

Influence of Public Trust and Perception of the Nigeria Police Force on Intelligence Sharing Among Citizens

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Abstract- This research measured how public trust and perception of the Nigeria Police Force influence intelligence sharing among the citizens. The study became imperative given how integral citizen-led intelligence is to addressing rising insecurity in Nigeria. The study adopted the survey research design, while the questionnaire served as the instrument of data collection. A total of 300 Nigerians (150 online and 150 offline) across the country were targeted for the study, but 256 valid responses were eventually analysed. The study was anchored on the Procedural Justice Theory and Institutional Trust Theory. Data from the study was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The researcher found the majority of Nigerians sampled have low trust in the police as well as a negative perception of the force. The study also found such low trust and negative perception of the NPF were mostly shaped by respondents' personal experiences with the police rather than hearsay. Further findings showed that trust and perception of the police influence intelligence sharing among Nigerians. In spite of this, the study revealed that citizens were willing to share intelligence with the police and indicated readiness to cooperate more with them if misconduct, corruption, and other concerns were addressed. The study recommended, among others, that the NPF should consider significant reforms to rebuild citizens' trust in the institution and address negative perceptions about it to enable it to function optimally in the fight against insecurity.

Keywords: *nigeria police force, public trust, perception, intelligence sharing, security*

I. INTRODUCTION

Insecurity has become a nightmare for many Nigerians. From the North East to the North Central and other parts of the country, the fear is palpable in homes, on the streets, and even in private circles. Dauda (2024) stated that the country has come under various security threats, including terrorism attacks, insurgency, proliferation of arms and ammunition, transnational organised crimes, drug trafficking, bandits' attacks, kidnapping, abduction, violence attacks on individuals and robberies, cybercrimes, trading of illicit drugs and dealing in contraband goods. Adeleke (2013) cited in Duada and Jafaru

(2025) also noted that insecurity has "become a monster that security operatives in the country appear incapable of handling" (p.796). Hussaini and Liman (2024) submitted that in the last 10 years, the country has "been progressively experiencing" an increase in criminal activities such as kidnapping, cattle rustling and terrorism (p.139). Corroborating this, Ibani (2024) noted that the country's internal security is threatened by several security challenges, including terrorism, insurgency, banditry, militancy, and arms importation.

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is among security agencies leading the fight against insecurity in the country. First established in 1820, the NPF is the principal law enforcement agency in the country. Akuul (2011) posited that the Nigerian police was "established to combat crime and ensure security of lives and property of the citizenry" (p.16). The Police Act outlined the core responsibilities of the police. Section 4 of the Police Act provides that "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".

To effectively carry out this responsibility, however, good public perception and trust in the Nigeria Police Force are critical. This is because the NPF cannot thrive in isolation; it needs the support of the people. Establishing the need for such collaboration, Idowu and Idris (2025) noted that "the society needs the police to run and function smoothly and in the same manner, the police need the society (public support) to successfully perform their core duty of fighting crime and curb criminals" (p.88).

The scholars also added:

"A lack of trust can lead to decreased cooperation, reduced crime reporting and an overall breakdown of the relationship between the police and the community they serve. When public trust in the police is low, it can lead to decreased cooperation

with law enforcement, reduced reporting of crimes and reluctance to engage with the police in solving community security issues. This lack of cooperation can hinder police efforts in gathering information, preventing crime, and building strong relationships with the communities they serve” (p.88).

One of the ways the public can support the police is by providing reliable and timely intelligence to strengthen its operations. While intelligence sharing is critical to the success of security systems, it largely has to do with how people perceive and trust the security agencies. A positive perception and trust in security agencies among people will encourage intelligence sharing and collaboration to combat crime and other forms of security threats. This study, therefore, probes the public trust and perception of the NPF and the influence of such on intelligence sharing among Nigerians as the country battles rising insecurity.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In recent years, the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), like other security agencies in the country, has come under intense pressure amid rising insecurity across Nigeria. To function effectively, the police require credible intelligence and active citizen cooperation, as intelligence remains a critical component of national security. According to Olowonihi and Musa (2024), intelligence provides decision-makers with the “crucial information and analysis required to develop and implement effective security strategies” (p.143). Corroborating this, Ibekwe (2025) noted that timely, accurate, and actionable intelligence helps security agencies, including the police, to deal with threats effectively.

While citizen-led intelligence is crucial to security, trust in the police and perception of the institution play a key role in encouraging it. Idowu and Idris (2025) observed that “without trust, the police face challenges in preventing and solving crimes, gaining community support and maintaining social order” (p.88). In the same vein, Usman (2019) argued that “what the public thinks, believes and feels about the police determines if people will obey or disobey them, if they will support the police in fighting crime, and contributes to how and whether the police will succeed in maintaining order” (p.3).

Previous studies have interrogated public trust and perception of the NPF, but limited attention has been accorded to how these factors influence citizens’ willingness to share intelligence with the police. This study therefore fills this gap, particularly in the wake of rising insecurity in the country and the need for more intelligence to combat it.

From the foregoing, the study measures how Nigerians perceive the police, the extent to which they trust the institution, and whether such trust and perception influence their willingness to share intelligence with police operatives.

Research Objectives

- To examine the level of public trust in the Nigeria Police Force.
- To assess Nigerians’ perception of the effectiveness, professionalism, and integrity of the Nigeria Police Force.
- To determine the willingness of Nigerians to share intelligence with the Nigeria Police Force.
- To evaluate the influence of public trust and perception of the Nigeria Police Force on intelligence sharing among Nigerians.

Research Questions

- What is the level of public trust in the Nigeria Police Force?
- How do Nigerians perceive the effectiveness, professionalism, and integrity of the Nigeria Police Force?
- To what extent are Nigerians willing to share intelligence with the Nigeria Police Force?
- How do public trust and perception of the Nigeria Police Force influence intelligence sharing among Nigerians?

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Intelligence sharing, crime prevention and national security

Globally, the security system relies heavily on intelligence. Intelligence sharing is the heartbeat of thriving security architecture. The more people are willing to share intelligence with established security operatives, the more efficient and effective they become. Olowonihi and Musa (2024) defined intelligence as the “systematic collecting, analysis, and dissemination of information about potential threats, both internal and external” (p.143). The scholars, in their study, listed various forms of

intelligence to include Human Intelligence (HUMINT), Signal Intelligence (SIGINT), Electronic Intelligence (ELINT), Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT), Social Media Intelligence (SOCMINT), and Geospatial Intelligence (GEOINT).

For conceptual clarification, intelligence sharing has to do with the willingness of people to provide timely, relevant, and useful information about suspicious activities, crimes, or security threats to recognised security agencies to help prevent crime or improve safety. Lowenthal (2016) submitted that intelligence plays a “critical” role in national security as it allows the government to “anticipate and minimize risks before they become full-fledged crises”. Collins (2016) cited in Olowonihi (2024) posited that global advancement and interconnectedness have brought about increased security threats, which necessitate comprehensive and interdisciplinary national security plans that include “military, economic, and diplomatic tools, as well as strong intelligence collecting and analysis capabilities” (p.143). Lending credence to this, Oke, Braimah & Masajuma (2021) contended that “inadequate intelligence impacts negatively on crime prevention and detection” (p.147).

Due to its significance, countries across the globe are investing heavily in their intelligence agencies. For instance, the United States has the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). In the United Kingdom, there is the United Kingdom's Secret Intelligence Service, popularly called (MI6), and Security Service (MI5). Perl (2020) stated that Russia, China, and Israel also protect their national security through intelligence-focused agencies like the Federal Security Service (FSB), the Ministry of State Security (MSS), and the Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations, known as Mossad.

Nigeria is also not oblivious of the importance of intelligence to national security, with agencies such as the Department of State Services (DSS), the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), and the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) leading the country's intelligence architecture. However, the effectiveness of Nigeria's intelligence structure in the fight against insecurity remains a subject of conversation among scholars and relevant stakeholders. Olowonihi and Musa (2024) noted that “the Nigerian intelligence

sector faces institutional limitations that hinder the successful implementation of intelligence collecting, which is widely acknowledged as a crucial tool in tackling these issues” (p.142). The development has posed serious concerns as Nigeria battles rising security threats. Onapajo & Uzodike (2022) observed that Nigeria, since its independence in 1960, has confronted various security threats. These, according to them, include the civil war, military coups, ethnic and religious conflicts, insurgency, and terrorism. Olowonihi and Musa (2024) stated that the country's insecurity challenge witnessed a new dimension with the emergence of terrorism and insurgency, particularly the Boko Haram onslaught. Albert (2015) submitted that the country's security issues are further compounded by other threats such as kidnapping, armed robbery, farmer-herder confrontations, and organised criminality. Akinola (2015) attributed the continued emergence of violent non-state actors in Nigeria to several factors, including poverty, unemployment, and inequality. According to the 2026 Global Terrorism Index, Nigeria rose two places to fourth position in 2025 behind Pakistan, Burkina Faso, and Niger. The report also showed that Nigeria had the largest increase in terrorism-related deaths in 2025 and “has experienced a steady rise in terrorism-related deaths since 2022, recording 237 more fatalities in 2025 than in 2024” (p.16). Azu et al. (2021) remarked that the country's insecurity has crippled growth and development, caused violence and significantly affected economic stability and wealth creation.

To address this grim reality, Ibekwe (2025) remarked that the country needs a “strong and responsive internal security framework” rooted in credible intelligence. Intelligence, according to him, acts as the “eyes and ears” of the government and helps in “providing early warnings that can significantly reduce the human and economic toll of insecurity” (p.1934). Adetula (2010) cited in Olowonihi and Musa (2024) pointed out that “intelligence collecting plays a critical role in recognizing, preventing, and responding to security threats, making it an essential component of national security strategy” (p.143). Credible intelligence helps in anticipating potential security threats and executing preventive strategies, enables the identification of emerging threats and facilitates the optimal allocation of resources by identifying high-risk areas and prioritising them for intervention (Ibekwe 2024).

Nigeria police: Perception, trust and intelligence sharing

The police institution is one of the core and significant institutions in Nigeria responsible for safety and protecting the life and property of citizens (Idowu & Idris, 2025, p.88). The scholars submitted that to carry out this duty successfully, however, there is the need for mutual trust between the public and the police, adding that police-public trust is crucial for maintaining social order, preventing crimes and ensuring justice in any nation. Indeed, public perception and trust are two essential things every organisation, including the police, must handle intentionally to function effectively. Simply put, perception is the way people see, understand, or interpret someone, something, or a situation based on their experiences, beliefs, or information. Trust, on the other hand, is the belief or confidence that a person, group, or institution is honest, reliable, and will act properly or safely.

In spite of this reality, there have been growing concerns over public trust and perception of the Nigeria Police Force in recent years. Idowu & Idris (2025) noted that incidents of police misconduct, racial profiling and excessive use of force have eroded public trust in the police. According to them, distrust may be influenced by historical experience, social factors, systemic issues and individual encounters with the law enforcement agencies. In their studies, Obarisiagbon and Omege (2018), Oluwasola (2016), and Ajayi and Longe (2015) cited in Oke, Braimah & Masajuma (2021) found that the perception of Nigerian police is poor with attendant trust deficit.

Scholars argued that such poor perception and low trust discourage citizens from fully collaborating with the police, especially in providing intelligence. Ibekwe (2025) noted that credible intelligence is crucial to the achievement of internal security in Nigeria. The scholar added that community-based intelligence (CBI) and civilian participation are crucial for enhancing Nigeria's internal security operations. Oke, Braimah & Masajuma (2021) stated that the implication of such poor perception and trust deficit is the poor harvest of intelligence and inadequate information. The scholars submitted that "intelligence gathering by the Nigeria police may be limited because of its poor image profile and perception by the public" (p.147). Intelligence sharing, to a large extent, is predicated on perception

and trust. In other words, positive perception and trust encourage intelligence sharing, while negative perception and distrust discourage it. Driving home this truism, Olowonihi and Musa (2024) opined that "public perception and trust are of paramount importance for intelligence services." Idowu and Idris (2025) stated that when public trust in the police is low, it can lead to decreased cooperation with law enforcement, reduced reporting of crimes and reluctance to engage with the police in solving community security issues. According to them, public distrust can also influence police functionality. They explained that in an environment where police feel scrutinised and mistrusted, officers may become more defensive, less willing to engage with the community, and more likely to adopt an adversarial approach. This, they added, can exacerbate tensions, increase the likelihood of confrontations, and further erode public trust. This could be illustrated with the #EndSARS protests that shook the country in 2020, as youths took to the streets to protest alleged human rights violations and extra-judicial killings by the police. In his study, Ibekwe (2025) listed community mistrust in security agencies as one of the challenges of effective intelligence gathering and utilisation in Nigeria, particularly Human Intelligence (HUMINT).

To address this, scholars have called for strategies capable of building trust between the police and the citizens. Oke, Braimah & Masajuma (2021) asked the police to focus on positive engagements and collaborations with the citizens to build trust and confidence. This, according to them, facilitates the "policing through the community" approach, which promotes active participation of community members in intelligence gathering and other security-related activities.

Empirical review

Several studies have attempted to measure public perception and trust in the police and examined its attendant implications on the country's security. In their work, Oke, Braimah & Masajuma (2021) noted that studies showed that "Nigerians have a poor and negative perception of their police force, resulting in trust deficit between the police and the public" (p.153). For instance, Oluwasola (2016) cited in Oke, Braimah & Masajuma (2021) conducted a study on the image and approval ratings of the Nigerian police by Nigerians. Using a sample size of two hundred comprising respondents from the Lagos command of

the Nigeria Police, Public Relation Practitioners, Crime Correspondents and other members of the public, the study found only 2.7% of the respondents gave the Nigeria Police an approval rating, with 64% attributing the poor image of the Nigeria Police to corruption.

Ajayi and Longe (2015) also probed the relationship between the Nigerian police and Nigerians, using the south west geographical zone and a sample size of 1350 respondents drawn from 15 professional groups. Findings from the study showed “that the Nigeria Police is antagonistic in their relationship with Nigerians. 85% of the respondents polled agreed that the Nigeria police is unfriendly in their relationship with the public.” The study, also cited in Oke, Braimah & Masajuma (2021) revealed that “the public perception of the Nigeria police is negative” (p.154). Victor (2019) did a study titled “Crime is Inevitable but Police is not friendly: Exploring the Public Perception of Police on Crime Prevention and Management in Lagos State, Nigeria”. The research explored the factors responsible for the perception of the public about police on crime prevention and management in Nigeria. It also examined the level of trust members of the public have on the effectiveness of the police force and assessed the government efforts towards a police-public-friendly relationship in Nigeria. The report said respondents indicated a lack of confidence in Nigerian police “because of their unprofessionalism in fighting crime when the occasion arises”. The study also revealed that public perception of the police is “shaped by the widespread corrupt practices of officers while on duty.

Corroborating this, Uke & Adeniran (2026) stated that the perceived inability of the Nigeria Police Force to effectively perform its constitutional roles has led to the emergence of decentralized policing groups in the country. Akuul (2011) in a study titled “The Role of the Nigerian Police Force in Maintaining Peace and Security in Nigeria” noted that the police have “lived below expectation” over the years due to corruption, delayed justice, and impartiality, among others. The development, the study said, “has made the people to see the police as an enemy rather than a friend” (p.16). It recommended that if crime is to be combated to guarantee security of the citizens, the government should restructure the force to instil into it more positive values that could ensure more effective service delivery to the masses.

Idowu and Idris (2025), in their study, “Public–police Distrust and Effectiveness of Nigeria Police on Crime Control in Mpape, FCT, Abuja, Nigeria: Redeeming Police Image”, investigated the impact of public distrust on police effectiveness and crime control in Mpape, Abuja, using a mixed-method approach combining surveys and case studies. The study found that public-police distrust primarily stems from perceived inefficacies and unethical practices within the police force, leading to reduced cooperation, alternative justice methods, and strained community relations. The scholars also found that such distrust undermines police effectiveness by diminishing cooperation and intelligence quality, affecting crime-solving rates, and lowering police morale. Key recommendations of the study include enhancing transparency and accountability, implementing community policing strategies, improving officer training, strengthening communication channels, and addressing corruption and misconduct among the police. Usman (2019) also carried out a study titled “Public perceptions of trust in the police in Abuja, Nigeria”, which explored the relationship between police and the public in Nigeria and ordinary people’s perceptions of police corruption and trust and the historical background that forms the context of this. The study found that participants employed an idea of police effectiveness to assess their legitimacy that in turn was connected to procedural fairness as well as honesty. Participants believed that they would be more likely to trust the police if they were provided with the needed services, such as securing lives and properties and maintaining law and order, as well as investigation and detection of crime.

Similarly, Okocha, Achenyo, and Ola-Akuma (2022) measured civilians’ perception of Nigerian Security Forces in their study “Netizens Perception of Nigerian Security Agencies’ Representation in the New Media”. The study showed that though cooperation between the forces and the public is a prerequisite for their success, many respondents have lost confidence in the security forces as they perceive them to “be brutal, contemptuous of civilians, manipulative, lawless, propagandist and corrupt”. The study, among others, recommended that security forces, especially the military and police, should “strive to understand the perception of the public beyond empty rhetoric and adopt international best practices in their engagements with the civilian

population, while strategically striving to redeem and sustain a positive public image” (p.235).

The distrust and negative perception of police among Nigerians have become a focus area for scholars, particularly as it concerns citizens sharing intelligence with police operatives. Studies have established the importance of intelligence in addressing the country’s insecurity challenge. Adegoke (2020) examined the nexus between the level of intelligence gathered and security in his study “Intelligence Gathering and Challenges of Insecurity in Nigeria”. The study found a positive relationship between effective intelligence gathering and the state of security. It also attributed the country’s insecurity to the lapse of intelligence gathering and its proper utilisation. The research recommended, among other things, the training and retraining of personnel of the intelligence community to be able to meet up with current trends and changes in contemporary Nigeria. Olowonibi and Musa (2024), in their study, “Intelligence Gathering and its Contribution to Nigeria’s National Security: A Critical Assessment”, found that the efficiency of intelligence gathering is hampered by structural and operational obstacles such as insufficient financial resources, insufficient training and knowledge, technical constraints, competition among different agencies, and legal and bureaucratic restrictions. On their part, Oke Braimah & Masajuma (2021) also conducted a study titled “Policing through the community in Nigeria: The missing link in security architecture”. The study found policing through the community will improve the intelligence-gathering capacity of the security agencies in their fight against criminality and insurgencies in Nigeria. The study recommended decentralisation of the current police structure and urged the police to take measures to reinvent itself to change the negative perception of the public towards it. Similarly, Ibekwe (2025) did a study titled “Role of Credible Intelligence in Enhancing Internal Security Operations in Nigeria: A critical Analysis”, which examined how credible intelligence contributes to improving internal security operations in Nigeria. The study listed poor inter-agency collaboration, lack of modern technology, limited funding, and low community trust as key challenges facing intelligence operations in Nigeria.

Dauda and Jafaru (2025), in their study, “Assessing the Strengths of Existing Security Intelligence and Conflict Resolution Mechanisms in Katsina State, Nigeria”, also found that security intelligence helps

prevent security threats in Katsina state. However, poor coordination was identified as the major obstacle to the effective use of security intelligence in Katsina state alongside lack of resources, corruption, and insufficient training. Also, Okon, Enamhe, Omotosho, Terso, Uyang, & Agba (2024) did a study titled “Intelligent gathering and crime control in Nigeria: A critical sociological view” which looked at the role of intelligence gathering and non-kinetic strategies in crime control in Nigeria’s South South region. The study found grassroots intelligence gathering, skill empowerment initiatives, and advocacy programmes, such as school-based crime prevention clubs, are effective in reducing criminal behaviour. It recommended prioritising vocational training, enhancing community-police collaboration, and implementing conflict resolution mechanisms to achieve peace and security in South-South Nigeria.

Hussaini and Liman (2024) also conducted a study titled “Approaches to Intelligence Information Gathering and Sharing Among Security Agencies for Security Management in Kaduna State, Nigeria”. The study found the common types of intelligence information gathering and sharing for security management in Kaduna state were information about criminal hideouts and criminal modes of operation. It recommended that security agencies should collaborate with community leaders, elders, youth and other stakeholders for effective intelligence information gathering; they should also strengthen rapport with crime suspects and syndicates for effective intelligence gathering. Security agencies should also intensify efforts on daily intelligence gathering and sharing.

The above studies reviewed clearly showed the importance of intelligence in addressing the country’s insecurity. They also established trust and a good perception of the police as prerequisites for effective gathering and sharing of intelligence. However, none of the studies specifically addressed how such trust and perception of the police influence residents’ willingness to share intelligence with the police amid the country’s security challenges, a lacuna filled by this research.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the Procedural Justice Theory and Institutional Trust Theory due to their suitability to understand how public trust and perception of the

Nigeria Police Force influence intelligence sharing among Nigerians.

Procedural Justice Theory

Procedural Justice Theory, developed by Tom R. Tyler, posits that citizens are naturally likely to obey the law and cooperate with legal authorities if they consider the procedure through which they are enforcing such law fair enough. In this context of this study, the theory is essential to help interrogate the extent to which citizens' perceptions of the police and trust influence their willingness to share intelligence with them.

Institutional Trust Theory

Institutional Trust Theory explains that citizens' cooperation with and support for an institution largely depends on the level of trust they have in such an institution. In other words, the more citizens perceive an institution to be efficient and accountable, the more they are likely to trust it. This theory is therefore suitable to determine how citizens' trust and perceptions of the police influence their willingness to share intelligence.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of literate Nigerian citizens aged 18 and above. However, due to the impossibility of sampling the entire population, the researcher purposively targeted 300 literate Nigerians (150 online and 150 offline). The questionnaire was used as the research instrument and contained closed-ended and open-ended questions to get quality responses for the study. To get the online respondents, the researcher developed the questionnaire using Google Forms and shared the link via social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp. Akeusola (2023) considered the online survey approach efficient due to its "cost-effectiveness, broad accessibility, and real-time data collection capability" (p.18). Using

this approach, the researcher leveraged the snowball sampling technique. The Google Form link created was shared with a few people in the researcher's online network and then encouraged them to also circulate the same with others, provided they met the research criteria. Upon completion of the data collection phase, the researcher deactivated the survey link to preserve data integrity.

For the offline, a total of 150 copies of the questionnaire were distributed across Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos state. The researcher purposively selected the LGA because of access and convenience. It was also considered suitable for the study because it is largely urban and home to many literate Nigerians. Alimosho LGA is divided into five Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs). They are Agbado/Oke-Odo, Ayobo-Ipaja, Egbe-Idimu, Igando-Ikotun, and Mosan-Okunola. Out of this, the researcher selected Agbado/Oke-Odo LCDA due to accessibility and familiarity with the terrain. The researcher then distributed the questionnaire across Aboru, Abule Egba, Oke-Odo, and Agbelekale communities. Using the convenience sampling technique, the researcher selected residents who were available for the study at the time of distributing the questionnaire across the selected communities. The data collected was consequently presented and analysed using the quantitative and qualitative methods.

V. RESULT

This section analysed raw data gathered from the research using simple tables and percentages. Based on the study's sample size, a total of 300 copies of the questionnaire were administered (150 online and 150 offline). However, 256 (85.3%) copies of the distributed questionnaire were correctly returned. This meant the researcher analysed 256 valid responses for the study.

This was shown in the table below:

Table 1: Response rate of distributed questionnaire

Channel	Targeted	Returned/Valid	Response Rate (%)
Online	150	137	91.3
Offline	150	119	79.3
Total	300	256	85.3

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	136	53.1
	Female	120	46.9
Age Bracket	26–35 years	111	43.4
	18–25 years	56	21.9
	36–45 years	51	19.9
	46–55 years	26	10.2
	56 years and above	12	4.7
Marital Status	Single	149	58.2
	Married	104	40.6
	Widowed	2	0.8
	Divorced	1	0.4
Educational Qualification	HND/Bachelor's Degree	155	60.5
	Postgraduate Degree	42	16.4
	Secondary Education	31	12.1
	Diploma/NCE	26	10.2
	Primary Education	2	0.8
Occupation	Employed	149	58.2
	Others _____	52	20.3
	Student	34	13.3
	Unemployed	19	7.4
	Farmer	2	0.8
State of Residence	Lagos	175	68.4
	Enugu	16	6.3
	FCT (Abuja)	11	4.3
	Ogun	10	3.9
	Oyo	7	2.7
	Ondo	5	2.0
	Niger	4	1.6
	Kwara	3	1.2
	Kaduna	3	1.2
	Zamfara	2	0.8
	Edo	2	0.8
	Sokoto	2	0.8
	Anambra	2	0.8
	Rivers	2	0.8
	Kebbi	1	0.4
	Kogi	1	0.4
	Benue	1	0.4
	Gombe	1	0.4
	Abia	1	0.4
	Borno	1	0.4
	Kano	1	0.4
	Adamawa	1	0.4
	Cross River	1	0.4
	Akwa Ibom	1	0.4
	Ebonyi	1	0.4
	Ekiti	1	0.4

Table 2 shows the demographic distribution of the 256 respondents. Regarding gender, 136 (53.1%) were male while 120 (46.9%) were female. On age, the largest bracket was 26-35 years with 111 (43.4%) respondents, followed by 18-25 years with 56 (21.9%). In terms of marital status, 149 (58.2%) respondents were single, while 104 (40.6%) were

married. For educational qualification, most respondents, 155 (60.5%), held an HND/bachelor's degree. On occupation, 149 respondents, representing 58.2%, were employed. Lastly, on state of residence, the majority, 175 (68.4%), resided in Lagos state.

Table 3: Have you had a personal encounter/experience with the Nigeria Police Force before?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	153	59.8
No	103	40.2
Total	256	100.0

As presented above, 153 (59.8%) of the 256 respondents indicated they have had personal encounters with the Nigeria Police Force before, while 103 (40.2%) haven't.

Table 4: If yes, is such an encounter/experience positive or negative?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Negative	81	52.9
All of the above	45	29.4
Positive	27	17.6
Total	153	100.0

From the table, 52.9% (81) of respondents said their experience/encounter with the police ended on a negative note, 27 (17.6%) indicated positive, while 45 (29.4%) said "All of the above".

Table 5: Do you trust the Nigeria Police Force to protect lives and property in your community?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	161	62.9
Yes	95	37.1
Total	256	100.0

As presented in the table, 161 (62.9%) said they don't trust the police to protect lives and property in their communities. In comparison, 95 (37.1%) said they do.

Table 6: Do you have confidence in the ability of the Nigeria Police Force to respond effectively to security threats?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	186	72.7
Yes	70	27.3
Total	256	100.0

As shown in the table, 72.7% (186) of respondents said they don't have confidence in the police's ability to respond to security threats, while 70 (27.3%) said they do.

Table 7: Do you trust the Nigeria Police Force to handle information provided by citizens confidentially and responsibly?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	166	64.8
Yes	90	35.2
Total	256	100.0

From the above, 166(64.8%) of the 256 respondents indicated they don't trust the police to handle citizens' information confidentially, while 90(35.2%) said they do.

Table 8: Is your response to the above based on personal experience with the police?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	166	64.8
No	90	35.2
Total	256	100.0

As shown above, 64.8% (166) of respondents said their trust-related response was based on personal experience, while 90 (35.2%) said no.

Table 9: If no, what other factors determine your trust in the police? (Grouped by themes)

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Experiences or accounts shared by family, friends, or other people	20	31.7
Institutional or systemic factors (logistics, welfare, accountability, national situation)	9	14.3
Perceived corruption, bribery, or misconduct	8	12.7
Positive perception of police effectiveness, integrity, or responsiveness	8	12.7
Media and social media reports	7	11.1
Professionalism, honesty, and competence of officers	7	11.1
General or unspecified responses	4	6.3
Total	63	100.0

The table above groups the open-ended responses on other factors that shape trust in the police, where personal experience was not the basis of recurring themes. The leading theme was "Experiences or accounts shared by family, friends, or other people", accounting for 20 (31.7%) of the 63 respondents who

answered this item. This was followed by "Institutional or systemic factors (logistics, welfare, accountability, national situation)", cited by 9 respondents, representing 14.3% of that group. This item applied to 63 of the 256 respondents, as it was conditional on an earlier response.

Table 10: Do you think the Nigeria Police Force performs its duties effectively in combating crime and insecurity?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	181	70.7
Yes	75	29.3
Total	256	100.0

From the table, 70.7% (181) of the respondents do not think the police are effective in combating crime and insecurity, while 75 (29.3%) think the police do.

Table 11: Do police officers in your area conduct themselves professionally when interacting with members of the public?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	173	67.6
Yes	83	32.4
Total	256	100.0

As shown above, 173 (67.6%) of the respondents said police officers in their area do not conduct themselves professionally when interacting with members of the public, while 83 (32.4%) said they do.

Table 12: Do you believe the Nigeria Police Force treats citizens fairly and without bias?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	218	85.2
Yes	38	14.8
Total	256	100.0

From the table, 85.2% (218) of respondents said they don't believe the police treat citizens fairly and without bias, while 38 (14.8%) believe they do.

Table 13: Do corruption and misconduct among police officers reduce your confidence in the Nigeria Police Force?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	217	84.8
No	39	15.2
Total	256	100.0

As presented above, 217 (84.8%) of the respondents said corruption and misconduct among police officers reduce their confidence in the Nigeria Police Force, while 39(15.2%) said such do not reduce their confidence.

Table 14: Is your response to the above based on personal experience with the police? 2

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	183	71.5
No	73	28.5
Total	256	100.0

As shown above, 71.5% (183) of respondents said their perception-related response was based on personal experience. In comparison, 73 (28.5%) said no.

Table 15: If no, what other factors determine your perception of the police? (Themes)

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Experiences or accounts shared by family, friends, or other people	16	45.7
Perceived corruption, bribery, misconduct, or harassment	7	20.0
Media and online reports	4	11.4
Institutional or systemic factors (logistics, welfare, investigative capacity)	3	8.6
General knowledge, worldview, or security concerns	3	8.6
Positive or balanced perception (professionalism, fairness)	2	5.7
Total	35	100.0

Table 15 groups the open-ended responses on other factors shaping perception of the police, where personal experience was not the basis of recurring themes. The leading theme was "Experiences or accounts shared by family, friends, or other people", accounting for 16 (45.7%) of the 35 respondents who answered this item. This was followed by "Perceived corruption, bribery, misconduct, or harassment", cited by 7 respondents, representing 20.0% of that group.

Table 16: Are you willing to report suspicious activities or criminal behaviour to the Nigeria Police Force?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	191	74.6
No	65	25.4
Total	256	100.0

From the table, 74.6% (191) of respondents said they are willing to report suspicious activities or criminal behaviour to the police, while 65 (25.4%) said they are unwilling.

Table 17: Would you provide useful security information to the police if it could help prevent crime?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	216	84.4
No	40	15.6
Total	256	100.0

As shown in the table, 216 (84.4%) of the respondents indicated willingness to provide useful security information to help prevent crime, while 40 (15.6%) said they would not provide such information.

Table 18: Do you feel safe sharing intelligence with the Nigeria Police Force without fear of intimidation or victimisation?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	175	68.4
Yes	81	31.6
Total	256	100.0

The table above showed 68.4% (175) of respondents do not feel safe sharing intelligence with the police, while 81 (31.6%) said they do.

Table 19: Does your level of trust and perception of the Nigeria Police Force influence your willingness to share intelligence with them?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	133	52.0
No	123	48.0
Total	256	100.0

As shown in the table, 133 (52.0%) of the respondents indicated that the level of their trust and perception influences their willingness to share intelligence with the police, while 123 (48.0%) said no.

Table 4.19: Would you be more willing to share intelligence with the police if you trusted them more?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	227	88.7
No	29	11.3
Total	256	100.0

As shown above, 88.7% (227) of respondents said greater trust would increase willingness to share intelligence with the police, while 29 (11.3%) said it won't.

VI. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The focus of the study was to determine the influence of public trust and perception of the Nigeria Police Force on intelligence sharing among the citizens. The demographic composition of the respondents showed that the majority of them, 43.4%, were aged 26-35, indicating they were mostly youth. The majority of the respondents, 68.4%, were also based in Lagos, showing the urban nature of the study. Further breakdown showed that the respondents were largely educated, with the majority, 60.5%, holding an HND/bachelor's degree, while 58.2% were employed. The gender composition of the respondents also showed that the majority, 53.1%, were male.

Findings from the study showed that the majority of Nigerians sampled, 59.8%, had a personal encounter and experience with the NPF, with 52.9% of the figure describing such an encounter as negative against 17.6%, which indicated it was positive. The study also revealed that the majority of Nigerians sampled had low trust in the Nigeria Police Force. For instance, 62.9% of the respondents do not trust the police to protect lives and property, 72.7% lack

confidence in their ability to respond to threats, and 64.8% do not trust them to handle citizen information confidentially. This finding aligns with a study done by Victor (2019), which showed that citizens indicated a lack of confidence in the Nigerian police "because of their unprofessionalism in fighting crime when the occasion arises".

The researcher also measured how the citizens perceive the NPF, particularly its effectiveness, professionalism and integrity. Findings showed that Nigerians have a negative perception of the police. 85.2% of the respondents sampled say the police do not treat the citizens fairly, while 70.7% do not believe the police effectively perform their duty in combating crime and security. The study found such negative perception was a result of the misconduct and corruption among some officers of the NPF. For instance, 67.6% of the respondents say police officers in their area do not conduct themselves professionally when interacting with members of the public, while 84.8% say such misconduct and corruption reduce their confidence in the NPF. This finding also supports that of Ajayi and Longe (2015) cited in Oke, Braimah & Masajuma (2021), which found that the public perception of the Nigerian police is negative.

It also corroborated a study by Idowu and Idris (2025) which revealed that public-police distrust primarily stems from perceived inefficacies and unethical practices within the police force, leading to reduced cooperation, alternative justice methods, and strained community relations.

The researcher also found Nigerians' trust and perception of the NPF are shaped by their personal experiences with the police rather than hearsay. For those who say personal experience is not the basis, the study found secondhand accounts from family, friends, and others as the dominant alternative source of trust and for perception, indicating negative attitudes are reinforced through social transmission even where direct contact is absent.

Further findings showed that despite low trust and negative perception, the willingness to cooperate with the police in intelligence sharing remains comparatively high among Nigerians. For instance, 74.6% of the respondents say they would report suspicious activities or criminal behaviour to the police, while 84.4% say they would provide useful security information to the police if it could help prevent crime. However, the researcher found that such willingness is constrained by safety concerns, as 68.4% of the respondents indicated they do not feel safe sharing intelligence with the police over fear of intimidation or victimisation. The researcher also found a direct relationship between the level of trust and perception of the police and intelligence sharing among Nigerians. 52% of the respondents admitted that their willingness to share intelligence with the police is determined by their level of trust in the police and perception, while 88.7% say they would be more willing to share intelligence if trust increased. This agrees with the tenets of the Institutional Trust Theory used for this, which holds that citizens' cooperation with and support for an institution largely depends on the level of trust they have in such an institution.

VII. CONCLUSION

At a critical time in the country's history, Nigerians need the police to dismantle rising criminal networks that have made many of them feel largely unsafe on the road and in their homes. Without public goodwill, however, this will be a tall order for the Nigerian Police Force to achieve. The police must therefore dissipate more efforts and resources to build trust and address negative perceptions of the force through

professionalism and improved efficiency in the discharge of its constitutional duties.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on findings of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. The police should intensify efforts to weed out erring officers, particularly those who engage in corruption and other misconduct, as such actions reduce public confidence in the force.
2. The NPF should organise regular training sessions for its officers on public engagement to improve trust and positive perception.
3. To improve intelligence sharing, the NPF should consider interventions that would encourage the citizens to report criminal activities without fear of intimidation or victimisation.
4. Considering personal experiences mostly shape trust and perception of the police, the NPF should organise constant interactive sessions with the public to understand their encounters with officers and address underlying grievances.
5. To enjoy public goodwill, the NPF must strive to attain efficiency in discharging its primary duties of protecting life and property as well as responding to security threats across communities.

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