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Police Funding and Operational Performance in Nigeria: Evidence from the Delta State Police Command

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ABSTRACT
This study examined the impact of funding on the performance of the Nigeria Police Force, with specific reference to the Delta State Police Command. The aim was to assess the extent and nature of police funding and to determine how it influences operational effectiveness. The study further explored how inadequate funding, manpower shortage, poor remuneration, poor welfare, alienation, and corruption affect police performance. Historical methods of description and analysis were deployed because they offered an opportunity to interrogate sources. Both primary and secondary sources were used. Elder statesmen and police officers were interviewed. Data were collected through interviews and archival records covering [1930-1970, that is colonial to post-colonial era) and analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings revealed that inadequate funding and manpower, poor remuneration and welfare conditions, and systemic corruption significantly hinder the effective performance of the police. The study recommends improved government funding, provision of adequate logistics and equipment, increased staffing, enhanced salary structure, and a strong institutional stance against corruption. These measures will contribute significantly to improving the security of lives and property in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Funding is the core global crisis of policing: how much money police get, and how they get it, directly shapes what they can do. In the Global South, the issue there is underfunding. That is why most police in Africa, South Asia, and Latin America are chronically underfunded by central budgets. The consequence is that low salaries fuel corruption and extortion at checkpoints; lack of fuel, vehicles, and radios means slow response; no forensic labs means reliance on confessions. In Nigeria and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), officers often buy their own uniforms, so they extort to survive. The issue in Global North is mis-funding / militarization. In the US and France, budgets are large but skewed to hardware such as armored vehicles, SWAT, surveillance - over training and community policing. Performance becomes measured by arrests and drug seizures, not trust. This fuels legitimacy gaps. The effects of this funding model is that when police are funded by fines and seizures, example- US municipalities, they over-police poor areas to raise revenue. Secondly, when funded by central elites (example, authoritarian states), they serve regime protection, not citizens. Thirdly, when funded by donors (example, UN, European Union in Africa), operations collapse when aid stops. Globally, the result is the same: underpaid police rely on coercion rather than consent, and over-militarized police rely on force rather than legitimacy. Both erode performance - measured not by crime stats, but by public trust and willingness to cooperate.

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is confronted with a plethora of challenges, including corruption, inadequate funding and equipment, lack of welfare packages, and an acute shortage of manpower. Inadequate funding has led to numerous negative practices, adversely affected its

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performance, and heightened the state of insecurity in Nigeria. Constitutionally, the police are saddled with the responsibility of maintaining law and order and protecting lives and property. They are expected to provide a social and psychological sense of security for the majority of Nigerians (Oghenekparobo, Interviewed 28/9/2026). The extent to which they fulfill these roles serves as a yardstick for measuring police effectiveness both locally and globally.

In recent times, the persistent insecurity in Nigeria has led to increased government attention to the security budget, which explains why the police budget in 2003 amounted to 311 billion Naira (Akinsuyi, 2010). According to Okeleke (2025), "even though crime was experienced on a regular basis in the communities, police recklessness in handling crime led many Nigerians never to report crimes and offences to police." Many police stations are underfunded and unable to afford basic stationery and fuel for patrol vehicles, causing the Force to perform below expectations in providing a safe society for Nigerians (Anichebe, 2013). The effectiveness of the Nigeria Police Force must be viewed against the backdrop of recent waves of insecurity and criminal activities across the country, to the extent that even police officers themselves feel insecure. One key factor for motivating security operatives and maximizing their performance is good remuneration (Azu, 2013).

There is also a critical need to equip operatives with essential operational gadgets such as patrol vehicles, walkie-talkies, bulletproof vests, and serviceable firearms for rapid response to emergencies and for deployment to troubled zones. The importance of equipping the operatives with mandatory gadgets like operational vehicles, walkie-talkie, bullet proof jackets, serviceable AK 47, RPG, Kalashine 2, Light Assault Rifle, Fabricane Nationalé Calibrate (FNC), Anti-Riot guns, Smoke Pistol, GPMG and assault rifle for rapid response to emergencies and other exigencies and onward deployment to troubled zones. Due to inadequate funding, the operational capacity of the police has been overstretched. Over 70% of police stations lack operational vehicles and logistics says one of the author's respondent named Oghenekparobo (interview cited). While Toyota Hilux and Tata vehicles are considered suitable for police operations, many commands now resort to renting Toyota Sienna vehicles on a weekly basis to enable them to patrol their Areas of Responsibility (AOR).

Furthermore, the sophisticated weapons in the possession of criminals often outmatch those of the Nigeria Police Force. This disparity is evident in the number of casualties recorded whenever the police engage criminals in gun battles. There are instances where the Force cannot withstand the superior firepower of armed bandits due to lack of equipment, ammunition, and knowledge of combat craft. Combat craft can be defined as the fighting skills that enable Police Mobile Force personnel to advance or retreat from enemy territory without being injured or killed. While no operation is without casualties, adequate equipping of the police for violent operations would reduce police casualties to the barest minimum.

Owing to inadequate funding from the Federal Government, the NPF sometimes depends on State Governments and public-spirited individuals to fund its operations. The Federal Government has become increasingly less responsive to the needs of the police (Arthur-Worry, 2013), despite the fact that the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria clearly states that it is the responsibility of the Federal Government to fund law enforcement agencies. Funding constraints create a vicious cycle in operational capacity. Lack of fuel, vehicles, comms, and forensics reduces patrol coverage and investigation. Police become reactive - manning static checkpoints instead of proactive patrol - and dependent on informal extortion to operate. Secondly, funding constraints affects institutional accountability. When salaries are below living wage, the state loses moral authority to discipline. Corruption becomes systemic, not deviant. Oversight bodies are also underfunded, so impunity grows and professionalization fails. Lastly, internal security is also affected. Weak capacity plus weak accountability will produce low public trust. Citizens don't share intelligence, so police resort to more coercion to get information, which further alienates communities. The security vacuum is then filled by vigilantes, insurgents, or private militias - as seen in eastern DRC, northern Nigeria, and Haiti - accelerating state illegitimacy.

Statement of the Problem

While extant studies (Alemika 1988; Hills 2008; Karimu 2015) have established that inadequate funding undermines NPF effectiveness, they predominantly adopt a descriptive approach, listing funding challenges without disaggregating how funding constraints specifically affect distinct performance dimensions. There is limited empirical evidence on the differential impact of funding on operational capacity, institutional accountability, and internal security outcomes. Furthermore, most studies rely on secondary data or public perception surveys in single states, with little primary data from officers on resource allocation mechanisms. This study therefore fills the gap by empirically examining the nexus between funding constraints and operational effectiveness of the NPF, using primary data. Historically, the Force has been maintained by the Federal Government without sufficient equipment, personnel and operational gadgets. The problem of funding has affected the size, structure and strength of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), leaving it without adequate capacity to combat crime and recurrent insecurity. Funds are rarely available for recruitment and training. The strength of the Force is estimated at 370,000

for a population of about 160,000,000, representing a ratio of one policeman to 433 citizens (Ogar, 2013).

Similarly, police welfare and retirement packages are poor, largely due to the contributory pension scheme under which retired officers are paid in installments from deductions made while in service. Only officers from the rank of Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG), Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) and Inspector General of Police (IGP) are exempted from the scheme. This chronic underfunding has amplified corruption and extortion within the Force. Long-term poor funding has entrenched police brutality, bribery, wholesale embezzlement and extortion, thereby threatening the fundamental rights and security of citizens.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine how funding affects the performance of the Nigeria Police Force; and identify other factors that affect the performance of the Nigeria Police.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Political Economy Theory is suitable for this study because police funding is not a technical accounting issue, but a political allocation of scarce state resources. The theory argues that state institutions perform based on how power holders prioritize budgets. It explains why NPF is underfunded say police compete with military, executive patronage, and elite interests for federal budget. It links budget decisions to behavior say when the state underinvests in an institution, that institution creates informal survival strategies which is extortion and corruption.

Key Concepts and Mechanisms of the theory

Independent Variable: Funding Constraints is defined as inadequate, delayed, and centrally controlled federal allocation.

There are two intervening Mechanisms in the theory.

The first is Operational Capacity which explains that the ability to function is vehicles, fuel, communication, arms, forensic tools. Mechanism: Political budget cuts means no fuel/vehicles which means reduced patrol and slow response time.

The second is Institutional Conduct. The internal discipline and professionalism are recruitment, training, salary, promotion. Mechanism: Low remuneration fixed by political class means low motivation with corruption as compensation.

Two dependent Variables are identified. The first is service outcome which explains crime prevention, investigation, response effectiveness. The second is public trust Outcome which explains police legitimacy and citizens' willingness to cooperate and share intelligence.

Causal chain: political bargaining led to budget allocation decision which led to low operational capacity and poor institutional conduct. This led to poor service and low public trust which results into weak internal security.

Karl Marx is a proponent of the Classical Political Economy theory. Marx (1859, modern reprint published 1970) argued in his paper titled “A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy” that the economic base (how resources are produced and distributed) determines the political superstructure, including state institutions like the police. The state allocates resources to protect ruling class interests. Applied to policing, police underfunding reflects the low priority of public security for the masses versus regime security. Another proponent of Political Economy Theory is Adam Smith. Smith (1776, modern edition published 1976) argues that state expenditure is a product of political choices. Buchanan and Tullock (1962) advanced this theory positing that budgets are not rational but result from bargaining among self-interested politicians. Police funding in Nigeria is therefore a product of executive-legislative bargaining, where police lose out to more politically visible sectors like defence.

The theory had been criticized on three grounds, First, determinism and Neglect of Agency. Critics like North (1990) argues that political economy is overly deterministic. It assumes funding automatically determines performance, ignoring institutional agency. Well-funded forces like the US police still suffer misconduct, showing money does not equal reform. Secondly, neglect of sociological factors. Weberian critics (Weber, 1947) argues that Political Economy Theory reduces policing to economics and ignores bureaucratic culture, training ethos, and professionalism. Police failure may be due to colonial paramilitary legacy, not just budget. The last but not the lease is methodological complexity. Measuring political interests is difficult empirically (Green & Shapiro, 1994). Despite these critiques, the theory remains suitable because it directly connects funding as a political product (independent variable) to dependent variables (performance).

Conceptualization of Police Performance

Apprehension of criminals is historically the central rationale for policing but in fact, calls for police services incorporate a wide range of complaints. Modern police are prepared to act in a variety of roles from problem-solving to counseling and providing of first aid among others (Greene 2010). Yet historically, western police agencies and police in modern African societies have measured their effectiveness against a very restricted set of crime-focused indicators such as crime rate, arrest response time and clearance rate (Coupler, 1983). Most recently, these measures of police effectiveness have begun to include a focus on “value for money” (Robert, 2012). One can think of police effectiveness as applying the law

equally to everyone, guidance on the use of lethal weapon and brut force, safety and fair treatment of crime suspects detained in police cell, protecting the rights of juveniles, women, refugee and allowing community to hold police accountable for their actions and inactions (Okeleke 2024).

International policing expert such as Alemika, Asenime, Okeleke, Okpevra *et al* argues that first, democratic policing means adherence to the rule of law and not just to the whines/dictates of the authority or those in power. Second, police must protect civil right- from the right to free speech and association to freedom from torture and other forms of abuses. Third, in democratic policing, police is accountable to government birdies, oversight commission (police monitoring team, police service commission) and or the court. Lastly, democratic policing should give top priority to meeting the security needs of common citizenry (Bayley, 2006). Policing is at the forefront of the criminal justice system, with the court at the middle and prisons at the last or back. Police is the front marker who secures, upholds, and reaffirms the rights of people, ensure the dignity of citizens, peaceful assembly, free from fear and reprisal attacks, freedom of speech, free civic participation, ensure due process is followed in all things (Alemika, 1993). Measurement is critical to maintening a healthy balance between controlling crime and protecting the rights of citizens (Bayley 2006). Only by adopting a comprehensive and multifaceted measurement system of police performance will police chiefs and other informers have a chance to drive the organization to a higher level of performance or to shift the organization direction. Mark Moore and Anthony Braga (2003) proposed seven relevant dimensions of police performance measurement. Namely:

1. Crime and Victimization Reduction- crime may look like something beyond the control of police alone but reducing crime is the important contribution of police to the society.
2. Clearance and Conviction of Crime suspects- crime suspects must account for their actions, because punishment can prevent and deter people from commiting future crime. Police prosecutor must ensure that when magistrate or judge sentence crime suspects to prison/correctional center, they are taken there at once to serve jail terms.
3. Increasing safety and order in public places- control of traffic to reduce traffic accident, arrest people involved in affray when they fight in public places.
4. Reducing fear and enhancing security- disorderly conditions must be tacked. Enforcement of curfew order, and night watch of the community is necessary here.
5. Application of minimal force when necessary - special powers must be used judiciously and equitably. Lethal weapons and brut force such as sporadic shooting, shooting into the air, killing criminals at a spot and others is discouraged. Force Order 237 explains when a police officer is to use his or her firearm.
6. Fair and efficient use of public funds. Police must operate economically, controlling cost responsibly.
7. Enhancing Customer Satisfaction - in wide range of police services which go beyond crime fighting, security services to citizens and others. Police legitimacy and accountability is questioned by police actions.

How do citizens (police customers) see the police? What must police excel at? The innovation and learning perspective (how can police improve and create value to what they do and how do police service commission chairman see those in non-commissioned staff working under him? Bello and Umaru (2022) considers performance of police organisation in Nigeria as the ability to utilise its inputs to generate outputs towards provision of outcome. The performance system must capture the complex expectations that modern society has on police, including services to citizens who request assistance while in police custody. Performance measures is the basic method of ensuring police accountability in modern democratic societies (Robert 2012).

Appraisal of NPF Funding

National budget for NPF since independence in 1960 reveals a pattern of continuous underfunding. Apart from 1983 under the Shagari administration when the police got allocated 10.7% of national budget, in all other years including 2011 and 2012, the police with its nearly 400,000 staff got allocated an average lower than 5% to 7% of national budget (El-Rufai, 2013). Between 1984-1988, Nigeria's operating budget remained static in the N360 million to N380 million range. It was in 1988 that the NPF budget got a 69% increment from the previous allocation, that is, N521 million. Again, in 1986, 54% of the total budget allocated to NPF was used for capital expenditure due to the fact that personnel and recurrent expenditure have not grown astronomically. The 1986 and 1988 police budget represented 3.5% and 2.5% of total federal capital expenditures in those years (El-Rufai, 2013). It was from this year that the percentage of the federal government budget for the police began to drop drastically. When these funds are released, the headquarters, zonal and area commands, Police Mobile Force squadrons, withhold substantial amounts leaving pretty little for intelligence gathering, street patrols and guards, policing at Divisional and Station outpost levels where most of the law enforcement is done. When the force asked for N100, the government brought N30.

History and Perspective of Measuring Police Performance

Modern policing in Nigeria was birthed in 1970 when centralised policing started after the disbandment of Local Government Police Force and Native Authority Police Force and the complete absorption of her personnel into the central police known as the Nigeria Police Force (Okeleke 2014). Between 1860-1930, officers cadre, administrative arm of the Nigeria Police was peopled and headed by foreigners especially the British. But in 1940, non-indigenous presence began to reduce particularly among the Hausa while that of Igbo increased (NAI, NAK 1944-1947). Since 1970, police organization have been collecting data on police performance just to demonstrate the inputs, activities, output of individual police agencies. The idea of comparative performance measurement began to take root in the 1970s. One can measure police effectiveness by nothing down the number of cases cleared and the number of stolen properties recovered. This can also be used by both police and academics or expert police analysts to render professional judgement. It must confirm to current notion of good administrative practice, accommodate innovations and improvements in policing. To Nigerian citizens today, public confidence in the police is abysmally low, especially after President Buhari crippled the Police Mobile Force (PMF) nationwide by transferring most combat machines and equipment to the military, saying that they are too much for policing operations. President Buhari also reduced PMF training to lesser combat craft and tactical manoeuver and weapon handling skills- thereby removing major war-time skill training for which PMF is known for. Today, PMF techniques in combat craft is nothing more than:

1. Snake crawling
2. Bounce by bounce
3. Monkey walk
4. Dive and roll, and
5. Cover to cover.

The method to adopt depends on the terrain because flying ammunition does not travel in a straight line, but rather bevels. When you hear the sound of gunshots, the bullet is not meant for you. You must know the difference between concealment and taking cover. Combat formation and hand signals are special skills, techniques, or methods used by the police when advancing or withdrawing/retreating from enemy territory. Examples are:

1. Line out bait
2. Single file formation
3. Wedge formation
4. Harribon formation, and
5. All round defence.

A citizen survey of police performance should take note of the form of government, police salaries, personnel practices, officers welfare, logistics, technology, economic development, and quality of training and retraining program. In year 2020, after EndSARS protest, police analysts observed passionate discontent on police action in Ugheli and Obiaruku(Okeleke 2014).

Crime Rates

Crime is a product of a complex array of social, economic, and political forces. While the police can have a substantial impact on certain types of crime, their influence varies. For instance, visible crimes such as the sale and consumption of hard and contraband drugs are more preventable and suppressible than others. Other crimes, such as firearms infiltration through porous borders, are more difficult for the police to combat or reduce to the barest minimum.

Crime reduction is not solely attributable to police efforts; at times, it results from factors unrelated to policing, such as government intervention (Alpert, Flynn, & Piquero, 2001). Similarly, when a coalition of social factors increases crime, it is inappropriate to blame the police, as such factors may be beyond their control.

Reported crime rates are also linked to police-public relations. Police departments can influence reporting rates if their policies encourage civilians and informants to report crimes directly (Ahire, 1993).

However, not all crimes are reported to the police. For this reason, crime analysts often supplement official crime data from crime bulletins with victimization surveys. Under-reporting occurs for various reasons: immigrants may fear deportation, domestic abuse victims may fear retaliation, and teenagers may avoid reporting offences involving rape, defilement, indecent assault, child abuse, and hostage-taking or child trafficking to protect their reputation among peers.

Arrests and Citations

Arrest refers to the restriction of an individual's movement and taking the person to a police station to answer a charge. It represents one of the most visible measures of police output and is one of the few output measures collected from policing agencies in the country. The category of offence determines whether an arrest can be effected with or without a warrant duly signed by a court magistrate.

From the perspective of problem-oriented policing, arrest is just one tool in an officer's toolkit. Merely counting arrests produces a figure of uncertain value. In the Nigerian context, public resistance to arrest is common, as few youths willingly follow officers to the station without coercion. Furthermore, the Nigeria Police does not systematically keep annual records of arrests. This does not imply that arrest data has no role in performance measurement. Rather, it challenges police executives to think creatively about what this measure represents and

how it can contribute to a more comprehensive performance measurement framework.

Clearance Rate

Clearance rate, defined as the proportion of reported crimes solved by the police, is another widely collected measure of police output and the most common indicator of investigative effectiveness. However, it is susceptible to manipulation. Investigation Police Officers (IPOs) may inflate performance by using a single arrest to clear other similar offences, even when evidence linking the cases is slim. Furthermore, while some cleared cases result in convictions, others are merely closed and end in discharge and acquittal. Although clearance rates can be useful, the quality of the data is a major concern, particularly when used to compare different agencies and offence types.

Response Time

In most police formations in Nigeria, prompt response to distress calls is typically directed by a superior officer. Civilians do not always expect rapid response from patrol teams unless the call originates from a senior officer such as a Unit Commander (UC) of a Police Mobile Force (PMF) Squadron, Area Commander (AC), Divisional Police Officer (DPO), State Commissioner of Police (CP), or Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG) in charge of a zone. For example, Delta, Edo and Bayelsa States fall under Zone 5, with two PMF squadrons in Delta State: Squadron 31 at Ogwashi-Uku and Squadron 51 at Oghara. Faced with resource shortages, policing agencies in Nigeria including the NPF, PMF, Vigilante Group of Nigeria, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Civilian Joint Task Force, Hunters Security Services, and Special Tactical Squad have adopted alternative response strategies to improve efficiency. A major challenge in Delta State is the prevalence of cases without witnesses or evidence, which are often discarded while suspects are granted bail. In such contexts, providing citizens with an accurate estimate of response time is often more important than a rapid response itself (Barlow & Barlow, 2000).

As a comparative performance measure, response time presents several challenges. Community standards vary widely due to differences in geography, topography, and traffic patterns, making comparisons difficult. Rapid response to minor nuisance calls can be wasteful and detract from more pressing priorities. Moreover, rapid response can expose officers to risk, as distress calls are sometimes used to orchestrate ambushes aimed at killing officers or carting away firearms. Ambush can be deliberate, initiated by criminal elements, or immediate counter-ambush operations launched by security forces in response to an attack. The complexity of such encounters, including tactical casualty care, makes response time an important but problematic comparative indicator. Okorie (2026) proposes the following reforms for enhancing police effectiveness:

First, government and relevant stakeholders should ensure full and timely implementation of police reforms. Several reform policies have been drafted and submitted but remain unexecuted. Implementation should therefore be prioritized through realistic timelines, accountability mechanisms, and measurable outcomes.

Second, adequate and sustainable funding of reform policies is imperative, particularly to address training, equipment, and welfare needs of the police.

Third, the involvement of anti-graft agencies in police procurement and contracting processes can minimize corruption and ensure that allocated resources are utilized for their intended operational purposes.

Fourth, the creation of state police and strengthening of community policing should be pursued. Localizing policing builds trust and optimizes intelligence gathering, thereby bridging the gap between citizens and the police.

Fifth, a balanced civil-military security architecture should be promoted. Over-reliance on the military for internal security undermines police authority. Empowering the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) as the primary internal security agency is essential for maintaining law, order, and public safety in Nigeria's democracy.

Finally, productive youth empowerment programmes should be implemented to reduce recruitment into insurgent groups and criminal networks, thereby enhancing internal security.

Designing Police Performance Measures

Outputs versus Outcomes

Outputs are internal performance measures under the direct control of the police that correlate with desirable policing outcomes. For example, the number of raids on criminal hideouts and brothels and the recovery of arms, stolen vehicles, and other exhibits constitute outputs. When such operations make a community calm and secure, that represents an outcome the societal benefit produced by policing, such as residents feeling safe. While police actions like community policing and crime prevention contribute to this outcome, other non-police factors also influence citizens' sense of safety. Colonial records in the National Archives, Ibadan, particularly the Nigeria Police Standing Orders (NPSO 1932, 45-93), show that authorities relied on persons alien to a locality to police it. The reversal to this practice in contemporary Nigeria creates a crisis of alienation that undermines officer performance.

Interpretability of Measures

Measures derived from online sources and police records often have ambiguous interpretations. For instance, does a high number of cases reported at a police station indicate rising crime (negative) or increased public

confidence in the police (positive)? Does an increase in arrests signify greater police engagement or a lack of proactivity in preventing crime? Similarly, a high number of citizen complaints may indicate an abusive force, or it may simply reflect an accessible and publicized complaint process. This ambiguity underscores the need to rely not on a single indicator but on a set of indicators to assess professionalism. In Police Colleges established in Kaduna (1922), Ikeja and Enugu (1932), emphasis was placed on physical and moral development and team spirit (NAI, CSO 1937, 8), while officer welfare and human rights-based policing were largely neglected.

A Framework for Measuring Police Performance.

Police behaviour and its outcomes are conditioned by policies such as the Police Act 2020 and its regulations, the police code of conduct, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and police operational guidelines. Policies and programmes serve as rules; actions reflect official behaviour; while desirable outcomes are the results. Regarding police policy, a key question is whether policies on the use of force and traffic/pedestrian stops at checkpoints and toll gates conform to national best practices. While these practices are currently obtainable in Nigeria, they fall far below standards in developed countries. With respect to training programmes, the pertinent question is whether hours of academy and in-service training on use of force, stop-and-search, and ethnic sensitivity have improved performance. Okolie-Ijei (Interviewed 5/9/2026) observes that since the introduction of human rights-based policing and physical drills on firearms use into the training curriculum, reports of extrajudicial killings, torture, and brutality have reduced drastically. Analysis of departmental reports and police websites indicates improved transparency through the routine publication of data on citizen complaints, use of force, and stops. Similarly, analysis of departmental records and observation of meetings reveals an improved police-community interface, evidenced by the establishment of citizen advisory councils, public attendance at open community meetings, and civilian participation in anti-crime activities.

Officers' responsiveness to distress calls results into neutralization of armed hoodlums, and recovery of arms and ammunition. Surveys on morale and ethics indicate levels of job satisfaction and a climate of integrity, although some low-ranking officers report a crisis of alienation (Okeleke, 2025). A rudimentary set of measures can thus provide valuable information for evaluating agency effectiveness and strategic plans. As demands for greater efficiency increase, performance indicators will continue to grow in complexity; judicious selection and use of such indicators offers opportunities to entrench a culture of accountability.

The Nigeria Police Force currently lacks an international best-practice standard for measuring performance and has consistently been judged ineffective, as evident in the upsurge of crime and insecurity. The factors inhibiting NPF effectiveness are both internal and external (Egwunatum, 2020). Consequently, the Force has not attained optimum efficiency. Osayende (2008) attributes the lackluster attitude of personnel to identifiable factors which, if improved, could enhance effectiveness. The poor performance of the NPF is not unconnected to its historical background.

Historical Background of the Nigeria Police Force

The historical affliction of the NPF began with British colonial abuse and misuse of policing power and continued through the post-independence political dispensation, where misuse of power further weakened and deteriorated police performance. The colonialists' neglect of police funding was a deliberate strategy to subject the police to their control, followed by indigenous neglect by Nigerian leadership and the debilitating impact of military rule. That the Force has survived without drowning testifies to its resilience amidst the vicissitudes of the Nigerian project. Like a house built from the roof, the Nigeria Police lacks an indigenous foundation of policing as a community function, which is central to any effective and efficient police organization. This explains why the public does not see the NPF as their own. Osayende (2008) identified the following inhibiting external and internal factors:

1. Military intervention in government between 1966-1979 and 1983-1990;
2. Poor funding and mismanagement of available funds;
3. Under-budgeting and failure to release full estimated funds;
4. Establishment of parallel security organizations such as the NSCDC.

Internal factors:

1. Inappropriate development of personnel protective security;
2. Non-observance of rule of law and fundamental human rights;
3. Organized corruption;
4. In-fighting among senior officers over postings and promotions;
5. Unlawful exercise of authority;
6. Non-compliance with laid-down regulations, procedures, manuals, and traditions at all levels;
7. Decayed state of discipline; and
8. Inadequate basic and continuous training.

According to Mckulka (2012), lack of physical resources including vehicles, phones, computers, uniforms, life jackets, and housing impedes performance, as stagnation is inevitable where inputs are insufficient. Uronu (2011) similarly argues that effective functioning is impossible

without sufficient resources, as observed during the EndSARS protests. Resources required to improve police work include protective equipment, information and communication technology, adequate personnel, finances, and support structures. Hence, it is imperative for this research to review empirical studies on police performance as it relates to funding and effectiveness

Police Staffing and Effectiveness

The Delta State Command of the Nigeria Police Force is experiencing severe understaffing, exacerbated by the Inspector-General of Police's mass interstate transfer. Although officers may be considered reasonably paid, this comes at significant cost to their mental and physical health. Findings indicate high stress levels, particularly among patrol officers operating a 24-hour on, 24-hour off duty cycle, entailing long working hours. Additional stressors include constantly changing 12-hour shifts in the charge room, complex caseloads for investigators, limited career development opportunities, and growing family pressures.

The use of members of the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN) and the Anti-Cult Volunteers Corps to augment Anti-Crime, Surveillance, and Crack squads at the divisional level has further exposed issues of corruption, unprofessionalism, and low morale to civilians and other local policing actors. For instance, in Ogwashi-Uku, a VGN member reportedly refused to be searched at a police checkpoint, stating: "You are an officer, I am an officer, you are telling me to come down from my motorcycle for checking, what warranted this insult?" Such incidents illustrate how VGN members now perceive themselves as equals or even superiors to the police, highlighting the extent to which understaffing undermines police performance.

A study conducted at Area Command, Ogwashi-Uku, where officers aged 30-45 were interviewed. Most were married with children, and two-thirds were also caring for elderly dependents. About half were in dual-career households. Two-thirds expressed dissatisfaction with job security and pay, particularly under the contributory pension scheme introduced by former President Olusegun Obasanjo following the creation of a parallel policing organization, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), which diverted attention from the police. According to Osaretin (Interviewed 28/9/2026), "salaries are paid with ranks, a police constable going home with N118,000 while Corporal goes home with N124,000 per month in 2026."

Half of the interviewed officers reported high stress levels, while two-thirds missed approximately four workdays annually, mainly due to health issues or fatigue. Officers typically work 72-96 hours per week, managing multiple competing and high-risk demands such as engaging bandits, Boko Haram insurgents, militants, armed robbers, and hoodlums in gun battles, while also preparing case files for transfer to headquarters or for prosecution. All these tasks are treated as priority. An officer stated that work overload has been aggravated by understaffing in Delta State.

Furthermore, officers face unpredictability and little control over their schedules, with start and finish times subject to change, leading to exhaustion and domestic challenges. Investigation Police Officers (IPOs) in the Crime Branch and police prosecutors in the Legal Aid Branch are sometimes required to attend court hearings on their days off. The longstanding practice of strangers policing strangers, from the earliest period to the present, has not aided police performance. This has led the police to adopt personality profile traits characterized by authoritarianism, suspicion, aggressiveness, masculinity, alienation, and cynicism (NAI MAK, 1941: 8).

Corruption and Police Effectiveness.

In the media, references to corruption in business, politics, professions, and other spheres of social life are common, each shaping public perception of individuals and organizations (Black, 1970). In Africa, reports of police corruption receive particular attention because the police are mandated to serve society and are vested with extraordinary powers not granted to others, the power to stop, search, arrest, detain, charge, prosecute, imprison, and, in rare cases where a death sentence is pronounced, execute through firing squad. They are also authorized to use deadly force in the discharge of their duties. Consequently, corruption in the police is deeply disturbing as it is closely linked to abuse of power and privilege, raising serious questions about accountability and oversight, and prompting the public to ask: can we trust the police?

Police corruption, defined as lack of integrity, constitutes a major obstacle to positive police-public relations in contemporary Nigeria (Grant, 2001). Police globally are not immune to corruption. Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer (2010) identified the police as being associated with petty bribery worldwide. In Nigeria, despite various reforms, the police enjoy very limited public confidence due to pervasive corrupt practices. There remains a need for sustained reform to reduce susceptibility to corruption and restore public credibility. Combating police corruption is critical, as Nigeria faces a law enforcement challenge worsened by internecine civil conflicts. The proliferation of uniformed policing agents who evade police checkpoints, trade in exhibits, contraband goods / hard drugs, firearms, and engage in illegal businesses further impedes effective crime control. Many members of sister security agencies are alleged to have joined policing agencies merely to avoid road checks and perpetrate crimes under cover of uniform. Attempts to stop and search them often result in

violent clashes. Officers injured in such encounters receive little institutional support. For example, Emeke (interviewed 28/9/2026) reported being brutally injured at a checkpoint in Ibusa by Ifeanyi, a member of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), for requesting to search his vehicle booth. His Divisional Police Officer (DPO) reportedly responded: "Is police your father's job, what are you fighting for, why don't you allow him to go when he said he's not going to open his car booth... this job is a thankless job; anyone that refuses to cooperate with you, allow them to go." Such demoralizing leadership, coupled with poor incentives, perpetuates dysfunction.

Effective monitoring and evaluation of police activities for attitudinal change and enhanced service delivery is a sine qua non for building a democratic foundation (Adepegba, 2013). Corruption is generally defined as misuse of entrusted authority for personal gain, and a police officer is corrupt when authority is misused to produce personal gain for the officer or others, including superiors or criminals (Alpert & Moore, 1993). Such misuse weakens organizational capacity to address crime. As law enforcers, police must act professionally to inspire public confidence in the rule of law (Adebayo, 2012). Corruption erodes their credibility, creates a negative public image, and fosters lawlessness. Imoagene (2026) argues that the limitation of public policy in improving national security in Nigeria lies more in implementation failures than in policy formulation, and recommends enhanced implementation frameworks, increased funding, improved training, and strengthened accountability within the police force. When citizens cannot rely on the police, they resort to self-help, including mob justice (jungle justice) or seeking assistance from sister security agencies or youth groups.

Acts that bribery allows to go unpunished include:

1. Failure to arrest and prosecute offenders;
2. Allowing drunk drivers to go free;
3. Premature termination of investigations, leading to increased crime and loss of public trust;
4. Refraining from inspecting crime scenes or premises where police presence could deter illegality;
5. Avoiding raids on drug spots where officers are themselves patrons;
6. Withholding patrol deployment to known criminal areas in exchange for financial advantage;
7. Reducing the severity of charges due to personal relationships or bribes;
8. Misallocating police protection, leaving strategic areas understaffed; and
9. Misuse of official property, such as using police vehicles for non-official purposes, depriving operational units of resources. Another critical form is illicit access to or alteration of confidential records for criminal benefit, compromising document confidentiality and intelligence.

Effects of Police Corruption

1. Failure to enforce law encourages anti-social behaviour.
2. Administrative control structures become ineffective when officers are corrupted by external parties.
3. Quiet corruption occurs when officers fail to perform duties, absent themselves from assigned areas, or misuse vehicles.
4. Supervisory structures collapse as officers lose control over subordinates, damaging the entire police image.
5. Citizens resort to self-help, believing reporting to police only invites rent-seeking. To mitigate corruption, citizens are advised to: speak out when bribery is observed, record the officer's name and force number and report to superiors; seek corroborative evidence such as witnesses or photographs; and refuse to offer bribes, as both giver and taker are guilty of corruption, particularly when no offence has been committed.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Low public awareness and knowledge of the activities of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has left many Nigerians unable to assess police effectiveness.
2. The police lack adequate support from the populace, and police-public relations in Nigeria remain abysmally poor.
3. NPF performance is hindered by inadequate work equipment, corruption, understaffing, and inadequate training.
4. Inadequate funding significantly impedes police effectiveness.
5. Unavailability and inadequacy of personnel adversely affect effectiveness.
6. Poor remuneration and low motivation contribute to underperformance.
7. Corruption at all levels of the Force undermines performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made to improve NPF effectiveness:

1. Government should initiate sustained awareness campaigns on the activities and functions of the NPF to enhance public understanding of police duties.
2. The police-public relations gap should be bridged. Government should encourage citizens to cooperate with the police and provide useful information, while the police should adopt a more citizen-friendly approach.

3. Government should overhaul the police funding system. In national security considerations, the police should be given priority attention in budgetary allocation.
4. Recruitment, selection, and promotion should be based on experience and expertise, supported by regular training and retraining programmes for cadets, inspectors, and rank-and-file personnel to optimize performance.

Suggestions for Further Studies

This study suggests the following areas for future research:

1. The role of NGOs and international donors in funding the NPF, given that the force is currently solely funded by government. Kenya, Liberia, and Sierra Leone provide relevant African examples of security aid.
2. Other non-economic factors such as cultural, physical, and psychological factors that affect NPF effectiveness.

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