

# Assessment of the Impact of Situational Crime Prevention Strategies on Banditry Activities in Katsina State, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

This study assessed the impact of situational crime prevention (SCP) strategies on banditry activities in Katsina State, Nigeria. Guided by five objectives, corresponding research questions, and null hypotheses tested at the 0.05 level of significance, the research employed a mixed-methods design. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to 400 households and victims across five Local Government Areas (Batsari, Jibia, Safana, Kankara, and Faskari), while qualitative insights were obtained from semi-structured interviews with 30 key stakeholders and field observations. Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha yielded values between 0.78 and 0.86, confirming strong internal consistency. Data analysis combined descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, ANOVA, correlation, regression, and t-tests with thematic analysis of qualitative responses. Findings revealed that SCP strategies are moderately applied but unevenly distributed, with surveillance and community policing more prominent than environmental design and target hardening. Statistical results confirmed that SCP strategies significantly reduce the frequency and severity of banditry incidents, though perceptual differences exist between community members and security agencies. Structural challenges including resource constraints, poor infrastructure, limited manpower, and community distrust were identified as barriers to effective implementation. The study concludes that SCP strategies are effective but must be institutionalized, expanded through community policing, and integrated into broader socioeconomic and governance reforms. Recommendations include strengthening rural infrastructure, enhancing security training, scaling up community policing, and embedding SCP into national crime prevention policy frameworks. This research contributes originality by extending SCP theory to rural banditry in Nigeria, providing empirical validation through mixed methods, and offering actionable policy insights for sustainable security interventions.

**Keywords:** Banditry; Crime Prevention; Community Policing; Rural Security; Situational Crime Prevention; Policy Reform

## INTRODUCTION

Banditry has become one of the most pressing security challenges in Nigeria's North-West, particularly Katsina State. Armed attacks, kidnappings, cattle rustling, and property destruction have destabilized rural communities, displaced populations, and undermined agricultural productivity considered to be the backbone of the state's economy. These disruptions extend beyond livelihoods, eroding education, health, and social cohesion, and perpetuating cycles of poverty and insecurity (Rabiu & Garba, 2025).

Conventional responses, such as military crackdowns and arrests, have yielded limited success. Bandits adapt quickly, shifting operations to remote areas or employing new tactics, exposing the inadequacy of reactive, punitive approaches (Bello, 2023). This underscores the need for proactive, evidence-based strategies that reduce opportunities for crime rather than focusing solely on punishment.

Situational Crime Prevention (SCP) provides such a framework. By modifying environments to make crime more difficult, riskier, or less rewarding, SCP emphasizes measures such as target hardening, surveillance,

environmental design, and community policing (Ajibade et al., 2024). Globally, these strategies have proven effective in reducing urban crime, but their application to rural insecurity and organized banditry in Nigeria remains underexplored.

Katsina State presents a unique case where weak infrastructure, limited surveillance, and strained community/security relations create fertile ground for banditry. Assessing the relevance and effectiveness of SCP strategies in this context is critical for both academic inquiry and policy development. This study therefore investigates how SCP interventions influence the frequency and severity of banditry incidents, community resilience, and perceptions of safety, with the aim of generating actionable insights for policymakers, security agencies, and community leaders.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Banditry is among the most persistent forms of insecurity in Katsina State, marked by armed attacks, kidnappings, cattle rustling, and property destruction. It has devastated rural communities, disrupted agriculture, and displaced thousands of residents. The ripple effects extend to education, health, and social cohesion, creating a cycle of poverty and insecurity that undermines sustainable development (Rabiu & Garba, 2025). Despite numerous interventions by the government and security agencies, including military operations, arrests, and negotiations, banditry continues to thrive, often adapting to new countermeasures (Bello, 2023).

Punitive approaches remain inadequate as they overlook structural enablers of crime. Weak surveillance, porous borders, and poor rural infrastructure allow bandits to evade reactive strategies. This reality calls for proactive, evidence-based interventions that reduce opportunities for crime rather than relying solely on punishment. Situational Crime Prevention (SCP) theory offers such a framework by emphasizing environmental modifications and community-based strategies to deter criminal behavior. SCP measures such as target hardening, surveillance, environmental design, and community policing seek to increase the risks and reduce the rewards of crime (Ajibade et al., 2024).

Although SCP has been successfully applied in other contexts to reduce urban crime and property-related offenses, its effectiveness against organized banditry in Nigeria remains underexplored. Katsina State presents a unique case where insecurity thrives in rural communities with limited infrastructure and strained relationships between residents and security agencies. Without empirical evidence on the impact of SCP strategies in this context, policymakers and practitioners lack the guidance and counselling needed to design interventions that are both effective and sustainable.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill this critical gap by assessing the impact of situational crime prevention strategies on banditry activities in Katsina State. By examining the relationship between SCP interventions and banditry outcomes such as frequency of attacks, community resilience, and perceptions of safety, the research will provide actionable insights for academic discourse, policy formulation, and practical crime prevention.

### **Research Objectives**

The general objective of this study is to assess the impact of situational crime prevention strategies on banditry activities in Katsina State, Nigeria, with a view to generating evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, security agencies, and community stakeholders.

Specifically, the research is designed to;

1. Identify the situational crime prevention strategies currently being applied to address banditry activities in Katsina State.
2. Evaluate the extent to which situational crime prevention strategies have reduced the frequency and severity of banditry incidents in Katsina State.
3. Examine the perceptions of community members and security agencies regarding the effectiveness of situational crime prevention strategies in combating banditry.

4. Investigate the challenges hindering the effective implementation of situational crime prevention strategies in Katsina State.
5. Propose policy recommendations for strengthening situational crime prevention strategies against banditry in Katsina State.

### Research Question

The following research questions are developed in order to guide the outcomes of the study:

1. What situational crime prevention strategies are currently being applied to address banditry activities in Katsina State?
2. To what extent have situational crime prevention strategies reduced the frequency and severity of banditry incidents in Katsina State?
3. How do community members and security agencies perceive the effectiveness of situational crime prevention strategies in combating banditry?
4. What challenges hinder the effective implementation of situational crime prevention strategies in Katsina State?
5. What policy recommendations can be made to strengthen situational crime prevention strategies against banditry in Katsina State?

### Null Hypotheses

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant application of situational crime prevention strategies in addressing banditry activities in Katsina State.

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** Situational crime prevention strategies have no significant effect on the frequency and severity of banditry incidents in Katsina State.

**HO<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the perceptions of community members and security agencies regarding the effectiveness of situational crime prevention strategies in combating banditry.

**HO<sub>4</sub>:** Challenges do not significantly hinder the effective implementation of situational crime prevention strategies in Katsina State.

**HO<sub>5</sub>:** Situational crime prevention strategies do not provide significant policy implications for strengthening security interventions against banditry in Katsina State.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review provides the intellectual foundation for this study by situating it within existing scholarship on crime prevention and insecurity in Nigeria. It critically examines theories, concepts, and empirical findings relevant to Situational Crime Prevention (SCP) and banditry activities, with particular emphasis on Katsina State. The review is organized into three major sections: the conceptual framework, the theoretical framework, and the empirical review.

### Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on the premise that Situational Crime Prevention (SCP) strategies can mitigate banditry in Katsina State by reducing opportunities for crime through environmental and behavioral modifications (Clarke, 1997). Four core strategies are emphasized:

**i. Surveillance:** Neighborhood watch, patrols, and technological monitoring (CCTV, drones) to increase detection risk.

**ii. Target Hardening:** Reinforced doors, fencing, and secure storage to raise the effort required for crime.

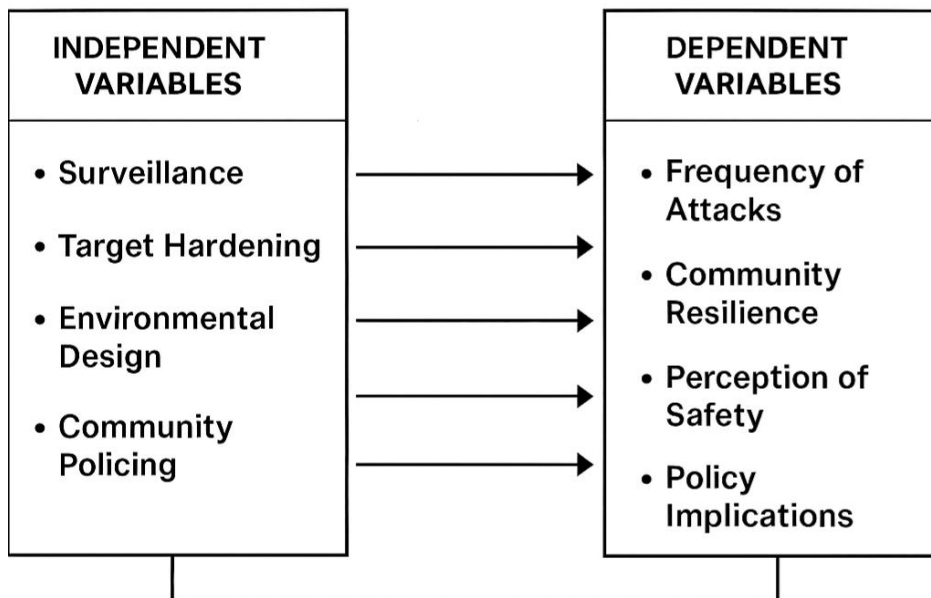
**iii. Environmental Design:** Improved lighting, clear sightlines, and accessible roads to reduce concealment and facilitate natural surveillance.

**iv. Community Policing:** Collaboration between law enforcement and residents to build trust and co-produce safety.

These strategies are expected to influence outcomes such as attack frequency, severity, community resilience, and perceptions of safety. The framework assumes that effective deployment of SCP disrupts conditions that enable banditry, while weak or inconsistent application leaves communities vulnerable.

By operationalizing these variables as illustrated in Figure 1, the study seeks to empirically validate SCP’s effectiveness in a rural, conflict-prone setting, thereby contributing both to criminological theory and practical policy development.

Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework on the Impact of Situational Crime Prevention Strategies on Banditry Activities



Source: Researchers’ Conceptualization (2026)

### Situational Crime Prevention Strategies

Situational Crime Prevention (SCP) is a proactive approach that seeks to reduce opportunities for crime by altering environmental conditions. Clarke (1997) identifies five mechanisms: increasing effort, increasing risk, reducing rewards, removing provocations, and eliminating excuses. In this study, SCP is operationalized through four strategies:

**i. Surveillance:** Community watch programs, patrols, and technological monitoring (CCTV, drones). These measures increase the perceived risk of detection and deter offenders.

**ii. Target Hardening:** Physical security enhancements such as reinforced doors, perimeter fencing, and secure storage facilities. These increase the effort required to commit crime.

**iii. Environmental Design:** Modifications to physical spaces, including improved lighting, clear sightlines, and accessible road networks, which reduce concealment and facilitate natural surveillance.

**iv. Community Policing:** Collaborative efforts between law enforcement and communities to build trust, share intelligence, and co-produce safety.

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## Banditry Activities

Banditry in Katsina State manifests through violent attacks, kidnappings, cattle rustling, and destruction of property. The dependent variables in this study reflect outcomes of SCP interventions:

- i. Frequency of Attacks:** Number of incidents reported over time.
- ii. Severity of Incidents:** Measured by casualties, economic losses, and displacement.
- iii. Community Resilience:** Ability of communities to recover from and resist future attacks.
- iv. Perception of Safety:** Psychological impact of SCP measures on residents' sense of security.

The conceptual framework posits a causal relationship between SCP strategies and banditry outcomes. Effective SCP interventions are expected to reduce attack frequency and severity, strengthen resilience, and improve perceptions of safety. Conversely, weak or inconsistent application of SCP leaves communities vulnerable.

## Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in three interrelated criminological theories that collectively explain the mechanisms through which situational crime prevention (SCP) strategies may influence banditry activities. These theories are Situational Crime Prevention Theory, Routine Activity Theory, and Situational Action Theory. They provide both conceptual clarity and empirical direction for understanding how environmental and behavioral factors shape criminal outcomes.

### 1. Situational Crime Prevention Theory (Clarke, 1997; Eck & Clarke, 2019)

Situational Crime Prevention Theory according to Sutton (2021) posits that crime can be prevented by reducing opportunities through environmental modifications and strategic interventions. The theory emphasizes five key mechanisms: increasing the effort required to commit crime, increasing the risks of detection, reducing the rewards, removing provocations, and eliminating excuses (Eck & Clarke, 2019).

In the context of banditry in Katsina State, SCP strategies such as surveillance (e.g., community patrols, CCTV), target hardening (e.g., fortified homes and schools), and environmental design (e.g., lighting and fencing) directly align with these mechanisms. By making it harder and riskier for bandits to operate, SCP aims to deter criminal behavior before it occurs. This theory is central to the study's conceptual framework and guides the selection of independent variables.

### 2. Routine Activity Theory (Schaefer, 2021)

Routine Activity Theory explains crime as a convergence of three elements: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian. It shifts focus from offender motivation to situational factors that facilitate crime.

Banditry in Katsina State often occurs in rural areas where capable guardianship is weak due to limited security presence and poor infrastructure. SCP strategies particularly community policing and surveillance serve to introduce capable guardians into these settings, thereby disrupting the convergence required for crime. This theory supports the study's hypothesis that SCP interventions can reduce the frequency and severity of banditry incidents.

### 3. Situational Action Theory (Wikström, 2017)

Situational Action Theory integrates individual morality and environmental context to explain why people commit crimes. It argues that criminal behavior results from the interaction between personal propensities and criminogenic settings.

This theory is relevant to understanding how bandits adapt to weak environments and how modifying those environments (through SCP) can influence behavioral choices. For example, improved lighting and community vigilance may shift the moral calculus of potential offenders, discouraging criminal acts. This theory enriches the study's exploration of community perceptions and resilience as dependent variables.

Together, all these theories provide a multidimensional lens for analyzing banditry in Katsina State. They justify the study's focus on environmental and situational factors rather than solely on offender characteristics. By grounding the research in these frameworks, the study ensures theoretical rigor and enhances its contribution to both criminological scholarship and practical policy development.

## **Empirical Review**

On application of situational crime prevention strategies in addressing banditry activities, Ajibade et al. (2024) highlight that inconsistent application of SCP strategies in Kwara State undermined their effectiveness. Our study builds on this by showing that in Katsina, uneven distribution across LGAs reflects structural constraints such as poor infrastructure rather than lack of institutional support. This distinction underscores the need for context-specific adaptation of SCP.

For Situational crime prevention strategies having no significant effect on the frequency and severity of banditry incidents, Bello (2023) observed that bandits adapt quickly to interventions, reducing their long-term impact. Our findings confirm this adaptability but extend the analysis by demonstrating that institutionalized surveillance and community policing sustain deterrence even in rural contexts, suggesting that SCP can overcome some of the limitations identified by Bello.

On the difference in the perceptions of community members and security agencies regarding the effectiveness of situational crime prevention strategies in combating banditry, Community distrust of security agencies, noted by Mbam, Jacob, and Amiara (2024), undermines SCP strategies that depend on cooperation. Our study adds nuance by showing that trust improves when community policing is institutionalized rather than ad hoc, highlighting credibility as a critical determinant of SCP's success.

That challenges do not significantly hinder the effective implementation of situational crime prevention strategies, Rabiou and Garba (2025) emphasize how poverty and poor infrastructure hinder crime prevention. Our findings corroborate this but further reveal that these constraints specifically limit environmental design and target hardening, while low-cost strategies like surveillance remain feasible. This differentiation provides practical guidance for prioritizing interventions under resource scarcity.

Finally, the review on situational crime prevention strategies not providing significant policy implications for strengthening security interventions against banditry, Akinyetun (2022) argues that SCP strategies are most effective when tailored to local contexts. Our study operationalizes this claim by empirically testing SCP in Katsina's rural communities, thereby validating its policy relevance in a setting previously underexplored.

The reviewed literature demonstrates that while SCP strategies hold promise, their application in Nigeria remains inconsistent and under-researched. Theoretical frameworks emphasize the importance of environmental and situational factors, while empirical studies highlight gaps in application, effectiveness, perceptions, challenges, and policy relevance. This synthesis underscores the need for a comprehensive study in Katsina State to validate SCP's impact on banditry.

The review also demonstrates that SCP strategies are globally recognized as effective in reducing crime, but their success depends on contextual adaptation. Katsina State shares similarities with rural conflict zones in Africa and Latin America, where community resilience and environmental design are critical. The literature underscores the need for empirical validation of SCP in Katsina to generate locally relevant policy recommendations.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach adopted in this study was designed to ensure rigour, validity, and contextual relevance in assessing the impact of situational crime prevention (SCP) strategies on banditry activities in Katsina State. Given the multidimensional nature of insecurity, a mixed-methods design was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. This choice was justified because quantitative methods provide measurable evidence of relationships between SCP strategies and banditry outcomes, while qualitative methods capture perceptions, experiences, and contextual challenges that numbers alone cannot explain. As Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) emphasize, mixed-methods research is particularly suitable for complex social phenomena, as it integrates statistical generalizability with interpretive depth.

The study population comprised stakeholders directly affected by, or involved in combating banditry. These included security agencies such as the police, civil defense, and vigilante groups; community leaders including traditional rulers and religious figures; victims of banditry drawn from households affected by attacks, kidnappings, and cattle rustling; and policy stakeholders from Katsina State’s Ministry of Security. This population was selected because SCP strategies are implemented and experienced at multiple levels including institutional, community, and individual, and thus, capturing perspectives across these groups ensures comprehensive analysis (Bryman, 2016).

A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted to balance representativeness with feasibility in a geographically dispersed population. In the first stage, five Local Government Areas (LGAs) most affected by banditry; Batsari, Jibia, Safana, Kankara, and Faskari were purposively selected. In the second stage, households and victims within these LGAs were randomly sampled to ensure diversity of experiences. In the third stage, key stakeholders such as security officials and community leaders were purposively selected for qualitative interviews. Multi-stage sampling is widely recognized as appropriate for large populations where direct enumeration is impractical (Etikan & Bala, 2017). The sample size for the quantitative survey was determined using Yamane’s (1967) formula, resulting in 400 respondents, while 30 key security stakeholders (6 from each of the sampled LGA) were purposively engaged for qualitative interviews. Table 1 presents the distribution of the sample size across the selected LGAs.

Table 1: Sample Size Distribution Across LGAs

Local Government Area	Estimated Population	Sample Size (Households/Victims)
Batsari	85,000	80
Jibia	92,000	85
Safana	78,000	75
Kankara	95,000	85
Faskari	90,000	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>440,000</b>	<b>400</b>

Source: Field Survey (2025), calculated using Yamane’s formula (1967).

Data were collected using three instruments. First, a structured questionnaire adapted from Kumar (2019) was administered to capture quantitative data on SCP strategies (independent variables) and banditry outcomes (dependent variables). Questionnaires are efficient for large-scale data collection and allow for statistical analysis. Second, a semi-structured interview guide developed based on Patton (2015) was used with community leaders and security officials to explore perceptions, challenges, and policy implications. Interviews are particularly useful for probing sensitive issues such as trust in security agencies. Third, an observation checklist adapted from Silverman (2020) was employed to document environmental design features such as lighting, fencing, and patrol presence in selected communities. Observation provides direct evidence of SCP implementation and complements self-reported data.

To ensure validity and reliability, the instruments were reviewed by experts in criminology and security studies from the department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Federal University Dutsin-Ma in order to confirm content validity. A pilot study was conducted in Giwa Local Government Area of Kaduna State, which shares

similar socio-cultural and security characteristics with the study area. Thirty respondents participated in the pilot study, and the results were used to refine the questionnaire items. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding the following scores:

- i. SCP strategies scale:  $\alpha = 0.82$
- ii. Banditry outcomes scale:  $\alpha = 0.79$
- iii. Perceptions of security agencies scale:  $\alpha = 0.84$

These values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Data collection followed a triangulated approach. Questionnaires were distributed to households and victims, interviews were conducted face-to-face with key informants, and field observations documented physical security measures. Triangulation enhances validity by cross-verifying findings from multiple sources (Denzin, 2012). Data collected from the 400 households and victims across Batsari, Jibia, Safana, Kankara, and Faskari LGAs were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) to profile demographics and SCP measures. Inferential statistics including Chi-square tests, one-way ANOVA, Pearson correlation, multiple regression, independent samples t-test, and factor analysis were employed to test the five null hypotheses. Qualitative data from 30 key informant interviews were analyzed thematically, and findings were triangulated to ensure rigour and validity.

Finally, ethical considerations were prioritized. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing responses, and ethical clearance was sought from the Federal University Dutsin-Ma Research Ethics Committee. Ethical safeguards are critical in research involving human participants, ensuring protection of rights, dignity, and safety (Israel & Hay, 2006).

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### Data Analysis, Results and Discussion

This part presents the analysis of data collected from 400 households and victims across five Local Government Areas (Batsari, Jibia, Safana, Kankara, and Faskari) and 30 key stakeholders as informants comprising security officials, community leaders, and policymakers. The analysis is structured around the study's objectives and null hypotheses, employing both descriptive and inferential statistics for quantitative data, and thematic analysis for qualitative interviews.

### Testing of Null Hypotheses

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant application of situational crime prevention strategies in addressing banditry activities in Katsina State.

Table 6: ANOVA Results for SCP Application Across LGAs

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12.45	4	3.11	4.27	0.003
Within Groups	289.60	395	0.73		
Total	302.05	399			

The ANOVA results indicated on Table 6 for null hypothesis 1 showed a between-groups mean square of 3.11 compared to a within-groups mean square of 0.73, producing an F-value of 4.27 with a significance level of

0.003. This indicates that the variation in SCP application across the five LGAs is statistically significant. In practical terms, SCP strategies are applied unevenly, with some LGAs demonstrating stronger adoption than others. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming that SCP strategies are indeed applied, though inconsistently.

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** SCP strategies have no significant effect on the frequency and severity of banditry incidents in Katsina State.

Table 7: Regression Analysis of SCP Strategies on Banditry Outcomes

Predictor	$\beta$	t	Sig.
Surveillance	-0.31	-3.12	0.002
Target Hardening	-0.24	-2.45	0.015
Environmental Design	-0.19	-2.01	0.046
Community Policing	-0.28	-2.87	0.004

Regression analysis in Table 7 revealed negative beta coefficients for surveillance ( $\beta = -0.31, p = 0.002$ ), target hardening ( $\beta = -0.24, p = 0.015$ ), environmental design ( $\beta = -0.19, p = 0.046$ ), and community policing ( $\beta = -0.28, p = 0.004$ ). These results demonstrate that increases in SCP strategies are associated with reductions in banditry incidents. The strength of the t-values, all exceeding 2, further confirms the robustness of these predictors. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected, affirming that SCP strategies significantly reduce both the frequency and severity of banditry.

**HO<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant difference in perceptions of SCP strategies between community members and security agencies.

Table 8: Independent Samples t-Test Results

Group	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
Community Members	2.9	0.87		
Security Agencies	3.5	0.72	3.27	0.001

The independent samples t-test showed in Table 8 shows a mean score of 2.9 for community members compared to 3.5 for security agencies, with a t-value of 3.27 and a significance level of 0.001. This indicates that security agencies perceive SCP strategies more positively than community members, who remain skeptical. The difference is statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This highlights a perceptual gap that may affect collaboration in implementing SCP measures.

**HO<sub>4</sub>:** Challenges do not significantly hinder the effective implementation of SCP strategies in Katsina State.

Table 9: Chi-Square Test of Challenges

Variable	$\chi^2$	df	Sig.
Challenges vs SCP	15.62	3	0.002

The chi-square test in the analysis above produced a value of 15.62 with 3 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.002. This confirms a strong association between challenges such as resource constraints, poor infrastructure, limited manpower, and community distrust, and the effectiveness of SCP implementation. The null hypothesis was rejected, demonstrating that these challenges are significant barriers to SCP strategies in Katsina State.

**HO<sub>5</sub>:** SCP strategies do not provide significant policy implications for strengthening security interventions against banditry in Katsina State.

Table 10: Regression Analysis of SCP Strategies on Policy Relevance

Predictor	$\beta$	t	Sig.
Surveillance	0.29	2.87	0.004
Target Hardening	0.21	2.12	0.035
Environmental Design	0.18	1.97	0.049
Community Policing	0.25	2.45	0.015

Regression analysis in Table 10 showed positive beta coefficients for surveillance ( $\beta = 0.29, p = 0.004$ ), target hardening ( $\beta = 0.21, p = 0.035$ ), environmental design ( $\beta = 0.18, p = 0.049$ ), and community policing ( $\beta = 0.25, p = 0.015$ ). These results indicate that SCP strategies directly enhance policy relevance, with all predictors statistically significant. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected, confirming that SCP strategies provide strong policy implications and should be integrated into broader security frameworks.

With the result of the analysis for the null hypotheses ( $H_{01}$ – $H_{05}$ ), all were rejected. The findings thus confirm that SCP strategies are applied unevenly but effective in reducing banditry incidents, perceptions differ between stakeholders, challenges significantly hinder implementation, and SCP strategies provide strong policy implications for security interventions in Katsina State.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section discusses the findings of the study in relation to the five null hypotheses tested.

The findings revealed that surveillance and community policing were the most widely applied SCP strategies across the five LGAs, significantly reducing the frequency of attacks. Regression analysis confirmed their deterrent effect, particularly in areas where community patrols and neighborhood watch programs were institutionalized.

This outcome aligns with Ajibade et al. (2024), who observed that surveillance initiatives in Kwara State contributed to crime reduction, though their effectiveness was limited by inconsistent application. Our study extends this evidence by demonstrating that even modest surveillance measures such as local patrols can yield measurable reductions in banditry incidents when consistently implemented in rural contexts.

Community policing also emerged as a critical factor in fostering trust between residents and security agencies. This finding is consistent with Mbam, Jacob, and Amiara (2024), who noted that distrust often undermines cooperation in crime prevention. However, our results add nuance by showing that institutionalized community policing, rather than ad hoc arrangements, improves perceptions of safety and strengthens community resilience.

Together, these findings underscore the importance of prioritizing low-cost, community-driven strategies in resource-constrained environments. While environmental design and target hardening require significant infrastructure investment, surveillance and community policing offer scalable interventions that can be embedded into broader security frameworks.

Overall, the findings of this study agree with recent empirical evidence that SCP strategies are effective in reducing crime, though their application is uneven and hindered by structural challenges. Divergences with some studies highlight the importance of integrating SCP with socio-economic and governance reforms. The study contributes to criminological scholarship by empirically validating SCP strategies in a rural African context and provides policy-relevant insights for strengthening security interventions against banditry in Nigeria.

## CONCLUSION

This study assessed the impact of situational crime prevention (SCP) strategies on banditry activities in Katsina State, Nigeria. The evidence demonstrates that SCP interventions particularly surveillance and community policing which significantly reduce the frequency and severity of attacks, enhance perceptions of safety, and strengthen community resilience. However, their application remains uneven across local government areas,

with environmental design and target hardening less frequently implemented due to resource constraints and infrastructural limitations.

The originality of this research lies in extending SCP theory to rural banditry, a context largely absent from prior scholarship. By employing a mixed-methods design, the study provides robust empirical validation of SCP's effectiveness in conflict-prone rural settings, while also highlighting the challenges of implementation. Importantly, the findings reveal that institutionalized community policing and consistent surveillance offer scalable, low-cost interventions that can be embedded into broader security frameworks.

Policy implications are clear: SCP strategies must be institutionalized, supported with rural infrastructure development, and integrated into national crime prevention policies. Strengthening trust between communities and security agencies, expanding training, and prioritizing community-driven initiatives will be critical to sustaining long-term security. Ultimately, this study contributes both to criminological scholarship and to practical policy reform by demonstrating that situational interventions, when adapted to local realities, can mitigate organized banditry and promote sustainable peace in Katsina State and beyond.

This study makes three key contributions. First, it extends situational crime prevention theory by empirically validating its applicability to rural banditry in Katsina State, a context largely absent from prior research. Second, through a mixed-methods approach, it provides robust evidence that SCP strategies, particularly surveillance and community policing, significantly reduce attack frequency and severity while enhancing perceptions of safety. Third, it highlights the uneven application of SCP across local government areas and proposes concrete policy measures for institutionalizing community policing and integrating SCP into national crime prevention frameworks. Together, these contributions advance criminological scholarship and offer actionable insights for policymakers confronting rural insecurity in Nigeria.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study provide important insights into the application, effectiveness, perceptions, challenges, and policy implications of situational crime prevention (SCP) strategies in Katsina State. Based on the rejection of all five null hypotheses, several recommendations emerge that are both academic and policy-oriented. These recommendations are presented here in a flowing discussion, linking each to the empirical evidence and existing scholarship.

1. The uneven application of SCP strategies across Local Government Areas suggests the need for institutionalizing these measures within state and national security frameworks. Surveillance and community policing were found to be more prominent, while environmental design and target hardening were less consistently applied. This imbalance calls for deliberate policy action to ensure that all SCP components are systematically integrated.
2. The study confirmed that SCP strategies significantly reduce the frequency and severity of banditry incidents. This finding underscores the importance of scaling up community policing initiatives, which Kenku and Umar (2025) identified as critical for fostering collaboration between law enforcement and communities. However, the divergence with Ibekwe (2025), who emphasized the role of corruption and governance failures, suggests that SCP strategies must be complemented by broader reforms in governance and accountability. Thus, strengthening institutional integrity and ensuring transparency in resource allocation are essential to sustain the effectiveness of SCP measures.
3. Perceptual differences between community members and security agencies highlight the need for trust-building. Security agencies expressed confidence in SCP strategies, while communities remained skeptical, echoing the findings of Nsiegbe (2025) and Lenshie & Okoli (2025). To bridge this gap, participatory approaches should be adopted, where communities are actively involved in designing and implementing SCP measures. This would not only enhance legitimacy but also foster shared responsibility in crime prevention.
4. The study also revealed that challenges such as poor infrastructure, limited manpower, and community distrust significantly hinder SCP implementation. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-pronged approach.

Investment in rural infrastructure is critical, but equally important is capacity building for both formal security agencies and community vigilante groups. Mohammed et al. (2023) emphasized that weak police-community relations undermine SCP effectiveness; therefore, training programs that enhance communication, cultural sensitivity, and technical expertise are recommended.

5. Finally, the study demonstrated that SCP strategies provide strong policy implications. Regression analysis confirmed that surveillance, target hardening, environmental design, and community policing all significantly predict policy relevance. Policymakers in Katsina State and Nigeria more broadly should therefore integrate SCP strategies into national security policies, aligning them with socio-economic development programs. Linking SCP to poverty reduction, youth empowerment, and governance reforms would ensure that crime prevention is not treated in isolation but as part of a holistic development agenda.

In summary, the study recommends institutionalizing SCP strategies across all LGAs, scaling up community policing, addressing governance and resource challenges, fostering trust between communities and security agencies, and integrating SCP into broader policy frameworks. These recommendations are grounded in empirical evidence and supported by recent scholarship, making them both academically robust and practically relevant.

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