

# Unknown Paper

## AI Reviewer 1 - Comprehensive Review

*This reviewer provides a thorough and balanced assessment*

**\*\*Review of "THEY KEPTFILMING UNTIL THE END": TRUSTWORTHINESS IN JOURNALISTIC TESTIMONY DURING THE GAZA WAR (2023–2024)\*\***

\\ \\ **\*\* Step 1. Summary of the Paper\*\***

This study examines journalist fatalities in Gaza from October 2023 to March 2024, analyzing 158 documented cases through a mixed-methods approach. The paper claims to investigate how trust in journalistic testimony is established under extreme conditions of conflict, communication blackouts, and infrastructural collapse. Quantitative analysis reveals patterns in demographics, causes of death, and temporal distribution, while qualitative thematic coding identifies themes such as courage, credibility, injustice, and hope in journalists' final communications. The authors argue that trust operates as "relational reciprocity," where journalists' risk-taking creates moral truth claims validated through audience witnessing, transforming individual sacrifice into collective moral testimony.

\\ \\ **\*\* Step 2. Evaluation Criteria\*\***

\\\\ \\ **\*\*1. Originality / Novelty\*\*** - **\*\*Score: 7/10\*\*** - The paper addresses a timely and understudied phenomenon—journalist fatalities in the Gaza conflict—and integrates quantitative fatality data with qualitative testimony analysis, which is relatively novel in conflict journalism research. However, the theoretical frameworks (epistemic trust, moral witnessing) are well-established, and the application to this specific context, while relevant, is not entirely groundbreaking. The concept of "relational reciprocity" adds nuance but is not a paradigm shift.

\\\\ \\ **\*\*2. Scientific Rigor / Methodology\*\*** - **\*\*Score: 6/10\*\*** - The mixed-methods design is appropriate, but several flaws undermine rigor: - **\*\*Sampling Bias:\*\*** The sample is limited to \*fatalities\*, excluding injured, detained, or surviving journalists, which skews the analysis of "trust" toward extreme cases. - **\*\*Causality Claims:\*\*** The paper implies that risk exposure directly causes trust, but no experimental or longitudinal data support this causal inference. - **\*\*Missing Controls:\*\*** No comparison with conflicts where journalist fatalities were lower (e.g., Ukraine) to contextualize findings. - **\*\*Ethical Oversight:\*\*** While data are anonymized, the source of sensitive testimonies (e.g., social media) and ethical approval processes are unclear.

\\\\ \*\*3. Clarity \ Presentation\*\* - \*\*Score: 8/10\*\* - The paper is well-structured, with clear sections and logical flow. The abstract and conclusions accurately reflect the content. However: - \*\*Jargon Overuse:\*\* Terms like "epistemic trust" and "relational reciprocity" are repeated without sufficient layperson explanation. - \*\*Table Readability:\*\* Tables are informative but lack detailed captions (e.g., Table 2 does not clarify what "Local Media" entails). - \*\*Overstated Claims:\*\* The conclusion suggests "transformative" impacts without robust evidence.

\\\\ \*\*4. Reproducibility \ Transparency\*\* - \*\*Score: 5/10\*\* - The methodology section describes data sources (e.g., CPJ, Al Jazeera) but lacks critical details: - \*\*Data Availability:\*\* No mention of public access to the "press\_killed\_nin\_gaza.csv" dataset or code for analysis. - \*\*Coding Reliability:\*\* While two researchers coded a subset, inter-coder reliability metrics (e.g., Cohen's kappa) are unreported. - \*\*Statistical Methods:\*\* Descriptive statistics are basic, but no justification for omitting inferential tests (e.g., regression).

\\\\ \*\*5. Significance \ Impact\*\* - \*\*Score: 8/10\*\* - The topic is critically important, addressing journalist safety, media ethics, and humanitarian communication. The findings could inform: - \*\*Policy:\*\* International frameworks for journalist protection. - \*\*Education:\*\* Journalism curricula on risk and trust. - \*\*Academic Discourse:\*\* Conflict journalism and epistemic justice. - However, the impact is tempered by methodological limitations and regional specificity.

\\\\ \*\*6. Ethics \ Integrity\*\* - \*\*Score: 7/10\*\* - The authors acknowledge positionality and use triangulation to mitigate bias. However: - \*\*Conflict of Interest:\*\* No statement on funding or ideological affiliations, which is crucial given the politicized context. - \*\*Sensitivity:\*\* Using final communications of deceased journalists raises ethical questions about consent and family privacy, which are inadequately addressed.

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\\\ \*\* Step 3. Specific Suggestions for Improvement\*\*

\\\\ \*\*Major Flaws to Address:\*\* 1. \*\*Expand Sampling:\*\* Include non-fatal journalists (e.g., injured, survivors) to avoid survivorship bias. 2. \*\*Strengthen Causal Claims:\*\* Use regression or comparative case studies to test whether risk exposure directly correlates with trust. 3. \*\*Clarify Ethical Protocols:\*\* Detail IRB approval, data anonymization, and consent procedures for using sensitive testimonies. 4. \*\*Improve Reproducibility:\*\* Share datasets, code, and full coding frameworks in supplementary materials.

\\\\ \*\*Minor Flaws:\*\* 1. \*\*Define Key Terms:\*\* Add a glossary for terms like "relational reciprocity." 2. \*\*Enhance Tables:\*\* Include confidence intervals, p-values, or effect sizes where applicable. 3. \*\*Reduce Repetition:\*\* Consolidate theoretical discussions in Sections 2–3.

\\\\ \*\*Additional Analyses to Strengthen the Manuscript:\*\* 1. \*\*Comparative Analysis:\*\* Contrast Gaza with other conflicts (e.g., Syria, Ukraine) to identify context-specific vs. universal trust mechanisms. 2. \*\*Audience Study:\*\* Incorporate survey/data on audience perceptions of journalist credibility to validate qualitative themes. 3. \*\*Longitudinal Tracking:\*\* Analyze how trust dynamics evolved monthly alongside conflict intensity.

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\\\ \*\* Step 4. Final Decision \ Justification\*\*

- \*\*Overall Score: 6.5/10\*\* - \*\*Recommendation: Borderline\*\* - \*\*Justification:\*\* This paper ad-

addresses a high-stakes, under-researched topic with potential societal impact. The mixed-methods approach is commendable, and the integration of quantitative and qualitative findings provides nuanced insights. However, **methodological flaws**—including sampling bias, unsubstantiated causal claims, and insufficient reproducibility—undermine its scientific rigor. The politicized context also demands greater transparency about ethics and conflicts of interest. - **Strengths:** Timeliness, theoretical integration, clear structure. - **Weaknesses:** Limited generalizability, speculative conclusions, inadequate data sharing. - **Path to Acceptance:** Major revisions addressing sampling, causality, and ethics could make this suitable for publication. Without these, the paper remains more descriptive than explanatory.

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**Confidential Note to Editor:** This study's political sensitivity necessitates careful scrutiny. While the authors strive for objectivity, the omission of explicit conflict-of-interest statements and reliance on partisan sources (e.g., Al Jazeera) without balancing perspectives (e.g., Israeli media) may introduce bias. Recommend additional review by experts in Middle Eastern studies or political communication.

## AI Reviewer 2 - Critical Review

*This reviewer provides critical analysis and identifies potential weaknesses*

**\*\*Overall Assessment: Weak Reject (2/5)\*\***

\\ 1. Overall Impression **\*\*Immediate Reaction:\*\*** The manuscript addresses a timely and tragic subject with clear humanitarian significance. However, it suffers from profound methodological and conceptual flaws that undermine its scientific contribution. The core argument—that trust is established through "relational reciprocity" and "embodied persistence"—feels more like a philosophical assertion than an empirically demonstrated finding. The paper reads as an overhyped weak study that attempts to leverage the gravity of its subject matter to compensate for a lack of academic rigor. The integration of quantitative and qualitative methods is superficial, and the leap from descriptive statistics to grand theoretical claims is not justified by the evidence presented.

**\*\*First Impression Strengths:\*\*** \* **\*\*Timely and Important Topic:\*\*** The scale of journalist fatalities in Gaza is a critical issue for media studies, ethics, and international law. \* **\*\*Interdisciplinary Ambition:\*\*** Attempts to bridge quantitative data analysis with qualitative thematic analysis and high-level theory (epistemic trust, moral witnessing) are commendable in intent. \* **\*\*Clear Structure:\*\*** The paper is logically organized and follows a standard IMRaD format.

**\*\*First Impression Concerns:\*\*** \* **\*\*Lack of Causal or Correlational Rigor:\*\*** The quantitative analysis is purely descriptive. It establishes *what* happened but does not test *why* or how these patterns relate to the core concept of "trust." \* **\*\*Unsubstantiated Theoretical Leap:\*\*** The central claim that statistical patterns of death "align" with qualitative themes to form "relational reciprocity" is an interpretive leap, not a finding derived from the integrated methodology. \* **\*\*Missing Comparative Framework:\*\*** The analysis is entirely insular to the Gaza case, with no systematic comparison to other conflicts to test the uniqueness or generalizability of the proposed trust mechanism.

### \\ 2. Technical \ Scientific Assessment

**\*\*A. Problem Definition: Score 4/5\*\*** The research question is clearly motivated and non-trivial. The authors effectively argue why understanding trust mechanisms in this extreme context matters for journalism studies and ethics. The problem is significant and well-articulated.

**\*\*B. Methodological Soundness: Score 1/5\*\*** This is the paper's primary weakness. \* **\*\*Study Design:\*\*** The concurrent mixed-methods design is appropriate in theory but fails in execution. The quantitative and qualitative strands run in parallel but are not effectively integrated to answer the research questions. The quantitative data describes the context of death, while the qualitative data describes the content of communication; the link to "trust" is presumed, not measured. \* **\*\*Hidden Assumptions:\*\*** The entire analysis rests on the unverified assumption that audience perception of trust is directly and accurately inferred from the journalists' final communications and the circumstances of their death. There is **\*\*no primary data on audience perception\*\***. \* **\*\*Statistical Flaws:\*\*** The analysis is limited to descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages). There is no inferential statistics, no tests for significance, no control for confounding variables, and

no demonstration that the observed patterns are non-random.

**C. Results \ Evidence: Score 2/5** **Results:** The results are descriptive and reproducible in a narrow sense (the tables are clear), but they are not compelling evidence for the paper's central thesis. The evidence shows journalists died and what they said; it does not show how this created trust. **Baselines/Comparison:** There is a critical lack of comparative baselines. How do trust dynamics differ for journalists who were *not* killed? How does this case compare to Syria, Ukraine, or other conflicts with high journalist fatalities? Without this, claims of uniqueness or specific trust mechanisms are unsubstantiated. **Exaggeration:** Claims like "trust operates as relational reciprocity" and "embodied persistence... validates testimony credibility" are profound exaggerations of what the data can support. The data documents a correlation (journalists died while reporting), not the causal mechanism of trust formation.

**D. Contribution to the Field: Score 2/5** The contribution is currently weak. It documents a tragic case study but does not meaningfully advance theoretical knowledge. The application of Fricker and Margalit is superficial. The proposed concept of "relational reciprocity" is not developed with sufficient empirical or theoretical novelty to be widely cited or built upon. It repackages existing ideas in the context of a new, severe case.

**E. Writing \ Presentation: Score 4/5** The paper is generally well-written, organized, and accessible. The tables are clear. The language is sometimes overly abstract and jargony ("epistemic trust," "moral witnessing," "relational reciprocity"), which masks the methodological simplicity.

**F. Ethical \ Transparency Standards: Score 3/5** The use of posthumous data likely raises complex ethical issues, but the authors mention anonymization and aggregation, which is a minimum standard. **A major flaw is the lack of data/code availability.** The analysis relies on a custom dataset ('press\_killed\_nongaza.csv'), which is not provided. This makes full reproducibility impossible. *No evidence of misconduct is apparent, but the lack of transparency is a significant concern.*

\\ 3. Strengths **Focus on a critically important and under-documented humanitarian and journalistic crisis.** **Attempt to bring a rigorous, mixed-methods framework to a highly charged and emotional subject.** **Clear presentation of descriptive data that starkly outlines the scale and patterns of the tragedy.**

\\ 4. Weaknesses **Major Flaws:** 1. **The Missing Link: No Audience Data:** The entire argument about "trust" and "audience perception" is built on a foundation of proxy data (journalist actions/words) rather than direct evidence (audience surveys, reception studies, social media analytics). 2. **Methodological Disconnect:** The quantitative and qualitative analyses are not integrated to test the core hypothesis. They are two separate descriptions presented as mutually reinforcing evidence. 3. **Purely Descriptive Statistics:** The quantitative analysis lacks any inferential power. It cannot support claims about relationships, causes, or the significance of the observed patterns. 4. **Lack of Comparative Analysis:** The claim that this case is "unprecedented" or demonstrates a unique trust mechanism is untested without comparison to other conflict zones.

**Minor Flaws:** **The phrase "They kept filming until the end" in the title is powerful but anecdotal; its representativeness is not established.** **Some theoretical concepts (e.g., Origgi) are**

mentioned but not meaningfully operationalized in the analysis.

\\\ 5. Recommendations for Improvement **\*\*For a Major Revision (Required for Resubmission):\*\***  
 1. **\*\*Reframe the Claims:\*\*** The paper should be reframed as a **\*\*descriptive case study\*\*** that documents the patterns of fatalities and the themes in final communications. The grand theoretical claims about "relational reciprocity" must be severely tempered or removed until supported by stronger evidence. 2. **\*\*Conduct a Comparative Analysis:\*\*** Add a systematic comparison with data from at least one other major conflict (e.g., from CPJ databases on Syria, Ukraine) to contextualize the findings and test claims of uniqueness. 3. **\*\*Incorporate Audience Data:\*\*** If possible, the authors should analyze secondary data on audience reception (e.g., engagement metrics, sentiment analysis of comments on the journalists' final posts, or a meta-analysis of how international media framed these deaths) to provide a direct, rather than inferred, link to trust.

**\*\*For a Future Submission (To make it Tier-1 Quality):\*\*** 4. **\*\*Strengthen the Quantitative Analysis:\*\*** Move beyond descriptive statistics. Employ inferential tests. For example, test if the cause of death (airstrike vs. other) is independent of journalist affiliation (local vs. international), or if the temporal distribution of deaths correlates significantly with independent measures of conflict intensity. 5. **\*\*Formalize the Integration:\*\*** Use a joint display table to explicitly show how specific quantitative findings (e.g., high airstrike deaths in Gaza City) directly inform or are explained by specific qualitative themes (e.g., "courage under siege"). The current integration in section 5.3 is vague and unconvincing. 6. **\*\*Ensure Full Transparency:\*\*** Publicly archive the 'press\killedn;nn\_gaza.csv' dataset and any analysis code to ensure full reproducibility.

\\\ 6. Verdict **\*\*Final Score: 2/5 - Weak Reject\*\***

**\*\*Justification:\*\*** This paper should be rejected in its current form. While the topic is of undeniable importance, the methodological execution is fundamentally flawed for the claims it attempts to make. The core argument about trust formation is speculative and built on an analytical structure that cannot support its weight. The absence of primary audience data, the purely descriptive nature of the statistics, and the lack of a comparative framework render the study incremental and its conclusions overstated. There is a path to a respectable publication, but it requires a significant down-scoping of claims and a substantial strengthening of the analytical methods, particularly by incorporating direct evidence of audience perception and comparative context.

## Human Reviewer

*Expert human review providing domain-specific insights*

Reviewer: Dr. Majid Naeem

Scores (out of 10): - Question 1: 1.5 - Question 2: 1.5 - Question 3: 1.5 - Question 4: 1 - Question 5: 1 - Question 6: 1.5 - Question 7: 1.5

Total Score: 9.5 / 10

Reviewer Notes:

Submitted at: 2025-12-25 01:27:14

## Aggregate Review

*Combined assessment from all reviewers*

### Aggregate Review Report

This report combines the assessments from all three reviewers:

Individual Scores: - AI Reviewer 1 (Comprehensive): 7.0 / 10 - AI Reviewer 2 (Critical): 0.0 / 10  
- Human Reviewer (Dr. Majid Naeem): 9.5 / 10

Aggregate Score: 5.50 / 10

Overall Assessment: The paper received an average score of 5.50 out of 10 across all three reviewers.

Final Decision: Minor Revision

Justification: The paper shows promise but requires minor improvements before publication.

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