

# Transformational Leadership and Perception of Corruption: An Empirical Examination within the Nigeria Police Force

[Felix Akinwumi Orole, Kamisan Bin Gadar, Murray Hunter]

**Abstract:** This study was designed to investigate the relationship between the attributes of transformational leadership; charisma, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation, and the perception of corruption in the Nigeria police force. By using quantitative methodological approach to examine these dimensions, data was collected by administering questionnaires on 156 respondents. Descriptive, correlation and regression analyses were expended in the examination and the result showed that while transformational leadership practices is perceived to be high in the Nigeria police force, the perceived level of corruption remained high too. Charisma and intellectual stimulation consistently have positive influence on corruption. Though in varying degree, the results indicate a correlation between the three attributes of transformational leadership and the dimensions of corruption. These findings were discussed in the specific contexts of transformational leadership theory, organizational practices and police corruption, while its practical implications for organizational development, police reform and crusade against police corruption in the Nigeria police were underscored.

**Keywords:** Transformational Leadership, Charisma, Corruption, Bribery, Police Force

## I. Introduction

In order to achieve organizational goals, effective leadership has been proposed by both practitioners and scholars (Bass, 1985; Bennis & Nanus, 1985). This is because leadership acts as a fundamental aspect of management. The police institution is saddled with the responsibility of helping to maintain peace, enforcing the laws and ensuring the safety of life and property. As an organization, police force has not been exempted from the pressure of achieving these institutional outcomes (Conger & Kanungo, 1990). Previous studies (Rouche, Baker & Rose, 1989) affirmed that transformational leadership is an effective leadership style that police leaders can adopt in order to achieve organizational outcomes. Recent studies (Othman, 2013; Ekundayo, 2012; Ngumi, 2008) contend that there is a significant relationship between leadership style and organizational outcomes.

Othman (2013) posits that corruption derails law enforcement agencies like the police force from achieving its objectives and goals. The effect of which, triggers organizations to establish clear descriptions for corruption in order to be able to overcome this phenomenon (TI, 2012). Since corruption itself cannot be defined, several attempts have been made by Transparency International (TI), a Berlin-based non-governmental organization to describe it. According to

Transparency International (2011), corruption can be interpreted as any action that involves abuse of authority for personal gain.

Transformational leaders are known to maintain collaborative cultures where officers can participate in decision-making, critique and plan together. They also encourage followers to carry out their various duties in the most exemplary way, which include shunning deviance like corruption. Corruption is diverse; however, its dimensions examined in this study are bribery, crime, and ethics within the Nigeria police.

## II. Problem Statement

As an emerging phenomenon in organizational leadership studies, corruption is multi-dimensional. Corruption remains an ill-addressed lingering issue in the Nigeria police, which has proven to have negative effect on the police organization, society, and the economy. By using Corruption Perception Index (CPI) to measure the perceived level of corruption in the public sector in 177 countries, TI (2013) report rated the police institution 4.7 percent out of its score of 5 percent. The five percent meant “extremely corrupt” while one percent meant that the institutions rated are “not at all corrupt. As portrayed in Table 1, the findings of the research rated the police institution as the most corrupt in Nigeria and most of the countries surveyed.

**Table 1: Transparency International’s assessment of corruption with CPI**

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

(Source: Transparency International 2013)

As Dufka (2010) posits:

“Widespread corruption in the Nigeria Police Force is fuelling abuses against ordinary citizens, and severely undermining the rule of law. It has been noted that on a daily basis, countless ordinary Nigerians are accosted by armed police officers who demand bribes and commit human rights abuses against them by soliciting for, and demanding for bribes from them. These abuses range from arbitrary arrest and unlawful detention to threats and acts of violence, including sexual assault, torture, and extrajudicial killings. Police also routinely extort money from victims of crimes to initiate investigations and demand bribes from suspects to drop investigations”.

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

The punitive measures that are usually used by most law enforcement agencies seem not to be effective in helping to checkmate corruption within the Nigeria police. Therefore, transformational leadership may provide a model by which leadership development programs could present to police leaders in Nigeria how to lead in ways that are in line with the followers ‘Culture-Endorsed Leadership Theory (CLT) (Kabaskal & Bodur, 2004). By investigating the relationship between the attributes of transformational leadership and dimensions of corruption, it is hypothesized by the researcher that this leadership style can be an effective instrument that leads to the reduction of corrupt practices within the Nigeria police force.

### III. Research Framework

The independent variables for this study are charisma, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation, which constitute the attributes of transformational leadership theory and its instrumentation as propounded by Burns (1978) and modified by Bass (1985). On the other hand, the dependent variable was adopted and modified from selected dimensions of corruption as previously examined by Transparency International (TI). Based on the above proposition, the Figure 1 shows the hypothesized link between the attributes of transformational leadership and corruption within the police force.

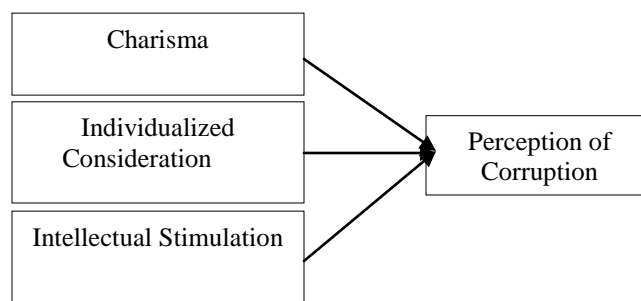


Figure 1: A conceptual model for studying the relationship between transformational leadership and perception of police corruption

### IV. Research Objectives

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

1. to determine the perceived level of Transformational Leadership and dimensions of Corruption in the Nigeria Police Force
2. to examine the relationship between transformational leadership (TL) characteristics and perception of corruption.

### V. Research Questions

Grounded on the research objectives, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the perceived level of Transformational Leadership and Corruption in the Nigerian police?
2. What is the relationship between the attributes of transformational leadership (TL) and dimension of Corruption in the Nigeria Police Force?

### VI. Methodology

#### a. Research Design and Sampling

The study utilized a cross-sectional survey design by the use of questionnaire to examine the relationship between the attributes of transformational leadership and dimensions of corruption. The population for the survey is the member of the Nigerian police in Lagos police command, Lagos State. Lagos state is the commercial and financial hub of Nigeria and West

Africa. The command is a heterogeneous society as it consists of every tribe and ethnics in Nigeria.

Lagos police command has a total number of 29,122 police officers and the command is divided into thirteen area commands, eighty-four divisional police headquarters and twenty-two police posts. The command is headed by a commissioner of police, and assisted by three deputies who are in charge of administrations, operations and investigations respectively. By utilizing a stratified simple random sampling, a total of 156 officers participated in the study.

### b. Measurement

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 5X (MLQ5X) questionnaire with a total of 36 items was used to assess transformational leadership. These sets of instruments have been used by previous leadership researchers to measure transformational leader, and MLQ-5X scales has consistently shown satisfactory reliability and validity. Various items on the questionnaire were grouped based on how the leader is charismatically transformational in his approach while being considerate. At the same time, how the leader intellectually stimulates his followers. All these items were ranked on a five-point Likert scale of (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree).

The selected dimensions of corruption; bribery, ethics and crime in the police force was assessed by adopting and modifying similar questions that Transparency International (TI) has consistently used in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) to measure the perceived level of corruption in the public sector. Similarly, the questionnaire on police corruption was based on the perception of the participants. The 36 items in the section were categorized under the three dimensions of corruption. Akin to the independent variable, all the items were ranked on a five-point Likert scale.

An Alpha Coefficient of .87 and .68 were obtained for transformational leadership and police corruption in this present study.

## VII Results

### a. Descriptive Analysis

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

Table 2: Means and standard deviations of the attributes of transformational leadership

Variable	Mean	SD
Charisma	4.30	.4662
Individualized Consideration	3.33	.4755
Intellectual Stimulation	3.11	.7478
<b>Transformational Leadership</b>	<b>3.58</b>	<b>.4651</b>
Valid N (Listwise)	N=156	

Table 2 depicts the mean and standard deviation of the attributes of transformational leadership. Given the MLQ questionnaire and employing the midpoint mark of 3.0, as used in a similar studies (Nguni et al, 2006; Bolger, 2001); the result indicates that charisma ranks the highest with a mean value of 4.30. Based on the same analysis, the mean value for individualized consideration is 3.33. Other than the attributes of charisma and individualized consideration, the third attributes of transformational leadership; intellectual stimulation was 3.11. As indicated in the Table 2, the average mean score of transformational leadership and its associated traits was 3.58.

Table 3: Means and standard deviations of corrupt practices and its facets

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Bribery	3.88	.9123
Crime	2.65	.5501
Ethic	3.22	.6710
<b>Corrupt Practices</b>	<b>3.17</b>	<b>.5724</b>
Valid N (Listwise)	N=156	

Table 3 exhibits the perception of corruption and its facets within the Nigeria Police Force. The overall perceived level of corruption in the Nigerian police is 3.18. Participants' involvement in bribery ranked the highest (3.88). Poor ethics in the police force is 3.22. Crimes in the police force were expected to be higher but it assumed the least position. However, the result indicated that the perceived rate of crime in the Nigeria Police Force is 2.65.

### b. Correlation Analysis

Based on the second objective of the study, correlation analysis was utilized to examine the association between the attributes of transformational leadership and the dimensions of corruption. The summary of the correlational matrix is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Correlation matrix of transformational leadership traits, transformational leadership, corrupt practices and its facet bribery

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

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

The results of the correlation analysis as presented in Table 4 show that, though in varying degree, a significant relationship exist between the attributes of TL and dimensions of corruption. The  $R^2$  value of 0.741 shows that there is a correlation between charisma and individualized consideration. This means that leaders who demonstrate charismatic attributes also tend to be more considerate in their approach. The result also revealed a relationship between charisma and intellectual stimulation. With the  $R^2$  value of 0.587, leaders who show more charisma will also show more intellectual stimulation within the police force. Further result (Pearson correlation of 0.601) showed that a relationship exists between individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation. The overall result revealed a positive relationship between the various leadership traits and transformational leadership generally.

Along with charisma, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation, transformational leadership yielded a Pearson correlation value of 0.961, 0.784 and 0.852 respectively. The result showed the strongest correlation with charisma. Based on the various results, it can be inferred that transformational leadership exhibited a better correlation with its attributes more than the attributes could link with each other. Nonetheless, among the various attributes of transformational leadership, charisma demonstrates a better relationship with the facets of corruption. As a variable, transformational leadership however exhibits a strong association with corruption and its dimensions. Similarly, the perception of corruption and its facets showed that high correlation existed with its facets than the relationship among facets themselves.

### c. Regression Analysis

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

**Table 5: Relation between transformational leadership and corrupt practices**

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

\*test is significant at .01

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

From Table 5, the coefficient value between the predictor and the regressor is positive. This is indicated with the p-value between transformational leadership and corrupt practices obtained ( $p = .000 < .01$ ). The result therefore is a pointer that police leaders who are more transformational lend to greater reduction of corruption within the police force. The precedent of this result lends support to the prediction that police officers are perceived to be less corrupt when they are under police leaders who are more transformational in their leadership style. The equation thus produced is  $CP = 35.992 + .471 (TL)$ , where CP is the predicted score or level of corruption and TL is transformational leadership.

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

## VIII Discussion

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

Though, transformational leadership practice is rated at 3.58 on the scale of 4, the perceived level of corruption in the Nigerian police stood at 3.17 on the scale of 4. Previous studies (Adebayo, 1999; Ekundayo, 2011) showed that the perceived level of transformational leadership practice within the Nigerian police is 2.99 and 3.22. The same result indicated that the perceived level of corrupt practices stands at 3.41 and 3.01 respectively. The findings are indicative that almost 4 out of 5 police officers engage in corruption in the Nigerian police. This study also lends support to studies (Othman, 2012; Ngumi, 2008) that there is evidence of transformational leadership in the police force.



*Discussion of Research Question 2: What is the relationship among the attributes of Transformational Leadership (TL) and the perception of Corruption (CP) within the Nigeria Police Force?*

The second research objective sought to investigate the link between the attributes of transformational leadership and various facets of corrupt practices in the Nigeria Police Force. The correlation shows that transformational leadership has a positive influence on corrupt practices. The value of Pearson  $r$  between TL and CP is 0.598 ( $p < .05$ ) and regression analysis showed a significant minor impact ( $\beta = 0.471$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $R^2 = 0.38$ ). Having established a relationship between the attributes of transformational leadership and dimensions of corrupt practices, regression analysis showed that the attributes of transformational leadership had varying influence that is significant on the facets of corrupt practices combined.

Finally, when each attributes was separately analyzed, transformational leadership was found to have a significant influence on all the dimensions of corruption. There is significant effect of transformational leadership on the rest of the facets of corrupt practices

## IX Conclusion

The result affirmed that when police leaders demonstrate a degree of charisma, individualize consideration and intellectual stimulation in leading, the subordinates and rank-and-file officers learn the positive leadership qualities from such leaders. This practice enables police leaders to be able to consider individuals base on their strength and unique capabilities. Since the police leaders in Nigeria demonstrate an appreciable degree of transformational leadership, the Nigerian government and police oversight bodies should institute and implement programs that help to foster transformational leadership skills in the police force. Such programs can be in the form of seminars and workshops, both home and abroad. For efficiency, police leaders and supervisors should be entrenched and equipped through leadership training and development programmes, which will help them to develop a resolutely patriotic decision to lead an exemplary style in their service. In the crusade against corruption in the Nigeria police, each police leader must steadfastly demonstrate a commitment to address every act of corruption within the police force – which is the hallmark of true leadership. Thus, the decision by police leaders not to encourage proscribe behaviours will invariably breed exemplary followers within the police force.

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