

# POLICE AND ACCUSATIONS OF CORRUPTION IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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## Abstract

This study examined accusations of corruption in the Nigeria Police Force using the Rivers State Police Command as the case study. The social exchange theory served as the theoretical guide for the study, while the survey was the research design. Data for the study were obtained from respondents through a Likert scale questionnaire. A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted to select respondents from three police divisional areas covering the three senatorial districts of Rivers State. The sample size for this study was 200 which represent thirty percent (30%) of serving officers of the Nigeria Police Force drawn from the total population of 652 comprising the three divisions under study. Five null hypotheses were tested in the study using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) at 0.05 level of significance. All the hypotheses, except one, were rejected. It was found from the study that inadequate personal emolument (salaries and allowances), poor recruitment policies or procedure, inadequate operational facilities and poor funding are factors that encourage corruption among officers/men of the Nigeria Police Force. Based on these findings, the study recommends among others; adequate personal emolument/salary increment, improved recruitment policies/procedures, adequate provision of operational facilities, adequate funding, education, and effective monitoring, legislation and execution, as a panacea to curb police corruption in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Corruption, Police, Officers, Rivers State, Nigeria.

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## Introduction

Corruption in Nigeria is endemic and its gravity is so intense that it has become a subculture that is highly practiced in the country. Every year the Transparency International (TI) in its annual corruption perception index

usually rates Nigeria as one of the most corrupt nations in the world. This implies that, every nation has its peculiar nature of corruption, and the level at which a nation is perceived to be corrupt is a function of several variables which includes how the nation is seen by the outside world. Corruption

has severe consequences on national development. As rightly observed by Akanbi (2004), corruption stunts growth and development and as well create political instability. It ruins socio-economic life and undermines the legitimacy of the state as well as introduces uneven distribution of amenities and prerequisites of life.

Quite a number of ad-hoc measures have been adopted over the years to combat corruption in Nigeria. Some of these measures include: the Public Officers (Investigation of Assets) Decree No.5 of 1966; the Corrupt Practices/Decree of 1975; the establishment of the Code of Conduct Bureau for public officers by the 1999 constitution; the War Against Indiscipline; the Corrupt Practice and Economic Crime Decree of 1990; the Indiscipline, Corrupt Practices and Economic Crime (Prohibited) Decree of 1994; the Failed Bank Decree and Tribunal; Advanced Fee Fraud and other Related Offences Act Decree of 1999; the establishment of Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission (ICPC) in 2000, and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in 2003.

Corruption is deep in our society because the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) that is supposed to tackle corrupt practices is widely seen as corrupt. According to Dode (2007), corruption is rife among officers/men of the NPF. This heinous act as practiced by the police ranges from mounting illegal tolls (road blocks) on the nation's local and highways; accepting of bribe to pervert justice; illegal detention of citizens; squeezing money from detainees' relations in the name of buying pen, foolscap sheets and files; collecting huge sums of money to effect bail for detainees; and colluding with criminals,

election riggers, fraudsters, assassins and bunkers (Ingiabuna and Uzobo, 2017; Ifeanyichukwu, 2017).

Successive governments in Nigeria have tried to stem the tide of police corruption in the country. Despite their efforts, this menace still thrives and remains critical in the nation's development and security drives. This calls for explanations. In spite the devastating effects of police corruption on the nation's image, development and security strides, there have been inadequate empirical studies and policy issues to address it. Thus, this study seeks to examine the causes of corruption among officers of the Nigeria Police with particular reference to Rivers State Police Command. This will be achieved in collaboration with the following specific objectives: to examine the relationship between personnel emolument and corrupt practices among officers/men of the NPF; to examine the relationship between recruitment policies and corrupt practices among officers/men of the NPF; to examine the relationship between inadequate funding and corrupt practices among officers/men of the NPF; to examine the relationship between insufficient accommodation and corrupt practices among officers/men of the NPF; and to examine the relationship between operational facilities and corrupt practices among officers/men of the NPF.

### **Police Corruption and Nigeria's National Development**

Police corruption affects the Nigerian society and its national development. It undermines all developmental efforts in the country. A catalogue of woes may be traced to it. Becker (1986) has insightfully linked

corruption to poverty index because it reduces the income earning potential of the poor. Little wonder that Nigeria is perpetually rated among the poorest in the comity of nations, even when its oil revenues continue to rise daily per barrel. Collection of bribes and kick-backs by the police helps to impoverish the ordinary citizens. Hagher (2002) noted that corruption breeds poverty, sickness, low life expectancy, and unequal distribution of the national wealth.

Police corruption does not only impoverish road users and suspects or their relatives, it impoverishes the Nigerian society. The negative effect of police corruption could also be seen in government regulatory functions. Government is not able to perform satisfactorily its regulatory role over financial institutions, hospitals, transportation and of protecting lives and property because somebody is there to give or take bribe. Another pernicious effect of corruption is its negative impact on the economic growth of Nigeria. Because so much money is siphoned from government coffers through embezzlement and brazen looting of public funds, there is little left for providing basic social amenities like education, health, electricity and good roads. The education and health sectors are particularly moribund, being starved of the needed funds for its rejuvenation. Electricity supply remains epileptic, leaving the nation shrouded in darkness. The private sector is worst hit, forcing many players to close shops because of lack or absence of power supply for their businesses. Closely related to this is the effect police corruption has on foreign aid and investment in Nigeria. Investors are reluctant to do business with perceived

corrupt nations like Nigeria, because they consider it as a dangerous destination for investment. This leads to a stoppage of external finances direly needed to stimulate such depressed economies (Nwazue, 2002).

Corruption leads to the decay of infrastructures, lives and property. So many lives have been lost to police corruption, especially under the guise of 'stray bullets' when the drivers failed to comply on illegal demands at roadblocks. A visit to the police barracks and quarters will confirm the decay of infrastructures. Even when contracts are awarded for their upgrade or rehabilitation, some of the high-ranking officers will only see it as an opportunity to siphon the money meant for contract executions into their personal accounts. All these have negative cumulative effects, leading to economic doldrums, social inequality and political instability. Based on the foregoing analysis, it is obvious that police corruption has social, economic and political effects on the Nigerian society.

### **Police Corruption and the Social Exchange Theory**

The major proponents of the Social Exchange Theory are; George Casper Homans, Peter M. Blau, Richard Emerson and James S. Coleman (Ritzer, 2008). The theory is concerned with understanding the exchange of resources between parties in an interactive situation where the objects offered for exchange must have value, must be measurable, and must be that which there is mutual dispensation of rewards and costs between actors (Ap, 1992). The proposition is that, if condition "B" must take place, situation "A" must prevail (Charles, 2005). Exchangeable resources in this context

includes: the giving and receiving of 'goods' which could be tangible such as money, shoes, cars, clothes and other things that can be seen and touched; and intangible ones such as love, appreciation, esteem and approval. It also includes opportunities, advantages, or some aspects of human relations as well as avoidance of pain, expense and embarrassment (Skidmore, 1979).

In reference to the main thrust of this research 'police and accusation of corruption', the Exchange theory explains the give and take relationship that exists between officers/men of the NPF and the general public. It is apparent in Nigeria that the police most times during their official duty compromised by receiving gifts from members of the public. This act has largely compromised the essence of creating the institution (i.e. for crime prevention). This gift as offered may be with or without the intent of influencing the police, but it may likely be considered by the police whenever the giver has a case to answer with the law.

A fundamental question which the exchange theory seeks to ask is the "quid pro quo", i.e. something given as compensation. In any situation of exchange (interaction or transaction), actors normally ask what will be their gain or loss. This question of gain or loss is usually quickly calculated mentally before an actor engages in any interaction. This is not surprising because the world has become not only materialistic but also sentimental. Most at times, the public give bribe to the police because they want to save time or defy their stress which they do not know will in time become a culture and probably become an ill to the society which is termed corrupt. The police, on the other hand, have aided criminal activities in their quest to make gains. A

typical example is the attitude of Nigeria Policemen on highways that collects bribe at checkpoints without carrying out their constitutional obligation of stop and search where necessary (Inyang and Abraham, 2013).

### **Methodology**

The survey design was chosen for this study. The study population consisted of serving officers/men of the NPF in the three divisional areas drawn from the three senatorial districts of Rivers State. A sample size of 200 respondents was drawn from the total population of 652 police officers/men of the Rivers State Command. This was achieved via the cluster sampling technique. In addition, the stratified random sampling technique was adopted to select these respondents from the categories of senior police officers (SPOs), inspectors, and junior officers (rank and file). The adoption of a multi-stage sampling technique in the study was informed by the fact that the study covers a wide area of Rivers State and the technique allows for objectivity and wide spread representativeness. Questionnaire was used for the collection of data for the study and it was administered to the selected 200 respondents in their divisions and offices. The data collected were analysed using Simple Percentages and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, while the former was used to analyse the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, the latter was used to test the hypotheses formulated for the study.

### **Results and Discussion**

Based on the objectives of this study, five hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment

Correlation Coefficient at 0.05 level of significance. Hypothesis one was tested to know if there's any significant relationship between personnel emolument and corrupt practices among officers of the Nigeria Police. Result of the finding as presented on Table 1 in the appendix section, indicates that, the calculated probability value (p-value) 0.043 is less than the declared probability value (0.05 alpha level). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected, while the alternate hypothesis was accepted which states that; there exists a significant relationship between personnel emolument and corrupt practices among officers of the Nigeria Police. The Table also shows a calculated r-value of 0.124 which implies that, personnel emolument is closely related to corrupt practices. Based on this finding, it can be argued that, corruption thrives and is perpetuated amongst officers/men of the Nigeria Police Force because of inadequate salaries, non-prompt payment of special duty allowances/overtime, as well as illegal deductions of their salaries. This revelation collaborates with the view of Dode (2007), who argued that, personnel emolument is a factor in police corruption in Nigeria.

Hypothesis two sought to establish if there's a significant relationship between recruitment policies and corrupt practices among officers of the Nigeria Police Force. Data on Table 2 below were derived from inquires made in relation to the hypothesis and it indicates that, the p-value 0.032 is less than the alpha level 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, while the alternate hypothesis which states that, there exists a significant relationship between recruitment policies and corrupt

practices in the Nigeria Police Force was accepted. Also, the table indicates that, the calculated r-value is 0.131 which implies that, recruitment policies are closely related to corrupt practices in the Nigeria Police Force. It is observed from the findings that, in most cases, people who have questionable character are recruited into the Police Force simply because they have been recommended by paramount rulers, high ranking police officers, and political godfathers. These officers only come to the force to perfect or improve on their corrupt behaviours, hence police corruption thrives. More so, lack of thorough investigation of the past lives and behaviours of prospective officers of the Nigeria Police Force go a long way to encourage police corruption.

Hypothesis three emerged to find out if there's significant relationship between operational facilities and corrupt practices among officers of the Nigeria Police Force. Data presented on Table 3 below represent findings in relation to the hypothesis, and it indicates that, the calculated p-value 0.022 is less than the alpha level 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, while the alternate hypothesis which states that, there exists a significant relationship between operational facilities and corrupt practices among officers/men of the Nigeria Police Force was accepted. The relationship though is low as seen from the r-value (0.170) on the table, however, it indicates that, inadequate provision of serviceable patrol vehicles, inadequate fuelling of patrol vehicles, inadequate maintenance of patrol vehicles, and inadequate police kits encourage corrupt practices among officers/men of the Nigeria Police Force. This finding collaborates with the view of Dode's (2007), who argued that

inadequate operational facilities is a major cause of police corruption in Nigeria. This is because officers who are sent out to the highways for duties without adequate facilities will likely indulge in corrupt practices in order to fuel, service or maintain their patrol vehicles adequately.

Hypothesis four states that, there is no significant relationship between inadequate funding and corrupt practices among officers of the Nigeria Police Force. Data presented on Table 4 below in relation to the hypothesis indicates that, the calculated p-value 0.000 is less than the alpha level 0.05. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternate hypothesis which argues that; there exists a significant relationship between inadequate funding and corrupt practices is accepted. As observed, the relationship shown on the Table from the calculated r-value (0.379) is not strong. However, finding indicates that, the Nigeria Police Force is not adequately funded; hence police corruption is alarming in the country. This finding also collaborates with the studies of Dode (2007); Inyang and Abraham (2013) that highlighted inadequate funding as a critical issue in police corruption in Nigeria.

Hypothesis five states that, there is no significant relationship between insufficient accommodation and corrupt practices among officers/men of the Nigeria Police Force. Data presented on Table 5 in relation to the hypothesis, shows that the calculated p-value 0.176 is greater than the alpha level 0.05. Also, that the calculated r-value stands at 0.101. This implies that, there is no significant relationship between insufficient accommodation and corrupt practices. Therefore the null hypothesis is retained, while the alternate

hypothesis is rejected. This finding disagrees with the view of Dode (2007) who observed that, lack of accommodation encourages police officers to indulge in corrupt practices. Thus, it submits that, police officers can survive in any environment provided they are adequately funded through improved salaries and allowances, and as well given adequate operational facilities to carry their duties satisfactorily.

### **Conclusion**

Indeed, police corruption is in sharp contrast to the main purpose of establishing the police institution (i.e. to maintain law and order in the Nigeria society). Not only does it contrast with its primary objective, corruption among officers and men of the Nigeria Police constitutes a threat to national security and it makes the public (internally and internationally) to lose confidence and trust in the Force. This study has indicated that, police corruption does not just happen; it is caused by several factors which include: inadequate personnel emolument (salaries and allowances); faulty or inadequate recruitment policies; inadequate provision and maintenance of operational facilities; and inadequate funding of the police force.

Consequently, police corruption has dehumanized Nigerians, impoverished the public, give the country a bad image in the international community, and as well threatened economic growth and development. Therefore, the study concludes that; tackling police corruption in Nigeria in an effective way will not only restore the trust and confidence of the public in the institution, it will also enhance national security, reduce crime drastically, and promote foreign

investment and economic growth in the country.

### **Recommendations**

In line with the findings of the study, the following suggestions are made to help reduce police corruption in Nigeria:

**Adequate personnel emolument/salary increment:** Concerted efforts should be made by the police service commission and the Nigeria government to ensure that adequate salaries and allowances of officers/men of the NPF are paid promptly. In addition to prompt payment of salaries and allowances, illegal deduction of police salaries and allowances should be discontinued or discouraged. Most importantly, police salaries and allowances should be subject to periodic review in order to enable them meet up with the changing economic realities in the country.

**Improved Recruitment Policies and Procedures:** Concurrent and predictive validation tests should be developed for use in selection of suitable prospective policemen both at recruitment and immediately after probationary period. These tests should include socio-psychological aptitude tests, educational test, physical test, and health or medical test. Among these tests, the socio-psychological is very vital because it has the capacity to reveal the character or behaviour of the prospective officers. This suggests that proper search into the prospective officer's life and conduct should be conducted even at the community level. Recommendation for recruitment should only be received from the prospective officer's community leaders, traditional rulers/chiefs other than from politicians who in most cases send in their thugs and boys of questionable character into

the force. Importantly, training and retraining conditions should be made humane and less cruel to enhance productivity and professionalism.

**Adequate Provision of Operational Facilities:** Operational facilities such as patrol vans, arms and ammunitions, kits, and detective facilities should be adequately provided for the police. Not only should there be adequate provision of these facilities, they should also be adequate maintenance. In addition, the fuelling and maintenance of police patrol vans should not be left in the hands of the officers on duty, as they can indulge in extorting monies from road users or the public to fuel and maintain such vehicles.

**Adequate Funding:** No institution on earth can function satisfactorily without adequate funding. Funding is therefore critical to the survival of any institution. Inadequate funding has been found to be a major factor driving police corruption in Nigeria. As a panacea, the Nigerian government should provide adequate funds for policing in the country. With adequate funding, problems that are faced by the institution and its officers including salary problems, poor operational facilities, poor recruitment procedures, poor housing, and insufficient stationary materials will be drastically reduced. Private individuals, corporate bodies and NGOs should also assist or partner with the government in funding the Nigeria Police Force.

**Education:** Most officers of the Nigeria Police Force indulge in corrupt practices simply because they do not have adequate knowledge of the effects of corruption on the institution, themselves and the society at large. Against this backdrop, sensitization programmes on the dangers of police corruption and effective policing

strategies should be provided for the officers and men of the NPF at all levels. Also, it should be emphasized during training and while swearing to the Oath of Allegiance and Oath of Office, that the duties of a constable are imposed by law and cannot be widened or restricted by any superior police officer or administrative authority. A constable is not an 'agent', but is personally liable for any act in excess of his authority and cannot plead that he is obeying the order of his police authority or superiors.

Effective Monitoring, Legislation and Execution: The Nigeria Police Force should ensure the efficient monitoring of conducts of its personnel on their duty posts. It should also provide credible public complaints system that will receive complaints about the conducts of police personnel and as well ensure timely response to such complaints appropriately.

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### Appendix

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis of relationship between personnel emolument and corrupt practices

Variable	N	R	p. Value	Decision (p< .05)
Personnel emolument	180	0.124	0.043	*
Corrupt practices	180			

\* = Significant

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis of relationship between recruitment policies and corrupt practices

Variable	N	R	p. Value	Decision (p< .05)
Recruitment policies	180	0.131	0.032	*
Corrupt practices	180			

\* = Significant

Table 3: Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis of relationship between operational facilities and corrupt practices

Variable	N	R	p. Value	Decision (p< .05)
Operational facilities	180	0.170	0.022	*
Corrupt practices	180			

\*=Significant

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis of relationship between funding and corrupt practices

Variable	N	R	p. Value	Decision (p< .05)
Funding	180	0.379	0.000	*
Corrupt practices	180			

\*=Significant

Table 5: Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis of the relationship between insufficient accommodation and corrupt practices

Variable	N	R	p. Value	Decision (p< .05)
Insufficient accommodation	180	0.101	0.176	NS
Corrupt practices	180			

NS=Not Significant