

Design a research
study regarding issue
in developmental
psychology



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Identity in Kidnapped Children I was listening to an ABC News video interview of Jaycee Lee Dugard, the woman who was kidnapped at age 11, by a pedophile and his wife, and was held for 18 years, gave birth to and raised two daughters, fathered by her kidnapper, and was finally freed. One thing that really struck me was the process by which he intentionally took away her identity and built her a new one. I began to look at the stories of other kidnapped children who survived their ordeals, and I noticed some possible patterns in common, in many of the cases, in terms of this process by which the kidnapper broke down the child's identity and reconstructed a new one. I am especially interested in the cases of those children who were kidnapped by someone other than a parent, and who were held for some time and structured into a "familial" relationship with their kidnapper/abuser. My research question is: What techniques do kidnappers use on kidnapped children to deconstruct and reconstruct identity and integrate them as a "family member" (however dysfunctional)? My hypothesis is: there are patterns of commonality in the techniques kidnappers use on kidnapped children to deconstruct and reconstruct self-identity and integrate them as a "family member" (however dysfunctional). The kidnapping of children by a stranger is a rare event (Gardiner). Fewer still survive months or years in captivity. It is rare but it happens. It happened to Jaycee Lee Dugard (ABC News). It happened to Shawn Hornbeck (CBS News. com). It happened to Elizabeth Smart (Netter, Stone and Friedman). They have told their stories, and surely there are others. I will collect data by looking at the cases mentioned, and any others I identify. I will read their stories and try to identify patterns of commonality specific to the techniques and process by which kidnappers break down

<https://assignbuster.com/design-a-research-study-regarding-issue-in-developmental-psychology/>

children's identity, reconstruct and impose another in an effort to control the child's loyalty, trust, obedience and support as a "family member".

Examples of such data might be giving the child a new name, telling the child that their parents do not want them, forcing the child to lie to others about the relationship with the kidnapper, abusing the child. Identity is socially constructed in the normal course of development. It is of vital importance to the worldview, personal and social experience of the individual. Identity refers to an individual's group membership and attributes, and also to a person's dignity, pride and honor, connected to social categories (Fearon). The deconstruction and reconstruction (change) in identity of the child is my dependent variable. My independent variable is the process and set of techniques by which the kidnapper accomplishes this. One of the ethical considerations that must be considered, in the exploration of kidnapped children's stories, is the fine line between sharing stories of courage and survival vs. continuing the exploitation of abused children to satisfy the prurient interests of the public. Oprah Winfrey had to defend herself when she aired an interview of Shawn Hornbeck. She responded to expressed concerns by explaining that she had interviewed parents first, and parents and Shawn privately, off-air and without an audience (Hawk). Still there were comments about how she was commercially benefitting by continuing his exploitation (Reyes). I, of course, am not in a position like Oprah Winfrey's. Still, I will be sensitive to this ethical issue by focusing any related conversations on a factual discussion and summary of my research process, rather than any dramatic recounting of perverse details. Works Cited ABC News. "Jaycee Lee Dugard Kidnapped at Age 11." 11 July 2011.

Yahoo News: U. S. Videos. 11 July 2011 . CBS News. com. "Kidnapped:
<https://assignbuster.com/design-a-research-study-regarding-issue-in-developmental-psychology/>

Shawn Hornbeck." 24 September 2008. CBS News 48 Hours Mystery. 12 July 2011 . Fearon, James D. " Stanford. edu." 1999. What is Identity (As We Now Use the Word)? 12 July 2011 . Gardiner, Sean. " Study Undermines Kidnapping Fears." The Wall Street Journal 7 April 2011. Hawk, Thomas. " If Michael Devlin is Found Guilty of Kidnapping He Needs to Die." 19 January 2007. Thomas Hawk's Digital Connection. 12 July 2011 . Netter, Sarah, Alex Stone and Emily Friedman. " Elizabeth Smart Tells Court How She Survived Nine Month Abduction." 8 November 2010. ABC News. 12 July 2011 . Reyes, Robert Paul. " Oprah Winfrey Exploits Shawn Hornbeck." 21 January 2007. Diary of a Tired Black Man. 12 July 2011 .