

## Analysis of Perceived Effect of Kidnapping on Smallholder Arable Crop Farmers' Activities in Ose Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria

\*Osabuohien, J. I. and Ogunlade R. O.

Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural development,  
University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.

\*Corresponding Author: [julius.osabuohien@uniben.edu](mailto:julius.osabuohien@uniben.edu)

### ARTICLE INFO

### ABSTRACT

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*This study assessed smallholder farmers' perception on the effect of kidnapping on arable cropping practices in Ose Local Government, Ondo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study described the socioeconomic characteristics, identified arable crops cultivated; ascertained farmers' knowledge of kidnapping; and examined the perceived effect of kidnapping on arable crop farming as well as identified strategies adopted against kidnapping in the study area. A two-stage sampling procedure was employed to collect data from 120 respondents using a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the socioeconomic characteristics while t-statistics in binary logistic regression was used to identify the determinants of their perceived knowledge of kidnapping. Results indicate that 52.5% of respondents were males and the mean age of 51.33 years. It was also revealed that about 33.3% had secondary education, 65% had over 20 years of farming experience, while 58.3% of farmers cultivated 3–5 acres of land. There was a significant relationship between farm size ( $t = 6.129 \leq 0.000$ ) and their knowledge of kidnapping. Based on these findings, the study recommends strengthening rural security, improving road infrastructure, and implementing other targeted measures to mitigate the incidence of kidnapping and its impact on agricultural activities in the region.*

### 1.0 Introduction

Agriculture involves the production of food, fiber, medicinal plants, and other products used to sustain and enhance human life (FAO, 2021). A practice that not only supports human survival but also plays a crucial role in the economy and social structure of societies. It encompasses a broad range of cultural activities that are almost entirely time bound, including crop production, livestock farming, forestry, and fisheries. These activities are integral to the production of food, fiber, biofuels, and medicinal products, making agriculture a cornerstone of human civilization (World Bank, 2022). It contributes to environmental sustainability. Its practices, such as crop rotation, sustainable land management, and agroforestry help maintain soil health, conserve water, and promote biodiversity (Pretty, 2008). However, modern agriculture faces numerous challenges, such as climate change, soil degradation, kidnapping and cattle rustling, increasing demand for food due to population growth and others. Addressing these challenges

requires innovative approaches and the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices (FAO, 2018). The foregoing point to the fact that problems of agriculture are numerous.

The role of smallholder farmers, who make up a significant portion of the global agricultural workforce is critical in ensuring food security and for rural development. Smallholder farmers often operate on limited land and resources, yet they produce a large share of the world's food, particularly in developing countries (IFAD, 2019). Supporting smallholder farmers through access to technology, education, fighting against kidnapping that has become rampant in Nigeria particularly in rural community settlements, and access to markets is essential for enhancing agricultural productivity and resilience (IFAD, 2019).

In Nigerian criminal law, kidnapping is defined as the taking away or abduction of a person against the person's will, usually to hold the person in false imprisonment, a confinement without legal



authority. This may be done for a ransom or in furtherance of another crime" (Okonkwo, 2020)

Kidnapping and other forms of insecurity have profound effect on agricultural activities, particularly for smallholder farmers. Insecurity in rural areas has led to a significant reduction in arable cropping practices, as farmers are increasingly abandoning their fields due to fear of abduction, increase in food price (Adeola & Oluoyemi, 2020; Oluwole, 2021). The financial strain of paying ransoms or investing in security measures can deplete the limited resources of smallholder farmers, who already operate on thin profit margins. It results in financial burden often that results in reduced investment in farm inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and equipment, further diminishing productivity (Adeyemi, 2019).

Moreover, the psychological toll of kidnapping—whether experienced directly or through the constant fear of it—can lead to long-term trauma among farmers, which in turn affects their ability to work effectively. The social fabric of rural communities is also threatened, as the pervasive fear of kidnapping undermines trust and cooperation among farmers (Eze, 2020).

Kamara, et al. (2019) noted that smallholder farmers contribute significantly to agricultural production, food security, and biodiversity conservation across sub-Saharan Africa. They are the drivers of many African economies, yet their potential is often not fully realized. However, the rising incidence of kidnapping in various parts of the country, including Ondo State, poses a serious threat to these farmers, potentially disrupting their farming activities and endangering their livelihoods (Akinyemi, 2020). Ute, a community within Ose Local Government Area, is predominantly agricultural, with arable cropping being a major source of income for most households. The fear and reality of kidnapping can lead to reduced farming time, abandonment of farmlands, and a decline in crop production, which could have severe implications not only for the farmers themselves but also for the broader community that depends on their produce (Adetola & Ogundele, 2021).

This study therefore examined smallholder farmers' perception of the effect of kidnapping on arable crop farming in Ose local government area of Ondo State. The specific objectives are to: examine the socioeconomic characteristics of sampled smallholder arable farmers, examine

common arable crop farmers, ascertain farmers' knowledge of kidnapping in the study area, examine farmers' strategies adopted against kidnapping, and perceived effect of kidnapping on arable crop farming.

The study hypotheses stated that: There is no significant relationship between socio-economic characteristics of farmers and (i) their knowledge of kidnapping; (ii) their perceived effect of kidnapping on arable crops production in the study area.

## 2.0 Methodology

The study was conducted in Ose Local Government Area of Ondo State, It shares a boundary with Akoko Northwest Local Government in Ondo State and Owan West Local Government Area in Edo State. Towns in the local government area include Afo, Idoani, Idogun, Ikaro, Arimogija, Okeluse, Ijagba, Imoru, Ute, and Imeri among others. It has an area of 1,465 km<sup>2</sup>; a Latitude 6.5547N and Longitude 5.4625E and an average temperature of 28 degrees Celsius. The population was 144,901 at the 2006 census. The tropical climate of the local government is broadly of two seasons. The rainy season (April – October) and the dry season (November –March) (Finelib.com 2019).

A two-stage-sampling-technique was employed. The first stage was purposive selection of four (4) villages under Ose local Government Area. Okeluse, Ute, Arimogija, Imoru. This area experienced several incidents of kidnapping among the farmers.

The second and last stage was the use of simple random selection of 30 arable crop farmers from the four (4) village previously selected in the first stage. Thirty (30) Respondents were selected from each community in the first stage, fifteen (15) were female and fifteen (15) were male. Making it a total of one hundred and twenty (120) farmers.

The data were obtained through primary and secondary sources. The primary data were obtained through the means of a structured questionnaire which was administered to the respondents from the various communities. The secondary data was collected through the internet, e-books, and existing research works which have been conducted in areas related to this study.

The data collected in this study was analyzed using various statistical methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the findings. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, and means were utilized to summarize the data and describe the characteristics of the sample population. Specifically, the objectives were analyzed using frequency and percentage distributions to highlight the key attributes of the sample.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{logit}(P) &= \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 \\ &+ \beta_3 X_3 \dots \dots \dots \beta_n X_n + \epsilon \end{aligned}$$

Where:

P= dependent variable which assume a dummy variable (0,1)

$\beta_0$  = the coefficient on the constant term

$\beta_1 - \beta_n$  = the coefficient of independent variable

$X_1 - X_n$  = the independent variable

$\epsilon$ = error term.

The results from the logistic regression analysis determine whether farmers' knowledge and perception of kidnapping risks are significantly influenced by their socio-economic characteristics. If significant relationships are found for both hypotheses, this suggests that: Farmers in the study area are well-informed about kidnapping. They recognize the serious risks associated with kidnapping and its impact on farming activities. If no significant relationships are found, it may indicate that other unmeasured factors (such as personal experience with kidnapping or media exposure) play a stronger role in shaping farmers' knowledge and perceptions.

This insight will provide essential evidence for policymakers and stakeholders to implement the targeted intervention, improve rural security, and support smallholder farmers in maintaining labour resources and sustaining agricultural activities.

### 3.0 Results and Discussion

Agriculture remains the backbone of rural livelihoods in Nigeria, yet it is increasingly under threat from insecurity, particularly kidnapping.

As farmers struggle with fear, displacement, and reduced farming activities, their ability to maintain food production is compromised. This study explores the magnitude of the problem, coping strategies adopted by farmers, and possible interventions to mitigate the crisis.

### 3.1 Socioeconomic Characteristics of Respondents

The results in table1 show that 52.5% of the respondents were male. Although farming in Nigeria is often considered a male-dominated occupation, women are increasingly participating in arable cropping, particularly in post-harvest processing and small-scale trade (Olagoke et al., 2021). The near-equal representation suggests that both men and women bear the burden of kidnapping, with families experiencing emotional, financial, and occupational disruptions. Their mean age was 51.33 years with 50% of farmers aged 50 years and above. This shows that farming is increasingly dominated by older individuals, while younger ones are probably exiting agriculture in study area due to several factors like insecurity, lack of incentives to farmers, and many young people would avoid agricultural activities in areas that plagued by banditry and kidnapping (Faruk & Abdullahi, 2022).

The results (Table 1) indicate that 33.3% had secondary education; 29.2% had tertiary education; 31.7% had only primary education; and 5.8% had no formal education (Table 1). Farmers with higher education levels tend to be more proactive in adopting safety measures, reporting suspicious activities, and diversifying their income sources (Moses et al., 2024). However, those with limited education may lack access to information on risk mitigation strategies, making them more vulnerable to kidnapping.

With an average of 26.03 years of farming experience, most respondents have witnessed a significant increase in insecurity over time. The results show that 65% of respondents have over 20 years of farming experience; 58.3% cultivate between 3-5 acres, while 32.5% farm over 5 acres. Large farm sizes increase exposure to kidnapping risks, as these farms are often located in isolated areas with limited security presence (Omotoba et al., 2024). It is a common knowledge that education plays a crucial role in how farmers assess risk, adopt modern farming practices, and respond to security threats.

**Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of Respondents**

Sex	Freq	%	Mean	Std. Dev.
Male	63	52.5		
Female	57	47.5		
<b>Age(years)</b>				
<30.00	6	5		
30.00 - 39.00	23	19.2		
40.00 - 49.00	31	25.8	51.33	14.04
50.00+	60	50		
<b>Marital status</b>				
Married	101	84.2		
Not married	19	15.8		
<b>Education background</b>				
No formal education	7	5.8		
Primary education	38	31.7		
Secondary education	40	33.3		
Tertiary education	35	29.2		
<b>Number of years in farming</b>				
<10.00	16	13.3		
10.00 - 19.00	26	21.7	26.03	13.95
20.00+	78	65		
<b>Size of farm</b>				
Less than 3 acres	11	9.2		
3-5 acres	70	58.3		
Above 5 acres	39	32.5		

Source: Field survey, 2025

### 3.2 Selected Crops Cultivated by sampled arable farmers

The results (Table 2) indicate that arable crop farmers in the study area grow multiple crops, with the most common combinations being: Yam, cassava, and maize (91.7%); Cassava and maize (82.5%); Maize, beans, and vegetables (71.7%). However, insecurity is forcing farmers to rethink their crop choices. Many now favour crops that require less time in the field, allowing them to minimize their risk of abduction (Amadi-Robert et al., 2024).

**Table 2: Arable crop cultivated**

Crops Cultivated	Freq.	%
Cassava, Maize	99	82.5
Yam, Cassava, Maize	110	91.7
Maize, Bean, Vegetable	86	71.7
Cassava, Maize, Melon	69	57.5
Potato, Maize, Vegetable	61	50.8
Yam, Melon, Vegetable	55	45.8
Yam, Cocoyam, Pepper	51	42.5

Source: Field survey, 2025 \*Multiple Response

### 3.3 Farmers' Knowledge of Kidnapping

Table 3 reveals that kidnapping is a universally acknowledged threat among farmers. Over 90% confirmed that kidnapping had occurred in their community ( $\bar{x} = 4.60$ ); Most respondents believed kidnapping significantly threatened their livelihood ( $\bar{x} = 4.68$ ); Farmers frequently discuss kidnapping risks ( $\bar{x} = 4.62$ ). These findings support Omotoba et al. (2024), who found that farmers in high-risk areas live in constant fear, which has a profound impact on arable crop farmers' productivity and investment decisions. This persistent state of anxiety discourages them from expanding their farms, adopting new agricultural technologies, or making long-term financial commitments. As a result, their farming activities are significantly disrupted, leading to lower yields, reduced income, a decline in overall agricultural productivity, farmers abandoning farming, which further exacerbating food insecurity in studied areas.

**Table 3: Knowledge of kidnapping**

Knowledge of kidnapping	Mean	Std. Dev.
I am aware that kidnapping has occur in my community	4.60	0.53
The threat of kidnapping is frequently discussed among the farmer	4.62	0.57
I believe that kidnapping poses a risk to that farmer In the Study area	4.68	0.52
I know of specific cases of a farmers in this area being kidnapped	4.67	0.64
Farmers are frequently kidnapped while working inside their farms	4.60	0.67
Farmers are often kidnapped on their way to the farm	4.75	0.43

Source: Field survey, 2025 \*Mean  $\geq 3.0$  = High

### 3.3 Strategies Adopted Against Kidnapping

Farmers have developed several coping strategies to mitigate their risk (Table 4) adjusting their farming schedule to work fewer hours ( $\bar{x} = 4.70$ ); Avoiding isolated farm locations ( $\bar{x} = 4.56$ ); Relocating their farming activities to safer locations ( $\bar{x} = 4.58$ , SD = 0.60); Reporting of suspicious activities ( $\bar{x} = 4.62$ ); Reduction in my farm size and ability to farm (Mean = 4.58, SD = 0.57). According to Omotoba et al., (2024), the phobia of kidnapping has caused many farm

owners to neglect their farms, leading to a significant decline in agricultural production. As fewer farmers are willing to cultivate their land due to security concerns, the overall supply of foodstuffs decreases. This scarcity directly impacts market dynamics, increasing food prices. With lower quantities of food available, demand surpasses supply, driving costs higher and making essential commodities less affordable for consumers. This cycle not only threatens food security but also places additional economic strain on both farmers and the general population. In addition, Olanrewaju et al. (2024) emphasized that these adaptations come with significant consequences. The reduction in farming hours and the relocation of agricultural activities lead to lower productivity, which in turn contributes to increased food shortages and a decline in household income. As farmers spend less time on their farmland, their crop yields decrease, disrupting local food supply chains. This decline not only affects individual farmers but also exacerbates food insecurity in the broader community, ultimately straining both rural economies and household livelihoods.

**Table 4. Strategies against kidnapping**

Strategies	Mean	Std. Dev.
I have changed My farming schedule (E.g. working fewer hour or during specific time) due to the fear of kidnapping	4.70	0.46
I avoid farming in isolated areas because of the threat of kidnapping	4.56	0.56
The fear of kidnapping has caused me to relocate my farming activities to a safer location	4.58	0.60
I often report suspicious activities to local authorities because of concerns about kidnapping	4.62	0.54
kidnapping has significantly reduced my size and ability to farm as I normally would as I now reduce my farm size	4.58	0.57

Source: Field survey, 2025 \*Mean  $\geq$  3.0 = High usage

### 3.4 Perceived Effects of Kidnapping on Arable Crops production

The results (Table (5)) show that many farmers have changed their crop choices due to kidnapping risks ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.40); Productivity has significantly declined ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.42); Discouragement of expanding farming activities ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.53);

Reduction in farming output ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.58); Quit farming ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.63); Hiring farm labor has become difficult due to security concerns ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.63); Lack of ability to focus on long-term goal ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.63). These findings support study by Moses et al. (2024), who observed that insecurity is a major driver of declining agricultural output in Nigeria. The results clearly illustrate how the prevalence of kidnapping has disrupted farming practices, forcing farmers to adjust their crop choices to those that require minimal labor and have shorter growth cycles. This shift is largely driven by the increasing difficulty in securing farm labor, as many workers avoid high-risk areas due to security concerns. Consequently, the reduction in available manpower has not only altered traditional cropping patterns but has also led to a significant decline in overall agricultural output, further exacerbating food insecurity and economic instability in the study area.

**Table 5: perceived effect of kidnapping on arable crops**

Effect	Mean	Std. Dev.
I have changed the types of crops I grow due to the risk of kidnapping	4.40	0.54
The fear of kidnapping has led to a decline in my farm's productivity	4.42	0.59
The risk of kidnapping has discouraged me from expanding my farming activities	4.53	0.55
I believe kidnapping incidents have led to reduced agriculture output in this area	4.58	0.59
The impact of kidnapping has made me consider leaving farming altogether	4.63	0.56
Hiring labourers for farming has become more difficult due to the fear of kidnapping	4.63	0.52
The fear of kidnapping affects my ability to focus and make long-term plans for my farming business	4.63	0.59

Source: Field survey, 2025 \*Mean  $\geq$  3.0 = High effect

The logistic regression analysis (Table 7) examined shows the determinants of knowledge of kidnapping, with the Nagelkerke R Square = 0.44, indicating that the model explains approximately 44% of the variance in knowledge of kidnapping. The -2 Log likelihood = 146.408 suggests a relatively good model fit. Specifically, sex was significant with the following parameters (B = 0.88, Sig. = 0.036, Exp (B) = 2.41). This

suggests that sex is a significant predictor of knowledge of kidnapping. The positive coefficient (0.88) and Exp (B) = 2.41 imply that one sex category (likely male) is 2.41 times more likely to have knowledge of kidnapping than the other. This finding aligns with studies such as Okoli & Agada (2014) on gender-based risk perception in Nigeria, which highlight that men tend to have more direct encounters or knowledge of security threats like kidnapping due to their increased mobility and exposure to security risks. Also, age (B = 0.91, Sig = 0.000, Exp (B) = 2.48) is a highly significant determinant ( $p < 0.01$ ). The positive coefficient suggests that older individuals are more likely to have knowledge of kidnapping, with each unit increase in age raising the odds by 2.48 times. Similar trends are found in Eze & Iwuoha (2020), who observed that older individuals are more aware of kidnapping dynamics due to lived experiences and historical knowledge. As at today, no States in Nigeria is free from incidents of kidnapping.

Furthermore, experience (B = 0.63, Sig. = 0.000, Exp (B) = 1.87) is significantly influenced knowledge of kidnapping ( $p < 0.01$ ). The positive coefficient implies that individuals with prior exposure to insecurity events (either personally or through community engagement) are 1.87 times more likely to be knowledgeable about kidnapping. The finding aligns with Onuoha (2016), who explored how victims and residents in high-risk areas develop localized security awareness due to direct experiences with kidnapping. It was also revealed that farm size (B = -0.54, Sig. = 0.000, Exp (B) = 0.58) has a negative and highly significant relationship ( $p < 0.01$ ) with knowledge of kidnapping. This suggests that individuals with larger farms are less likely to have knowledge of kidnapping, with each unit increase in farm size reducing the odds by 42%. This finding supports studies like Adisa (2021) on the impact of rural banditry, which indicate that larger farm owners are often more isolated from active security discussions, relying more on local security outfits or private guards. The significance of sex, age, experience, and farm size suggests that interventions addressing kidnapping should be targeted differently across demographic groups. Men and older individuals may have more exposure to security discourse and risks, necessitating broader community engagement strategies. In addition, experience plays a major role, indicating that first-hand encounters or media exposure shape awareness,

while the significance of farm size's negative effect suggests that large-scale farmers might need dedicated security awareness programs, particularly in regions affected by rural banditry/kidnapping

**Table 7. Determinants of knowledge of kidnapping**

	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp (B)
Sex	0.88*	0.42	4.37	0.036	2.41
Age	0.91*	0.33	7.62	0.000	2.48
Marital status	0.15	0.57	0.06	0.804	1.16
Edu.	0.27	0.18	2.34	0.060	1.31
Exper	0.63*	0.23	7.40	0.000	1.87
Farm size	-0.54*	0.24	5.11	0.000	0.58
Constant	0.38	0.30	1.61	0.952	1.45

Source: Field survey, 2025.

\*Sign at 0.05; \*\*Sign at 0.01

-2 Log likelihood = 146.408; Nagelkerke R Square = 0.44

### 3.5 Relationship between socioeconomic Characteristics and perceived effect of Kidnapping

The regression analysis in Table 8 examines the determinants of the effect of kidnapping, with R = 0.613 and R<sup>2</sup> = 0.376, indicating that the model explains 37.6% of the variance in the dependent variable. The findings revealed that only farm size (B = 0.79, Sig. = 0.000, t-stat = 6.729) is highly significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) in predicting the effect of kidnapping. The positive coefficient (0.79) suggests that individuals with larger farms experience a greater effect from kidnapping incidents. The findings align with Adisa (2021), who found that rural farmers bear a disproportionate burden of insecurity, as kidnappings in Nigeria often target wealthy landowners, forcing them to abandon farmlands. This is consistent with reports of rural banditry and farmer-targeted abductions, particularly in regions like Zamfara, Kaduna, and Benue. Many farmers abandon farmlands due to threats, leading to food insecurity (Adisa, 2021). The government should enhance rural security and support affected farmers through community policing and agricultural security measures.

**Table 8: Determinants of effect of kidnapping**

	B	S.E.	t-stat	Sig.
Sexcat	0.14	0.52	0.276	0.730
Age	0.48	0.29	1.643	0.627
Marital status	0.20	0.20	1.025	0.513
Educat	0.26	0.13	2.017	0.445
Exper	0.39	0.36	1.083	0.628
Farm size	0.79**	0.12	6.729	0.000
Constant	0.81	0.32	2.552	0.041

Source: Field survey, 2025.

\*Sign at 0.05; \*\*Sign at 0.01R = 0.613; R Square = 0.37

#### 4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that kidnapping has a profound negative impact on arable cropping in Ose Local Government Area. The fear of abduction has forced many farmers to reduce their farm activities, relocate, or change cropping patterns. This has led to lower agricultural productivity, food insecurity, and economic hardships for smallholder farmers. The key findings suggest that: age, sex, and farming experience significantly influence knowledge of kidnapping. Farm size strongly affects how farmers perceive the impact of kidnapping on their work. Education, marital status, and access to security services were not significant predictors of either knowledge or perception of kidnapping. Farmers have implemented self-protective measures, but these have not fully mitigated the risks. The results highlight an urgent need for targeted security interventions, farmer support programs, and policy actions to curb the rising kidnapping crisis in agricultural communities. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- i. There should be increase security presence in rural communities.
- ii. Early warning systems, such as emergency hotlines and local security alerts, should be introduced to help farmers report suspicious activities.

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