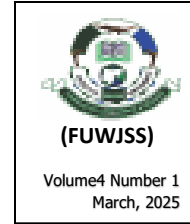


POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE WITHIN BORNO STATE POLICE COMMAND, NIGERIA



Idris Mu'azu¹

Kemi Yusuf Agana²

¹Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria

Email: idrismuazu@unimaid.edu.ng

²Women Affairs Secretariat FCT, Abuja, Nigeria

Abstract

This study assessed police accountability and transparency in Borno State Police Command, and discussed implications for the criminal justice system in the Command. Principally, the study examines the effectiveness of the police in dispensing criminal justice in Borno State Police Command. Symbolic Interactionism and Labeling Theory were utilised as the theoretical lenses in this study. The population of the study consists of all Police staff serving under Borno State Police command. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 400 police officers but only 365 were retrieved. Questionnaire was used to collect data. The collected data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentage and tables. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents frequently witness corruption within their department and they believe that it significantly affects police accountability and transparency. The findings further assert that majority of the respondents rate the public's view of the police as negative following such incidents. The study's conclusion underscores the importance of police accountability and transparency to public safety and crime reduction. The study recommends that Borno State Police Command should develop and mandate training programmes focusing on ethical conduct and anti-corruption strategies to educate officers on the implications of corrupt practices and the importance of integrity in law enforcement.

Keywords: Accountability, ethics, transparency, criminal justice, police

Introduction

Police accountability and transparency are critical components of an effective and part of criminal justice system, influencing public trust, community relations, and the overall legitimacy of law enforcement agencies. These principles ensure that police officers adhere to legal and ethical standards, and that misconduct or abuses of power are addressed, preventing systemic issues that could lead to injustice or public unrest (Hills, 2017). The significance of police accountability and transparency cannot be overstated, as these factors directly affect the protection of human rights and the preservation of democratic norms (Osse, 2014). In the United States (US), police accountability has been a topic of intense debate, especially following high-profile incidents of police brutality (Hornberger, 2018). The country's law enforcement operates under a federal system where local, state, and federal agencies have distinct roles. Accountability mechanisms include internal affairs divisions, civilian complaint boards, and body-worn cameras, among others. However, challenges persist, particularly with regard to racial disparities and the significant powers granted to police unions that sometimes protect officers from repercussions (Cooper-Knock, 2014). Recent movements and public demands have pushed for greater transparency and reforms, such as the widespread adoption of body-worn cameras and revising use-of-force policies (Uwazuruike, 2019).

In India, police accountability is marred by systemic issues, including corruption, lack of adequate training, and political influence, which often hinder transparent operations (Muntingh, & Gould 2018). While there are mechanisms like the Central Bureau of Investigation and the National Human Rights Commission, their effectiveness is frequently questioned. The colonial-era laws still governing the police forces exacerbate issues of accountability, with calls for comprehensive reforms continuing to grow amid incidents of police brutality and corruption (Diphoorn, 2016). China presents a contrasting scenario where the concept of police accountability is framed by the central authority's control and the Communist Party's oversight. Transparency and public scrutiny are significantly limited by state censorship and the lack of an independent press (Xing, 2015). The police force is seen as a tool of the state rather than a service to the community, which complicates the implementation of any reforms that would align with Western concepts of police accountability. Public dissent or criticism of the police can lead to legal repercussions, further suppressing dialogue about police reforms (Bempah, 2017).

In Africa, Ghana's approach to police accountability has seen progressive changes, particularly with efforts to increase transparency and community policing initiatives. The establishment of the Police Intelligence

and Professional Standards Bureau (PIPS) and public access to submit complaints are steps towards greater accountability (Oduro, 2018). Nevertheless, challenges such as inadequate resources, corruption, and occasional instances of excessive force remain issues that need addressing to enhance trust between the police and the public (Odeyemi & Akanle, 2015). In Nigeria, particularly in its northern regions, faces unique challenges regarding police accountability. Issues such as political corruption, inadequate training, and insufficient funding plague the Nigerian Police Force (Obi, 2017).

In northern Nigeria, additional complexities include the involvement of various military and paramilitary groups in law enforcement duties, often blurring the lines of accountability (Alkasim, 2018). The End SARS protests in 2020 highlighted widespread discontent with police brutality, beading to promises of reforms (Khalid, 2019). However, significant progress is required, especially in terms of implementing effective oversight mechanisms and ensuring that reforms address local needs and contexts. It is against this background that a study on police accountability and effectiveness in becomes crucial in Borno State, Nigeria.

Police accountability and transparency in Borno State, Nigeria, are complex issues deeply influenced by the region's ongoing security challenges due to insurgency activities, primarily from Boko Haram and, more recently, splinter groups like the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). As posited by Khalid (2019) Borno State, as a significant site of conflict in northeastern Nigeria, presents a unique landscape where the police operate under intense pressure. The ongoing insurgency has not only led to significant loss of life and displacement but also strained the resources and capabilities of the police force. On the other side, corruption and impunity are longstanding issues within Nigeria's police force, exacerbated in conflict zones like Borno. Corruption manifests in various forms, including extortion, bribery, and misappropriation of resources. Impunity for misconduct is common, partly due to weak institutional oversight mechanisms and the challenging security environment which can prioritize immediate security over procedural justice.

Various studies in Borno State and Nigeria as a whole were conducted on police accountability and transparency. For example, Alkasim (2018) conducted a study on the causes of failure in police accountability in Borno State. Khalid (2019) also conducted a study on police accountability and corruption in Northern Nigeria. Despite the available literature, there are significant gaps that need addressing to enhance understanding and improve police accountability and transparency in Borno State. There is a scarcity of literature on challenges of corruption, extrajudicial actions, and the effectiveness of police in criminal justice system. This study therefore

assessed police accountability and transparency in Borno State, and its implication for the criminal justice system.

The specific objectives of this paper are to evaluate the implication of corruption on police accountability within the criminal justice system in Maiduguri, Borno State; assess the impact of extrajudicial actions by police on their image within the criminal justice system in Maiduguri, Borno State; investigate how the effectiveness of police have impact on the criminal justice system in Maiduguri, Borno State.

The Police and Law Enforcement in Nigeria

The police encompasses various facets, including their roles in society, their functions, the challenges they face, and their relationship with the community. One of the primary roles of the police is to enforce laws and regulations. Protects life's and properties, they investigate crimes, apprehend suspects, and ensure that justice is served (Akinlabi, 2017). Police are responsible for maintaining public order and safety. This includes managing public gatherings, responding to emergencies, and preventing disorderly conduct. Police also engage in proactive measures to prevent crime. This may involve community outreach, patrols in high-crime areas, and partnerships with other agencies and organizations (Bradford, Huq, Jackson, & Roberts, 2014).

Police conduct investigations to gather evidence, identify suspects, and build cases for prosecution. This involves interviewing witnesses, collecting forensic evidence, and analyzing crime scenes (Tankebe, 2010). Patrol officers monitor neighborhoods and public spaces to deter criminal activity, respond to incidents, and provide assistance to citizens. Police also enforce traffic laws, regulate traffic flow, and investigate accidents to promote road safety. Many police departments have specialized units such as SWAT teams, narcotics units, cybercrime units, and K-9 units to address specific types of crime or emergencies (Bempah, 2017).

Police often face the challenge of balancing competing priorities such as crime prevention, community engagement, and resource allocation. Likewise, maintaining public trust and confidence is crucial for effective policing. Instances of misconduct or abuse of power can erode trust and strain police-community relations (Sing & Minnaar, 2018). Police must continuously adapt to technological advancements and new methods used by criminals. This includes digital forensics, surveillance technologies, and cybersecurity challenges. Police operations are influenced by social, political, and economic factors. They must navigate complex issues such as racial tensions, political polarization, and public perceptions of law enforcement (Kombe, 2020).

Many police departments adopt a community policing approach, which emphasizes collaboration and partnerships with community members. This involves problem-solving strategies, community engagement initiatives, and building trust through positive interactions (2011). Maintaining accountability and transparency is essential for fostering trust and legitimacy. Police departments may implement oversight mechanisms, internal review processes, and transparency initiatives to promote accountability and public scrutiny of police actions. Overall, the concept of police is multifaceted, encompassing their critical role in law enforcement, public safety, crime prevention, and community relations. Effective policing requires a balance of proactive strategies, responsive interventions, ongoing training, and strong ethical standards to serve and protect communities effectively (Bempah, 2017).

Police Accountability and Transparency

Police accountability and transparency are fundamental principles in ensuring trust, fairness, and justice within law enforcement agencies. Police officers are responsible for their actions, decisions, and conduct while on duty. There are mechanisms in place, such as internal affairs units, civilian review boards, and independent monitors, to oversee police actions (Kombe, 2020). Accountability involves holding officers accountable for misconduct or wrongdoing through disciplinary actions, legal processes, or administrative procedures. In addition, engaging with the community ensures that police actions align with community expectations and values, fostering mutual trust and respect (Mutisi, 2011). Transparency involves sharing information about police policies, procedures, practices, and outcomes with the public. Effective communication channels between law enforcement agencies and the community promote transparency and accountability (Akinlabi, 2017). More so, providing access to data related to police activities, such as use of force incidents, arrests, and complaints, enables public scrutiny and evaluation. So also, transparent processes for handling complaints, conducting investigations, and reporting findings are essential for building trust and credibility (Ukiwo, 2017).

The underlying reasons behind police corruption are multifaceted. There are notable constant and variable factors. In relation to the constant factors, discretion can be exercised with licit and illicit cores; managerial absence of visibility; secrecy of managers preserving police culture even if corruption prone; low salary and status issues; and affiliation with criminals that hinders the performance of police duties (Odunaike, Lalude & Odusanya 2021). Low wages can exacerbate bribery and extortion, especially when living costs are high for large families. Even if police officers are well salaried, they may believe that they are not remunerated to match their responsibilities and thus

can still encourage corrupt practices (Kombe, 2020). From a Durkheimian perspective, relative deprivation theory forms anomie, and when individuals cannot attain what they believe to be part of distributive fairness, then social deviance, such as corruption, can emerge. Police officers can become prey to lucrative ventures of criminal groups to turn a blind eye so that they can continue their illegal businesses. In hostile settings, organised criminal networks permeate police units to act within their narrow, and profit-making, interests by averting detection, investigative processes, and sanctions (Akinyetun, 2021). Criminal groups pay off police officers that corrupt law enforcement in high drug cultivating, dealing, and trafficking areas. Police officers may be engaged in a drug trade for profitable gain and personal use (Akinlabi, 2017)

In relation to variable features that encourage corruption, legal openings to participate in corrupt activities when there are no victims can result in the exploitation of minor traffic, construction, and licensing offences (Smith, 2017). When considering organisational structures, if a police force fails to promote adequate pay, career development, and professionalism, then systemic corruption can occur. A community may also tolerate minor practices of corruption and thus a police department may encourage petty corruption as legitimate (Onuoha, 2011). The protection of a police department or the Interior Ministry from corruption investigations can taint efforts to control and curtail police corruption (Odunaike, Lalude & Odusanya 2021).

In relation to the constant and variable factors, a central cause of police corruption is weak accountability. When police officers are not punished for corruption, corrupt activity increases and becomes embedded within a police force. Akinlabi (2017) has similarly identified that good policing is seriously undermined by 'safety from punishment provided by' supervisors and authorities 'to errant police' officers 'and the lack of accountability.' Ukiwo (2017) noted that 'police corruption always reflects a lack of institutional accountability.' For instance, in Kenya, police officers saw 'themselves as the law' (Onuoha, 2011). In Latin America, accountability for police corruption is severely hindered by 'institutional structures lacking resources' (2011). In Costa Rica, holding police officers accountable is deemed as undermining police work (Akinyetun, 2021). Therefore, weak accountability has been demonstrated in developing and hostile states. However, debilitated accountability for police corruption is also discernible in modern democracies.

Impact of Extrajudicial Actions on Police Accountability

Extrajudicial action such as killing of innocents attributed to personnel of the Nigerian Police in the conduct of their constitutional duties and

responsibilities have become prevalent in recent times. They have been accused of human rights violations, torture, brutality, and unlawful killings of varying proportions. This palpable, yet injurious trend has become a strain on effective policing and security in Nigeria (Kombe, 2020). Extrajudicial killing, otherwise, extralegal killing, refers to the unlawful deprivation of life without recourse to judicial or legal processes. It is, by all means, illegal and directly impinges on a victim's fundamental human rights in its entirety (Igbo, 2017). As used in this paper, extrajudicial killing is the overt or covert termination of human life against constitutional provisions to satisfy unjustifiable reasons. Extra-judicial killing in Nigeria is a serious issue that haunts the operational practice of different security agencies in the country. Thus, the killings of innocent citizens and suspected criminals by officers of the security agencies are considered extrajudicial, extralegal and unlawful. This however seems to be prevalent among the Nigeria Police Force (hereafter NPF) (Odunaike, Lalude & Odusanya 2021) whose recent activities are in recurring stark contrast to its basic mandate – to protect life and property.

Having ratified the African Charter on Human and People's Rights as well as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, it is the primary responsibility of the Nigerian state to safeguard the citizens' right to life and right to fair hearing – among others. Contrarily, the Nigerian police – an agent of the government, is responsible for the incessant deprivation of life in the most violable way owing to its extensive powers. The police in Nigeria have been accused of corruption, brutality, violation of human rights, gross misconduct, enforced disappearance and extrajudicial killings. Thus, the incidence of extrajudicial killings by the Nigerian police is a recurring phenomenon since the inception of the Nigerian Fourth Republic in 1999. As Akinsanmi (2020) argues, the cases of extrajudicial killings in Nigeria remain a contemporary challenge to grapple with as the cases of arbitrary detainment, human rights violation, torture, enforced disappearances and unlawful killings by the security forces; police inclusive, have continued unabated in Nigeria (Amnesty International, 2021).

The New Humanitarian (2010) alleges that the police in 2004 killed 2,987 people while 329 robbers were also reported killed in 2006. In 2009, several hundreds of innocent civilians were killed in the crackdown on Boko Haram in Maiduguri while several others were illegally detained. As a case in point, rather than being interrogated and prosecuted according to the law, Mohammed Yusuf, the leader of Boko Haram was unlawfully killed on July 30 2009 while in police custody – although authorities claimed he was caught in a crossfire while trying to escape. Therefore, it remains incontrovertible that the police promote extrajudicial killing. It is believed that the agency has a penchant for violence.

Substantiating this assertion, Igbo (2017) contends that the law guarantees the police enormous powers which it uses without caution, while Akinyetun (2022) opines that the NPF is an excessively militarized parastatal with a checkered history of violence, brutality, human rights violation and corruption spanning its pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial epochal existence. This view is supported by Amnesty International (2021) that the police; particularly the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), often acted as an agent of abuse against citizens. For context, security agents shot five members of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria during a protest to demand the release of their leader, Sheikh Ibraheem El-Zakzaky in Abuja. Meanwhile, during the enforcement of the COVID-19 lockdown measures, no fewer than 18 people were killed between March 30 and April 13 by the police, military and the Nigerian Correctional Service. There was also general excessive use of force in several states of the federation. It was in protest against the extrajudicial killings and high-handedness of officers of the squad that Nigerian youths staged nationwide mobilization and protests in October 2020 to demand for the disbandment of SARS using the #EndSARS (Akinyetun, 2021).

The Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (2010) claims that the NPF is enmeshed in illegal acts due to an avalanche of obstacles including the lack of investigative infrastructure which makes it rely on torture as a means of extracting a confession from suspects, over-centralization and poor accountability, corruption, lack of human rights training, poor working conditions, pro-elite orientation and political interference, poor internal control and the absence of reforms.

Theoretical Framework: Symbolic Interactionism and Labeling Theory

Symbolic interactionism is a sociological perspective that emphasizes the role of symbols and language as core elements of all human interaction. This theory is fundamentally concerned with the ways in which individuals interpret and respond to each other's actions. Symbolic interactionism was developed by George Herbert Mead in the early 20th century, particularly through his seminal work "Mind, Self, and Society," which was published posthumously in 1934. The theory later expanded through the works of Herbert Blumer, a student of Mead, who coined the term "symbolic interactionism" in 1937.

In the context of policing, symbolic interactionism can be applied to understand how police officers and members of the community interpret each other's actions and behaviors. For instance, police officers might interpret certain behaviors as suspicious based on prior interactions or learned symbols within the police culture. Conversely, citizens interpret police actions based on their past experiences, societal narratives, and media

portrayals, which could range from viewing officers as protectors to perceiving them as oppressors. The symbols associated with policing (e.g., uniforms, badges, patrol cars) carry significant weight in public interactions. These symbols can evoke feelings of safety or fear, depending on one's personal or communal history with law enforcement. Transparency in police actions (e.g., body cameras, open reports) can alter the public's perception, potentially reshaping these symbols from signs of authority and intimidation to ones of accountability and trust. Symbolic interactionism also highlights the importance of communication in shaping realities. Efforts to increase police transparency, such as community policing initiatives, public forums, and accessible reporting, are forms of communication that contribute to the social construction of policing. These interactions can foster a shared understanding, helping to align law enforcement behaviors with community expectations and values.

On a larger scale, how police are perceived and how they interact with the community can influence overall confidence in the criminal justice system. For instance, if symbolic interactions between police and the public are generally negative, this could lead to a pervasive sense of injustice and distrust in the system. Alternatively, positive interactions and transparent practices can enhance legitimacy, encourage community cooperation, and improve the effectiveness of law enforcement. In conclusion, through the lens of symbolic interactionism, police accountability and transparency are not just administrative or procedural issues but are deeply embedded in the ongoing social interactions and meanings that define the relationship between law enforcement and the community. By focusing on these interactions and the symbols involved, reforms aimed at enhancing accountability and transparency can be better designed to foster a more just and cooperative society.

Labeling theory is a sociological perspective that emerged from the broader field of symbolic interactionism, focusing on how social responses to individuals or groups can affect their self-identity and behavior. It was notably developed by Howard Becker in his 1963 book, "Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance." Becker argued that "social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders."

Labeling theory can be used to analyze how police officers are perceived and how these perceptions might influence their behaviors. For example, if society broadly labels police officers as corrupt or brutal, these labels might influence public interactions with the police, eroding trust and fostering adversarial relationships. Conversely, police officers who are consistently labeled as community protectors and are held accountable through positive reinforcement might more likely internalize these positive labels and behave

accordingly. In addition, public labeling of police actions, particularly through media and social platforms, plays a critical role in shaping police accountability. When incidents of misconduct are widely publicized and labeled as unjust, it puts pressure on law enforcement agencies to uphold transparency and enforce disciplinary actions. This public scrutiny often leads to reforms in policy and practice, intended to prevent future misconduct.

Enhanced transparency in policing, such as the use of body cameras and the public release of data on police activities, can help re-frame public perceptions of the police. These measures allow the public to see a fuller picture of police work, not just the negative incidents. This broader perspective can help shift labels from overwhelmingly negative to more balanced or even positive, reducing stigma and potentially altering police self-conceptions and behavior. On a systemic level, labeling theory suggests that how the criminal justice system is labeled can affect its legitimacy and effectiveness. If the system is perceived as biased or unjust, it may lose public trust, which is essential for effective law enforcement and community safety. Efforts to improve transparency and accountability are not only about preventing misconduct but also about shifting the labels and perceptions associated with the criminal justice system to those of fairness and integrity.

Labeling theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the dynamics of police accountability and transparency. It highlights the role of societal perceptions and labels in influencing police behavior and the broader criminal justice system. By addressing and managing these labels through transparency and community engagement, law enforcement agencies can work toward a more positive and constructive relationship with the communities they serve, ultimately enhancing their effectiveness and legitimacy.

Having reviewed the above theories, this study adopted both symbolic interactionism and labeling theories because they explain police accountability and transparency, and its implication for the criminal justice system.

Research Methodology

The study was carried out in Borno State Police Headquarter which is located in the city of Maiduguri along Bulumkutu/Kano road, opposite National Library of Nigeria, Borno State branch. The police headquarter is under Zone fifteen (15), comprising Borno and Yobe State Commands. Office of the Borno State Commissioner of Police, (CP), is located at this headquarter, while directives and instructions are ordered by the CP to all the Police Divisions in the state. Borno state, the “Home of Peace”, is one of the largest states in Nigeria, having a land mass of 70,898 square kilometers,

and covering 27 Local government Areas with its capital in Maiduguri where the headquarter situated.

Borno State Police Headquarter has a total of 15,000 personnel (Police Headquarter, Maiduguri, 2024). Subsidiaries or units under this headquarter are the Special Anti-Robbery Squad; Anti-Fraud Section; Force CID; General Investigation Unit; Anti-Human Trafficking Unit; Forensic Science Laboratory. It has been reported that the Borno State Police Command have arrested many criminals liable for different offences such as murder, kidnapping, robbery, burglary, suicide bombing; rape. However, there is a total of 503 suspects been arrested between November 2022 to March 2023 in the state (Daily Nigerian, 2023).

A survey research design were employed for data collection approach. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire guide to assess police accountability and transparency in Borno State Police Command.

Data was gathered between July and September 2024 through a survey conducted within the Borno State Police Command. Participants are the police officers who were enlisted in the study. Data were obtained through a structured questionnaire schedule guide to assess police accountability and transparency in Borno State Police Command, focusing on the implications for criminal system.

The study assess police accountability and transparency in Borno State Police Command. The population of Borno State Police Command is 15,000 (Police Headquarter, Maiduguri, 2024). This study collected quantitative data from individual's police officer in Borno State Police Command.

To determine the sample size for this study, researchers utilised Yamane's (1967) method. The study was conducted in Borno State Police Command.

The sample size was calculated via Yamane (1967) sample size determination. The formula is as follows:

$$\text{Finite population (n2)} = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \quad (2)$$

Where n = sample size, e = level of significance (0.05 degrees of freedom), and N = population size.

$$n = \frac{N}{(1 + N(0.05)^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{15,000}{(1 + 15,000(0.05)^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{15,000}{15,000(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{15,000}{15,001 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{15,000}{37.5025}$$

$n = 399.9$ Approximately = 400.

A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select the respondents. In the first stage, the Borno State Police Command was selected using purposive sampling. The Police Command was selected because is the headquarter Borno State Nigerian Police Force. In the second stage, Police officers were selected from various rank using the systematic sampling technique. Finally, Police officers from administrative department, investigation units both junior and senior cadre were also administered with questionnaire using a purposive sampling method.

Convenience sampling approach was employed to distribute questionnaires to Police officers in Borno State Command. Questionnaires were distributed to four hundred (400) Police officers.

This method focused on the Police Accountability and Transparency among police officers in Borno State Command. The quantitative method is regarded as beneficial to this study because it allows the researchers to gather rich and detailed data directly from skilled participants and provide insight into their experiences and opinions on the research topic.

The questionnaires were first tested with a small group of participants to ensure that the questions were valid and easy to understand.

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 24.0 was used to analyse the descriptive statistics through the aid of ordinary frequency, percentages and tables. The data were checked for errors, cleaned, manually coded, and inputted into the computer. The questionnaires encompassed socio demographic characteristics, the implication of corruption on police accountability within the criminal justice, the impact of extrajudicial actions by the police on their image within the criminal justice system and the impact of effectiveness of police on the criminal justice system. In the pre-data collection phase, all participants received a thorough participant information document and an informed consent form. Subsequently, each participant provided written informed consent, affirming their voluntary participation and comprehension of the study's objectives and procedures.

Results and Discussions

A total of four hundred (400) questionnaires were administered to the respondents but three hundred sixty five (365) were retrieved. The remaining thirty five (35) were invalid due to incomplete responses.

Table 1:
Demographic Characteristics of the Respondent (N=365)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	236	65
Female	129	35
Total	365	100
Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18 – 25	26	07
26 – 33	88	24
34 – 41	161	44
42 and above	90	25
Total	365	100
Rank/Position	Frequency	Percentage (%)
ACP	05	01
CSP	11	03
SP	15	04
DSP	26	07
ASP	30	08
Inspector of Police	170	47
Sergeant	83	23
Corporal	12	03
Constable	13	04
Total	365	100
Year(s) of Service	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 5 years	30	08
5 – 10 years	120	33
11 – 20 years	148	41
21 – 30 years	67	18
Total	365	100

Source: Field work, 2024

Table 1 reveals that majority of the respondents (65%) were male, while females constituted (35%) of the sample. In terms of age distribution, the largest group of respondents (44%) were between the ages of 34 and 41, followed by (25%) who were aged 42 and above, (24%) aged 26 to 33, and (07%) aged 18 to 25. The rank or position of the respondents showed that a significant proportion (47%) were Inspectors of Police, followed by Sergeant who made up (23%) of the sample. A smaller proportion of respondents held the positions of ASP (08%), DSP (07%), SP and Constable (4%), CSP and Corporal (03%), and ACP (01%). In terms of years of service, the majority of respondents (41%) had 11 to 20 years of service, followed

by (33%) with 5 to 10 years, (18%) with 21 to 30 years, and (08%) with at least 5 to 10 years of service. This distribution reflects a workforce with a significant number of experienced officers who attest to police accountability and transparency in Borno State Police Command.

The study discovered on the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, the implications of corruption on police accountability and transparency, the impact of extrajudicial actions on police image, and the accountability and transparency on the criminal justice system. Each section provides insights into the challenges and perceptions within the police force, while also contrasting these findings with existing literature. The analysis of socio-demographic characteristics revealed that a significant majority of respondents were male (65%), predominantly aged between 34 and 41 years (44%). Most held positions as Inspectors of Police (47%) and Sergeant (23%), with the largest group having 11 to 20 years of service (41%). These findings align with previous studies that indicate a male-dominated workforce in law enforcement, particularly in senior ranks (Barker, 2015). Additionally, the experience level of the respondents suggests a mature police force, which is crucial for fostering professional standards and operational accountability and transparency (Pritchard, 2016).

Table 2:
Implication of Corruption on Police Accountability within the Criminal Justice (N=365)

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
How frequent do you witness or hear about corruption within your department?		
Never	30	08
Rarely	120	33
Occasionally	67	18
Frequently	148	41
Total	365	100
To what extent do you believe corruption affects the overall effectiveness of the police force?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not at all	35	10
Slightly	70	19
Significantly	125	34
Very significantly	135	37
Total	365	100

What do you perceive as the primary cause of corruption within the police force?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low salaries	136	37
Lack of oversight	124	34
Pressure from superiors	64	18
Lack of adequate training	41	11
Total	365	100

Source: Field work, 2024.

The data highlights significant issues within the police department regarding corruption. A notable (41%) of the respondents indicated that they frequently witness or hear about corruption in their department, while an additional (33%) rarely encounter such cases. While (18%) were with the opinion that they occasionally witness cases of corruption within their department. This suggests that corruption is a common occurrence, with only (08%) of respondents stating that they never encounter it. These statistics reveal that corruption has become a deeply entrenched problem, affecting the day-to-day operations of the police force.

Respondents were asked about the extent to which they believe corruption affects the overall effectiveness of the police force, (37%) expressed that it affects the force very significantly. This is supported by (34%) of respondents who believe that corruption has a significant effect, indicating a broad consensus that corruption undermines police accountability and operational capacity. Only a small minority of respondents (19%) felt that corruption slightly exist within the police department and (10%) opposed that it does not affect the force at all, which underscores the gravity of this issue within the police department.

The perceived causes of corruption with the police department revealed majority of respondents (37%) identified low salaries as the primary source of corrupt practices within the police department, which points to the economic struggles faced by police officers that may push them towards unethical behaviour. This was followed by (34%) who believed that a lack of oversight is the key issue, indicating that without adequate monitoring and accountability mechanisms, corrupt behaviour may flourish. Pressure from superiors was also highlighted by (18%) of respondents as a contributing factor, suggesting that internal power dynamics within the police force may exacerbate corrupt practices. Lastly, (11%) of respondents pointed to inadequate training, which may leave officers ill-prepared to handle ethical challenges in their roles or duties.

Findings regarding the implications of corruption revealed that (41%) of respondents frequently witness corruption within their department, and a

staggering (37%) believe that corruption is very significantly which affects police accountability and transparency. These results corroborate with the study by Skolnick (2018), who posited that perceptions of corruption within police departments can lead to widespread distrust among the public and undermine police legitimacy. Furthermore, the primary cause of corruption was identified as low salaries (37%), consistent with existing literature that suggests economic pressures contribute to corrupt practices among law enforcement officers (Friedrich, 2019). This highlights the need for comprehensive reforms in compensation structures to mitigate corruption and enhance accountability.

Table 3:
Impact of Extrajudicial Actions by Police on their Image within the Criminal Justice (N=365)

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
What do you think are the forms of extrajudicial actions by some police officers?		
Extrajudicial killings	84	23
Detention without evidence	61	17
Torture and ill-treatment	40	11
Verbal abuse	34	09
Bribery	105	29
All of the above	25	07
None of the above	16	04
Total	365	100
How do you perceive the public's view of the police force after instances of extrajudicial actions?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very negative	128	35
Negative	105	29
Neutral	56	15
Positive	76	21
Total	365	100
In your opinion, do extrajudicial actions by some officers influence the impact of the entire police force?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	265	73
No	74	20
Unsure	26	07
Total	365	100

How confident are you in the current protocols and procedures put in place to handle allegations of extrajudicial actions among police officers?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very confident	82	22
Slightly confident	123	34
No confident at all	160	44
Total	365	100

Source: Field work, 2024.

The findings from the above table indicate significant concerns regarding extrajudicial actions taken by police officers and their impact on the police force's image within the criminal justice. The respondents identified various forms of extrajudicial actions, with (29%) recognising bribery and corruption as the fundamental problems facing police department, while (23%) were with opinion that extrajudicial killings is the key issue associated with the police department. Additionally, (17%) cited detention without evidence, (11%) believed that it was a result of torture and ill-treatment, (09%) were on the opinion of verbal abuse, (07%) of the respondents agreed to all of the above while (04%) go with none of the above as to what constitute forms of extrajudicial actions by the police department. Furthermore, the findings revealed on how police perceive the view of the publics on instances of extrajudicial actions, a striking (35%) described the perception as very negative, while (33%) rated it as negative, while (21%) go with positive, and only a minimal (15%) perceived the public's view as neutral, indicating that extrajudicial actions have severely tarnished the police's reputation. This substantial negativity suggests a profound disconnect between the police and the community, raising questions about trust and legitimacy in law enforcement.

Moreover, a substantial (73%) of respondents believe that extrajudicial actions by a few officers have a detrimental influence on the overall perception of the police force while (20%) opposed to that, and (07%) attest that they are not sure of extrajudicial action by the police which affect the entire department. This highlights a widespread understanding that the actions of a minority can overshadow the efforts of the entire force, further damaging its credibility and effectiveness.

Respondents expressed significant skepticism regarding the current protocols and procedures in place to handle allegations of extrajudicial actions. A striking (44%) indicated that they are not confident at all in these protocols, while (34%) slightly have confident, and with only (22%) feeling very confident. Lack of confidence reflects a deep concern that existing measures are inadequate to address the serious issues stemming from

extrajudicial actions, which could perpetuate a cycle of misconduct and erode public trust.

The analysis of extrajudicial actions indicated a serious perception of misconduct, with (29%) of respondents rating the public's view of the police as very negative following such incidents. This finding aligns with prior research indicating that extrajudicial killings and abuses significantly erode public trust in law enforcement (Kahane, 2020). Moreover, (73%) of respondents believed that the actions of a few officers influence the perception of the entire force, reinforcing the argument that a culture of accountability is essential for maintaining police integrity (Tyler, 2017). The lack of confidence in existing protocols for handling allegations of extrajudicial actions (44%) expressed no confidence, emphasises the urgent need for effective oversight mechanisms, as suggested by studies advocating for improved accountability systems in policing (Weitzer, 2015).

Table 4:
Impact of Accountability and Transparency of Police on the Criminal Justice (N=365)

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
How would you rate the accountability and transparency of your police - department in reducing crime?		
Very effective	134	37
Effective	155	42
Ineffective	52	14
Very ineffective	24	07
Total	365	100
To what extent do you believe police accountability and transparency contributes to public safety?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Extremely	133	36
Significantly	156	43
Slightly	48	13
Not at all	28	08
Total	365	100
In your opinion, how important is community cooperation in enhancing police accountability and transparency?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very important	153	42
Moderately important	132	36
Slightly important	58	16

Not important at all	22	06
Total	365	100
How often do you feel that the judicial system adequately supports police efforts in reducing crimes?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very effective	122	33
Effective	185	51
Ineffective	58	16
Total	365	100

Source: Field work, 2024.

The data from the above table provides valuable insights on the perceptions of police officers regarding the accountability and transparency of their department and its impact on the criminal justice system. On the accountability and transparency of the police department in reducing crime, (42%) of respondents felt that their department is effective, while (37%) considered it very effective. However, a notable portion, (14%) found the department ineffective, and (07%) rated it as very ineffective. This distribution indicates a mixed perception of accountability and transparency, suggesting that while there are positive views about police performance, significant concerns persist regarding the overall impact on crime reduction. Similarly, regarding the relationship between police accountability and transparency and public safety, a combined (43%) of respondents believe that police effectiveness has significant contributions on public safety, (36%) believed it is extremely effective, while (13%) agreed that it slightly contributes to public safety. This reflects a strong consensus on the importance of police effectiveness in fostering a safe community. However, the presence of (08%) of the respondents who felt that police effectiveness does not contribute to public safety at all signals a critical gap in perception that warrants attention.

The importance of community cooperation in enhancing police accountability and transparency was highlighted as very important which (42%) of respondents, indicating that a significant majority recognise the necessity of collaborative efforts between law enforcement and the community. Moderately important was chosen by (36%), while (16%) considered it slightly important and a mere (06%) deemed it not important at all. This strong endorsement of community cooperation suggests that fostering relationships with the public is crucial for the police to enhance their effectiveness and successfully address crime.

Finally, considering the support of the judicial system for police efforts in reducing crimes, responses were divided. (51%) felt that the judicial system is effective in supporting police efforts, (33%) rated it as very

effective, and (16%) described it as very ineffective. This indicates that while a substantial number of respondents acknowledge the judicial system's role, there is also a significant level of skepticism regarding its adequacy in supporting police efforts.

In assessing the effectiveness of the police department in reducing crime, (42%) of respondents viewed their department as effective in terms of accountability and transparency, while (37%) considered it as very effective. However, the presence of (14%) who deemed the department is ineffective indicates a significant level of dissatisfaction. This mixed perception reflects findings from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ, 2016), which noted that perceptions of police accountability and transparency often vary widely among different community segments. Moreover, (51%) of respondents recognised the contribution of police accountability and transparency to public safety, echoing research that underscores the integral role of effective policing in crime reduction and community safety (Skogan, 2006). The emphasis on community cooperation (42%) viewed it as very important, further supports the community-oriented policing model, which has been shown to improve police-community relations and enhance overall accountability and transparency (Kelling & Moore, 1988).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The conclusion from this comprehensive analysis underscore the police accountability and transparency in criminal justice within Borno state police command. The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents indicate a well-experienced workforce, yet the pervasive issues of corruption and extrajudicial actions profoundly affect public perception and police accountability and transparency within the criminal justice. Notably, the findings reveal a troubling lack of confidence in current protocols for addressing misconduct, which underscores the urgent need for reforms aimed at enhancing accountability and transparency within law enforcement agencies. The evidence that community cooperation is deemed crucial for police effectiveness aligns with the growing recognition of community-oriented policing as a viable strategy for building trust and improving public safety. Furthermore, the mixed perceptions of police accountability and transparency highlight the necessity for continuous evaluation and adaptation of policing strategies to address community concerns effectively. It is recommended that Borno State Police Command should develop and mandate training programs focused on ethical conduct and anti-corruption strategies to educate officers on the implications of corrupt practices and the importance of integrity in law enforcement.

Government should reevaluate and improve salary structures and benefits for police officers to reduce the temptation for corrupt practices and ensure fair compensation for their roles and responsibilities. Government should create independent oversight bodies to monitor police conduct and investigate allegations of corruption and misconduct, ensuring accountability and transparency. The police force should expand community-oriented policing programmes that prioritize building relationships between police and community members, encouraging cooperative efforts in crime prevention and public safety. There is need to develop clear, actionable protocols for reporting and investigating extrajudicial actions, ensuring that all allegations are taken seriously and addressed promptly.

There is need to launch public awareness campaigns to inform the community about police roles, responsibilities, and the procedures for reporting misconduct, fostering greater understanding and trust.

References

- Akinlabi, O. M. (2017). Police corruption and community policing in Nigeria: Challenges and solutions. *Journal of Human Security*, 13(1), 31-40.
- Akinyetun, T. S. (2022). Policing in Nigeria: A socioeconomic, ecological and sociocultural analysis of the performance of the Nigerian police force. *Africa Journal of Public Sector Development and Governance*, 5(1), 196-219.
- Alkasim, A. (2018). Failure in police accountability in Borno State: A perspective on its causes and control. *Journal of African Law*, 53(2), 225-238.
- Amnesty International. (2021). *Amnesty International report 2020/21: The state of the world's human rights*. London: Amnesty International Publications.
- Bempah, A. (2017). Police use of force in China: Official rhetoric and lived experiences from the ground. *Journal of Policing and Society*, 27(8), 824-839.
- Bradford, B., Huq, A. Z., Jackson, J., & Roberts, B. (2014). What price fairness when security is at stake? Police legitimacy in South Africa. *Regulation & Governance*, 8(2), 246-268.
- Cooper-Knock, S. J. (2014). 'We act like men and we don't cry': Responses to policing and violence in South Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 40(1), 17-33.
- Diphhoorn, T. (2016). Twilight policing: Private security and violence in urban India. *British Journal of Criminology*, 56(4), 696-715.
- Hills, A. (2017). The dialectic of police reform in Nigeria. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 45(2), 293-314.
- Hornberger, J. (2018). Policing and human rights: Eliminating discrimination, xenophobia, intolerance and the abuse of power from police work. *Journal of Human Rights*, 33(3), 842-872.
- Igbo, E. U. (2017). The use and abuse of police powers and extrajudicial killings in Nigeria. *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies*, 10(1), 83-99.

- Khalid, I. S. (2019). Police accountability and corruption in Northern Nigeria: A perspective on its causes and forms. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 19(3), 191-198.
- Kombe, J. (2020). Community policing and urban crime myths in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. *Journal of African Law*, 64(1), 119-137.
- Muntingh, L., & Gould, C. (2018). *Towards a new approach: Monitoring police conduct*. Institute for Security Studies Papers, 160, 1-20.
- Mutisi, M. (2011). Decentralizing policing in Zimbabwe: Locality, nationality, and legitimacy. *Journal of Policing and Society*, 21(4), 432-447.
- Obi, N. I. (2017). The impact of corruption on Nigerian policing and crime control. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 13(2), 133-147.
- Odeyemi, T. I., & Akanle, O. (2015). Police brutality in Nigeria: A comparative analysis of 1999-2012. *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*, 10(1), 160-174.
- Odunaike, D. A., Lalude, O. M., & Odusanya, T. O. (2021). I will kill you and nothing will happen: Extra-judicial killings in Nigeria and public interest litigation. *Bialystok Legal Studies*, 26(6), 145-162.
- Oduro, F. D. (2018). Public perceptions of the role of the police in Ghana. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 28(1), 15-24.
- Onuoha, F. C. (2011). Small arms and light weapons proliferation and human security in Nigeria. *Conflict, Security & Development*, 11(2), 213-239.
- Osse, A. (2014). *Understanding policing: A resource for human rights activists*. Amsterdam: Amnesty International.
- Singo, M. R., & Minnaar, A. (2018). Developments in the South African Police Service's approach to community policing: A case study. *Acta Criminologica: Southern African Journal of Criminology*, 31(1), 1-19.
- Smith, D. J. (2017). *A culture of corruption: Everyday deception and popular discontent in Nigeria*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Tankebe, J. (2010). Public confidence in the police: Testing the effects of public experiences of police corruption in Ghana. *British Journal of Criminology*, 50(2), 296-319.
- The New Humanitarian. (2010, July 15). Police kill, rape, torture and extort says rights group. Retrieved from <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/fr/node/248563>.
- Ukiwo, U. (2017). From 'pirates' to 'militants': A historical perspective on anti-state and anti-oil company mobilization among the Ijaw of Warri, Western Niger Delta. *African Affairs*, 106(425), 587-610.
- Uwazuruike, A. R. (2019). All police is local: Assessing the post-colonial reforms of the Nigeria Police Force. *African Security Review*, 28(3-4), 223-240.
- Xing, J. (2015). Demilitarising the police for effective crime control in Nigeria. *African Security Review*, 24(2), 213-222.