EFFECTS OF STATE CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES ON THE MANAGEMENT OF ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CONFLICT IN TARABA STATE, NIGERIA

Tukura, Fwaje Daudu
fwajetukura@gmail.com
GSM: 08038109654
Centre for Peace and Security Studies, Modibbo Adam's Universit, Yols Adamawa State
&
Momodu, A. Jude Ph.D.
judemomodu4@gmail.com
GSM: 07033937071
Centre for Peace and Security Studies, Modibbo Adam's Universit, Yols Adamawa State
&
Owonikoko, B. Saheed, PhD.
owonikoko.babajide@gmail.com
GSM: 07068951904
Centre for Peace and Security Studies, Modibbo Adam's Universit, Yols Adamawa State

Abstract
Taraba State, situated in the northeastern region of Nigeria, is a microcosm of Nigeria's broader diversity, characterized by over 80 ethnic groups practicing Christianity, Islam, and traditional African religions. This diversity, while a potential source of cultural richness, has become a breeding ground for recurrent and protracted ethno-religious conflicts, often sparked by struggle over land, political representation, and resource allocation. The persistence of these conflicts has not only led to significant loss of life and property, internal displacement of persons, and the destruction of means of livelihood, but has also deepened distrust among communities, disrupting social cohesion and local development. Therefore, this paper assesses the effects of the conflict resolution strategies employed by the Taraba state government on the management of ethno-religious conflicts in the state. The paper, which is both qualitative and quantitative, was anchored on conflict trap theory. The paper concludes that the diverse nature of the state deeply polarized it along ethnic and religious lines, contributing to the recurrent ethno-religious conflicts. It was found in the study that the kinetic and non-kinetic strategies adopted by the state have been effective in managing ethno-religious conflicts in Taraba state. This paper recommends that the Taraba state government should be proactive rather than reactive to ethno-religious conflicts, addressing the root causes of these conflicts in the state.
Keywords: *Conflict, State, Strategy, Management. Ethno-Religious*

Introduction
The mobilization of ethnic and religious sentiments and solidarity seeking to gain or retain relevance has continued to fuel anxiety, suspicion, fear of domination, and outright conflicts (Osumah and Okor 2009). The challenge of managing Nigeria's ethnic and religious plurality has not been an easy task. In fact, identity-based conflicts have continued to pose tremendous threats to the legitimacy of the Nigerian state especially in the current Fourth Republic (1999 to date) and its inability to offer leadership appropriate to the demand of nation-building. The state is a central actor in the management of social conflicts. There is also a consensus on the study of identity-based conflicts in Nigeria, emphasizing the role of the state as both the regulator of competition among the diverse ethnic groups as well as the guarantor of security (Osaghae, 2007). The state typically characterizes its use of violence as an order maintenance activity (Danzinger, 1998).

However, in the case of the Nigerian state, especially Taraba state has overtime demonstrated incapacity and inability to effectively manage identity-based conflicts and other forms of security threats within her domain. As Isah (2001:18) notes:

> The inability or weakness of institutional response to ethnic conflicts is a product of elite struggle that is an intra-ethnic rivalry to control the people through division and rule. The hypothetical issue is that the problem of ethnic conflicts in Nigeria appears to be seemingly intractable because of power play amongst the elites. The institutional forces   deal with the crisis per se without identifying the forces, which are the real actors in the crisis who are always never identified. This is largely due either to the fact that the state knows the elites or those elites control the state.

The Nigerian state, for instance, seems to always have vested interests in the management of conflicts within its domain and this has made it impossible for it to be an impartial arbiter in the management of ethnic conflicts

(Momodu, 2019). Timely and effective management of identity-based conflicts is critical to political stability and economic development of any plural or diverse society as scholars such as Easterly (2001:267-314) and Ralph (1995:98) have argued that high-quality institutions "constrain the amount of damage that one ethnic group could do to another," and that "institutional engineering can seek to depoliticize many areas of contention" between identity groups. In the same vein, North (1993:106) in his analysis of institutions opines that "we cannot see, feel, touch, or even measure institutions, they are constructs of the human mind, how are we to analyze their role in mediating ethnic interactions?" The state and its conflict management institutions have primary responsibility in managing agitations arising from identity groups.

Since the emergence of democracy in 1999, Taraba State has become a perpetual flashpoint of violent conflict. The State which had hitherto been one of the most relatively peaceful in Nigeria has been deeply enmeshed and has suffered ethno-religious conflicts which are characterized by genocidal attacks, maiming, and killings of several people, loss of business investments, industries, and property worth several millions of Naira (Allanamu, 2004). Within the space of twenty years, starting from 1999 to 2019 several ethnic and religious conflicts have been reported in Taraba State, for instance, Jalingo religious crisis in 1991; Wukari ethnic crisis in 1991; Takum ethnic crisis in 1991, 1993, 1997; Karim-Lamido ethnic crisis in 1996 and 1999; Lau religious crisis in 2006; Ibi religious crisis in 2012; Wukari religious crisis in 2013 to 2016; Donga ethnic crisis in 2019; Mararraba ethnic crisis in 2020; Bali ethnic crisis in 2020 to mention but a few are some of the crisis witnessed in various local government areas of the state that has both ethnic and religious colorations (Momodu, 2019). Furthermore, these violent conflicts have compelled many Taraba residents to attempt a redefinition of their identity as fallout of emotive feelings and perceptions. The violent conflict, which has remained a recurring decimal, has severally threatened the nascent democracy and national security and brought the nation to the brink of disaster.

The paper assesses the institutional responses for managing identity-based conflicts in Taraba State. Taraba State is one of the most diverse states in Nigeria with about 80 ethnic groups and three major religions, Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion. The diversity of the state makes it vulnerable to identity-based politics, which often give rise to violent contestations between or among the diverse groups. Indeed, the state has experienced several ethno-religious conflicts such as the Tiv-Jukun Conflict, violent contestations between Christians and Muslims both in Wukari local Government Area (LGA) of Taraba State, kuteb/Chamba/Jukun conflict in Takum LGA, the persistent religious crisis in Jalingo metropolis of Taraba State among others (Abdullahi, 1986). However, despite the plethora of academic studies concerning the ethnic and religious conflicts in Nigeria with particular reference to Taraba state, none has assessed the effectiveness of the state's conflict management strategies for managing the protracted ethno-religious conflicts in Taraba state, which remains the point of departure of this paper. Therefore, this paper assesses the effects of the conflict resolution strategies adopted by the Taraba state government in the management of ethno-religious conflicts that have characterized the state.

Government Responses to Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria
Since the return to civil rule in 1999, there has been an escalation of violence across Nigeria. It is reported that there have been at least 187 ethno-religious conflicts across Nigeria since May 1999, not-to-mention the hundreds of JARS-related incidences that have allegedly claimed over 3,600 lives since 2009 (Kwaja, 2013). The pressures deriving from the 'politics of democratization' have compounded extant pressures set in motion by the competition for scarce resources triggered by population expansion, economic crisis, and state economic withdrawal under structural adjustment, started in the 1980s (Imobighe, 2003).

Within the context of the buccaneering politics of political elites, the struggle for control over the 'spiritual realm' by religious entrepreneurs, the deprivations of poverty and widening economic inequalities, and a restless army of unemployed youth, violent conflict and general insecurity has intensified across Nigeria (Etanibi & Alemika, 2000). While the degrees of dissatisfaction and alienation has increased within different communities, the responses of the relevant authorities have often been perceived as 'unsatisfactory', thereby providing the justification for the resort to violence as the only effective means for seeking redress. This paper therefore provides a synopsis of the responses of various authorities, social actors, and international agencies that have sought to grapple with the spiral of violence more especially across northern Nigeria since 1999 (Allananmu, 2005). It examines the nature of the policies advocated by these actors, and their effectiveness in addressing the challenges at hand. Hence it will explore the responses to violent conflict across the north by both governmental and non-governmental actors which are; the federal and state governments, the media, women, the military, civic groups more generally, and the international development partners. More so, the paper equally examines the policy effectiveness of these various interventions in the process of curtailing menace posed by plethora of ethno-religious conflicts with particular reference to Taraba state and Nigeria at large.

The federal government tends to oscillate between the use of military force and the use of eminent persons to intervene in protracted crisis situations in Plateau and Borno States. As Albert (2013) notes, eminent persons are engaged in either of two ways: (i) holding consultative meetings with them in the hope of dousing down conflict situations, or (ii) appointing them into peace commissions of inquiry. Eminent persons intervene in conflicts either individually or collectively, but more information will be given to group interventions because individual efforts are usually conducted in discreet, off the record, manner. Between 2002 and 2010, the federal government appointed four commissions to investigate the violent conflict around Plateau, Nasarawa, and Benue States: Justice Okpene Judicial Commission of inquiry into communal conflicts in Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba states in 2002; Presidential Peace Initiative Committee on Plateau State, headed by Shehu Idris, Emir of Zazzau, May 2004; Federal administrative panel of inquiry into the 2008 crisis, headed by Major General Emmanuel Abisoye; and Presidential Advisory Committee on the Jos Crisis, headed by Solomon Lar in 2010 (Kwaja, 2013). Kwaja further stated that after the 2011 post-election violence that swept through many northern cities, the federal government appointed the Sheikh Ahmed Lemu Committee on Post-Election Violence and Civil disturbances. In the northeast geo-political zone faced with the insurgency of *Jama'atu Ahli Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad* ('People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad') (JAS).

The federal government appointment of the Galtimari Presidential Committee on Security Challenges in the North East in July 2011 and in April 2013, Presidential Committee on Dialogue and Peaceful Resolution of Security Challenges in the North was appointed to dialogue with JAS (Kwaja, 2013). Along with these use of Eminent Persons in dialogue and commissions, military forces were deployed in Plateau and the northeast under multi-agency Joint Task Force (JTF) and Special Task Force (STF). In both areas, the federal government also declared a State of Emergency in order to contain particular spikes in the violence. In May 2004, a short-lived State of Emergency was declared in Plateau State. In 2011, a State of Emergency was again declared in some local government areas in Borno and Plateau States. Finally, in the northeast, another declaration of a State of Emergency took place on 14 May 2013, barely a month after inaugurating the Amnesty and Dialogue Committee (Monguno, 2013). In both Plateau and in the northeast, the treatment of the civil population by a military confronting a faceless enemy has become a critical political and security challenge. As Monguno (2013) notes, in Borno State, considerable damage has been done to citizens' property by both insurgents and security agents who allegedly have set homes and shops ablaze whenever they are attacked by the insurgents. In fact until May 2013 when JAS insurgents started large-scale burning of homes in villages, most burning of houses and business premises were attributed to security agents. In 2013, a new army division, the 7th Division, was created in the northeast to provide a permanent military counter-insurgency capability in that volatile corner of Nigeria. With the declaration of the State of Emergency in May 2013, the commercial mobile telephony infrastructure of the affected states was turned off on the orders of the federal government in an attempt to deny the insurgents vital coordination capability.

One variation in the normal pattern of force deployment by the federal government is the Operation Rainbow (OR) established in Plateau State after massive criticisms of the STF by the population. Kwaja (2013) notes that Operation Rainbow (OR) was approved by President Goodluck Jonathan in 2010, and subsequently ratified by the National Assembly relies on security agents from the STF, Mobile Police (MOPOL), Nigeria Police, Department of State Services (DSS) and Nigerian Security and Civil Defence (NSCD) for personnel. Unlike the STF which relies solely on force for its operations, the OR tries to incorporate civilians into its peace mission. With support from the (United Nations Development Programme) UNDP, OR has been able to set up an early warning and early response infrastructure (Monguno, 2013). Community members across all the seventeen local government areas of the state are trained to monitor their communities and report to a situation room that coordinates early response.

In this way, both military and non-military strategies are incorporated into OR. Specifically, OR seeks to incorporate women, youths, community and religious leaders into efforts at mediation, early warning facilitation, and community policing. Though sporadic killings have continued in rural Plateau, and some have complained of bias in favour of Christians in the recruitment of youths to be trained under OR (Sadiq 2013), the establishment of the outfit has coincided with reduced agitation by local communities on all sides of the conflict against the security forces. Bakut (2013) also reports that the federal government established an Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) system which includes all security agencies, Technical Research Institutes, Academic Institutions, CSO and Community based associations in data collection and processing. If EWER is still in existence, it is certainly ineffective, given the repeated cycles of violence in many parts of the north that the authorities have failed to nip in the bud. The federal government has paid compensation to the victims of the 2011 post-election violence. This is a welcome departure from the usual neglect of victims of violence.

In the violence cluster around Taraba, Benue and Nasarawa States, the deployment of the police and army have frequently been used to suppress inter-ethnic and inter-religious clashes in those states. In some cases, commissions of inquiries like boundary adjustment commissions have also been instituted to critically look at the root causes of incessant crisis. The state has equally enacted some laws to serve as swift responses to recurring communal, ethnic, and religious, farmers/herders clashes in the state. Some of these laws are: The Taraba state open grazing prohibition and ranches establishment law, 2017. A law to prohibit open rearing and grazing of livestock and to provide for the establishment of ranches and for other matters connected thereto, 2017; A law to make provision for the establishment of the Taraba state inter-religious affairs, peace building and conflict resolution council law, 2017 and for other purposes connected therewith, 2017; A law to make provision for the amendment of the prohibition of thuggery in the state and for other purposes connected therewith, 2017.

In the case of the frequent clashes between Fulani herdsmen and Tiv farmers in parts of Benue State, eminent persons such as the Sultan of Sokoto and the Special Adviser to the Governor on security matters have occasionally intervened in the search for peace. With respect to the large-scale banditry in the western Kaduna, southern Katsina, and Zamafara cluster, very little has been done by the state governments other than the mobilization of the Nigerian Police. The Zamfara State governor has also called for the establishment of state police forces. In all of these 'neglected' instances of violence across the two clusters, local militia, often of an ethnic nature, are the primary instrument communities use to defend themselves from attack (THA, 2017).

Following the incessant and recurring communal, ethnic, religious and farmers/herders clashes which has led to loss of lives and property worth billions of naira in the state, the Taraba State House of Assembly has made series of concerted efforts towards managing the wanton killings and destruction of properties in the entire state. To that effect the Honourable House has inaugurated series of ad-hoc committees with a mandate to investigate and submit its report for further respond by the state government. Some of the reports are: Report of the Ad-hoc committee on harmonization of the Taraba state inter-religious affairs, peace building and conflict resolution council bill 2016 with the Taraba state peace building and conflict resolution commission bill 2017; report of Ad-hoc committee on Taraba state open grazing prohibition and ranches establishment bill on the 18th July, 2017; The need to beef-up security in Arufu and Akwana areas in Wukari Local Government Area by honourable Sabo Pius on the 11th October, 2017; presentation and consideration of the report of Ad-hoc Committee on harmonization of the Taraba state inter-religious affairs, peace building and conflict resolution council bill 2016, with Taraba state peace building and conflict resolution on 22nd November, 2017; Taraba state bureau for peace and conflict management, bill, 2017 on the 4th December, 2017; the need to provide relief materials to the people of Donga town who were displaced during the crisis after election of 27th March, 2004; The need to condemn the communal conflict that occur in Takum on the 16th March, 2008, the Taraba state inter-religious affairs, peace building and conflict resolution council bill 2017 on the 8th march, 2017.

The need for Taraba State Government to stop the ongoing communal crises between the Fulani herdsmen and the Mumuye farmers in parts of Lau and Yorro Local Government Areas of Taraba state on the 20th February, 2017; the Taraba state council for inter religious affairs bill 2016 on the 3rd August, 2016; The need to investigate the alleged land tussles between TTV and other private individuals by Honourable Ishaya Gani on the 29th July, 2013; Alleged breach of peace by the district head of Tsokundi community of Tunari farmers in Wukari, Taraba state on the 31st July, 2012; Complaint over incessant boundary dispute between Nyakwala and Gindin Dorowa village of Matan Fada district of Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba state on the 29th March, 2012; Laying, presentation and consideration of report of the ad-hoc committee on communal crisis between Armed Herdsmen and farmers in Takum and Ussa Local Government Area and alleged security threat in Nguroje state constituency on the 6th June 2017; A bill for a law to provide for the establishment of the Taraba State peace building and conflict resolution commission on the 11th July, 2017; Draft report of the, judiciary and cabinet affairs on a bill for a law to establish the Taraba state council for inter-religious affairs. December, 2016; and Report of the Taraba state ad-hoc committee on communal crisis between armed herdsmen and farmers in Takum and Ussa Local Government Areas and alleged security threats in Ngoroje State constituency.

Some of the responses of the State House of Assembly in the forms of bills are: A bill for law a law to provide for the establishment of Taraba state peace building and conflicts resolution commission 2017; A bill for the Local Government Area to make provision of thuggery in Taraba state (Amendment No. 3); and the T.S.U.S and neighbourhood match bill, 2019. Others include Taraba State House of Assembly Matter of Urgent Public Importance: The need for Taraba State Government to stop the reoccurring communal crises between the Fulani Herdsmen and the Mumuye Farmers in parts of Lau and Yorro local government Areas of Taraba state; the need for the government to take decisive actions to stop the incessant communal conflict in Wukari town; The need to restore sanity in Ibi town, Ibi Local government Area by Honourable Useni Bako on the 20th November, 2012; The need to investigate the causes of recent crisis in Wukari on the 4th March, 2013 Committee on the Taraba

state open grazing prohibition and ranches establishment bill 2017; The need to set up an inquiry into the activities of and Karim Lamido Local Government Councils (TSHA, 2021). However, from the review of the extant literature on ethno-religious conflicts in Taraba state, scholars dwelled so much on the causes, consequences and government responses to the conflict. Literature reviewed did not assess the effectiveness of government responses to the protracted ethno-religious conflicts in Taraba state. This constitutes our point of departure and the gap in literature.

Theoretical Framework
The paper employs conflict trap theory developed by Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler in 2003 as its analytical framework. Conflict Trap Theory posits that countries that have experienced civil wars and other forms of conflict are likely to experience repeated cycles of violence. This theory highlights how conflicts can perpetuate themselves, making it difficult for war-torn nations to break free from the cycle of violence, underdevelopment, and instability. Conflict trap theory assumes that conflict significantly damages a nation's economic infrastructure, making recovery difficult and prolonged. To this theory, poor economic conditions, in turn, create grievances and increase the likelihood of future conflicts. Collier and Hoeffler (2004) also argue that countries with low economic development are seen as more prone to repeat cycles of violence because poverty and unemployment feed instability

The theory also assumes that conflicts weaken or destroy governmental and institutional capacities, leaving post-conflict states unable to effectively govern or provide services, arguing that the absence of strong governance mechanisms increases the likelihood of conflict reoccurring, as weak institutions cannot manage grievances, foster reconciliation, or implement development effectively (Collier et al., 2003). Another critical assumption of the conflict trap theory is the role of natural resources in perpetuating conflicts. The theory argues that countries dependent on extractive industries are often subject to the "resource curse," where the competition over valuable resources fuels conflict and undermines the development of diversified, stable economies (Ross, 2004).

Application of the Theory
Conflict Trap Theory, which emphasizes the cyclical nature of violence, is highly relevant for understanding the persistent ethno-religious conflicts in Taraba State, Nigeria. The state has witnessed recurrent clashes between various ethnic and religious groups, particularly between Christian farmers and Muslim Fulani herders. Applying the core assumptions of conflict trap theory to this context can shed light on why these conflicts continue to reemerge despite attempts at peace-building.

A central tenet of conflict trap theory is that economic devastation caused by previous conflicts creates conditions for future violence. In Taraba State, economic factors especially competition over land and natural resources play a significant role in the conflicts between the predominantly Christian agricultural communities and Muslim Fulani herders. The theory highlights that poverty, unemployment, and the destruction of livelihoods during conflict worsen economic instability, creating an environment ripe for recurring violence (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004).

The persistent competition over farmland and grazing areas is intensified by environmental changes such as desertification in northern Nigeria, which drives Fulani herders further south into regions like Taraba. As land becomes increasingly scarce, grievances escalate, fueling the cycle of conflict. The damage to agricultural production and local economies from repeated clashes perpetuates poverty, making it difficult for communities to recover economically and preventing them from breaking the cycle of violence.

Conflict trap theory offers a robust framework for understanding the ethno-religious conflicts in Taraba State, Nigeria. Its assumptions about economic devastation, weak institutions, social fragmentation, and resource competition closely align with the factors driving recurrent violence in the state. The theory's focus on the cyclical nature of conflict helps explain why Taraba continues to experience repeated outbreaks of violence despite various peace efforts.

Discussion of Findings
The State conflict management strategies employed to management the persistent ethno-religious conflicts have been effective, leading to the reduction in the reoccurrence of the conflicts. The paper found that the used of kinetic and non-kinetic approaches/responses to the management of the ethno-religious conflict in Taraba state has been particularly very effective, and government facilitation of mediation/dialogue between the parties to ethno-religious conflict, as well as the interventions of judicial and administrative panel of enquiry to resolve incidences of ethno-religious conflict were also very effective in the management of the protracted ethno-religious conflicts in the State.

Similarly, Key Informant Interviews were conducted to obtain information not gotten either through the documents or questionnaires. Our respondents consistently confirmed that the conflict management strategies employed by the Taraba state government in the management of the persistence ethno-religious conflicts were very effective, curtailing the frequent occurrence of the conflict in the state. In their words, they stated that:

> *The use of kinetic and non-kinetic approaches/responses to manage ethno-religious conflict was very effective; Government facilitation of mediation/dialogue between the parties to the conflicts; Deployment of government security personnel to manage the conflicts; Punishment of the perpetrators were effective strategies of managing conflict in the state; Humanitarian assistance from the federal and state governments was also an effective strategy for managing ethno-religious conflicts in the state; Security intervention (Field work 2024).*

Also, questionnaires were administered to authenticate our hypothesis on the effectiveness of Taraba state government's conflict resolution strategies employed in the management of protracted ethno-religious conflict in the state and the result is obtainable on the table below.

Table 1: **Mean and Standard deviation of respondents on the effectiveness of the Taraba State conflict management strategies employed for managing the persistent ethno-religious conflicts**

S/N	Item Statement	N	Mean	S.D	Decision
1	The use of kinetic and non-kinetic approaches/responses to manage ethno-religious conflict is very effective.	384	3.75	0.83	Agree
2	Government facilitation of mediation/dialogue between the parties to ethno-religious conflict,	384	4.07	0.63	Agree
3	Intervention of judicial and administrative panel of enquiry to resolve incidences of ethno-religious conflict is very effective.	384	4.13	0.64	Agree
4	Deployment of government security personnel to manage violence associated to ethno-religious conflict is a very effective.	384	4.52	0.50	Agree
5	The provision humanitarian assistance by Taraba State and federal governments is very effective in the management of ethno-religious conflicts	384	4.06	0.70	Agree
6	Punishment of perpetrators is an effective strategy for managing ethno-religious conflict.	384	3.75	0.95	Agree
7	The fact-finding mission of Taraba State House of Assembly to communities affected by ethno-religious conflict is an effective to manage the conflict.	384	3.70	0.86	Agree
8	Establishment of 'Peace Committee' by Taraba State Government and Local Government is very effective managing ethno-religious conflict.	384	4.12	0.75	Agree
9	Setting up ad-hoc of peace committee to mediate between the conflict parties is an effective strategy in resolve ethno-religious conflict.	384	4.22	0.63	Agree
10	Addressing the governance needs of the warring parties by the State and concerned Local Governments is an effective strategy for resolving ethno-religious conflict.	384	4.29	0.67	Agree
	Cluster Mean	**384**	**4.02**	**0.13**	**Agree**

Result presented in Table 1 showed the mean and standard deviations of respondents on how effective are the Taraba State conflict management strategies employed to management the persistent ethno-religious conflicts. Result showed that items 1-10 had mean ratings of 3.75, 4.07, 4.13, 4.52, 4.06, 3.75, 3.70, 4.12, 4.22 and 4.29 with standard deviations of 0.83, 0.63, 0.64, 0.50, 0.70, 0.95, 0.86, 0.75, 0.63 and 0.67 respectively. These mean ratings are above the criterion level of 3.00, which is the average of the response options on the instrument for measuring the cluster. This means that the use of kinetic and non-kinetic approaches/responses to manage ethno-religious conflict is very effective, government facilitation of mediation/dialogue between the parties to ethno-religious conflict, and intervention of judicial and administrative panel of enquiry to resolve incidences of ethno-religious conflict is very effective among all the items in Table 11 are the effectiveness of the Taraba State conflict management strategies employed to management the persistent ethno-religious conflicts. The cluster mean of 4.02 is also above the criterion level of 3.00 set as benchmark for accepting an item. The cluster mean of 4.02

with a standard deviation of 0.13 showed that the Taraba State conflict management strategies employed to management the persistent ethno-religious conflicts are effective.

Conclusion

Taraba state continues to experience repeated outbreaks of ethno-religious conflicts despite various peace efforts. In Taraba State, the ethno-religious divisions between the predominantly Christian ethnic groups (such as the Tiv and Jukun) and the Muslim Fulani herders are central to the conflict. These divisions are not only social but also political, with each group seeking to assert control over land, political power, and resources. The polarization of communities based on identity makes reconciliation challenging. Instead of building inclusive governance structures that address the concerns of all groups, political elites in the state have sometimes exploited these divisions to gain power, further deepening the divide and perpetuating the protractedness of the conflicts. In Taraba State, the history of violent clashes between ethnic and religious communities has fostered mutual distrust and insecurity. Each group tends to militarize in response to perceived threats from the other group, leading to a cycle of retaliatory violence.

Recommendation

This paper recommends among other things that for sustainable peace to be achieved, the underlying economic, institutional, and social drivers of the conflict should be addressed by the Taraba state government, breaking the vicious cycle that has trapped the state in repeated violence.

References

Abdul, H. (2002). "Ethno-religious crisis in Kaduna: impacts on women and children" in, E. Alemika and F. Okoye (eds), *Ethno-religious conflicts and democracy in Nigeria: challenges,* Kaduna: Humn Rights Monitor.

Abdul, M. O. A. (1986). *Religious challenges of national development.* Ibadan, inaugural lecture, University of Ibadan.

Abdullahi, S. B. (2006). *The Nigerian press coverage of the 2001 Tiv-Jukun conflict.* unpublished Master's Degree dissertation, University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria.

Adebayo, A. (2006), *"Ethnic Conflicts and Nigerian's Democracy and Development (1999- 2004)"* in Hassan S. et'al (eds) Democracy and Development in Nigeria (Vol. 3), Social Issues & External Relations, Lagos. Concept Publication Limited.

Adebayo, R. I. (2010). Ethno-Religious Crises and the Challenges of Sustainable Development in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa,* 12(4), 213-225

Adeniyi, M.O. (1993). "Religion and Politics: An Eye-Bird's View of Development in Nigeria" in Akamidu, R.A. et.al (eds.) *Religion and Politics in Nigeria,* Ilorin: Nigerian Association for the Study of Religion (NASR)

Alananmu, S. A. (2004). "Ethno-Religious Conflict in Nigeria" in African Profile, vol. 1, No.

Alananmu, S.A. (2005) "Reflection on Religion violence in Nigeria 1999-2004)" In Alananmu S.A. Issues in political violence in Nigeria. Ilorin Nigeria.

Albert, I. O. (1999). "New direction in the management of community conflicts in Nigeria: insights from the activities of AAPW", in Otite, O & Albert, I.O. *"Community conflicts in Nigeria".* Ibadan, Spectrum Books Limited.

Albert, I.O. (1993): Inter-ethnic Relations in a Nigerian City: The Historical Perspective of the Hausa-Igbo Conflicts in Kano, 1953-1991, Ibadan *Institute Francais de recherché en Afrique*.

Albert, I.O. (1999) *Community Conflict in Nigeria: Management, Resolution and Transformation.* Ibadan Spectrum.

Collier et.al (2003). Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy, Washington D.C: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development The World Bank

Collier, P., & Hoeffler, A. (2004). Greed and Grievance in Civil War. Oxford Economic Papers, 56(4), 563-595.

Collier, P., Hoeffler, A., & Soderbom, M. (2003). Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy. World Bank Policy Research Report.

Danzinger, J. N. (1998). Understanding the political world: a comparative introduction to political science 4th edition. New York: Longman, Inc.

Easterly, W. (2001). *The elusive quest for growth: economists' adventures and misadventures in the tropics.* Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2001.

Ekeh, R. (1999). "The Aguleri-Umuleri conflict-the theatre of fraticidal war" Makenkamp, M, Tongeren, V.P, and Veen, Hans, (Eds) *Searching for peace in Africa: an overview of conflict prevention and management activities.* Utrecht. European Platform.

Etannibi E.O. Alemika, S. (2000). A sociological analysis of ethnic and religious conflicts in the middle belt of Nigeria, in *Ethnic and religious rights.* Aquarterly publication of Human Rights Monitor, Special Edition, edited by Festus Okoye, April 2000, Kaduna Nigeria, p. 4.

Federal Republic of Nigeria,. (1999). "*The 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria",* (Lagos, Federal Government Press, 1999).

Fwa, K.L. (2003). "Ethno-Religious conflict in Kaduna State". In Imbogihe, A.T. (ed). Civil Society and Ethnic Conflict Management in Nigeria. Ibadan: Spectrum books.

Imobighe, T. A. (2003). "Ethnicity and ethnic conflicts in Nigeria: an overview" in Imobighe, T.A. (ed.) *Civil society and ethnic conflict management in Nigeria,* Ibadan: African Strategic and Peace Research Group, pp. 13 – 34.

Isah, M. I. (2001). "The state and institutional responses to ethnic conflict in Nigeria: the case of Jukun/Chamba and Kuteb communal conflicts of Takum Local Government, Taraba State". *Africa at crossroads: Complex political emergencies in the 21st Century*, UNESCO / ENA http://www.ethnonetafrica.org/pubs/crossroadskabir.htm.

Kwaja, C. M. A., (2013), 'Responses of the Plateau State Government to Violent Conflicts in the State', NSRP, Abuja.

Momodu A.J. (2019) *"The challenges of government institutions and nongovernmental organisations in the management of TivJukun conflict in Wukari, Taraba State"* (Ph.D thesis, University of Ibadan).

Monguno, A. K., (2013), *'Response by Borno and Yobe State Governments to Conflicts Since 2009'*, NSRP, Abuja.

North, D. C. (1993). Institutions, transaction costs and productivity 9309004, EconWPA.

Osaghae, E. (2007). "Federalism and the management of ethnicity in Nigeria: The 1999 Constitution in Focus", in Bassey, C et.al (ed) *Conflict resolution, identity crisis and development in Africa,* Lagos: Malthouse Press Limited.

Osumah, O. and Okor, P. (2009). *Implementation of millennium development goals (MGDs) and national security: a strategic thinking*, being a paper presented at the 2nd International Conference on Millennium Development Goalsand the challenges in Africa held at Delta State University, Abraka, June 7-10

Ralph R. P. (1995). *Ethnicity and development: the case of Guyana* (London: Avebury Press.
Ramsbotham, O., Woodhouse, T., & Miall, H. (2011). *Contemporary conflict resolution* (3rded.). Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Ross, M. (2000). "Good-enough" Isn't so bad: thinking about success and failure in ethnic conflict management" Peace and conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, 6(1): 27-47

Sadiq, L., (2013), *'Operation Rainbow trainees include Fulani, Hausa - Jang',* Weekly Trust, 21 December.

Taraba State House of Assembly (2021). *Reports of the various Ad-hoc Committees of Inquiry into different crisis within the state and Bills regulating Open Grazing in the state.*