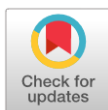


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Implications of Nigerian Newspapers' Framing of Police Brutality on Peace and National Security

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Abstract

The incessant occurrence of police brutality in Nigeria has raised concern among the citizenry. This is because the menace has claimed lives of innocent Nigerians. The media, especially the newspaper has been playing critical role in keeping people abreast of this menace. Scholars have investigated police brutality and newspapers coverage. However, there is a dearth of study on national security, newspapers framing and police brutality. Hence, this study examines the implications of newspapers framing of police brutality on national security. The study is underpinned by framing theory. Mixed method research of quantitative and qualitative content analysis were employed to examine all the editions of *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers published in Nigeria between January 1 and June 30, 2025. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 25 editions of the newspaper as the sample size. Coding sheet served as the instrument. Descriptive statistics and thematic analyses were used to analyse data while tables and texts were used to present the findings. The findings revealed that newspapers framing of police brutality in Nigeria strengthen the social responsibility role of the mass media towards peace and national security as the framing align with peace-oriented journalism, thereby, improving national security through humanisation of the victims and proactive approach to the incidents. The study, therefore, concluded that the Nigerian mass media, especially, the newspaper is pivotal in strengthening peace and national security by adopting peace-oriented approach in framing conflict-related issues. The study recommended among others, that the Nigerian media should use victim-centric approach with proactive coverage of reforms, peacebuilding initiatives, and systemic solutions through the adoption of Galtung's peace journalism framework in order to promote

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peace and national security.

Keywords: police brutality, peace, national security, nigerian newspaper, newspapers framing

Introduction

Information is crucial to the development of any society. The mass media are central to the provision of relevant information for nation building as they can bring to public notice, issues that require attention with a view to mobilising development efforts in that area. Meanwhile, Security is very vital in any nation of the world. Security and communication are intertwined because dissemination of appropriate information helps shed light on activities and happenings on issues regarding security (Sofadekan & Soluade, [2025](#)). The Constitution of the Federal Republic; 1999 constitution as amended confers the responsibility of monitoring the environment on the mass media and disseminating information therein to members of the society (Federal Republic of Nigeria, [1999](#)). This section has therefore empowered the Nigerian mass media to monitor the activities of people, organisations, and other stakeholders in Nigeria, including the Nigeria Police Force, especially on issues that relate to national security, as the security of lives and property is a cardinal responsibility of any government. To protect the security of lives and properties of the Nigerian residents, the Nigeria police force (NPF) is saddled with the responsibility of preventing crimes and crime-related activities by enforcing laws while upholding the principles of fairness, accountability and respect for human rights (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, [n.d.](#)).

However, Nigeria as a country has witnessed series of cases of disrespect for human rights by police officers. These include extrajudicial killings, torture and other forms of abuse perpetrated by the law enforcement officers (Chinedu, [2023](#)), and these, heralded the agitation for #EndSARS protest in Nigeria; thus, the Federal Government disbandment of Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) in October 11, 2020, under the administration of the late President Mohammed Buhari. In spite of the disbandment, there are allegations that the disbanded police unit still patrols streets, extorts, arrests and tortures citizens without reasons (The Punch, [2022b](#)). In supporting this, Amnesty international ([2021](#)) submitted that the Nigerian securities forces have committed at least 82 extrajudicial killings and 57 cases of torture between December 2020, and May 2021. In addition,

Amnesty International report ([2024](#)) added that the police atrocities continue four years after #EndSARS protests. For instance, one Mrs Bolanle Raheem was shot dead by a police officer on December 25, 2022, under the *Ajah* bridge in Lagos (The Punch, [2023a](#)). Also, the killing of a 16-year-old boy in Imo state during a protest against police brutality; the officer was said to have fired live rounds at the protesters, leading to the death of the teenager (This Day, [2023](#)). The killing of Godsent Obhafuosu by a cop on August 13, 2022 during the burial of his master's late mother in the Esan North East Local Government Area of Edo State (The Punch, [2022b](#)). Similarly, the death of Gafaru Buraimoh on December 7, 2022 which was also linked to the cops at Ajah Police Division consequent upon being hitting by a stray bullet while coming out of *SkyMall* (The Punch, [2022b](#)), etc.

Meanwhile, literatures such as Human Rights Watch ([2020](#)) have alleged the present Nigeria Police Force as the most indulged forces in misusing power. Hence, the public view the police with anger and disdain (Chinedu, [2023](#)). This perhaps is responsible for the Nigerian youths' perception of the Nigeria Police Force as the most cruel and unjust institution in the country (Amnesty International, [2020a](#)). Thus, police brutality has heightened the disconnection between the public and the Nigeria police force with the feeling of insecurity (Akinyetun, [2021](#)).

The mass media, especially the newspapers that are saddled with the responsibility of shaping public perceptions on societal issues (Wonuola & Adisa, [2024](#)) have been up and doing in discharging their responsibility by keeping people informed of the happenings in the society. This has propelled scholars such as Abang ([2023](#)) to examine "Police brutality and human rights violation in Nigeria: A critical analysis of the causes, effects, and responses" and concluded that the newspapers tended to downplay incidents of police brutality and did not provide sufficient context or analysis of the root causes of the problem. He, therefore, recommended future researchers to examine media coverage of police brutality on public attitude towards Law Enforcement Agency in Nigeria. Similarly, Abubakar et al. ([2022](#)) examined "Comparative Analysis of *The Guardian* and the *Nation* newspapers' framing of police brutality in Nigeria" and recommended more investigations on police brutality and mass media in order to create more awareness on the need to eradicate police brutality. Hence, there is a need to investigate the implications of newspapers'

framing of police brutality on peace and national security in order to unravel the effect that newspapers framing has on mitigating or escalating police brutality. This study therefore, examined the pattern of framing of police brutality-related issues in the selected national dailies in order to shed light on the security implications of the Nigerian newspaper's portrayal of police brutality.

Specifically, the study seeks to determine: the extent of coverage of police brutality in the selected Nigerian national dailies, to examine the pattern of framing of police brutality in the selected national dailies; and establish the implications of newspapers' framing of police brutality on peace and national security.

Literature Review

Framing Theory

Framing theory is closely linked to the agenda-setting function of the media, as newspapers' framing decisions can influence which issues the public deems important and worthy of attention (Zaklama, [2025](#)). Understanding agenda-setting through framing can reveal how newspapers prioritize certain aspects of police brutality coverage over others. Framing theory was first introduced by Erving Goffman in the 1970s and later expanded upon by Robert Entman in 1993 (Zaklama, [2025](#)). Framing theory according to Entman cited in Wonuola and Adisa ([2024](#)) is a communication theory that explains how the presentation of information can affect the interpretation of that information by individuals or groups. The theory posits that the media frames focus on highlighting certain aspects of issues while downplaying others, thereby, shaping the way audiences understand and interpret the world (Arowolo, [2017](#)). The theory, therefore, explains how the media's selection and presentation of information influence individuals' perceptions and interpretations of events, issues and policies.

Arowolo ([2017](#)) added that a frame is a central organising idea or cognitive structure that helps individuals interpret and understand events. Hence, the theory provides a lens through which information is filtered and understood, guided individuals' perceptions, evaluations and decision-making processes. The media, therefore, have the power to shape public perceptions of reality through their framing of events. This is particularly important in the context of police brutality in Nigeria, as the traditional

media have been known to downplay incidents, thereby, contributing to a lack of accountability for police officers (Amuno et al., [2023](#)).

Framing theory, therefore, is relevant to the study as it provides valuable insights into how the Nigerian newspapers shape public understanding about police brutality and national security. Thus, the theory aids in understanding how the Nigerian newspapers construct stories on police brutality in order to determine its effect on peace and national security as words are critical in mitigating and escalating tension.

Brief History of Police Brutality

Police brutality is not a new phenomenon as it has a long history that spans across different regions and countries. It can be defined as the extreme form of police misconduct and civil rights violation (Leonard, [2023](#)). Globally, there has been a long history of the abusive of power imbalance between law enforcement officials and civilians. For instance, in 1872, *Chicago Tribune* article reported that a civilian was beaten and arrested by the Harrison Street Police Station (Romeka & Christopher, [2022](#)). This shows that police brutality is not new globally. In many instances, the origins of police forces can be found in systems of oppression, such as colonialism and slavery (Buss, [2022](#)).

During these systems, law enforcement agencies were given more autonomy and discretion to handle incidents in their jurisdiction. This inspired the notion that police officers had to physically apprehend individuals who violated law and this later gave birth to discriminatory practices as police officers pursued specific demographics (Buss, [2022](#)). Meanwhile, many countries aside USA have recorded police brutality. For instance, in 2019, Rio De Janeiro reported over 1800 officers-related fatalities in Brazil (BBC News, [2020](#)). In Kenya, 122 people were killed by Kenyan police in 2019 (Human Rights Watch, 20 February, 2020). Other instances were the police murdered of 600 protesters between October 2019, and January 2020, in Iraq (Amnesty International, [2020b](#)), the killing of over 500 civilians between 2015 and 2018 in Jamaica (Associated Press News, [2023](#)), the Dominion attack on sex workers, especially, trans women who were abused by law enforcement agency through raping, beating and humiliating.

In the Nigerian context, the history of police brutality can be linked to the colonial era when the British colonial authorities established the police

as bodyguards and an instrument to maintain public order and suppress the native (Alozie, [2019](#)). However, the formal establishment of police in Nigeria dated back to 1861. This was done in order to protect the British trade and business interest as well as, to forestall peace between the natives and the imperial merchants (Chris, [2020](#)). The police force established during this period inherited a hierarchical structure and a culture of authoritarianism that laid the groundwork for future incidents of brutality (Oni, [2024](#)). After Nigeria gained independence in 1960, the police force underwent a transition, but many of the issues stemming from the colonial era persisted. This is because the force continues to be characterised by lack of accountability, corruption and a culture of impunity. This, therefore, provided a fertile ground for the occurrence of police brutality incident (Eliakim, [2024](#)).

Specifically, the 1990s witnessed a surge in human rights violations by the Nigeria police. For instance, the harassment of the residents of Maroko slum in Lagos on January 1, 1991 (Human Rights Watch World Report, [1990](#)). Meanwhile, the excessive use of force by the government in response to civil unrest and political opposition has led to numerous cases of police brutality. This further highlighted the deep-seated structural and systemic issues within the Nigerian police force and further contributes to the perpetuation of police brutality (Onuoha et al., [2022](#)). For example, the excessive use of force against protesters during the *#Endbadgovernance* protest from August 1 to August 10 led to the arrest of some protesters and death of about 24 protesters (Amnesty International, [2024](#)). It is important to note that police brutality in Nigeria is not limited to physical violence, but also encompasses other forms of abuse. This includes extortion, illegal detentions and torture. The genesis of police brutality in Nigeria, therefore, encompasses a complex interplay of historical factors, sociopolitical dynamics and institutional shortcomings that have contributed to its persistence.

Cases of Police Brutality in Nigeria

Police brutality can take various forms, such as physical abuse, verbal abuse, harassment, intimidation or even extrajudicial killings. In Nigeria, instances of police brutality persist. Some notable examples include Bolanle Raheem, a seven-month pregnant lawyer, who was shot dead by an assistant superintendent of police, Drambi Vandi, in Lagos State on December 25, 2022 (The Cable, [2023](#)). Faiz Abdullahi, who died in police custody on 30

July 2023, consequent upon torture during interrogation (Daily Trust, [2023](#)). A Police officer who shot his girlfriend, Joy Ndubueze in October, 2020, at Ikeja, Lagos State, over an argument (Vanguard, [2021](#)). The Otodo-Gbame community in Lagos State was forcibly evicted by security forces, including the police, in 2016. The eviction involved the use of violence and resulted to displacement of thousands of residents (Amnesty International, [2016](#)). This incident highlighted the disproportionate use of force against vulnerable communities and the violation of human rights.

In addition, the extrajudicial killings of Shi'ite protesters in 2015 as a result of clashes between the Nigerian police and members of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN), which eventually led to the extrajudicial killings of several Shi'ite protesters in Zaria, Kaduna State (Premium Times, [2020](#)). Kolade Johnson, a young Nigerian, who was shot and killed by a police officer in Lagos in 2019. His tragic death sparked outrage and led to widespread protests against police brutality. The incident brought attention to the excessive use of force by police officers and the need for accountability (Channels Television, [2022](#)). The alleged extrajudicial killings by police officers in Ebonyi State in April 2021 were consequent upon the shooting of a group of young men by police officers. This resulted in the deaths of at least three individuals (Human Rights Watch, [2021](#)).

Moreover, in a tweet, *SARS* officials shot a young man, left him by the roadside in Ugheli, Delta State, Nigeria on October 3rd, 2020 (The Punch, [2020](#)). The killing of Paul Durowaiye by a cop on January 22, 2022, over a N20 sachet of water that belonged to a police officer, which the victim drank (The Punch, [2022b](#)). Also, Emmanuel Joseph, an All-Progressive Congress Ward Seven youth leader in Calabar South, Calabar State, was killed by a police officer on May 27, 2022, over a rowdy manner at the Cultural Centre, Calabar, which led to the invitation of Anti-cultism/kidnapping officers who eventually shot him in the chest (The Punch, [2022b](#)). Another instance was the accidental discharge of a rifle by a policeman that led to the death of two guests at a birthday party in the Egbeda area of Lagos, in April 2022 (This Day, [2023](#)).

Furthermore, on January 11, 2023, operatives of the Nigeria Police Force guarding the palace at Ilasan, Lekki, Lagos, were captured in the video assaulting a lady when she attempted to record them during a conversation with an Uber driver. The lady's phone was seized, and she was also arrested. This act contradicted the submission of the spokesperson of

the State police Command, Benjamin Hundeyin. “It is not a crime to record a policeman on duty as long as it does not obstruct duty (Business Hallmark, [2023](#)). In October 2021, a day set to remember victims of police brutality, an Uber driver, Adedotun, was beaten, brutalised, pepper-sprayed and forcefully dragged into a black maria by operatives of the Nigeria Police Force during the #ENDSARS memorial which took place at the Lekki tollgate (People Gazette, [2023](#)).

In March 2023, a mobile policeman, Sergeant Olalere Michael, killed a woman identified as Miss Tosin, suspected to be his mistress, and later shot himself dead at school premises in Ilorin, Kwara State (The Punch, [2023a](#)). On April 21, 2023, some armed police officers were secretly filmed using a machete to smack two unidentified persons in Imo State (Premium Times, [2023a](#)). On April 5, 2023, there was tension in Asaba, Delta State capital, following the killing of a middle-aged businessman, identified as Emmanuel Onyeka, by a police officer after the deceased reportedly refused to offer him an N100 bribe at a checkpoint (Vanguard News, [2023b](#)). On January 1, 2023, a policeman attached to the Katsina State Police Command shot two people dead. The incident happened in the *Filin Kanada* area of the State. Three teenagers also sustained gunshot injuries (Premium Time, [2023b](#)).

The cop, alongside three colleagues attached to the Ogombo Police Station, stormed the Lekki Peninsula Scheme II to enforce the government’s ban on motorcycle operations on the estate and shot Koleosho Abayomi, a security guard at the Lekki Peninsula Scheme II, at the Eti Osa Local Government Area of Lagos State on September 28, 2022. Koleosho was, however, fortunate to have survived. Meanwhile, the identity of the cops was not revealed (The Punch, [2023c](#)). Oliver Ezra Barawani, a graduate of Taraba State University, was killed by a policeman while driving with his boss, Liu, a Local Government chairman, on June 4, 2022 (This day, [2023](#)). On May 23, 2022, a Journalist, Toba Adedeji, was shot by a trigger-happy policeman in Osogbo, Osun State while covering a protest. On July 11, 2022, Emeka Uwalaka, a National Diploma Civil Engineering student of the Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri, Imo State, was shot by a policeman attached to the Nekede Police Division (Daily Post Nigeria, [2022](#)). In addition, on 20th September, 2023, some police officers invaded a Lekki shop, arrested an attendant, and plotted charges (The Punch, [2023b](#)).

These instances contradict the provision of Article 3, Universal

Declaration of Human Rights, which provides the right to life, liberty, and security of a person (United Nations, [n.d.](#)). Similarly, the code of ethics of the Nigeria Association of Social Workers clearly upholds and promotes the rights, dignity and worth of persons in all professional endeavours (Nigeria Association of Social Workers, [n.d.](#)). Hence, there is a need to curb this menace in our society as it erodes public trust in law enforcement institutions and the legitimacy of the Nigerian state.

Newspaper and Police Brutality

Newspapers play a crucial role in shaping public understanding and discourse surrounding incidents of police brutality in contemporary society. Their coverage of such incidents can influence public opinion, policy debates, and social movements seeking justice and accountability (Pramiti, [2023](#)). The framing of police brutality incidents in newspapers can significantly impact public perceptions. Media outlets have the power to shape narratives by choosing specific language and emphasizing certain aspects of the incidents. For example, they may focus on the use of force by police officers or highlight the racial or social context in which the incidents occur. These framing choices can influence readers' interpretations and understanding of the incidents (Wonuola et al., [2023](#)).

Newspapers also serve as a critical platform for raising awareness about incidents of police brutality. Through investigative reporting and in-depth journalism, newspapers can uncover cases that might otherwise remain hidden or receive minimal attention. They can shed light on systemic issues, expose patterns of misconduct, and provide a voice to victims and their communities (Pramiti, [2023](#)). However, newspapers must also navigate challenges in their coverage of police brutality. The reliance on official police sources and narratives can introduce biases and perpetuate the perspective of law enforcement agencies. Hence, news reporters need to critically assess and verify the information they receive, seek diverse perspectives, and hold authorities accountable.

Police Brutality and National Security

According to Lambe ([2024](#)) the Nigerian police were saddled with the responsibility of maintaining internal security and complementing the efforts of other parliamentary agencies, such as the correctional centres, immigration, customs services, and some levels of performance of military duties within and outside the country. This submission is in line with

Section 4 of the Police Act, CAP 359, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990, which states:

The police shall be employed for the prevention and detection of crime, the apprehension of offenders, the preservation of law and order, the protection of life and property and the due enforcement of all laws and regulations with which they are directly charged and shall perform such military duties within or without Nigeria as may be required by them, by or under the authority of this or any other Act (Vanguard, [2021](#)).

Thus, in discharging this responsibility, the Nigeria Police Service according to Asanebi ([2023](#)) should uphold the principles of fairness, accountability and respect for human rights. Meanwhile, there is a growing concern of security breach alleged to be perpetrated by the Nigeria Police Force and this contradicts the tenet of the Part II, Section 3 of the Police Acts and Regulations that highlight the duties of the police force to include the prevention and detection of crime, the preservation of law and order (Nigeria Police Act, [2020](#)). This, therefore, contributed to insecurity in Nigeria. Recorded threats to national security in Nigeria include kidnapping, armed robbery, extra-judicial killing, police brutality, etc. Police brutality which is the concern of this study can be viewed according to Leonard ([2023](#)) as the extreme form of police misconduct and civil rights. The police brutality seems to oppose the protection of life as stated in the Act. This, therefore, can be termed as a threat to peace and national security.

National security in the view of Alozie ([2019](#)) refers to the protection of lives and properties of the citizens, preservation of sovereignty, territorial, economy, socio-cultural and political harmony in a country. National security in line with the Federal Government according to Nwakoby et al. ([2021](#)) encompasses three elements: total defense, diplomacy and internal security. Internal security is centred on protection, safety and survival of both the state and its citizens from harm, destruction and some other threats dangerous for human survival (Abraham et al., [2023](#)). This, therefore, implies that police brutality is a threat to internal security as it violates Article 2 of Declaration of Human Rights which includes the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. This is in accordance to the submission of Lambe ([2024](#)) that the Police force has lived beyond expectation of protecting national security. This perhaps, is

responsible for why some Nigerians, especially youths view the police as enemy rather than friend (Ademola, [2019](#)) based on the alleged extra-judicial killing by the Nigeria police officer. For instance, Buchanan-Clarke and Lekalake ([2016](#)) in their study between 2014 and 2015, “Attitude of citizens to Nigerian Police” discovered that only 21% of the participants have some forms of trust and faith in Nigeria as majority perceived Nigeria to be unsecured as a result of police brutality and other related crimes. Hence, police brutality could be described as a threat to peace and national security.

Method

The study adopts quantitative and qualitative content analysis. Content analysis refers to the examination of manifest content of communication to determine the existing patterns therein (Tejumaiye, [2017](#)). Johan Galtung model of peace and war journalism was adopted to analyse the newspapers content on police brutality.

Table 1

Revised Version of Johan Galtung Generic Model of Peace and War Journalism (Maslog 2005 cited in Wonuola et al, [2023](#))

War / Violence Journalism	Peace/Conflict-Sensitive Journalism
1. War / Violence oriented Focuses on conflict arena, 2 parties, 1 goal (winning) war, “zero-sum” oriented Closed spaced, closed time, causes and exists in the arena, “who threw the first stone?” Focuses only on visible effects of violence (numbers killed, or wounded, material damaged) Makes wars opaque/secret “Us-them” journalism, propaganda, a voice for us Sees “them” as the problem focuses on who prevails in war Dehumanizes “them”; more so the worse the weapon Reactive: waiting for violence before reporting	1. Peace / Conflict-oriented Explores conflict formation, x parties, y parties, z issues, win-win orientation Open space, open time causes and outcomes anywhere, also in history/culture Focuses on invisible effects of violence/trauma and glory, damage to structure/culture Makes conflict transparent Gives voices to all parties, empathy, understanding Sees conflict/war as the problem; focuses on conflict creativity Humanizes all sides, more so the worse the weapon Pro-active: prevention before violence/war occurs
2. Propaganda-oriented expose “their” untruths help “our” cover-ups/lies	2. Truth-oriented expose untruths on all sides uncover all cover-ups

3. Elite-oriented Focuses on “our suffering” on able-bodied elite males, “being their mouthpiece” Name “their” evil-doer Focuses on all elite peacemakers	3. People-oriented Focuses on suffering all over; on women, the aged, children, giving voice to the voiceless Name all evil-doers Focuses on the people peacemakers
4. Victory-oriented Peace=violence + ceasefire Conceals peace initiatives before victory is at hand Focuses on treaties, institutions, the controlled society Aftermath: learning for another war, returning if the “old war” flares up.	4. Solution-oriented Peace=non-violence + creativity Highlights peace initiatives to prevent more war Focuses on structure, culture the peaceful society Aftermath: resolution, reconstruction, reconciliation.

Hence, the newspaper's contents were analysed based on Johan Galtung's generic model of peace/conflict journalism and war/violence journalism. Galtung's peace and war generic model has three indicators which were later expanded to 13 by Lee and Maslog (2005), as cited in Wonuola et al. (2023). Three indicators each from peace and war/violent journalism were adopted to analyse the newspapers' contents on police brutality in order to clearly establish the effect that the reportage has on national security. Thus, the study produced indices to measure violent framing and peace framing in the selected newspapers. Hence, a coding sheet was prepared based on violent journalism and peace journalism strategies, and the three indicators under each frame were adopted. For war/violence journalism, violence-oriented, elite-oriented, and victory-oriented were used as strategies to measure the newspapers' reports, while peace-oriented, people-oriented, and solution-oriented were adapted to measure peace journalism. This is done to determine the effects that the newspapers' framing of police brutality has on national security.

The population of the study comprised all the editions of *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers published in Nigeria between January 1, 2025, and June 30, 2025, based on the recurrence of cases of police brutality in Nigeria. The population, therefore, amounted to 362 editions. That is, 181 editions each were selected from each newspaper. Purposive sampling technique was used to select *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers, as both newspapers are acclaimed to be national newspapers with a national audience and appeal, wide coverage of national and international outlooks, noted for high quality of journalism and distinct editorial voice (Wonuola

et al., 2023). In addition, a purposive sampling technique was used to select the editions that contain information on police brutality related-issues. The units of measurement for the study were divided into the following categories: story type; news, feature, editorial, cartoon and column; pattern of framing; peace, people, solution, victory: violence, elite; while the content category is police brutality-related cases. The coding sheet served as the instrument to gather data from the selected newspapers.

Results and Discussion

The data gathered through the coding sheets were analysed with the aid of descriptive statistics, while frequency tables, simple percentages, and texts were used to present the findings. For qualitative content analysis, thematic analysis was used while texts were used to present the findings thematically. The analysis is in line with the research objectives.

RQ1: The extent of coverage of police brutality in the selected Nigerian national dailies.

The extent of the coverage was measured through the frequency of the reportage and the story types. Hence, table 2 and 3 present the findings.

Table 2

Frequency of Reportage on Police Brutality in the Selected Nigerian Newspapers

Newspapers	Frequency	Percentage
The Punch	17	68%
Daily Trust	8	32%
Total	25	100%

Table 2 presents data on the frequency of the newspapers' reports on police brutality. The table reveals that *The Punch* has 17 (68%) while *DailyTrust* has 8(32%). This indicates that *The Punch* has more reports on police brutality compared to *DailyTrust*. This implies that the two newspapers reported police brutality.

Table 3

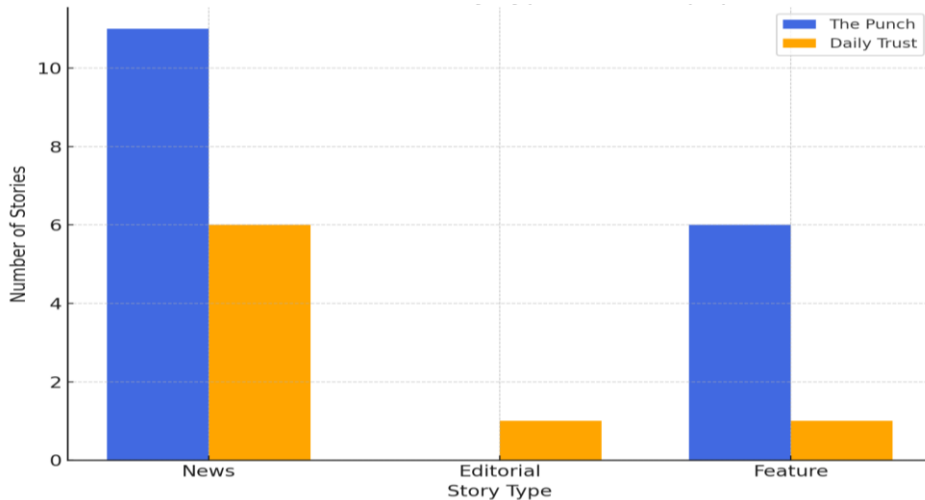
Story Types on Police Brutality Reportage in the Selected Nigerian Newspapers

Newspapers	News	Editorial	Cartoon	Feature	Column	Total (%)
The Punch	11 (44%)	—	—	6 (24%)	—	17 (68%)

Daily Trust	6 (24%)	1 (4%)	—	1 (4%)	—	8 (32%)
Total	17 (68%)	1 (4%)	—	7 (28%)	—	25 (100%)

Figure 1

Distribution of Story Types on Police Brutality in the Selected Newspapers



The data in Table 3 and Figure 1 indicate that The Punch has 11 (44%) news stories and 6 (24%) feature stories. Daily Trust has 6 (24%) news stories, 1 (4%) feature story, and 1(4%) editorial. This implies that news is mostly used to report cases of police brutality in the selected newspapers, and the cases are frequently featured in the newspapers. Therefore, police brutality is a critical issue as issue that is significant is disseminated via news. The finding contradicts the submission of Eke and Adeyemi (2023) that the media downplay or ignore police brutality-related incidents, and this contributes to a lack of accountability for police officers. The finding is in tandem with the view of Wonuola and Adisa (2024) that messages disseminated through news are critical to generating public discourse. Hence, newspapers' framing of police brutality creates awareness and generates public discourse in Nigerian society.

RQ 2: To examine the pattern of framing of police brutality in the selected national dailies.

In measuring the pattern of framing of police brutality reports in the selected newspapers, indicators for war/violence and peace/conflict-

sensitive journalism were employed. For peace journalism, peace, people, and solution indicators were used, while war/violence journalism has violent, victory, and elite indicators.

Table 4

Pattern of framing police brutality Reports in the Selected Nigerian Newspapers

Newspapers	Peace	Peace People	Solution	Violence	Elite	Victory	Total (%)
The Punch	1 (4%)	14 (56%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	—	17 (68%)
Daily Trust	1 (4%)	3 (12%)	2 (8%)	—	2 (8%)	—	8 (32%)
Total	2 (8%)	17 (68%)	3 (12%)	0 (0%)	3 (12%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)

The data in table 4 indicates that *The Punch* has 1(4%) on peace, 14(56%) on people, 1(4%) on solution and 1(4%) on elite. Daily Trust has 1(4%), 3(12%) on people, 1(4%) on solution and 2(8%) on elite. This implies that the people indicator was mostly used to frame police brutality reports in the selected newspapers. Hence, the framing of police brutality in the selected newspapers is partly responsible for accountability and transparency in the reform of the Nigeria police force. The finding supports the view of Asanebi (2023) that the upholding of the principles of fairness, accountability, and respect for human rights should be adhered to by the Force. In addition, the finding aligns with framing theory that the mass media provide a lens that guides individuals' perceptions, evaluations, and decision-making processes about certain information (Arowolo, 2017).

RQ 3: What is the implication of police brutality on national security?

Implications of Newspapers' Framing of Police Brutality for National Security

Table 5

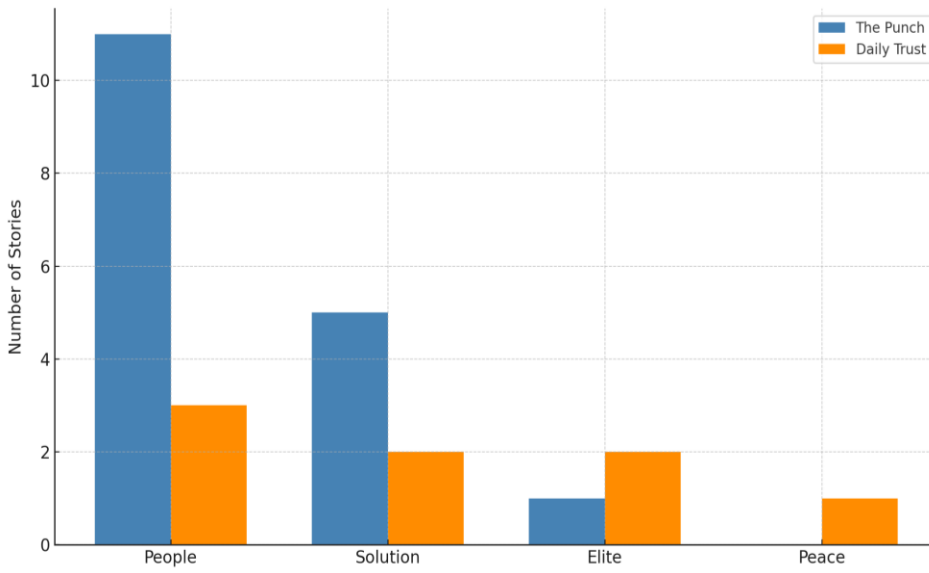
Selected Newspaper Reports on Police Brutality Based on Galtung's Peace and Violence/War Journalism Indicators

Newspaper	Theme 1: People Indicator	Theme 2: Solution Indicator	Theme 3: Elite Indicator	Theme 4: Peace Indicator
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The Punch	11 articles	5 articles	1 article	0 articles
Daily Trust	3 articles	2 articles	2 articles	1 article

Figure 2

Galtung Indicators in The Punch and Daily Trust Coverage of Police Brutality



The answer to research question 3 is based on the peace and violence indicators of Johan Galtung's model of peace and violent/war journalism. Hence, three indicators each on peace and violent/war journalism: peace, people, solution, and violence, victory, and elite were used as the sub-themes to arrive at the implications that the framing has on peace and national security. However, the findings, which are a summary of the interpretations of the newspapers' framing of police brutality, were based on only four sub-themes derived from the newspapers' reports in line with Johan Galtung's model: people, peace, solution, and elite. Thus, violence and victory indicators were not featured in the reports.

Table 5 presents the data on qualitative content analysis of the study. The findings show The Punch has 14 stories while Daily Trust has three stories on the people-indicator. The Punch has two stories on the solution-indicator, while Daily Trust has three. The Punch has no story on peace-

indicator, while Daily Trust has one. The Punch has one story on the elite-indicator while Daily Trust has two.

People-Indicator

The stories that are framed through victims' voices and traumatic personal experiences such as grieving families, extortion accounts, and testimonies of brutality, tilted towards the people-indicator. For instance, in The Punch ([2025h](#), p.24), A viral video exposing a police officer extorting motorists for fuel or money highlights the abuse faced by everyday Nigerians. Similarly, The Punch ([2025g](#), p.2) includes a grieving father's account of his 13-year-old son's death by police for a minor traffic violation, which personalises the tragedy. Other instances in The Punch ([2025b](#), p.24), include a Benue man's account of his nephew's death in custody, and a Lagos agent's report of a brother tortured to death (The Punch, [2025b](#), p. 25), further centre the narrative on ordinary citizens' suffering.

Instances of people-indicator in Daily Trust ([2025f](#), p. 6) include "A report on a WASSCE student killed by a stray bullet during a police chase." Daily Trust ([2025b](#), p. 24) includes "The death of a peacemaker due to an accidental discharge, with an eyewitness suggesting the officer's gun was triggered inadvertently." Hence, the adoption of a people-indicator in the reportage signals a peace journalism approach. This exposes structural violence and fosters empathy.

Solution-Indicator

The Punch ([2025g](#)) reports on responses to police misconduct indicate some solution-oriented coverage. For instance, "Amnesty International's warning to the police to avoid actions that could spark another #EndSARS protest" suggests a proactive call for reform. The Punch ([2025c](#)) reported "The arrest of three officers for N150,000 extortion in Lagos", prompted by a victim's social media post, shows institutional response. The Punch ([2025e](#), p.12) reported "The detention of an officer for stabbing a civilian in Ekiti", which demonstrates accountability measures.

Daily Trust also covers solutions but with fewer instances compared to The Punch. For instance, Daily Trust ([2025a](#), p.6) reported that "The Police Commission's dismissal of two ASPs for corrupt practices", signals accountability. Hence, the adoption of a solution-indicator in the reportage

promotes transparency and institutional responsibility.

Elite-Indicator

On Elite-Indicator, The Punch ([2025f](#)) has only one report, a “slain WASSCE student’s father driving against traffic in Oyo State,” which frames the victim’s family negatively, and this aligns with elite perspectives that justify police actions.

Daily Trust ([2025c](#)) shows two elite-oriented tendencies: “Police attributing firearm losses to officers’ poor knowledge” shifts blame to individual officers rather than systemic issues. Daily Trust ([2025d](#), p.29) reports that “The Inspector General of Police (IGP) probing the killing of a WASSCE candidate” centres the narrative on official actions.

Peace-Indicator

For Peace-Indicator, The Punch has no peace-oriented coverage while Daily Trust ([2025e](#), p.8) presents only one report that “The Oyo State Commissioner of Police’s promise of a forthcoming investigation report into a WASSCE candidate’s death” suggests transparency, a step towards accountability that could foster public trust.

This implies that the selected newspapers focus more on peace journalism by using more people-indicators and solution-indicators to frame the reportage. Specifically, The Punch aligns more with the Peace journalism, as its reporting focuses heavily on police misconduct and victims, and incorporates solution-oriented elements by highlighting arrests and investigations. This implies efforts to address police misconduct. Daily Trust indicates engagement with peace journalism, with its coverage of dismissals and editorials indicating some focus on accountability. The finding aligns with the views of Wonuola et al. ([2023](#)) that news framing is critical to audience perception of issues. The finding supports the submission of Usigbe and Ilo ([2019](#)) that the preconceived notions among the media audience is largely responsible for the interpretation of media messages. The view of Yahaya ([2019](#)) supports the finding of this study as it posits that the mass media contribute significantly to prevention and resolution of conflicts. The finding contradicts the submission of Ogu ([2018](#)) that newspapers’ presentations of conflict-related issues are bias and sensational. Therefore, the selected newspapers contribute to peace and national security through police brutality reportage by using indicators that tilt towards peace journalism to frame the reports; thereby preventing

violence in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined implications of Nigerian newspapers' framing of police brutality on peace and national security in *The Punch* and *DailyTrust* newspapers published between January 1 and June 30, 2025; in order to establish the effect that the framing has on national security. The study revealed that the selected newspapers adopted more of peace journalism indicators such as peace, people and solution-indicators compared to violence/ war indicator to frame the reports. Hence, the selected newspapers reports employed peace-journalism indicators. This therefore, contributed significantly to peace and national security in Nigeria as the cases of police brutality has drastically reduced in Nigeria compared to the previous years. The implications of this study lies in its contribution to the existing knowledge on mass media and police brutality as the findings concluded that the mass media, especially the newspapers is significant in mitigating police brutality in Nigeria. The study also contributes to the existing knowledge by validating framing theory as the theory emphasises that the manner of presentation of an issue determines how people think about such an issue. This is reflected in the adoption of Johan Galtung peace journalism indicators by the newspapers in reporting cases of police brutality in Nigeria as the findings contribute to the need for the transformation of the institution, especially a reform of the Nigeria police Acts in order to ensure accountability and transparency within and outside the institutions.

Based on the findings of this study, the study calls on the Nigeria policy makers to expedite actions on overhaul reform of the Nigerian Police Force as this will facilitate transparency and accountability among the police officers. In addition, the Nigerian media organisations in collaboration with the Nigeria Police Force should embark on consistent education on the role of the police force and individual member of the society in promoting peace and national security. Additionally, the Nigerian government together with relevant stakeholders should intensify efforts on training and re-training of the Nigeria Police Force as this will facilitate the eradication of the menace in Nigerian society and consequently promote peace and national security. Furthermore, the Nigerian media should use more of victim-centric approach with proactive coverage of reforms, peacebuilding initiatives, and systemic solutions through the adoption of Galtung's peace journalism framework to present conflict-related reportage, especially the police

brutality cases in order to promote peace and national security in Nigeria.

Future researchers should beam their searchlight on netizens trolling on digital media framing of police brutality. This recommendation is based on the premises that police brutality is a global issue that requires urgent attention from all stakeholders in peace and national security. Studies can also be extended to comparative analysis of broadcast media framing of police brutality in Nigeria.

Author Contribution Statement

Monsurat Modasola Wonuola: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Formal Analysis, Data Curation, Writing – Original Draft, Visualization. Faosat Biola Olagunju: Methodology, Validation, Supervision, Writing – Review & Editing, Resources. Abdul-Azeez Alao Adekola: Conceptualization, Supervision, Project Administration, Writing – Review & Editing, Validation.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

Data supporting the findings of this study will be made available by the corresponding author upon request.

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