Role of the Nigeria Police Force in Ensuring Personal and Community Security in Keffi Local Government Area

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Abstract- Security remains a fundamental condition for social stability and development, yet Nigeria continues to experience rising levels of crime and insecurity despite various reforms in the policing sector. This study, therefore, examined the role of the Nigeria Police Force in ensuring personal and community security in Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. The study was guided by two objectives: to examine the extent to which the Nigeria Police Force ensures personal security, and to assess its effectiveness in promoting community security in Keffi. The descriptive research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 392 respondents across five selected wards using a structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Chi-Square tests. Findings revealed a significant relationship between police operational activities and the level of personal security (X^2 = 119.78, $p < 0.05$), as well as a significant impact of police effectiveness on community security (X^2 = 72.44, $p < 0.05$). The results indicate that proactive policing, regular patrols, and prompt response to incidents enhance both individual and collective safety. The study concludes that strengthening police-community collaboration, improving operational capacity, and promoting fair service delivery are essential for sustaining peace and security in Keffi Local Government Area.

Index Terms- Nigeria Police Force, Personal security, Community security, Policing effectiveness, Keffi Local Government Area.

I. INTRODUCTION

Security remains one of the most essential conditions for social stability and national development. In Nigeria, the increasing rate of crime, violence, and insecurity has continued to put significant pressure on the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), which is constitutionally mandated to protect lives and property, maintain law and order, and prevent and detect crime (Ameh, 2021). Over the years, insecurity has evolved in both scale and complexity, prompting renewed attention toward reforming policing practices and strengthening public safety mechanisms. One of the key strategies introduced to address these challenges is community policing, a model designed to foster collaboration between law enforcement agencies and local communities. This approach emphasizes citizen participation, trust building, and partnership in identifying and solving security problems at the grassroots level (Olowolagba, 2020). According to the Inspector-General of Police, the full implementation of community policing is expected to enhance citizens' safety and address Nigeria's persistent security challenges (Daily Post, 2020).

Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State provides a useful context for examining these issues, as it reflects many of the broader national challenges associated with ensuring personal and community security. The area is characterized by both rural and semi-urban settlements, economic migrants and social diversity, all of which shape the pattern of crime and influence community perceptions of safety. The role of the NPF in Keffi is therefore critical in safeguarding personal security, protecting individuals from physical harm, and in maintaining community security, which promotes collective wellbeing and social harmony (Eze & Ogar, 2022).

Despite the introduction of community policing frameworks across the country, the effectiveness of the NPF continues to be constrained by factors such as limited manpower, inadequate resources, poor training, and weak collaboration between the police and community stakeholders (Ojukwu & Nwankwo, 2023). These persistent challenges call for a contextual evaluation of police operations and engagement strategies within Keffi Local

Government Area. Consequently, this study seeks to examine the role of the Nigeria Police Force in ensuring personal and community security in Keffi, identify the major operational challenges confronting the Force, and explore their implications for sustainable peace and development in the area.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the constitutional mandate and various reforms within the Nigeria Police Force, the level of insecurity in many communities across Nigeria remains a major concern. Crimes such as robbery, burglary, kidnapping, cultism, and communal conflict continue to threaten the safety and wellbeing of citizens (Umaru & Adebayo, 2021). In Keffi Local Government Area, residents have expressed growing worries over inadequate police presence, delayed responses to distress calls, and poor investigative outcomes. These issues have contributed to a decline in public trust in the police and have encouraged the emergence of informal security actors such as vigilante groups (Okafor, 2022). Studies have shown that weak collaboration between the police and local community structures reduces the effectiveness of crime prevention and peace maintenance efforts (Ojukwu & Nwankwo, 2023).

Although community policing was introduced to promote partnership and enhance intelligence gathering, its implementation in many parts of Nigeria, including Nasarawa State, has been inconsistent. Factors such as poor funding, lack of logistics, and limited community involvement have hindered its success (Eze & Ogar, 2022). As a result, the inability of the Nigeria Police Force to fully operationalize community policing has left several communities exposed to crime and insecurity. The central problem, therefore, is the limited empirical understanding of how the Nigeria Police Force fulfils its dual responsibility of ensuring both personal and community security in Keffi Local Government Area. There is also a lack of evidence-based evaluation of the strategies, mechanisms, and outcomes of police operations in the area. Without such understanding, it becomes difficult to design effective policy interventions or strengthen police-community partnerships for improved security management. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the role of the Nigeria Police Force in ensuring personal and community security in Keffi Local Government Area.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

i. To what extent does the Nigeria Police Force ensure personal security in Keffi Local Government Area?
ii. How effective is the Nigeria Police Force in promoting community security in Keffi Local Government Area?

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The broad objective of this study is to investigate the role of the Nigeria Police Force in ensuring personal and community security in Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. The specific objectives are to:
i. Examine the extent to which the Nigeria Police Force ensures personal security in Keffi Local Government Area.
ii. Assess the effectiveness of the Nigeria Police Force in promoting community security in Keffi Local Government Area.

V. HYPOTHESES

i. Hypothesis One (H_{01}): There is no significant relationship between the operational activities of the Nigeria Police Force and the level of personal security in Keffi Local Government Area.
ii. Hypothesis Two (H_{02}): The effectiveness of the Nigeria Police Force does not significantly impact community security in Keffi Local Government Area.

VI. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Clarification

Nigeria Police Force
The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) serves as the primary institution responsible for law enforcement and internal security in Nigeria. Established under Section 214 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), the NPF is mandated to protect lives and property, maintain public order, prevent and detect crime, and enforce existing laws. As a key arm of the state, the police play a central role in ensuring peace, stability, and justice. In a democratic society, they are expected to carry out these duties with professionalism, fairness, and accountability, reflecting the state's commitment

to citizens' safety and rights (Ibrahim & Yakubu, 2022).

In local settings like Keffi, the visibility and responsiveness of the police often influence how secure residents feel. The ability of the Force to prevent crime, resolve disputes, and respond to emergencies contributes significantly to public trust and the overall sense of safety. The NPF therefore functions not only as an enforcer of the law but also as a key agent in promoting human security and national development (Okafor & Nwosu, 2023). Effective police action, such as timely intervention in communal conflicts or domestic violence, can prevent crises and strengthen the bond between law enforcement and the community.

Personal Security
Personal security is a core component of human security that focuses on protecting individuals from harm, violence, or threats to their safety. It guarantees that people can live without fear for their lives, dignity, or freedom within their communities (United Nations Development Programme, 2022). In Nigeria, concerns about personal security have become more urgent with the increasing prevalence of armed robbery, kidnapping, cultism, domestic violence, and political violence (Aliyu & Abdullahi, 2020). These challenges have left many citizens anxious about their safety and have led to the emergence of vigilante groups and informal security networks attempting to fill the gap left by the police.

Promoting personal security therefore demands a proactive and citizen-centered approach by the Nigeria Police Force. This includes consistent patrols, effective intelligence gathering, reliable crime reporting systems, and meaningful engagement with the public. In Keffi Local Government Area, the importance of personal security is underscored by the town's growing population and rapid urbanization, which have contributed to rising incidents of youth crime and social tension. When citizens have confidence in the police to act promptly and impartially, their sense of safety improves, and cooperation between the public and law enforcement becomes stronger (Akinyemi & Eze, 2021).

Community Security
Community security refers to the shared sense of safety and stability enjoyed by members of a community within a specific locality. It ensures that people can live free from fear, intimidation, and or violence, and that they are able to pursue their social and economic activities in peace. Community security goes beyond the presence of the police; it depends on the collective efforts of citizens, local institutions, and government agencies working together to maintain order and prevent conflict (UNDP, 2022). It emphasizes trust-building, local participation in policing, and addressing the underlying causes of insecurity such as poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion.

In Nigeria, the inability of formal policing structures to fully meet security demands has encouraged the growth of informal security groups such as vigilantes, neighborhood watch associations, and local security committees. While these initiatives sometimes complement police efforts, they have also raised concerns over coordination and accountability. Nonetheless, studies have shown that strong collaboration between the police and community members can lead to significant reductions in crime rates (Ogundele & Olanrewaju, 2021). For instance, community policing projects in Lagos, Kano, and Enugu have demonstrated how regular interaction and shared responsibility between residents and law enforcement officers improve trust and early crime detection. In Keffi, enhancing cooperation between the police and the community remains vital to achieving lasting peace and security.

The Nigeria Police Force and Security Delivery
The relationship between the Nigeria Police Force and security is fundamental to national stability and human wellbeing. The police act as the primary institution responsible for maintaining order, enforcing laws, and protecting citizens from internal threats. When the police function effectively, they help create an environment that supports social harmony, education, and economic development. However, when the Force is viewed as corrupt, unresponsive, or abusive, public confidence declines, and citizens may turn to self-help or informal security measures, which can undermine both personal and community safety (Adebayo & Ojo, 2023).

In Keffi Local Government Area, the ability of the Nigeria Police Force to guarantee personal and community security depends on its operational efficiency, access to adequate resources, and adherence to professional standards. Modern policing increasingly requires proactive and preventive

approaches that focus on addressing the root causes of insecurity rather than responding only after crimes occur. As noted by Okafor and Nwosu (2023), effective policing today relies on intelligence gathering, technological innovation, and active collaboration with local communities. To achieve this, the police must strengthen their relationship with the public through transparency, respect for human rights, and a commitment to community-focused service delivery.

Role of Nigeria Police in Personal and Community Security

The role of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) in maintaining personal and community security has continued to attract scholarly attention due to the persistent challenges of crime and insecurity across the country. Researchers have emphasized that effective policing is crucial for strengthening public confidence in the state and encouraging citizens to cooperate in crime prevention efforts (Eze & Ogar, 2022). Community security, in this sense, extends beyond the physical protection of individuals to include trust, mutual respect, and a shared sense of safety within society (Ameh, 2021). To achieve this, community policing has been widely promoted as a participatory approach that fosters collaboration between the police and the public in identifying and addressing local security challenges (Ojukwu & Nwankwo, 2023). In Nigeria, the implementation of community policing was designed to achieve both personal and community security.

However, evaluation of community policing in Nigeria revealed several constraining factors. For instance, Olowolagba (2020) observed that weak institutional frameworks, corruption, and inadequate training have limited the capacity of the NPF to engage effectively with local communities. Similarly, Okafor (2022) noted that delays in police response, lack of accountability, and public mistrust often lead citizens to rely on informal security networks such as vigilante groups. In addition, poor welfare conditions, inadequate logistics, and political interference continue to undermine the morale and professionalism of officers, affecting their ability to perform optimally (Umaru & Adebayo, 2021).

VII. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded on two key theories that explain the connection between policing and security delivery. These include Social Contract Theory and the Broken Windows Theory.

Social Contract Theory

The Social Contract Theory, developed by political philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, argues that individuals willingly give up part of their personal freedom to the state in exchange for protection, justice, and social order. This theory provides the philosophical foundation for modern governance and justifies the authority of state institutions like the police to maintain law and order and protect citizens' rights (Ogunyemi, 2021).

In the Nigerian context, the theory underscores the idea that the Nigeria Police Force represents an essential element of the social contract between citizens and the state. People obey laws and cooperate with authorities because they expect the police to ensure their safety and uphold justice. However, when the police fail to perform effectively, this social agreement weakens, leading to loss of public confidence and the emergence of alternative security mechanisms. In Keffi, for instance, inadequate police presence and delayed responses to criminal incidents have prompted communities to rely on vigilante groups or engage in self-help measures, sometimes resulting in mob actions and human rights violations.

The Social Contract Theory therefore provides a useful framework for understanding the reciprocal responsibilities between the police and the public. It helps explain how the Nigeria Police Force's effectiveness or failure directly affects citizens' trust, the legitimacy of the state, and the overall sense of security within the community.

Broken Windows Theory

The Broken Windows Theory, proposed by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling in 1982, argues that visible signs of disorder and minor offences, if not addressed, can create conditions that encourage more serious crimes. The theory highlights the importance of early intervention and proactive policing in maintaining social order. In the Nigerian setting, it helps explain how ignoring small issues such as street fights, youth loitering, and drug abuse can lead to more severe forms of crime and insecurity (Akinyemi & Eze, 2021).

Applied to Keffi Local Government Area, the theory suggests that the Nigeria Police Force should prioritize the early detection and resolution of minor disturbances before they escalate. Regular patrols, community surveillance, and a strong police presence can act as deterrents to crime while reinforcing public confidence in law enforcement. The approach also calls for collaboration between the police and community members in identifying potential sources of disorder and jointly restoring peace and civility.

This perspective aligns with modern community policing practices that emphasize partnership, problem-solving, and accountability. Together with the Social Contract Theory, the Broken Windows Theory provides a complementary understanding of the police's role linking their legal authority and social responsibility with practical strategies for maintaining both personal and community security.

VIII.   METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive research design and relied mainly on primary data collected from five electoral districts in Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. These include Jigwada, Angwan Rimi, Liman Abaji, Sabon Gari, and Angwan Iya I. The wards were purposively selected because they have higher population density, diverse socio-economic activities, and frequent security challenges compared to other areas in the local government. These characteristics made them appropriate for assessing the role of the Nigeria Police Force in ensuring personal and community security in Keffi.

According to data from the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (2024), the population within the selected wards was estimated at 56,387. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to ensure representativeness in selecting respondents. In total, 400 questionnaires were distributed, and 392 were properly completed and returned. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A captured demographic details, while Section B focused on questions related to the research objectives. To measure the key variables of personal security and community security effectiveness, Section B utilized a 4-point Likert scale (e.g., ranging from 'Very Effective' to 'Ineffective' and 'Always' to 'Not at all') to assess respondents' perceptions and experiences. Data collected were analyzed using qualitative interpretation and simple descriptive statistics.

Throughout the process, ethical standards were maintained to protect confidentiality and ensure that participation was voluntary and anonymous.

IX.   RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Research Question One: To what extent does the Nigeria Police Force ensure personal security in Keffi Local Government Area?

Table 1: Extent of Police Intervention in Cases of Theft, Assault, or Robbery in Keffi Local Government Area

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	266	67.9
No	100	25.5
Not sure	26	6.6
Total	392	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 indicates that a substantial majority of respondents (67.9%) have witnessed or experienced police intervention during incidents of theft, assault, or robbery. In contrast, 25.5% reported no such observation. These findings suggest that the Nigeria Police Force ensures personal security to a large extent by maintaining a visible and responsive presence against criminal threats in Keffi Local Government Area.

Research Question Two: How effective is the Nigeria Police Force in promoting community security in Keffi Local Government Area?

Table 2: Effectiveness of the Nigeria Police Force in Promoting Community Security in Keffi Local Government Area

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very effective	125	31.9
Moderately effective	150	38.3
Ineffective	75	19.1
Not sure	42	10.7
Total	392	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 presents the respondents' assessment of the Nigeria Police Force's effectiveness in promoting community security. The data reveals a largely positive perception, with a combined 70.2% of respondents rating the police as either 'Very effective' (31.9%) or 'Moderately effective' (38.3%), while only 19.1% rated them as 'Ineffective.' Consequently,

regarding Research Question Two, these findings demonstrate that the Nigeria Police Force is effective in maintaining collective safety and social stability in Keffi Local Government Area.

Hypothesis One (H₀₁): There is no significant relationship between the operational activities of the Nigeria Police Force and the level of personal security in Keffi Local Government Area

Table 3: Chi-Square Analysis of the Extent to which the Nigeria Police Force Ensures Personal Security

Response Category	FO	FE	O–E	(O–E)²	(O–E)²/E
Yes, always	140	98	42	1764	18.00
Sometimes	160	98	62	3844	39.22
Rarely	65	98	-33	1089	11.12
Not at all	27	98	-71	5041	51.44
Total	392	392	0	0	$X^2 = 119.78$

Critical value 7.815, DF 3, Level of Sig. 0.05
Source: Field Survey, 2025

The calculated Chi-Square value ($X^2 = 119.78$) is greater than the critical Chi-Square value (7.815) at 3 degrees of freedom and a 0.05 significance level.
Decision: The null hypothesis is rejected.
Conclusion: There is a significant relationship between the activities of the Nigeria Police Force and the level of personal security in Keffi Local Government Area. Specifically, the data indicates that the frequency of police operations (such as patrols and interventions) directly correlates with residents' perceived safety from personal crimes, including theft, assault, and robbery.

Hypothesis Two (H₀₂): The effectiveness of the Nigeria Police Force does not have a significant impact on community security among diverse groups in Keffi Local Government Area.

Table 4: Role of the Nigeria Police Force in promoting community security among diverse groups in Keffi Local Government Area

Response Category	F.O	F.E	O–E	(O–E)²	(O–E)²/E
Very effective	125	98	27	729	7.44
Moderately effective	150	98	52	2704	27.60
Ineffective	75	98	-23	529	5.40
Not sure	42	98	-56	3136	32.00
Total	392	392	0	0	$X^2 = 72.44$

Critical value 7.815, DF 3, Level of Sig. 0.05

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4 shows that the calculated Chi-Square value ($X^2 = 72.44$) exceeds the critical Chi-Square value (7.815) at 3 degrees of freedom and a 0.05 significance level.
Decision: The null hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion: There is a significant relationship between the effectiveness of the Nigeria Police Force and the state of community security in Keffi Local Government Area. The data reveals that the majority of respondents (combined 70.2%) rate the police as effective, implying that police performance is a critical determinant of the collective sense of safety and stability within the community.

X. DISCUSSIONS

The findings reveal a significant relationship between the operational activities of the Nigeria Police Force and the level of personal security in Keffi Local Government Area. The Chi-Square result ($X^2 = 119.78$, $p < 0.05$) indicates that police engagement in patrols, crime prevention, and prompt response to incidents significantly contributes to improved perceptions of personal safety. This aligns with the position of Nwosu and Akpa (2021), who argue that effective police visibility directly enhances citizens' confidence in local security.

Regarding the second hypothesis, the study established that the effectiveness of the Nigeria Police Force has a significant impact on community security in Keffi Local Government Area ($X^2 = 72.44$, $p < 0.05$). This finding supports Okoro and Yusuf (2020), who observed that efficient and fair policing is essential for strengthening social stability. Furthermore, it corroborates Akinola and Ibrahim (2023), who noted that proactive police operations are critical in reducing community conflicts and improving peace building efforts.

XI. CONCLUSION

This study examined the role of the Nigeria Police Force in ensuring personal and community security in Keffi Local Government Area. The findings demonstrated that the operational activities and effectiveness of the police significantly influence both personal security and community security respectively.

Thus, the study concludes that the Nigeria Police Force plays a crucial role in sustaining security and social stability in Keffi Local Government Area. Strengthening police-community collaboration, improving response capacity, and promoting equitable service delivery will further enhance trust and public safety within the locality.

XII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the significant relationship established between police activities and personal security, it is recommended that the Nigeria Police Force intensify its operational presence in Keffi Local Government Area. Strategies such as consistent patrols, rapid emergency response, and proactive crime prevention are essential to further reduce insecurity and sustain public trust.

To improve the effectiveness of the police in promoting community security, the Force should be empowered through adequate training, motivation, and logistical support. Emphasis should be placed on community-oriented policing to foster stronger cooperation, mutual respect, and lasting peace within the area.

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