www.ajol.info). Human rationality forms the basis of ethics, with moral choices guided by prudence and a rational weighing of pleasures and pains (Bakstanousky, 1989). This perspective highlights the significance of ethical agents in nurturing moral conduct and upholding societal values.

Biblical education serves as a conduit for imparting ethical values, integrating individuals into the church community and aligning them with God's will (www.ajol.info). Religious education fosters self-fulfillment and social cohesion, nurturing critical thinking and empathy. It facilitates interfaith understanding and cultivates transferable skills essential for life and work (godsdiensinskole.wordpress.com). Furthermore, religious education promotes moral reasoning and self-reflection, enabling individuals to navigate ethical dilemmas (archive.org). While public schools may not explicitly teach religious values, they play a crucial role in shaping moral development through value-based education (archive.org).

Various methods are employed to impart ethics, including teaching, reward and punishment, and religious instruction (Ayantayo, 2009). Religious education, in particular, addresses societal challenges like kidnapping by instilling virtues and moral principles (https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index). Christian ethical training engenders virtues like good morals, diverting individuals from criminal activities (academicexcellencesociety.com). It emphasizes actions aligned with Christian principles, fostering respect, responsibility, and compassion (Aba, 2008).

Moreover, religious and moral education promotes honesty and trustworthiness, vital for societal cohesion (Udoidem, 1992; Ilechuckwu, 2015).

It instills fairness and justice, fostering impartiality and equitable resource distribution (Autin et al., 2015; Udoidem, 1992). Additionally, religious instruction promotes holiness and divine conformity, shaping moral character and societal values (Agha, 2001). It encourages entrepreneurship and job creation, empowering individuals and reducing social vices (Ibeneme, 2012). Religious bodies leverage their influence to foster economic empowerment and community development (https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index). They promote the dignity of labor and respect for the human person, discouraging criminal activities like kidnapping (Ilodigwe, 2000).

Religious education and Christian ethical training play a vital role in shaping ethical values and preventing crime in Nigeria. By instilling virtues, promoting social responsibility, and fostering economic empowerment, these initiatives contribute to a more ethical and prosperous society.

The church and the use of ethical tools

The Church serves as a powerful ethical tool, influencing moral conduct and societal values through its teachings and community engagement. Its impact extends to various aspects of life, shaping individual behaviour and promoting social cohesion (Agha, 2001). Through religious instruction and moral guidance, the Church instils virtues such as honesty, trustworthiness, and compassion, essential for a thriving society (Udoidem, 1992). Furthermore, it leverages its influence to foster economic empowerment and community development, promoting dignity and discouraging social vices (Ilodigwe, 2000). By promoting ethical living and societal well-being, the Church remains a cornerstone of moral development and social transformation (Aba, 2008).

AbdulHafeez et al., (2013) emphasise the pivotal role of moral and ethical values in societal functionality and progress. These values, absorbed from various sources such as families and educational institutions, are integral to character development (eprints.utp.edu.my).

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In Nigerian society, praise serves as a method to reinforce positive actions, whether in religious or secular contexts. Those who act following societal expectations receive praise and may even be rewarded with significant religious positions or immortalisation of their names (Ayantayo, 2009). Conversely, individuals engaging in immoral behaviour face disgrace, either publicly or privately, depending on the judgment of the authorities (www.iosrjournals.org). Despite its punitive nature, disgrace serves as a deterrent against unethical conduct, contributing to moral education.

Religious morality emphasizes the principle of reward and punishment, as outlined in the book of Revelation (www.mafifiadoc.com, Rev. 22:12). Teaching religious ethics involves persuasion, illustration, and reference to eschatological issues to encourage adherence to ethical values and dissuade from unethical actions (Ayantayo, 2002). This teaching underscores the consequential nature of actions, both in this life and the afterlife, highlighting the importance of moral conduct for personal well-being and salvation.

Christian educational ethics and their impacts on behavioural training of youths

The following tables present demographic information of respondents and the impacts of Christian educational ethics on the behavioural training of youths.

Table 1. Demographic information of respondents

Variable	Categories	F	%
1. Age (years)	25-30	10	8.6
	31-40	50	43.1
	41-50	24	20.7
	51-60	26	22.4
	> 60	6	2
Total		116	100
2. Sex of respondents	Male	56	48.3
	Female	60	51.7
Total		116	100
3. Marital status	Married	90	77.6
	Single	24	20.7
	Single Parent	2	1.7
Total		116	100
4. Engagement with students	Parent/Guidance	74	68.5
	Church Pastor	10	9.3
	School Teachers	16	14.8
	School Guidance counsellor	4	3.7
	Church Counselor	4	3.7
Total		108	100

Table 2. Impacts of Christian educational ethics in behavioural training of youths

Research question one: what are the impacts of Christian educational ethics in behavioural training of youths?

SN		SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std
1	Foundation for healthy marriage	74(63.8%)	32(27.6%)	8(6.9%)	2(1.7%)	3.53	0.706
2	Emotionally stable and well-behaved children	24(20.7%)	78(68.4%)	4(3.5%)	8(7.0%)	3.04	0.731
3	Reduction of crime	52(44.8%)	56(48.3%)	4(3.4%)	4(3.4%)	3.34	0.715
4	Improving mental health and educational attainment	28(24.1%)	70(60.3%)	14(12.1%)	4(3.4%)	3.05	0.711
5	Impact on academic performance	52(44.8%)	44(37.9%)	12(10.3%)	8(6.9%)	3.21	0.894
6	Opposing illegal orientation to success	16(14.5%)	78(70.9%)	10(9.1%)	6(5.5%)	2.95	0.678
7	Integrating youth into the broader society	30(25.9%)	58(50.0%)	12(10.3%)	16(13.8%)	2.88	0.957
8	Increasing self-esteem and well-being	46(39.7%)	54(46.6%)	4(3.4%)	12(10.3%)	3.16	0.914
9	Sustaining marriage and improving its quality	26(23.2%)	60(53.6%)	12(10.7%)	14(12.5%)	2.88	0.916
10	Better relationship between parents and children	38(32.8%)	66(56.9%)	8(6.9%)	4(3.4%)	3.19	.712

Table 2 presents respondents' perceptions of the impacts of Christian educational ethics on youth behavioural training. The majority agreed that Christian educational ethics had significant effects, with over 58.6% agreement on each of the ten items. They noted that Christian educational ethics served as the foundation for healthy marriages, fostered emotionally stable children, reduced crime, improved mental health and educational attainment, enhanced academic performance, opposed illegal success orientations, integrated youths into society, boosted self-esteem, stabilised and enhanced the quality of marriages, and improved parent-child relationships.

Table 1 above shows the demographic information of respondents. A total of 116 questionnaires were retrieved of the total 120 administered representing 96.7% return rate. The analysis of demographic data revealed that 43.1% of respondents were aged 31-40, with 22.4% aged 51-60, and a minority (5.2%) over 60. In terms of gender, 51.7% were female, and 47.3% were male. Regarding marital status, 77.6% were married with children, 20.7% were single, and 1.7% were single parents. In assessing respondents' engagement with students, 68.5% were parents/guardians, followed by 14.8% school teachers, 9.3% church pastors, while school and church counselors each represented 3.7%. The analysis was based on 108 well-completed questionnaires out of 116 retrieved

Table 2 shows the impacts of Christian educational ethics in the behavioural training of youths. The discussion of results presents insights into the perceived impacts of Christian educational ethics on various aspects of society. Item No. 1: The majority (91.4%) affirmed that Christian educational ethics form the foundation for healthy marriage. This aligns with Adua's assertion (2012) that religious service attendance is linked to stable family life.

Item No. 2: A significant proportion (87.9%) agreed that Christian educational ethics fosters emotionally stable and well-behaved children. This

correlates with the notion that religious services aid in socialization and emotional support, as suggested by Fisher (2005) and Richardson (1907).

Item No. 3: A large majority (93.1%) acknowledged that Christian educational ethics reduces crime rates. This resonates with Imo's (2000) argument that religious education steers individuals away from criminal behavior.

Item No. 4: Most respondents (84.5%) believed that Christian educational ethics enhances mental health and educational attainment. This is supported by the idea that religious beliefs contribute to moral judgment and life decisions (Mazidi & Ostovar, 2006).

Item No. 5: A significant proportion (89.9%) agreed that Christian educational ethics positively impacts academic performance. This aligns with studies showing a correlation between religious involvement and higher academic achievement (Regnerus & Elder, 2003; Glanville et al., 2008).

Item No. 6: The majority (85.45%) affirmed that Christian educational ethics opposes illegal success orientation. This emphasizes the importance of instilling the dignity of labor and honest living through religious education (Ilodigwe, 2000).

Item No. 7: A notable percentage (75.9%) believed that Christian educational ethics integrates youths into society. This highlights the role of religious education in imparting moral values and fostering empathy and compassion (Imo, 2000; Wilson & Sugarman, 2000).

Item No. 8: A significant number (86.2%) acknowledged that Christian educational ethics boosts self-esteem and well-being. This underscores the role of religion in providing emotional support and moral guidance throughout life (Fisher, 2005; Hood et al., 2003).

Item No. 9: A considerable majority (74.14%) agreed that Christian educational ethics stabilizes and improves marriage quality. This aligns with

research indicating the stability of marriages rooted in religious commitment (Browning, 2001).

Item No. 10: Most respondents (89.66%) believed that Christian educational ethics fosters better parent-child relationships. This emphasizes the importance of parental involvement in children's education and the influence of parental education on family dynamics (Matilov & Naum, 2002).

Overall, the findings highlight the perceived positive impacts of Christian educational ethics on various aspects of individual and societal well-being, ranging from family life to crime prevention and academic success. These insights underscore the significance of religious education in shaping moral values and fostering holistic development.

Conclusion

This paper delves into the pressing concern of youth kidnapping in Lagos, Nigeria, focusing on the effectiveness of Christian educational and socio-ethical interventions in addressing this societal challenge. Through a comprehensive review of relevant literature and empirical evidence, it highlights the role of religious education, moral guidance, and community involvement in deterring youth from engaging in kidnapping activities. By understanding and evaluating these interventions, stakeholders can implement targeted strategies to combat youth involvement in kidnapping and foster a safer and more secure environment for the youth in Lagos. In addressing the alarming issue of youth kidnapping in Lagos, the efficacy of Christian educational and socio-ethical interventions has been critically examined. Through an in-depth analysis of various interventions, including religious education, moral guidance, and community engagement within the Christian framework, this research sheds light on the potential strategies for mitigating youth involvement in kidnapping activities.

The study aimed to investigate the impact of educational and socio-ethical training on reducing kidnapping among Lagos youths in Southern Western Nigeria. It focused on how Christian educational training and societal ethical values influence behaviour and choices, thus potentially preventing kidnappings. Data analysis revealed a significant correlation between acquiring Christian educational training, adopting societal ethical values, and promoting character transformation, leading to responsible decision-making and a decrease in youth kidnappings in Lagos State.

The abundance of youthful energy, if properly channeled, can bring numerous blessings (1 John 2:13b & 14b). However, if left untapped or misdirected, this energy can become destructive, serving the agenda of the devil to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10b). Failure to harness this energy for constructive purposes poses a threat to societal safety, endangering lives and property. Thus, it is crucial to provide youths with the necessary education and ethical guidance to empower them to make positive choices and contribute positively to society.

The paper strongly advocates for the church to play a proactive role in deterring youths from engaging in kidnapping and violent crimes for ransom by encouraging Christian parents to take responsibility for instilling Christian education and values in their children from a young age. It promotes the early inculcation of Christian moral principles such as love, selflessness, and fear of God to guide youths in making upright decisions, and emphasises the importance of teaching Christian education and ethics earnestly and consistently to reshape their thinking and transform their behavior. The paper also stresses the practical application of taught ethics in daily life, not just confession, and focuses on delivering salvation-based and life-transforming messages rather than recurrent prosperity preaching. Additionally, it encourages corporate responsibility among business leaders within the church community, reminding them to give back to society, and advocates for providing vocational training

and assistance to unemployed youths, collaborating with businesses willing to contribute to society. Finally, the paper suggests organizing church members into cooperative societies to facilitate access to loans or grants for starting businesses, recognising that white-collar jobs may not be sufficient to absorb all youths.

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