

Conflict Management Strategies and Sustainable Peace-Building in Addressing Banditry in Benue State, Nigeria

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Received: 11.04.2026 | Accepted: 16.05.2026 | Published: 18.05.2026

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DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.20274982](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20274982)

Abstract

Original Research Article

This study examined the effect of conflict management strategies on sustainable peace-building in Benue State, Nigeria. The specific objective of the study was to determine the effect of avoidance, accommodation, and forcing strategies on sustainable peace-building in addressing banditry in Benue State, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design. The population consisted of 10,243 community members, from which a sample of 240 respondents was drawn. Data collected were analysed using multiple regression techniques to examine the cause-and-effect relationship between the variables. The findings revealed a strong and significant relationship between conflict management strategies and sustainable peace-building ($R = 0.948$; $R^2 = 0.899$; $p < 0.05$). However, only forcing strategy had a significant positive effect, while avoidance and accommodation strategies were not statistically significant. The study concludes that although conflict management strategies influence sustainable peace-building, their effectiveness varies. Forcing strategy is effective in the short term but cannot ensure lasting peace on its own. The study recommends strengthening early warning systems and reducing displacement-based responses; promoting inclusive dialogue, mediation, and accountable peace agreements; and sustaining security operations through intelligence-led and rights-based approaches to ensure lasting peace.

Keywords: Conflict Management Strategies, Avoidance, Accommodation, Forcing, Sustainable Peace-Building.

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Introduction/Problematic

Banditry has become one of the major security challenges confronting Nigeria, especially in the North-West and North-Central regions where communities continue to experience attacks, kidnappings, cattle rustling, destruction of farmlands, and displacement of persons. What began as rural criminality has evolved into organized violence threatening national security, economic stability, and social cohesion. Onota, Ogbonna and

Alfred-Igbokwe (2024) and Thompson (2025) linked banditry to poverty, unemployment, weak governance, porous borders, arms proliferation, and state fragility. Akanji (2025) further described banditry as a socio-economic and political security crisis characterized by armed robbery, kidnapping, village raids, and violent competition over resources.

The consequences of banditry in states such as Zamfara, Kaduna, Katsina, Niger, Plateau, and Benue have been devastating. Communities



experience loss of lives, destruction of property, displacement of persons, food insecurity, disruption of businesses, and educational decline (Esamagu & Adeyinka, 2025; Thompson, 2025). Reports by Reuters (2024) and The Guardian (2025) revealed that repeated attacks in Plateau and Benue States have led to the death of many residents and destruction of rural settlements. Amadi and Ugwu (2025) also noted that persistent violence has forced many people into internally displaced persons' camps with poor living conditions.

Banditry has significantly affected agricultural production as many farmers can no longer access their farmlands due to fear of attacks and abductions. Ijirshar, Udaah, Mile, Vershima and Adaudu (2025) found that insecurity reduced crop and livestock production in Benue State, while Ofoma (2023) observed that banditry weakened rural livelihoods and socio-economic development in North-West Nigeria. Kidnapping for ransom has also increased, affecting travelers, students, and rural dwellers. Adelani and Onoja (2025) attributed this rise to weak security systems and porous borders.

To manage banditry, strategies such as avoidance, accommodation, and forcing are often adopted. Avoidance strategy involves withdrawal from confrontation to prevent escalation of violence. Hassan and Abdul (2025) argued that although avoidance may provide temporary peace, it fails to address the root causes of insecurity. Accommodation strategy involves negotiation, amnesty, and dialogue with armed groups to reduce violence. Idrisa, Lenshie, Miapyenb and Maikomob (2025) noted that dialogue and peace agreements have helped reduce attacks in some communities, though excessive accommodation may encourage criminality if not properly managed.

Forcing strategy involves the use of military operations and coercive measures to suppress violence. While this strategy may temporarily weaken armed groups, Bentu, Best and Bulus (2025) maintained that militarization alone cannot guarantee sustainable peace because it does not address underlying socio-economic grievances. Sadiq, Ahmad, Singh and Sani (2025) therefore emphasized the need for multidimensional approaches involving

security, poverty reduction, education, governance reforms, and community participation.

Overall, sustainable peace-building in Nigeria requires a balanced approach that combines security enforcement with dialogue, reconciliation, justice, and socio-economic development. Araba, Yusuf and Shehu (2025) concluded that inclusive dialogue and strong institutions are necessary for addressing the root causes of banditry and promoting lasting peace in affected communities.

Banditry refers to organized violent criminal activities such as kidnapping, armed robbery, cattle rustling, village raids, killings, and destruction of property for economic and political gains. In Nigeria, banditry has become a major security challenge, particularly in the North-West and North-Central regions where armed groups attack rural communities and disrupt socio-economic activities. Thompson (2025) described banditry as organized violence threatening national security and social stability, while Akanji (2025) linked it to poverty, unemployment, weak governance, arms proliferation, and porous borders.

The rise of banditry in states such as Zamfara, Kaduna, Katsina, Niger, Plateau, and Benue has resulted in severe humanitarian and socio-economic consequences. Esamagu and Adeyinka (2025) found that banditry has caused fear, displacement, destruction of property, and loss of lives across affected communities. Reuters (2024) and AP News (2025) also reported repeated attacks in Benue and Plateau States leading to deaths and destruction of rural settlements.

Banditry has negatively affected agriculture and food security as many farmers can no longer access their farmlands due to fear of attacks and abductions. Ijirshar, Udaah, Mile, Vershima and Adaudu (2025) found that insecurity reduced crop and livestock production in Benue State. Similarly, Ofoma (2023) observed that banditry weakened socio-economic development and increased poverty in North-West Nigeria. Adelani and Onoja (2025) further discovered that porous borders and weak security systems contributed to the rise in kidnapping and cattle rustling.

Overall, studies show that banditry has caused loss of lives, displacement of persons, food insecurity, economic decline, educational disruption, and weakening of national security in Nigeria. Scholars therefore recommend improved security systems, poverty reduction, community participation, and governance reforms to address the menace.

Banditry has also become a serious challenge in Benue State where persistent attacks, killings, kidnappings, and destruction of farmlands continue to threaten peace and development. In response, conflict management strategies such as avoidance, accommodation, and forcing strategies have been adopted. Avoidance strategy involves withdrawal from confrontation to reduce violence, but insecurity still persists in many communities. Accommodation strategy focuses on dialogue, negotiations, and peace agreements aimed at reducing hostilities, though its long-term effectiveness remains uncertain. Forcing strategy involves military operations and deployment of security personnel to suppress violent attacks. However, recurring violence and displacement suggest that the use of force alone may not guarantee sustainable peace-building.

Despite these strategies, banditry continues to escalate in Benue State, indicating possible weaknesses in the conflict management approaches adopted. Most studies have focused on the causes and effects of banditry with limited attention on how avoidance, accommodation, and forcing strategies influence sustainable peace-building in Benue State. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the effect of these conflict management strategies on sustainable peace-building in Benue State, Nigeria

Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the effect of conflict management strategies on sustainable peace-building of Bandits in Benue State. The specific objective includes:

- i. **examine the effect of avoidance strategy** on sustainable peace-building of bandits in Benue State, Nigeria.

- ii. **assess the influence of accommodation strategy** on sustainable peace-building of bandits in Benue State, Nigeria.
- iii. **evaluate the impact of forcing strategy** on sustainable peace-building of bandits in Benue State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated to guide the study;

- i. What is the effect of avoidance strategy on sustainable peace-building of bandits in Benue State, Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent accommodation strategy influence sustainable peace-building of bandits in Benue State, Nigeria?
- iii. In what way forcing strategy affect sustainable peace-building of bandits in Benue State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated in Null form to guide the study;

H₀₁: Avoidance strategy has no significant effect on sustainable peace-building of bandits in Benue State, Nigeria.

H₀₂: Accommodation strategy has no significant influence on sustainable peace-building of bandits in Benue State, Nigeria.

H₀₃: Forcing strategy has no significant impact on sustainable peace-building of bandits in Benue State, Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

Conflict management strategy

Conflict management strategy in the context of banditry refers to the approaches adopted by government, security agencies, and communities to control and resolve violent conflicts caused by armed groups in order to achieve sustainable peace. It involves the use of methods such as negotiation, disengagement, and coercion to manage conflict situations and address their root causes. Thompson (2025) notes that banditry requires multidimensional

responses combining security and socio-economic measures, while Akanji (2025) emphasizes the need to address underlying factors such as poverty, weak governance, and marginalization.

In practice, three major strategies are commonly used: avoidance, accommodation, and forcing. Avoidance involves withdrawal to prevent escalation of violence but provides only temporary relief. Accommodation focuses on dialogue and negotiation to reduce hostility, though its effectiveness depends on proper implementation. Forcing strategy involves the use of military and law enforcement operations to suppress violence but may not ensure lasting peace if root causes are ignored. Sadiq et al. (2025) and Aderayo et al. (2025) conclude that effective conflict management requires a combination of these strategies alongside socio-economic and governance reforms.

Ijirshar et al. (2025) observed that insecurity and bandit attacks in Benue State have significantly disrupted agricultural activities and livelihoods, thereby emphasizing the need for integrated conflict management strategies that combine security intervention, community participation, and socio-economic support to achieve sustainable peace.

Avoidance Strategy

Avoidance strategy in the context of banditry refers to a conflict management approach where individuals, communities, or government actors deliberately withdraw from confrontation or avoid direct engagement with armed bandits in order to prevent escalation of violence. It is commonly reflected in situations where communities flee affected areas, security agencies delay direct confrontation, or stakeholders temporarily avoid hostile encounters to reduce immediate harm.

According to Dansabo, Dabai, and Abdul Jabbar (2024), avoidance in insecurity situations such as banditry involves disengagement from conflict zones as a short-term survival response, though it does not address the underlying causes of violence. Osasona (2023) explains that banditry-related avoidance practices often involve community withdrawal and limited state presence in high-risk areas, which may

reduce immediate attacks but sustain insecurity in the long run. Obi, Iwuoha, Aniche, and Asogwa (2024) argue that avoidance behaviour in conflict-prone areas is largely driven by fear, weak security response, and socio-economic vulnerability. Similarly, Okwuse (2023) notes that avoidance strategies tend to suppress open confrontation without resolving the structural causes of violence, making peace temporary and unstable.

Ijirshar et al. (2025) observed that many farming communities in Benue State abandoned their farmlands and settlements due to fear of attacks, indicating that avoidance strategy often results in displacement, food insecurity, and disruption of livelihoods rather than sustainable peace.

Overall, avoidance strategy in banditry management is a non-confrontational response that may reduce immediate casualties but is generally ineffective for sustainable peace-building because it leaves the root causes of insecurity unresolved.

Accommodation Strategy

In the context of banditry, accommodation strategy refers to a conflict management approach where authorities, community leaders, or stakeholders reduce tension by negotiating with armed bandits and yielding to some of their demands in order to achieve temporary peace and reduce violence.

In Nigeria, especially in banditry-prone areas, this strategy is reflected in dialogue, peace agreements, and amnesty initiatives aimed at reducing attacks and restoring calm. Bentu, Best, and Bulus (2025) note that accommodation involves compromise and negotiation to reduce hostility and promote peaceful coexistence. Idrisa et al. (2025) also observe that community-based agreements and dialogue with armed groups have, in some cases, reduced violent attacks in affected regions.

Similarly, Gukas (2025) explains that accommodation promotes reconciliation and trust-building when properly applied in conflict-prone communities. From a recent Benue perspective, Joel Abah (2026) emphasizes that sustainable peace-building in Benue State requires inclusive

participation, community engagement, and locally driven dialogue mechanisms that involve affected persons in decision-making processes. Mebom and Ordua (2025) further describe accommodation as a strategy based on compromise and concession aimed at preventing escalation of conflict and maintaining temporary peace.

Overall, accommodation strategy in banditry focuses on negotiation, reconciliation, and compromise to reduce violence, although its long-term effectiveness depends on justice, reintegration, accountability, and proper conflict transformation measures.

Forcing Strategy

Forcing strategy in the context of banditry refers to a conflict management approach that involves the use of coercion, military force, and law enforcement operations to suppress or eliminate the activities of armed bandits and restore security in affected communities.

In Nigeria, particularly in the North-West and North-Central regions, this strategy is implemented through military operations, arrests, raids, and deployment of security personnel to combat bandit groups and regain control of affected areas. Thompson (2025) notes that banditry requires strong state intervention due to its violent and organized nature. Akanji (2025) similarly argues that coercive responses are often necessary given the scale and complexity of armed bandit activities.

Kwede and Danbala (2024) observe that military-based operations remain a key response to banditry in Nigeria, especially in high-risk rural communities. Similarly, Ijirshar et al. (2025), noted that security force interventions and coordinated military operations are frequently deployed to curb violent attacks and restore stability in affected communities. Idrees Mahmud Gana (2025) also highlights that forcing strategies are used to weaken armed groups and strengthen state security presence in conflict-prone areas.

However, Bentu, Best, and Bulus (2025) caution that while forcing strategy may reduce immediate violence, it may not ensure sustainable peace if the

underlying socio-economic causes of banditry are not addressed. Forcing strategy in banditry involves the use of military and coercive measures to suppress violence and restore order, but its effectiveness for long-term peace depends on integration with development, dialogue, and reconciliation efforts.

Sustainable Peace-Building

In the context of banditry, refers to long-term efforts aimed at restoring peace in conflict-affected communities by addressing the root causes of violence, rebuilding trust, and strengthening institutions to prevent the recurrence of armed attacks.

Thompson (2025) explains that sustainable peace-building in Nigeria requires combining security measures with governance reforms and socio-economic development. Akanji (2025) further notes that lasting peace depends on addressing structural causes of banditry such as poverty, unemployment, weak governance, and arms proliferation. Bentu, Best and Bulus (2025) emphasize that sustainable peace-building involves dialogue, trust-building, and community participation to restore social cohesion in affected areas. Similarly, Sadiq et al. (2025) argue that peace-building must integrate security interventions with education, economic empowerment, and institutional reforms to achieve lasting stability.

In addition, Mamuda, Baba and Doko (2025) highlight that sustainable peace is achieved when military responses are complemented with reintegration programmes, livelihood support, and inclusive development strategies. Overall, sustainable peace-building in the context of banditry focuses on combining security, development, justice, and reconciliation to ensure lasting peace and prevent the recurrence of violence.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Conflict Theory and Frustration–Aggression Theory.

Conflict Theory emerged in the 19th century and is mainly associated with Karl Marx (1840s–1860s), particularly through works such as *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) and *Das Kapital* (1867). Marx argued that society is shaped by continuous competition over scarce resources such as wealth, power, land, and opportunities. He maintained that social groups remain in constant tension because dominant groups seek to preserve their advantages, while disadvantaged groups struggle for survival and equality.

The theory assumes that society is characterized by inequality rather than harmony, resources are unevenly distributed, conflict between groups is inevitable, and social institutions often serve the interests of the powerful. It also holds that social change results from struggles between opposing groups. In relation to banditry in Nigeria, Conflict Theory explains how poverty, unemployment, inequality, and marginalization can drive individuals or groups into violence, highlighting the need for structural reforms to achieve sustainable peace.

Frustration–Aggression Theory was first proposed in 1939 by John Dollard and colleagues at Yale University and later refined by Neal Miller and Leonard Berkowitz between the 1940s and 1960s. It explains that aggression often results from frustration when individuals are unable to achieve their goals due to deprivation or blocked opportunities. People facing poverty, unemployment, or social exclusion may therefore respond with violent behaviour.

Its key assumptions are that aggression is triggered by frustration, its intensity increases with the level of deprivation, frustration may arise from economic or social conditions, and aggression may be directed at perceived causes or weaker targets. In the context of banditry in Nigeria, the theory explains how unemployed and marginalized youths may resort to kidnapping and violence due to lack of opportunities, stressing the need to address socio-economic deprivation for sustainable peace-building.

In Benue State, both theories help explain the relationship between conflict management strategies and sustainable peace-building. Conflict Theory shows that banditry is driven by inequality and weak

governance; thus, avoidance offers only temporary relief, accommodation reduces tension but does not resolve inequality, and forcing suppresses violence without addressing root causes.

Similarly, Frustration–Aggression Theory shows that banditry results from frustration caused by poverty and unemployment. Avoidance reduces immediate violence but not frustration, accommodation may reduce frustration through dialogue, while forcing may suppress aggression but risk increasing frustration if underlying issues persist.

Overall, both theories suggest that although avoidance, accommodation, and forcing strategies can manage banditry in the short term, sustainable peace in Benue State depends on addressing the root socio-economic causes of violence.

Empirical Reviews

In a study conducted in the Niger Delta, Nigeria, Okwuise (2023) examined conflict avoidance strategies and organizational peace outcomes using a survey design involving 506 respondents. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and F-test, and the findings showed that avoidance strategy does not significantly promote sustainable peace, as it only suppresses open conflict without addressing underlying issues. The study recommended negotiation and dialogue for lasting peace.

Similarly, Abdulrahman and Maliki (2025) investigated police conflict management strategies against armed banditry in Katsina State using a mixed-method approach across 10 frontline local government areas. The study found that avoidance-based responses, such as delayed intervention and non-engagement, were ineffective in addressing banditry, as attacks persisted despite such measures. They recommended proactive policing, intelligence sharing, and community engagement.

In a foreign study, Hönig (2023) used a quasi-experimental design to examine peace and conflict reduction outcomes in Nigeria, focusing on affected households in the Niger Delta. The findings revealed that while reduced conflict improves socio-economic

conditions, reliance on avoidance without structured peace-building mechanisms limits sustainable development. The study recommended integrated security and development-based peace policies.

In Plateau State, Nigeria, Gukas (2025) examined community collaboration for sustainable peace-building between farmers and herders using a mixed-method design. The study found that accommodation strategies such as dialogue and reconciliation significantly improved trust and reduced conflicts. It recommended sustained dialogue and inclusive mediation processes.

Similarly, Bai and Alhassan (2025) studied social housing as a post-conflict recovery tool in Benue State using a quantitative survey of 338 respondents. Findings showed that accommodation-based interventions such as resettlement and reintegration significantly enhance peace-building and community recovery. The study recommended stronger reintegration and recovery programmes.

In a related foreign study, Akintayo (2025) explored *Sulhu*, a traditional accommodation-based peace system, using an ethnographic qualitative design in Northern Nigeria. The study found that it promotes reconciliation and trust-building at the community level and supports sustainable peace. It recommended integrating indigenous mechanisms into formal peace-building structures.

In Benue State, Ijirshar et al. (2025) examined insecurity and agricultural output using a survey design involving 400 farmers. Data analyzed with t-test and SEM showed that although security forces are deployed, banditry still significantly reduces agricultural productivity, indicating that force alone does not ensure sustainable peace. The study recommended improved security deployment and community policing.

Similarly, Etian and Bemgba (2025) conducted a qualitative content analysis of banditry in Northern Nigeria using secondary data. They found that forcing strategy through military operations remains dominant but is limited by weak governance and adaptive criminal networks. They recommended combining military action with intelligence and socio-economic interventions.

In a related foreign study, Duruji, Fulani, and Osimen (2026) examined Nigerian military internal security operations using a qualitative historical–legal design. The study found that forcing strategy is useful for immediate stabilization but often fails to produce sustainable peace due to human rights concerns and failure to address root causes. They recommended integrating military force with governance reforms and community engagement.

Critiquing of the Empirical Studies

The critique of the reviewed empirical studies shows both strengths and limitations across the authors.

Studies by Okwuse (2023) and Ijirshar et al. (2025) adopted quantitative survey designs with relatively adequate sample sizes, which enhance reliability and generalizability. However, their dependence on self-reported data may introduce bias and limit deeper understanding of complex issues such as banditry and sustainable peace-building.

Similarly, Bai and Alhassan (2025) provided useful statistical insights through regression analysis, but their focus on post-conflict recovery limits broader application to conflict management strategies in active banditry situations. On the other hand, qualitative studies by Etian and Bemgba (2025), Akintayo (2025), and Duruji, Fulani and Osimen (2026) offer rich contextual explanations of forcing and accommodation strategies. However, their reliance on secondary data and lack of clearly defined sample sizes reduce the generalizability of their findings.

Furthermore, although Gukas (2025) and Akintayo (2025) emphasized dialogue and reconciliation as effective accommodation strategies, their studies did not sufficiently integrate these approaches with other strategies such as forcing and avoidance. Likewise, Ijirshar et al. (2025) and Duruji et al. (2026) focused heavily on military responses without fully examining their long-term implications for sustainable peace-building.

Another limitation is that many studies, including Okwuse (2023) and Etian and Bemgba (2025), examined conflict outcomes without clearly linking

specific conflict management strategies to measurable indicators of sustainable peace. In addition, most studies were conducted outside Benue State, except Ijirshar et al. (2025) and Bai and Alhassan (2025), creating a contextual gap in understanding the unique dynamics of banditry in Benue State.

Overall, while the studies by Okwuise (2023), Gukas (2025), Bai and Alhassan (2025), Ijirshar et al. (2025), Etian and Bemgba (2025), Akintayo (2025), and Duruji et al. (2026) provide valuable insights, there is a need for more integrated, context-specific, and mixed-method research that clearly examines how avoidance, accommodation, and forcing

strategies collectively influence sustainable peace-building in Benue State.

Methodology

This study on conflict management strategies and sustainable peace-building in addressing banditry in Benue State, Nigeria, adopted a survey research design. The population consisted of 10,243 community members, from which a sample of 240 respondents was drawn. Data collected were analysed using multiple regression techniques to examine the cause-and-effect relationship between the variables.

Results

Table 1: Model summary of conflict management strategies and sustainable peace-building in addressing banditry in Benue State, Nigeria.

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F Change	Sig Change
1	.948 ^a	.899	.898	581.344	.000

a. Predictors: (constant), Avoidance Strategy, Accommodation Strategy, Forcing Strategy

b. Dependent Variable: Sustainable Peace-Building

Source: Field survey, using SPSS V23.

The model summary in Table 1 presents the relationship between conflict management strategies (avoidance, accommodation, and forcing strategies) and sustainable peace-building in addressing banditry in Benue State, Nigeria.

The correlation coefficient (R = 0.948) indicates a very strong positive relationship between the independent variables and sustainable peace-building. This implies that changes in avoidance, accommodation, and forcing strategies are strongly associated with changes in the level of sustainable peace-building in Benue State.

The coefficient of determination (R² = 0.899) shows that 89.9% of the variation in sustainable peace-building is explained by the combined effect of avoidance, accommodation, and forcing strategies. This indicates that the model has a high explanatory power, while only 10.1% of the variation is influenced by other factors outside the model.

The Adjusted R² value of 0.898 further confirms the reliability and stability of the model. It shows that after adjusting for the number of predictors, about 89.8% of the variance in sustainable peace-building is still explained by the conflict management

strategies. The small difference between R^2 and Adjusted R^2 suggests that the model is statistically reliable.

The F-change value of 581.344 with a significance value of 0.000 indicates that the overall regression

model is statistically significant. Since the significance level is less than 0.05, the study concludes that conflict management strategies jointly have a significant effect on sustainable peace-building in addressing banditry in Benue State, Nigeria.

Table 2: ANOVA of conflict management strategies and sustainable peace-building in addressing banditry in Benue State, Nigeria.

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1 Regression	309.559	3	103.186	581.344	.000 ^b
Residual	34.612	240	.177	-	-

a. Predictors: (constant), Avoidance Strategy, Accommodation Strategy, Forcing Strategy.

b. Dependent Variable: Sustainable Peace-Building

Source: Field survey, using SPSS V23.

The ANOVA results in Table 2 assess the overall significance of the regression model examining the effect of conflict management strategies (avoidance, accommodation, and forcing) on sustainable peace-building in addressing banditry in Benue State.

The regression sum of squares (309.559) represents the variation in sustainable peace-building explained by the three conflict management strategies, while the residual sum of squares (34.612) represents the unexplained variation. This indicates that a large proportion of the total variation in sustainable peace-building is accounted for by the model, suggesting a good model fit.

The model has 3 degrees of freedom (df) for regression and 240 degrees of freedom for residual, reflecting the number of predictors and sample size used in the analysis. The mean square for regression (103.186) is substantially higher than the mean square for residual (0.177), indicating that the

explained variance is much greater than the unexplained variance.

The F-statistic ($F = 581.344$) is very high, and the corresponding significance value ($Sig = 0.000$) is less than 0.05. This shows that the overall regression model is statistically significant.

In other words, the combined effect of avoidance strategy, accommodation strategy, and forcing strategy has a significant influence on sustainable peace-building in Benue State. Therefore, the null hypothesis that conflict management strategies have no significant effect on sustainable peace-building is rejected. The findings imply that these strategies, when effectively applied, play a crucial role in addressing banditry and promoting sustainable peace in the study area.

In summary, the ANOVA result confirms that the model is robust and that conflict management

strategies significantly predict sustainable peace-building in Benue State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Coefficients of determinants of conflict management strategies and sustainable peace-building in addressing banditry in Benue State, Nigeria.

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig
1(constant)	.058	.062	-	0.934	.352
Avoidance Strategy	.066	.067	.081	0.979	.329
Accommodation Strategy	.019	.054	.023	0.359	.720
Forcing Strategy	.807	.067	.850	11.968	.000

Dependent Variable: Sustainable Peace-Building

Source: Field survey, using SPSS V23.

The coefficients table presents the individual effects of avoidance, accommodation, and forcing strategies on sustainable peace-building in addressing banditry in Benue State.

The constant (B = 0.058, p = 0.352) is not statistically significant, indicating that the baseline level of sustainable peace-building, when all predictors are held constant, is not meaningful in the model.

For Avoidance Strategy (B = 0.066, β = 0.081, t = 0.979, p = 0.329), the result shows a positive but statistically insignificant effect on sustainable peace-building. Although the coefficient suggests that increased use of avoidance strategy may slightly improve peace outcomes, the p-value (greater than 0.05) indicates that this effect is not significant. This implies that avoidance strategy does not meaningfully contribute to sustainable peace-building in the study area.

Similarly, Accommodation Strategy (B = 0.019, β = 0.023, t = 0.359, p = 0.720) also exhibits a positive but insignificant relationship with sustainable peace-building. The very low beta value and high p-value

suggest that accommodation strategy has minimal influence and does not significantly predict peace-building outcomes in this model.

In contrast, Forcing Strategy (B = 0.807, β = 0.850, t = 11.968, p = 0.000) has a strong positive and statistically significant effect on sustainable peace-building. The high beta value (0.850) indicates that it is the most influential predictor among the variables. The p-value (less than 0.05) confirms that the effect is highly significant, meaning that increased application of forcing strategy significantly enhances sustainable peace-building in Benue State.

Overall, the results indicate that while avoidance and accommodation strategies have positive but insignificant effects, forcing strategy is the only variable that significantly predicts sustainable peace-building. This suggests that coercive measures play a dominant role in addressing banditry in the study area, although reliance on a single strategy may require further evaluation for long-term peace sustainability.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that conflict management strategies have a strong and significant relationship with sustainable peace-building in addressing banditry in Benue State. The model summary showed a high correlation coefficient ($R = 0.948$) and coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.899$), indicating that avoidance, accommodation, and forcing strategies jointly explain a large proportion of the variation in sustainable peace-building. The ANOVA result further confirmed that the overall regression model was statistically significant, implying that conflict management strategies significantly influence sustainable peace-building in Benue State.

These findings are consistent with Karl Marx's Conflict Theory, which explains that conflicts arise from inequality, competition over scarce resources, poverty, and weak governance. The strong relationship between the variables suggests that the management of banditry is closely connected to how conflict situations are handled through security, dialogue, and governance measures. The findings also support Frustration–Aggression Theory developed by John Dollard, which argues that frustration caused by unemployment, poverty, and marginalization can lead to aggression and violence. This implies that conflict management strategies are important in reducing violent reactions associated with banditry.

The findings agree with the empirical studies of Okwuse (2023), Abdulrahman and Maliki (2025), who found that avoidance strategy has limited effectiveness in achieving sustainable peace because it only suppresses conflict temporarily without addressing its root causes. This aligns with the coefficient result where avoidance strategy had a positive but statistically insignificant effect on sustainable peace-building in Benue State.

Similarly, the insignificant effect of accommodation strategy supports the studies of Gukas (2025) and Bai and Alhassan (2025), who observed that dialogue, reconciliation, and reintegration can reduce tension but may not guarantee lasting peace when underlying socio-economic grievances remain unresolved. This suggests that accommodation strategy alone may not

be sufficient in addressing the complex nature of banditry in Benue State.

The findings further revealed that forcing strategy had a strong positive and statistically significant effect on sustainable peace-building. This supports Conflict Theory, which recognizes the role of power and coercion in managing conflict situations. The result also agrees with the studies of Ijirshar et al. (2025) and Duruji, Fulani, and Osimen (2026), who found that military operations and security enforcement remain the dominant and most effective short-term approaches in suppressing banditry and restoring order. However, these scholars also emphasized that force alone cannot ensure long-term peace without socio-economic development, justice, and governance reforms.

Overall, the study demonstrates that although avoidance, accommodation, and forcing strategies jointly influence sustainable peace-building, forcing strategy remains the most significant predictor in addressing banditry in Benue State. The findings therefore suggest the need for an integrated approach that combines effective security operations with dialogue, poverty reduction, employment creation, and community-based peace-building initiatives for sustainable peace.

Summary

This study examined the effect of conflict management strategies on sustainable peace-building in addressing banditry in Benue State, Nigeria. The study focused on avoidance, accommodation, and forcing strategies. A survey research design was adopted, with a population of 10,243 community members and a sample size of 240 respondents. Data were analysed using multiple regression analysis.

The findings revealed a strong and significant relationship between conflict management strategies and sustainable peace-building ($R = 0.948$; $R^2 = 0.899$; $p < 0.05$). The results further showed that avoidance and accommodation strategies had positive but insignificant effects, while forcing strategy had a strong and significant positive effect on sustainable peace-building in Benue State.

Conclusion

The study concluded that conflict management strategies significantly influence sustainable peace-building in addressing banditry in Benue State. However, forcing strategy was found to be the most effective approach in controlling banditry, while avoidance and accommodation strategies had limited impact. The study further concluded that sustainable peace cannot depend on force alone but requires a combination of security measures, dialogue, and socio-economic reforms to address the root causes of banditry.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were drawn from the study below;

- i. Government should strengthen proactive security measures and early warning systems to reduce bandit attacks in Benue State.
- ii. Community leaders and stakeholders should promote dialogue, mediation, and reconciliation programmes to improve peaceful coexistence.
- iii. Government should combine military operations with poverty reduction, employment creation, and governance reforms to achieve sustainable peace-building.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge by providing empirical evidence on how avoidance, accommodation, and forcing strategies influence sustainable peace-building in addressing banditry in Benue State. It establishes that while all three strategies are relevant, forcing strategy has the most significant effect, thereby highlighting the dominant role of coercive security responses. The study further advances understanding by showing that sustainable peace-building in banditry-prone areas requires an integrated approach beyond reliance on force alone, combining security interventions with dialogue and structural reforms.

Limitations and Further Suggestions

The study is limited by its reliance on cross-sectional survey data, which restricts the ability to establish causality over time. It also focused only on three conflict management strategies, excluding other relevant factors such as governance quality, poverty, and community policing. In addition, the study was confined to Benue State, limiting broader generalization to other banditry-prone regions in Nigeria.

Future research should adopt longitudinal or mixed-method designs and incorporate additional variables such as socio-economic conditions, intelligence policing, and governance reforms to provide a more comprehensive understanding of sustainable peace-building in conflict-affected areas.

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