

LEADERSHIP STYLE, POLICING AND PERCEPTION OF CORRUPTION: A COMPARATIVE PRELIMINARY STUDY WITHIN THE NIGERIA POLICE FORCE

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ABSTRACT. The connection between leadership style, on the one hand, policing and perception of corruption, on the other hand, has received little attention in the literature on leadership theory and organizational processes. Hence, the aim of this study is to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and perception of corruption within the police institution, especially in this instance, the Nigeria Police Force. Based on a sampling process of cross sectional approach, the data were collected by administering questionnaires on 156 respondents in Alausa police district in Lagos State. The descriptive result shows that while transformational leadership is practiced in the Nigeria Police Force, the perceived level of corruption remains high. Though in varying degree, the results indicate a positive correlation between the attributes of transformational leadership (charisma, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation) and the dimensions of corruption. While charisma consistently has a positive influence on the facets of corruption, individualized consideration and charisma influence the dimension of transparency within the police force. In addition, individualized consideration influences the facet of crime. Thus, transformational leadership seems to play an important, but complex role in the reduction of corrupt practices within the police institution. The findings were discussed in the specific contexts of transformational leadership theory, organizational practices and police corruption. The practical implications for organizational development, police reform and crusade against police deviances were also underscored.

JEL Codes: D73; P41

Keywords: leadership style; transformational leadership; good policing;
police corruption; reform; charisma

1. Introduction

Good policing is the bedrock for the rule of law and public safety. The long-term failure of the Nigerian authorities to address police bribery, extortion, and wholesale embezzlement threatens the basic rights of all Nigerians. – Corinne Dufka, Senior West Africa researcher, Human Rights Watch, 2010

The police institution is primarily saddled with the responsibility of maintaining peace, enforcing laws and ensuring the safety of life and property within a country. As an organization, the police sector has not been exempted from the pressure of achieving these institutional outcomes (Conger & Kanungo, 1990). HRW (2010) reported that the widespread perception among many Nigerians is that the police force has abysmally failed to fulfill its roles as guardians of society. As a result, many Nigerians perceive the police force as the least effective law enforcement agency in the country. According to a World Bank Report (2009), rather than being a source of help and security, the Nigerian public views the police force as a source of harm, risk and impoverishment. This is due largely to convoluted and pandemic corruption that goes unhindered within the police force.

Effective leadership has been proposed by both practitioners and scholars (Bass, 1985; Bennis & Nanus, 1985) as a prerequisite for achieving organizational outcomes. With leadership acting as a fundamental aspect of management, previous studies (Rouche, Baker & Rose, 1989) have confirmed that transformational leadership represents a principal contributor to achieving positive outcomes within the police force. Similarly, more recent studies (Othman, 2013; Ekundayo, 2012; Ngumi, 2008 & Bolger, 2001) have affirmed that there is a relationship between leadership style and organizational outcomes.

However, a conventional challenge that derails law enforcement agencies, the police force in particular, from achieving its organizational commitments is corruption (Othman, 2013). Hence, the effect of corruption triggers organizations to establish clear descriptions for corruption in order to come up with reforms that can help in addressing and combating this phenomenon (TI, 2012). Since the phenomenon of corruption poses a definitional problem, several attempts have been made by many researchers (Roebuck & Baker, 1974; Kleinig, 1996; Wood, 1997; Newburn, 1999; Punch, 2000; Ivkovic, 2003; Porter & Warrender, 2009) and international organizations (RAND, Transparency International (TI), Human Right Watch (HRW), International Monetary Funds (IMF) and World Bank) to describe it. The overarching description attempted by these researchers and organizations is that corruption is any action that involves abuse of authority for personal gain. Thus, for the purposes of this study, the term “corruption” will be used loosely to describe

the misuse of one’s position and authority for personal or organizational gain, where misuse in turn refers to departure from accepted societal norms (Anand, Ashforth, & Joshi, 2004).

2. Problem Statement

As an emerging phenomenon in organizational leadership studies, corruption is multi-dimensional due to its systemic, pervasive and endemic nature. Other than the perennial definitional problem of corruption, its negative effect on the police force, the public, and the society remains a protracted ill-addressed issue in Nigeria. By using Corruption Perception Index (CPI), Transparency International (2013) conducted a survey that measured the perceived level of corruption in the public sector in 177 countries. In the 48-page document, Transparency International rated the Nigeria police institutions 4.7 percent out of its score of five percent. The five percent meant “extremely corrupt” while one percent meant that the institutions rated are “not at all corrupt. As shown in Table 1, the survey rated the police institution as the most corrupt in Nigeria.

Table 1 Transparency International’s assessment of corruption with CPI (2013)
(Source: Transparency International 2013)

Transparency International’s Global Corruption Barometer for police force 2013			
ASIA PACIFIC	SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	NIS+	LATIN AMERICA
Vietnam (1st)	Cameroon (1st)	Azerbaijan (1st)	Mexico (1st)
Malaysia (1st)	Ghana (1st)	Moldova (1st)	Venezuela (1st)
Pakistan (1st)	Kenya (1st)	Russia (1st)	El Salvador (2nd)
Philippines (1st)	Liberia (1st)	Ukraine (2nd)	Brazil (3rd)
Taiwan (1st)	Nigeria (1st)	Belarus (2nd)	Colombia (3rd)
Bangladesh (1st)	Senegal (1st)	Armenia (3rd)	Bolivia (4th)
Cambodia (2nd)	Sierra Leone (1st)	Mongolia (4th)	Argentina (4th)
India (2nd)	South Africa (1st)		
Thailand (2nd)	Uganda (1st)		
Afghanistan (2nd)	Zambia (1st)		

Dufka (2010) notes that widespread corruption in the Nigeria Police Force is fuelling abuses against ordinary citizens, and severely undermining the rule of law. Human Right Watch (2010) reported that on a daily basis, countless ordinary Nigerians are accosted by armed police officers who demand bribes and commit human rights abuses against them by soliciting for, and demanding for bribes. Police also routinely extort money from victims of crimes to

initiate investigations and demand bribes from suspects to drop investigations. In over 80 years of existence, the Nigeria Police Force has become a symbol of unbridled corruption, mismanagement, and brazen human rights abuses, ranging from “arbitrary arrest and unlawful detention” to “threats and acts of violence, including physical and sexual assault, torture, and even extra-judicial killings” (HRW, 2010). The visible levels of police corruption and brutality have severely undermined the legitimacy of the federal government in Nigeria and eroded public support for the police (Hills, 2008).

The phenomenon of corruption does not only destroy morality but, also, represents a breach of the law and a threat to the security of individuals (Maljevic 2006; Punch, 2009). In the same vein, honest police officers find themselves discredited, devalued and disrespected as a result of the actions of corrupt colleagues. The ability of these police officers to properly serve the citizens is degraded by corrupted policing systems (Hughes, 2012). Consequently, the Nigeria Police Force has suffered from a lack of public confidence due to the endemic corruption that goes unchecked within the institution (Adebayo, 2005).

The punitive measure that accompanies police deviances has proved ineffective in combating police corruption. Therefore, we argue that transformational leadership may provide a model by which leadership development programs could present to police leaders in Nigeria how to lead in ways that are in line with the followers of “Culture-Endorsed Leadership” Theory (CLT) (Kabaskal & Bodur, 2004). By investigating the relationship between leadership style, policing and perceptions of corruption, it is hypothesized by the researchers that transformational leadership can be an effective tool for combating corruption as it provides a better measure for reducing and minimizing corrupt practices within the police force. Khalel (2006) therefore believes that concerted efforts have to be made on both national and international front to combat corruption. The actualization of this objective is directly dependent on the ability to establish a link between leadership style and dimensions of corruption in the police force.

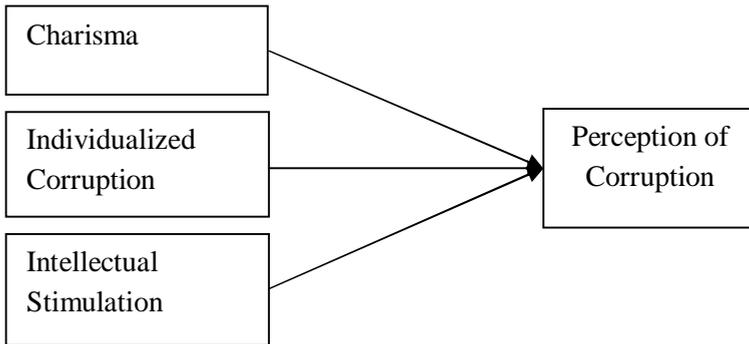
3. Research Framework

The researchers derived the independent variables for this study from the attributes of transformational leadership, and its instrumentation by Bass and Avolio (1995). The dependent variables were adopted and modified from selected dimensions of corruption as previously examined by international organization like Transparency International. Transformational leaders are known to maintain collaborative cultures where officers can participate in decision making, critique and plan together. They also encourage their followers to carry out their duties in the most exemplary way. There are four

attributes (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration) of transformational leadership identified by Bass. But as a result of the similarities in the attributes of idealized influence and inspirational motivation, researchers (Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003) replaced the two attributes with the term charisma.

Due to the systemic ways of its occurrences, the dimensions of corruption examined in this study are bribery, crime, poor ethics and lack of transparency. The framework helps in determining the perceived level of transformational leadership and corruption in the police force. Based on the above proposition, the Figure 1 shows the hypothesized link between the attributes of transformational leadership and the selected dimensions of corruption.

Figure 1 A conceptual model for studying the relationship between transformational leadership practices and perception of police corruption (Orole, Hunter & Gadar (2013)



4. Research Objectives

From the above framework, the relationship between transformational leadership and perception of corruption is certainly a grey area that warrants investigation. It is for a better understanding of this relationship, particularly at the law enforcement agencies that this study was undertaken. Thus, the purpose of this study is to determine the perceived level of this leadership practice and corruption within the police force. At the same time, to examine the relationship between the attributes of transformational leadership practice and facets of corruption within the police force. More specifically, the study seeks to address the following:

1. To examine the perceived level of Transformational Leadership (TL) and dimensions of Corrupt Practices (CP) within the Nigeria Police Force.
2. To investigate the relationship between transformational leadership (TL) characteristics and perception of corrupt practices (CP).
3. To determine whether Transformational Leadership (TL) lend to the reduction of police corruption

5. Research Questions

Based on the research objectives above, this study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the perceived level of Transformational Leadership and Corrupt Practices within the Nigeria Police Force?
2. What is the relationship between Transformational Leadership (TL) characteristics and perception of Corrupt Practices (CP) within the Nigeria Police Force?
3. Can it be inferred that Transformational Leadership (TL) is effective in minimizing corruption within the Nigeria Police Force?

6. Research Hypotheses

Anchored on previous studies, the effectiveness of the transformational leadership paradigm against corruption in the police force has been established. In view of such discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H1₀: Transformational leadership practice by police leaders dissuade the subordinate from engaging in corruption

H1_A: Transformational leadership practice by police leaders does not dissuade the subordinate from engaging in corruption

H2₀: Solicitation and involvement of police officers in corrupt practices encourages the police leaders to be more transformational

H2_A: Solicitation and involvement of police officers in corrupt practices does not encourage the police leaders to be more transformational

H3₀: A positive relationship exists between the attributes of transformational leadership and facets of corruption

H3_A: There is no positive relationship between the attributes of transformational leadership and facets of corruption

7. Methodology

7.1 Design and Sampling

The study applied quantitative approach by using questionnaire to investigate the relationship between the attributes of transformational leadership and dimensions of corruption. The technique utilized is the stratified simple random sampling. While the research population is the entire members of the police force in Nigeria, a total of 156 respondents were selected within the police force in Alausa police command in Lagos state. Lagos state was selected for this study as it is the commercial and financial hub of Nigeria and West Africa. The command is a heterogeneous society as it consists of members of almost every ethnic group in Nigeria. According to 2006 national population census, Lagos state has an estimated population of about 9,013,534 and a total number of 29,122 police officers (NPF, 2014). The command is divided into thirteen area commands, eighty-four divisional police headquarters and twenty-two police posts. The command is headed by a commissioner of police, and assisted by three deputies who are in charge of administrations, operations and investigations respectively. By utilizing a stratified simple random sampling, a total of 156 officers participated in the study.

7.2 Measurement

Independent Variable

The independent variable for this study is the attributes of transformational leadership, which are charisma, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation. By using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), a total of 36 items were used to assess the independent variable. These sets of instruments have been used by previous leadership researchers to measure the attributes of transformational leader and its scales have consistently shown satisfactory reliability and validity. Various items on the questionnaire were grouped based on how the leader is charismatically transformational in his/her approach while being considerate. At the same time, how the leader intellectually stimulates his followers. All these items were ranked on a five-point Likert scale of (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) to assess the respondents' perception of the leadership style of their superiors.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable for the study is police corruption. The selected dimensions or facets of corruption for examination in this study are bribery, ethics, transparency and crime within the police force. There is no actual measure-

ment for corruption. However, organizations like Transparency International (TI) have consistently used Corruption Perception Index (CPI) to measure the perceived level of corruption. Similarly, the questionnaire on police corruption was based on the perception of the participating police officers in the study. Altogether, there were 36 questions geared towards assessing the perceived level of corruption within the Nigeria Police Force. The questions were categorized under the different facets of corruption. Similar to the independent variable, all the items on the questionnaire were ranked on a five-point Likert scale in order to assess the perceived level of corruption within the police force.

8. Result

Based on the research objectives and questions, the data were analyzed with descriptive, correlation and regression analyses. The results are presented below:

8.1 Reliability Analysis

Table 2 Result of Reliability Test

Variable		Reliability statistics	Valid cases
Transformational Leadership		.931	156
Attributes:	Charisma	.905	156
	Individualized consideration	.805	156
	Intellectual stimulation	.891	156
Police Corruption		.819	156
Facets:	Bribery	.930	156
	Transparency	.646	156
	Crime	.518	156
	Ethics	.593	156
	Overall	.875	156

To establish the reliability of the study variables, Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency method was used. Cronbach's alpha measures how well a set of items (or variables) measures a single unidimensional latent construct. Usually a statistic equal to or greater than .7 is said to be good. The corresponding reliability statistics for transformational leadership and its attributes; charisma, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation are .931, .905, .805 and .891 respectively. This shows a high reliability of the variables (or items) of measurement for these attributes. In other words the variables are a consistent measure of transformational leadership and its attributes.

Also, the coefficient of reliability or Cronbach's alpha for corrupt practices and the facet Bribery was .819 and .930, respectively showing good reliability of the variables of measurement. The reliability result for transparency and ethics was .646 and .593 respectively. But the reliability result for crime assumed the least Cronbach's Alpha of .518. Table 2 shows the reliability analysis of scale on the dimensional constructs of the variables transformational leadership, its attributes and corrupt practices and its facets, using Cronbach's Alpha.

8.2 Descriptive Analysis

Based on the first objective of the study, the result of the descriptive analysis is indicated in Table 3 below

Table 3 Means and standard deviations of the attributes of transformational leadership

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Charisma	4.30	.4662
Individualized Consideration	3.33	.4755
Intellectual Stimulation	3.11	.7478
Transformational Leadership	3.58	.4651
Valid N (Listwise)		N =156

Given the MLQ questionnaire and employing the midpoint mark of 3.0, as used in a similar studies (Nguni et al, 2006; Bolger, 2001); the result indicated that charisma ranked the highest with a mean value of 4.30. Based on the same analysis, the mean value for individualized consideration is 3.33. Other than the attributes of charisma and individualized consideration, the third attributes of transformational leadership; intellectual stimulation was 3.11. As indicated in Table 3, the average mean score of transformational leadership and its associated traits was 3.58.

Table 4 Means and standard deviations of corrupt practices and its facets

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Bribery	3.88	.9123
Transparency	3.12	.7041
Crime	2.65	.5501
Ethic	3.22	.6710
Corrupt Practices	3.17	.5724
Valid N (Listwise)	N =156	

Table 4 exhibits the perception of corruption and its facets within the Nigeria Police Force. The perceived overall rate of corruption in the police force is 3.18. The rate of bribery (3.88) ranked the highest. Low transparency and

poor ethics is 3.12 and 3.22 respectively. Criminal activities were expected to be higher within the police force. However, the result indicated that the level of crime within the Nigeria Police Force was 2.65

8.3 Correlation Analysis

Based on the second objective of the study, correlation analysis was used to investigate the relationship between the attributes of transformational leadership and the various dimensions of corruption examined. The summary of the correlation matrix is shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5 Correlation matrix of transformational leadership traits, transformational leadership, corrupt practices and its facet bribery

	Respondent survey using MLQ				Respondent survey	
	C	IC	IS	TL	CP	BB
Transf. leadership (TL)						
C Charisma						
IC Individualized consideration	.741*					
IS Intellectual stimulation	.587*	.601*				
TL	.961*	.784*	.852*			
CP Corrupt Practices	.577*	.508*	.491*	.598*		
BB Bribery	.344*	.281*	.210	.353*	.722*	

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The R² value of 0.741 in Table 5 exhibits a correlation result that there is a significant relationship between transformational attributes of charisma and individualized consideration. It can be deduced that leaders who demonstrate charismatic attributes also tend to be more considerate. Further result shows that charisma and intellectual stimulation is closely related. With the R² value of 0.587, a leader who shows more charisma will also stimulate the followers intellectually. The Pearson correlation of 0.601 shows a significant relationship between individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation. Further result indicates that there is positive correlation between the various leadership traits and transformational leadership generally.

Along with charisma, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation, transformational leadership yields a Pearson correlation value of 0.961, 0.784 and 0.852 respectively. The result shows the strongest correlation with charisma. Based on the various results, it can be inferred that transformational leadership exhibits a better correlation with its attributes more than the attributes could link with each other. Nonetheless, among the various attributes of transformational leadership, charisma shows a better relationship with the facets of corruption. As a variable, transformational leadership, however,

exhibits a strong association with corrupt practices and its dimensions. On the perception of corruption and its facets, the result shows that the strongest association exists with its facets than the relationship among facets themselves.

9. Regression Analysis

While the result of correlation analysis helps to determine the relationship between the attributes of transformational leadership and dimensions of corruption, the regression analysis was however performed in order to examine the extent or the nature of the relationship that exist between these two variables. The inter-correlations among the variables imply that there is a possibility of multicollinearity among the variables whereby the predictor variables are highly correlated. The correlations between the attributes of transformational leadership are recorded as one of the features of transformational leadership theory. This was subsequently controlled in the regression analysis in order to help explain the kind of relationship, and the extent of the relationship between the predictor variables (TL and its attributes) and the response variable (corrupt practices). Likewise, the findings help to reveal the extent to which the response variable reacts to variation in the predictors.

Table 6 Relation between transformational leadership and corrupt practices

Independent variable	Corrupt Practices
Transformational leadership	.471* (.071)
Constant	35.992* (8.04)
R square	.381
Sample size	156

*test is significant at .01

Note: Dependent variable is corrupt practices; standard error in parentheses

From Table 6, the coefficient value between the predictor and the regressor is positive. This is indicated with the p-value between transformational leadership and corrupt practices obtained ($p = .000 < .01$). The result therefore is a pointer that police leaders who are more transformational lend to greater reduction of corruption within the police force. The precedent of this result lends support to the prediction that police officers are perceived to be less corrupt when they are under police leaders who are more transformational in their leadership style. The equation thus produced is $CP = 35.992 + .471 (TL)$, where CP is the predicted score or level of corruption and TL is transformational leadership.

By the coefficient value of 0.471, it can be statistically deduced that corruption decreases by a marginal unit of 47.1% with increase in the unit of transformational leadership. The R^2 value can be used for the same description that the value of 0.381 means that 38% of the variation in corrupt practices can be explained with the variation in transformational leadership as agreed by the respondents. It can be inferred as well as the degree to which transformational leaders' impact on perception of corrupt practices within the Nigeria Police Force.

10. Discussion

Discussion of Research Question 1: What is the perceived level of Transformational Leadership (TL) and Corrupt Practices (CP) within the Nigeria Police Force?

With the perceived level of transformational leadership at 3.58 on the scale of 4.0, the perceived level of corruption (3.17) is considered as high. Previous studies (Adebayo, 1999; Ekundayo, 2011) show that the perceived level of transformational leadership within the Nigeria Police Force is 2.99 and 3.22 respectively. The same result indicated that the perceived level of corrupt practices stands at 3.41 and 3.01 respectively. The findings are indicative that almost 4 out of 5 police officers engage in corrupt practices in the Nigeria Police Force. This alludes to the findings by Transparency International (2013) that rated corruption in the Nigeria police institutions at 4.7 percent out of its score of five percent. This study also lends support to studies by Ngumi (2008) and Othman (2012) that there is evidence of transformational leadership in the Ghanaian and Libyan Police Force respectively.

Discussion of Research Question 2: What is the relationship between Transformational Leadership (TL) characteristics and perception of Corrupt Practices (CP) within the Nigeria Police Force?

The correlation result shows that transformational leadership has a positive influence on corrupt practices. The value of Pearson r between TL and CP is .598 ($p < .05$) and regression analysis shows a significant minor impact ($B = .471$, $p < 0.01$, $R^2 = 0.38$). Having established a relationship between the attributes of transformational leadership and dimensions of corrupt practices, regression analysis shows that the attributes of transformational leadership had varying significant influences on the facets of corrupt practices combined. Furthermore, when each facet was separately analyzed, transformational leadership was found to have a significant influence on all the dimensions of corruption. There is significant effect of transformational leadership on the rest of the facets of corrupt practices

Discussion of Research Question 3: Can it be inferred that Transformational Leadership (TL) is effective in minimizing corruption within the Nigeria Police Force?

The result of the regression analysis shows that transformational leadership lead to greater reduction of police corruption. With a coefficient value of 0.471, it can be statistically deduced that corruption decreases by a marginal unit of 47.1% with increase in the unit of transformational leadership. The R^2 value can be used for similar description that the value of 0.381 means that 38% of the variation in corruption can be explained with the variation in transformational leadership as acceded by the participants. It can be inferred as well as the degree to which transformational leaders' impact on the perception of corruption in the Nigeria Police Force.

11. Conclusion

The overall findings of this study confirmed that when police leaders demonstrate an appreciable degree of charisma, individual consideration and intellectual stimulation in leading, the rank-and-file officers learn positive leadership qualities from such leaders. This practice enables police leaders to be able to consider individuals base on their strength and unique capabilities. Therefore, the police department and its oversight bodies should institute and implement programs that help to foster transformational leadership skills within the police institution. The tailored programs, like incorporation of problem solving principles into community policing, can be in the form of seminars and workshops, both home and abroad. To be more effective, it is suggested that police leaders and rank-and-file officers should entrench themselves with leadership training and development programs. Such programs should be geared towards helping the police leaders and their subordinates in improving human relations, increasing the sense of responsibility, increasing patriotism, and fostering discipline within the police force and the community. In addition, leadership training should provide instruction within the context of personal apprenticeship, which provides opportunity for training in attitudes and behaviour. The development of police leaders and rank-and-file officers needs to involve them in commitment to the community, which invariably serves as a reminder to members of the police force that they are called to serve the public. With such commitment comes transparency, patriotism, and openness, which is the hallmark of policing in the 21st century.

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