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## **PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE NIGERIAN POLICE ON EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY POLICING IN SOUTH WESTERN NIGERIA**

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**Abstract:**

*THE STUDY EXAMINED THE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF NIGERIA POLICE ON EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY POLICING. THIS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE OF THE TRANSITION FROM TRADITIONAL POLICING TO COMMUNITY POLICING WHICH ARE A GLOBAL PHENOMENON AND THE NIGERIA POLICE CANNOT BE AN EXCEPTION. THE STUDY ADOPTS THE DESCRIPTIVE ANALYTICAL MODEL AS A WORKING FRAME USING A WELL-STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE AS A PRIMARY MODE OF DATA COLLECTION. IN ANALYZING THE DATA COLLECTED, THE STUDY MAKES USE OF STATISTICAL PACKAGE FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES (SPSS) TO MAKE A LOGICAL MEANING OF THE CAUSAL FACTORS COMPLICIT OF PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF NIGERIA POLICE ON EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY POLICING. THE PAPER NOTED THAT NIGERIAN POLICE FORCE PERFORMS BELOW PAR, AND THAT THIS IS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE WIDESPREAD INEFFICIENCIES, CORRUPTION, INJUSTICE IN DEALING WITH SUSPECTS, SPORADIC OVERUSE OF LEGAL FORCE, BAD TEMPER, BULLYING, AND OTHER IMPUNITY-ABUSING VIOLATIONS OF CITIZENS' RIGHTS. THIS MISUSE OF POWERS WHICH CREATES NEGATIVE POLICE IMAGE AND POLICE-PUBLIC RELATIONS. THE PAPER HOWEVER CONCLUDED THAT THIS SITUATION CAN ONLY BE ALTERED IF AND WHEN THE POLICE ARE COMMITTED TO TREATING PEOPLE WITH RESPECT AND CARING FOR THEIR BASIC RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS. THE POLICE SHOULD PUT UP UNRELENTING EFFORT TO*



*CHANGE THEIR REPUTATION AS A FORCE THAT IS PREDATORY, HARSH, CORRUPT, AND UNDERPERFORMING.*

**Keywords:** PUBLIC PERCEPTION, COMMUNITY POLICING, NIGERIA POLICE FORCE, AND CRIME

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**Introduction**

Any institution that is so committed to serving the public cannot aspire to be immune from the effects of public opinion, and its personnel cannot function at their best potential without being aware of their place in society. These contribute to image problems when coupled with the high costs of defense and national security. According to Alemika (2005), the public considers the police as a drainpipe connected to the treasury given the significant annual funding provision and mediocre performance in terms of crime prevention and control. Another issue that significantly harms how the public views the Nigerian Police is the transferred image problem. The foundation of community policing is a formalized partnership between the police and the residents. In addition to upholding the law, a police officer's duties also include dealing with a wide variety of social issues. According to Okiro (2007), the shift from traditional law enforcement to community policing is a worldwide phenomenon, and the Nigerian police force cannot be an exception. In fact, community policing as a philosophy and method is a real vehicle for police reforms in that it aims to create a proactive and equal partnership between the police and the general public through which crime and community safety issues can be jointly discussed and solutions found and put into action. According to Abdulrahman (2007), the Nigerian police adopted community policing in 2004 as a practical strategy for increasing police effectiveness. The groundwork had been laid for a clear transition from traditional policing, which was incident-based and reactive, to proactive, problem-solving policing, similar to that practiced in many other countries across the world. The Nigerian police force adopted the community policing philosophy on the basis of the idea that in a democracy, the police should safeguard and uphold the people's basic rights to liberty, equality, and justice under the law. The police must be a member of the community they serve in order to carry out that privileged function. Osayekemwen and Adeoluwa (2022) noted that the community policing is critical in the battle against crime in every neighborhood, its efficacy is contingent on the community's preparation and support. Community policing was initially introduced in Nigeria on April 27, 2004, and it is a paradigm change that aims to put more of an emphasis on proactive policing engagement that is based on democratic ideals. A total paradigm shift away from paramilitary policing toward community democratic constitutional policing was brought about by the community policing program, which questioned conventional wisdom and stereotypes about the country police style of policing in order to develop a strong performing, disciplined culture.

According to Ehindero (2001), there are those among us who are overly zealous, and both the general public and we are unhappy with how they are conducting their business. As a transformation initiative, community policing will inevitably run into several roadblocks that will prevent its



successful implementation. According to some, the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East, banditry and cattle rustling in the North West and North Central, ethnic militia in the South South and South East, and armed robbery and ritual killings in the South West zones all negatively impact Nigeria's social and political climate. The rate of killings suggests that the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), an organization established to ensure internal peace and cohesion, has failed in fulfilling its legal obligations, and Nigeria has become one of the most dangerous places to live in the world. The best strategy for addressing Nigeria's internal security crisis is community policing, which ensures that residents work together with security personnel. On the basis of these assumptions, the study will look into how the general public's image of Nigerian police affects the effectiveness of community policing in the nation. The public is concerned about effective police performance. Police performance is subpar, and this has caused significant problems for officers throughout the 36 states that make up the federal government. Any sense of pride the cops may have in their work is destroyed. Any faith and trust the people may have in the police is diminished by the officers' subpar performance. Numerous variables have been identified as having an impact on these. According to Beal (1993), godfatherism, nepotism, corruption, racism, violence, and brutality are among the often stated factors. Institutional restrictions include things like insufficient manpower (both in strength and skill), inadequate education and training, inadequate equipment, bad service conditions, and unsatisfactory remuneration.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has established positions that are anticipated to influence how it is seen and perceived. The Nigeria Police's general responsibilities, as outlined in the Police Act of 1990, include the prevention and detection of crime, the capture of offenders, the maintenance of law and order, the protection of life and property, and the proper enforcement of all laws and regulations with which it is specifically tasked. These general responsibilities of the Nigerian Police Force have also been well documented by Alemika (2005) and Ehindero (1998); it is obvious that these functions have been established for the benefit of the public who uphold the law. Therefore, it follows that the Nigeria Police Force's religious execution of these mandated tasks is sufficient to inspire a favorable attitude in the majority of Nigeria's law-abiding inhabitants.

Contrary to the aforementioned assumption, it is more accurate to say that events involving the Nigerian Police Force over time have placed the Police against the people it was meant to defend and protect. It may be claimed that people generally have a bad opinion of police, wherever they may be found in the world. The literature on police and policing, according to Chukwuma (2005), showed that the police frequently clash with a sizeable portion of the people in practically every nation in the world. Despite this, the Nigerian Police was founded on a flawed foundation because the British government developed a predatory police administration that was left to Nigeria after independence, which is said to be the root of the current poor view of the Nigerian Police among the populace. Despite this, the Nigerian Police was founded on a flawed foundation because the British government developed a predatory police administration that was left to Nigeria after independence, which is said to be the root of the current poor view of the Nigerian Police among the populace. Alemika (2005) described that incivility toward citizens, verbal abuse, or insults; threats of or actual physical restraint without legal justification; brutality, torture, and degrading treatment of innocent citizens; frivolous searches and arrests in order to intimidate or harass individuals; extortion and corruption; and lengthy pre-trial detention either as a result of frivolous arrests intended to harass or intimidate individuals; are just a few of the unethical behaviors that have caused the negative reputation of the Nigeria Police Force. The presence of roadblocks, has also contributed immensely in this wide negative perception of the public concerning the Nigeria Police Force.



Otubanjo (2005) questioned why, despite all of the Nigerian police's attempts at image washing, the people are not responding favorably to this laundering. What impression do Nigerians have of the Nigerian Police? The general population has the impression that the Force is ineffective and inefficient at offering security services to the populace. The public does not have the justified confidence or trust in the Nigerian police to carry out its community policing program as a result of these negative impressions of the force. Balogun (2003) noted that because the police are unable to undertake the immense duty that internal security involves, public participation in policing society has become essential. To guarantee that police services are available to everyone in society, community partnerships are essential. However, despite instructing its personnel to uphold the organization's values, the Nigeria Police Force has not been bolstered.

The Nigerian Police represents all that is wrong, unpleasant, illegal, extortionate, and ineffective (Alemika, 2005). There is a gap because despite the fact that several academics have written about the Nigerian police, including Owohunwa (2007), Awoniyi (2007), Arase and Obaedo (2007), no one has truly looked into how the public views the Nigerian police in terms of successful community policing. This work aims to close this research gap. Wesley noted in Eugene (2007) that the highly prominent literature on police administration had little to say on the social traits, attitudes, and community service roles of the police.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to examine the public perception of Nigeria police on effective community policing. The specific objectives of this study are listed below:

- (a) to gauge the public perception of Nigerian Police on effective policing and crime control;
- (b) to identify the problems and constraints of Nigerian Police to effective community policing;
- (c) to assess the extent and magnitude of crime in Nigeria; and
- (d) to identify areas requiring strengthening and develop appropriate recommendation.
- (e)

### **Research Questions**

The research questions that will guide this study are as follows.

- (a) How do public perceive the Nigerian police?
- (b) What are the hindrances to effective policing in Nigeria?
- (c) How do the police interact with the environment in the performance of its duties?
- (d) What can be done to improve on the effectiveness of Nigerian Police?

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study will be beneficial to policy makers and all stakeholders in the Nigerian Police Service Commission on how to improve on the image of the Nigerian Police and to bring about the desired change in its attitude to duty and improved its relationship with the members of the society which it serves. The study will enrich the existing body of knowledge and literatures on the police force. The study is therefore, significant in the sense that it will create another challenge to Police researchers and make psychologists, criminologists, lawyers, sociologists and expert in peace and security to focus attention on psycho-social problems of members of the police force which can deter effective performance at work.



### **Scope of the Study**

The research covers the broad operational outline of the Nigeria Police and challenges facing them especially in combating crime. It specifically looks at the operational setting of the police officers and men in Osun and Ekiti States Police commands in the area of crime control. It covers the activities of the police in the states as regard crime control from the period 1999 up to date. The study assessed the police in the performance of its duties as stipulated in the constitution and other enabling laws. How do the police interact with the environment in the performance of its duties? The study identified factors that hinder the effectiveness of police force. Given the fact that the Nigeria police force has as one of its primary functions, the prevention and detection of crime in the society, the operational setting of police force is gestated towards achieving this objective.

### **Public Perception of the Nigerian Police a Conceptual Clarification**

The tools of a strong identity, image, and reputation have been employed by institutions all over the world to accomplish their goals as well as develop and strengthen their presence in their operating jurisdiction. According to Fleishman (2000), an institution can only achieve all of its aims if her image, identity, and reputation are strong, well-managed, and coordinated. However, it may be assumed that any institution's image, identity, and reputation are here to stay.

According to Ajala (2005), an institution's image, regardless of its type, plays a significant role in how well or poorly it is perceived by the public at any given time. This perception serves as a barometer for both the institution's internal and external publics, as well as how well or poorly it performs in its interactions with both groups of people. According to Wilcox, Premachandra, Young, and Raboy (2000), this type of advertising includes image building, which is "mainly intended to strengthen the institution's identity in the eyes of the public." The police force, like other institutions, must establish, maintain, or improve its reputation.

According to Hanna and Wozniak (2001), an institution's success depends on the public's perception of it. It is possible for an image to be clear or hazy, strongly positive or neutral, or even negative. A positive reputation practically guarantees the public organization's continuous appeal and turns it into a prized and well-protected asset. On the other hand, a bad reputation can substantially hinder an institution's capacity to conduct business and even endanger its survival. Because of this, image preservation and restoration tactics may be aggressive, defensive, or reactive. What kind of image does the Nigeria Police Force have—clear or hazy—in relation to this is negative. Is it an asset with a genuinely positive reputation that draws in potential customers? Is it something to be treasured? What techniques are currently being used for picture protection and restoration? Aggressive, defensive, or reactive strategies are used? The study will offer responses to these queries. Until something unpleasant happens, leaders may take the organization's reputation for granted before acting quickly to improve it. Image repair is considered as a time-consuming process that may never alleviate such prospects because attitudes define images and attitudes are slow to alter (Hanna & Wozniak, 2001).

The public's perception of the police can be summarized by looking at how they are generally perceived. Specific traits of the individuals, group, or institution are not differentiated. Measures of general perception are helpful because they give a quick indication of how much the public views the police in general favorably or with support (Gallagher, Maguire, Mastrofski, & Reisig, 2001). The goals and opinions that people have about the police are known as public perception, which is a pattern of public opinion. The way the public views the police is complicated. It comprises numerous components that can be broken down into three broad categories: overall perception, perceptions of police results, and perceptions of police operations (Gallagher et al, 2001).

Their desire to follow the law and obey the police appears to be influenced by how the public views how police treat them. According to the study's findings, public view of police officers is



widespread and can be either favorable or bad depending on their interactions with citizens and other factors (Gallagher, et al, 2001). According to Aremu (1999), the public does not view the police in Nigeria favorably; instead, they face a number of issues, including a demeaning work environment and a bad public opinion of them.

Mastrofski (1998) divided the public's impression of police officers and the police image into three broad categories: overall image, results, and process. The overall or general perception of police is hazy and represents attitudes, sentiments, and assessments that focus on the police as a whole, without respect to any specific quality or standard.

The following are examples of how the police are perceived generally according to Gallagher et al, (2001):

1. Trust in the police
2. Contentment with the cops
3. Confidence in the police
4. Honoring the cops
5. Assistance to the police
6. General police performance.

The literature on police and policing, however, demonstrates that the police frequently clash with a sizable portion of the people in practically every nation in the globe (Alemika, 1999; Reiner, 2000; Alemika & Chukwuma, 2000). The disagreement is mostly caused by two sources. First of all, despite their best efforts, the police are unable to be impartial in the face of antagonistic and competitive class relations since modern societies are different in their economic, social, and cultural makeup. Second, and perhaps most crucially, police are state-run organizations whose primary responsibility is to uphold the social order in which the interests of the ruling elite and the ruling class are paramount. Therefore, maintaining social order and upholding the law, which advance the interests of the rulers at the expense of the mass of the populace, unavoidably puts them at odds with their host communities abroad (Alemika, 1999). The perception that police personnel and the community they serve have of the police force itself is another significant aspect that has long been ignored, as correctly noted by Okereke (1995). Aremu (1999) was of the opinion that police face a number of issues, including an unfavorable public perception of them and a dehumanizing work environment.

Ajayi and Longe (2015) stressed that If a new relationship of sincere and genuine interdependence is not established between the government and the governed, as well as between the police as an institution of the government and civil society as those from whom the government derives its legitimacy, the capacity of the Nigerian police to monitor and manage the social space in the country will remain disappointingly suboptimal. The main conclusion of the study is that the Nigeria Police Force's effectiveness appears to be at an appalling level, despite their recent repositioning to secure the safety and security of the populace and private property. Therefore, it becomes necessary to investigate how the Nigerian population views the police and crime prevention.

Akinla (2020) opined that the lack of empirical research that appropriately assesses the same constructs in post-colonial African culture poses a significant challenge to socio-legal literature, despite the abundance of material covering police abuse of power and excessive use of force in the industrialized West. Police in underdeveloped nations are more likely to abuse their authority and are frequently not answerable to the people.

Numerous instances of police brutality in Nigeria have been documented by Campbell (2019), Amnesty International (2020), and Human Rights Watch (2000), including extrajudicial execution, organ harvesting, torture, rape, physical assault, harassment, extortion, excessive use of force, abduction, unlawful arrest, illegal detention, and all other types of human rights abuses. Nigerians have frequently described how cruel police officers and other security personnel, such as the Special Anti-



Robbery Squad, treated them (SARS). Aborisade and Oni (2020) noted in their work titled “Crimes of the Crime Fighters”, that the Nigerian Police Officers' Sexual and Physical Abuses Against Female Arrestees report documented instances of Nigerian police officers violating human rights, constitutional clauses, criminal law, and police regulations when arresting, detaining, and questioning female suspects. At the Female Maximum and Medium Security Prisons in Lagos, a mixed-method approach was used to gather and analyze quantitative data from 186 female convicts, of whom 27 were interviewed. Results show that the Anti-Torture Act and other constitutional clauses are not being followed to their full extent. Sexual assault, intimidation, and fraud were among the criminal code violations that were reported.

Oluwaniyi (2011) observed that corrupt activities in the police force are not a one-time occurrence but rather are the result of a complex network of structural and exacerbating elements that are examined within the context of politics, economics, society, and culture. These ingrained elements have made it worse for police personnel to utilize corrupt means and practices. Adebayo and Ojo (2009) noted that a doubt, corruption permeates several official organizations, including the Nigerian police. However, the extent of the police's corruption seems to extend too far into the "marrows" of the agency. If employees of other institutions do engage in corruption, they may do so with care, whereas police corruption is more frequently done in full front of the public.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The survey research method was adopted in this work. Survey research can also be called descriptive research. It is based on information gathered through questionnaire, interviews (oral, written, structured, unstructured etc.), inventories, rating scale, self-report, and observations. It is used to find the meaning and obtain an understanding of the present condition. Survey research method studies large and small populations, mainly to elicit responds from respondents to appraise the public perception of the Nigerian police in effective policing in Nigeria.

#### **Area of Study**

The study covers Ekiti and Osun states, both states were located in south western Nigeria and share boundary with each other. The study was carried out in the states capital of Osun and Ekiti.

#### **Population of Study**

The study population for this study comprised civilian populace resident within state capital in Osun and Ekiti states. Our target populations in this study were those people who have regular interactions with operations of Nigeria police and therefore hold strong perceptions of the force student leaders, National Union of Road Transport Workers NURTW, Road Transport Employer Association of Nigeria RTEAN, lawyers, lectures, labour leaders, civil society and market women.

#### **Source/Method of Data Collection**

The questionnaire is the instrument that was used to generate necessary data. Three hundred (300) questionnaires were distributed in the two states of Ekiti and Osun. One hundred and fifty (150) in each, the questionnaires was distributed among the randomly selected student leaders, members of National Union of Road Transport Workers NURTW, members of Road Transport Employer Association of Nigeria RTEAN, lawyers, lecturers, labor leaders, civil society and market women in both states. Police officer was also given questionnaires to give their perception of the people in the two states. Secondary data used for the work was police handbook and other publications, textbook, journals, and newspapers relevant to the subject matter.



### Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from this study was analyzed to answer the four research questions raised to guide this study. The study used Statistic Package for Social Science (SPSS) to analyze the data collected from the respondents

### Results and Discussion

State of origin	Osun	150	50.0
	Ekiti	150	50.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
Sex	Male	155	<b>51.7%</b>
	Female	145	48.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
Age	30-34	63	21.0%
	35-39	86	28.7
	40-44	76	25.3
	45-49	52	17.3
	50 years and above	23	7.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
Marital Status	Single	87	29.0
	Married	155	51.7
	Divorced	33	11.0
	Widowed	25	8.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
Work experience	1-10	64	21.3
	11-20	84	28.0
	21-30	71	23.7
	31-40	50	16.7
	41 years and above	31	10.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field work, 2020

As indicated in table 1 item 1 shows that, for the respondents to the questionnaire were distributed, 300 respondents, out of it 65(21.7%) were NURTW/RTEAN, 50(16.7%) were students, 26(8.7%) were market women, 40(13.3%) (Were lawyers, 24(8%) were lecturers, 15(5%) were labour leaders and 80(26.7%). 155(51.7%) were females and 145(48.3%) were males. The sample size was less than that of their female counterparts. This male-female disparity may be attributed to the low proportion of males. Equal respondents were 150(50%) ample in the study; 63(21%) of respondents were in the age of 30-34 years. On the other hand, 86(28.7%) of respondents were in the age of 35-39years, 76(25.3%) of respondents were in the age of 40-44 years, 52(17.3%) of respondents were in the age of 45-49 years and 23(7.7%) of respondents were in the age of 50years and above. Table 1 also shows that, 87(29.0%) of respondents were single, 155(51.7%) were married, 33(11.0%) were divorced and 25(8.3%) were widowed.



64(21.3%) of respondents were in the work experience of 1-10 years. On the other hand, 84(28%) of respondents were in in the work experience of 11-20 years, 71(23.7%) of respondents were in the work experience of 21-30 years 50(16.7%) were in the work experience of 31-40 years. However, an inconsiderable numbers of respondents 31(10.3%) were in work experience of 41 years and above. It concludes that, the majority of work experience of respondent was 6-10 years and 11-20 years.

**Table 2: Gauge/Assessment of the public perception of Nigeria police.**

Assessment of Nigeria police	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Mean	SD
Effective	40(13.3)	260(86.7)	3.57	0.72
Forceful	205(68.3)	95(31.7)	1.82	1.21
Authoritative	260(86.7)	20(13.3)	1.4	0.88
Respected	20(6.7)	280(93.3)	2.99	0.37
Appreciated	26(8.7)	274(91.3)	2.83	0.34
Competent	70(23.3)	230(76.7)	2.25	0.31
Dignified	0	300(100)	1.67	0.46
Democratic	40(13.3)	260(86.7)	3.57	0.72
Attractive image	20(6.7)	280(93.3)	2.99	0.37
Politicized	282(94.0)	18(6.0)	1.02	0.93

Source: Field work, 2020

Figure 1

From table 2 above, in Nigeria particularly in urban areas, crime has increasingly become intractable. Rising incidence of bombing, armed robbery, assassination and corruption has led to a perplexing anxiety, fear and frustration, which in turn have affected the economic and social life of Nigerians. There is no doubt that Nigeria has witnessed an upsurge in crime during the past two decades (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2000). Which of the following police have you witnessed? Responses All the parameters used to gauge/assess the public perception of Nigeria police strongly disagreed with the assertion except authoritative and politicized agreed with 86.7%(mean= 1.4, sd = 0.88) and 94.0%(mean = 1.02, sd = 0.93) respectively. Ajayi (2014) gave credence to the fact that there is no doubt that the effectiveness and efficiency of the Nigeria police has been under stress and adversely affected by various problems such as inappropriate policing orientation and strategies with emphasis on reactive instead of proactive/preventive measures, brutality against citizens, including extrajudicial killing, corruption and extortion, poor performance in the areas of intelligence analysis and utilization as well as investigation and perversion of the course of justice.

**Table 3: Responses on public interaction with Nigerian police**

Interaction with the Nigerian police	Agreed (%)	Disagreed (%)	Mean	SD
The police are corrupt	295(93.3)	5(1.7)	1.0	0.39
The police are high-handed and trigger happy	283(64.6)	17(5.7)	1.7	0.63
Police are friendly and always ready to help	32(10.7)	268(89.3)	3.7	0.67



The public see police as crime collaborator and law violator	7)	263(87.3)	100(33)	7	2.3	0.95
There is mutual mistrust between the public and police	3)	292(97.3)	8(2.7)	9	1.6	0.52
Police always exploit and take bribe in the open	)	300(100)	0	9	1.6	0.46
Police officers are not always properly dressed	3)	220(73.3)	80(26.7)	0	2.3	0.64
Police officers are courteous in addressing citizenry	)	12(4)	288(96)	6	3.7	0.51
Will you like to be enlisted into Nigerian police?	0)	150(50)	150(50)	0	3.0	1.00

Source: Field work, 2020

Respondent were asked to describe the interactions between the police and the public. 93.3% agreed that the police are corrupt and further supported by the mean and standard deviation of the responses 1.09 (sd = 0.39) which tends towards agreement to the assertion and this insensitivity would not allow for smooth interaction between the public and police. Described the interaction with the Nigerian police as very high-handed and trigger happy by 64.4% (mean = 1.75, sd = 0.63) while 89.3% disagreed that the police is as friendly always in perpetual collision with the members of the public. Various reasons were adduced for this: while 87.7% said the police as crime collaborator and law violator with further supported by (mean 2.37, sd = 0.95), 97.3% believed there is constant mutual mistrust between the police members of the public which supported by (mean = 1.69, sd = 0.52), 100% said police always exploit and take bribe in the open with (mean = 1.69, sd = 0.46). 73.3% agreed that police officers not always dressed properly which can lead to public embarrassment. Only a negligible few 4% were of the view that the interaction between the two groups is courteous in addressing citizenry because of the belief that the police is the keeper of public peace. Half of the respondents 50% agreed that they can be enlisted into Nigerian police. This is further confirmed by the mean response of 3.0 and standard deviation of 1.0. Odekunle as cited in Ajayi (2014) corroborate the above findings that Nigerian police force falls short of optimum performance he state further that this manifest in the widespread inefficiencies, corruption, unfairness in dealing with suspects, occasional over-use of legitimate force, bad temper, bullying, and other abuses of citizens' rights with impunity. Benjamin as cited in Ajayi (2014) also points out that the police has not been useful nor helpful in promoting its image before the general public, as there are many cases of murder, assassination and robbery which took place in the society that have lasted for two or more years without the police identification of the culprits talk less of arresting and prosecuting such groups or gangs.

**Table 4: Types of Assaults and Repressive Actions Witnessed by Respondents.**

Types of Assault	Frequency N=30		Mean	Std.Dev.
	Yes (%)	No (%)		
Verbal assault and vituperations	201(67)		99(33)	0.670.47
Slapping, kicking, and beating	150(50)	150(50)	0.5	0.5
Injuring, torturing and threat to kill	180(60)	120(40)	0.60	0.49
Killing	10(3.3)	290(96.7)		0.970.18
Confident in the police	10(3.3)	290(96.7)		0.960.18
Satisfaction with the police	12(4)	288(96)		0.970.16
	76			



Trust in the police	15(5)	285(95)	0.980.13
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*Source: Field work, 2020*

Exploring the types of assaults and repressive actions the public suffered from the police, data presented in Table 4 indicates the verbal vituperations and assault has the highest frequency 201(67%) with mean score value of 0.67 (sd=0.47) and Satisfaction with the police having the least frequency 12(4%) with score value of 0.97(sd=.16). from the analysis, slapping, kicking, and beating has half of the frequency (50%) supported the assault with mean score value of 0.5 (sd=.5), injuring, torturing and threat to kill has more than half of the respondents 180(60%) with mean score 0.6(sd=.049), killing and confident in the police have 1- (3.3%) (sd=.18), trust in the police 15(5%), 0.98(sd=.13). the picture which emerges from these findings is that verbal assault, injuring, torturing and threat to kill, slapping, and kicking and beating are the most rampant assaults that suspects from police brutality and repressive actions. These types of assault constitute a sort of violence against the public, creating serious image problems for the police and inhibiting the police/public partnership and community relations in crime prevention and control.

### **Conclusion**

The police are granted enormous powers by law and the constitution to take preventive measures against the commission of all crimes in Nigeria: in this sense the law allows them to use such reasonable force as may be necessary for the prevention of crimes. In the exercise of this authority, they have in various ways malevolently violated the fundamental rights of members of the public with impunity. This practice has earned the Nigeria police different derogatory names, hatred and constant collision with the members of the public to whom they have sworn an oath to protect. So far it can be inferred from the data gathered in this study that the relationship between the police and the public in Nigeria is not cordial, the police are more accountable to the government rather than to the member of the public whose interest they were statutorily established to protect. In Nigeria, the public perception of the police is warped based on the misuse of powers vested in them. This misuse of powers which creates negative police image and police-public relations is manifested in police corruption and brutality which had been their regular hallmark. This position can be changed if and only if the police are oriented towards adequate care and respect for human dignity, citizen's fundamental rights and privileges.

### **Recommendations**

From the conclusion above, the following recommendations were made:

1. It is recommended that the police should work relentlessly towards redeeming their public image of underperforming, immodest, brutal, corrupt and predatory force.
2. There should be provision in the constitution to checkmate the activities of Nigeria police force.
3. Legal recognition should be given to community policing to support Nigeria police force in curbing crimes in the country.
4. Nigeria Police Force should be trained from time to time to acquire necessary skills on adequate care and respect for human dignity, citizen's fundamental rights and privileges.
5. Nigeria Police Force should not abuse the guns and other ammunitions in her possession.



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