



**DISTRIBUTIVE INJUSTICE: A PREDICTIVE STUDY OF
CORRUPTION AND OFFICE ABUSE AMONG POLICE OFFICERS
IN ANAMBRA STATE POLICE COMMAND, NIGERIA**

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Abstract:

This paper explored the predictive effects of distributive injustice on corruption and office abuse among police officers in Anambra State Police Command. The participants of the study were 294 (two hundred and ninety four) junior cadre police officers (below the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police) who comprised 241 male-police officers and 53 female-police officers. The ages of the police officers ranged from 26 to 47 years, the mean age was 37.51 years with a standard deviation of 2.20. Data for the study was collected with the aid of organizational justice scale by Niehoff and Moorman (1993) and Unethical Behaviour Tendency Scale by Tang and Weatherford (1997). Predictive design and multiple regression analysis were adopted as the design and statistical tool for the study respectively. The result confirmed that both corruption and office abuse dimensions of unethical behaviour were significantly predicted by distributive injustice among junior cadre police officers.

Keywords: corruption, distributive injustice, Nigerian Police Force, office abuse, unethical behavior

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1. Introduction

In today's organizational environment, there is a tremendous need for effective utilization of organizational resources to guarantee effectiveness in the face of stiff competition from other organizations (Eze, Etodike & Ike, 2017). To achieve efficiency and effectiveness, employees remain most critical factor for organizational success given challenges posed by the antecedents of organizational climate (Breevaart, & Bakker, 2017; Meyer, & Topolnytsky, 2016). In Nigeria, it may not be said that employees in Nigerian public sector such as Nigerian Police Force are agents of organizational success owing to plaguing issues which border on conditions of service (Sanusi, 2015; Sa'adatu, Ekoja, & Adaku, 2015). These circumstances in the wake of their realities have orchestrated high level corruption and abuse of office rights and privileges (Oladipupo & Ibadin, 2014) by officers of Nigeria Police Force to disappointment of all and sundry; after all, the Police are supposed to be our friend.

The pain of corruption and abuse of office by officers in Nigeria Police Force has become somewhat customary and has inadvertently abetted high surge in crime wave; hence, researches for its antecedents are on-going. In the views of Aluko (2009), corruption is a global phenomenon and is not the exclusive preserve of any nation, race or section of the world but transcends national boundaries and frontiers and symbolizes phenomenal universal unwholesomeness politically. Onwuka, Okoh and Emeh (2009) defined corruption as a perversion or a change from good to bad. Onwuka, Okoh and Emeh (2009) asserted that corruption or corrupt behavior involves the violation of established rules usually for personal or group gain and profit. In the views of Ezeh and Etodike (2016), corruption is untamed instincts to the pervasion of natural human essence and value patterned for self-gain, idiosyncrasy and perpetuation. It is also the inability of the person to control the natural causes of hedonistic instincts of self-gain, selfishness, greed and avarice which are natural to the human frail. Furthermore, Leedy and Ormrod (2010) opined that it is an illegal and illegitimate means of securing wealth or power for private gain at public expense or a misuse of public power for private benefit. In the context of public officers, corruption is a behavior which deviates from the formal duties of a public officer, because of private or personal dispositions (gains) such as: personal, close family, private clique, pecuniary or status gains (Odemba, 2010). Abuse of office is one of the antecedents of corruption common among public officers. Use of office vehicles, properties, name and office identities for all purposes except which they have been meant amounts to abuse of office, a form of corruption which has become a norm among public officers especially the Police.

As much as the officers are blamed for their brazen corruption and abuse, it is pertinent to draw the attention of the stakeholders to circumstantial factors which border on organizational climate which may have precipitated this anticlimax. One of such circumstances is distributive organizational injustice. Fundamentally, there is correlation between employees' welfare and organizational success such as; efficiency, productivity and effectiveness (Breevaart, & Bakker, 2017; Demiray & Curabay, 2016;

Osman, Othman, Rana, Solaiman & Lal, 2015); however, a growing number of literature have also linked employees' welfare to organizational anticlimax such as; counterproductive workplace behaviours, sabotage and other forms of organizational deviance etc. (Monanu, Okoli & Ibe, 2015; Ogbeide, 2012; and Obikeze & Olukoye, 2004). In the instances of the above, the need to explore the influence of distributive organizational injustice on the police officers' corruption and abuse of office becomes pertinent.

Organizational injustice refers to the idea that a given organizational action or decision is morally inappropriate. Organizational injustice combines three dimensions: distributive, procedural, and interactional justices (Greenberg, 1987). While distributive injustice concerns the inequity on how decisions are made regarding the distribution of organizational outcomes namely; reward and punishment (Cropanzano & Ambrose, 2001), procedural injustice pertains to the perceived inequity of the process of outcome resolution, and the specific reasons the issues were handled in that manner (Cropanzano & Ambrose, 2001); and interactional injustice is concerned with the nature of the inter-personal treatment the individual receives from the organizational decision makers (Cropanzano & Ambrose, 2001). In the instance of the current inquiry, distributive dimension of organizational injustice may offer more insights into the abysmal corruption and abuse of office by Nigeria police officers in consideration of the poor conditions of service in Nigeria Police Force.

2. Literature

2.1 Corruption and Office Abuse

Corruption is a behavior which violates rules against the exercise of certain types of duties for private gains - regarding influence (Odemba, 2010). This definition also includes such behavior such as bribery (use of a reward to pervert the judgment of a person in a position of trust); nepotism (bestowal of patronage by reason of ascriptive relationship rather than merit); and misappropriation (illegal appropriation of public resources for private uses (O'Brien, Banfield, & Sokoloff, 1961). To the already crowded landscape, Ezeani (2005 in Osoba, 1996) adds that corruption is an anti-social behaviour conferring improper benefits contrary to legal and moral norms, and which undermine the authorities to improve the living conditions of the people.

Although, several definitions abound which have evolved over the years in attempt to define the anomaly, however, one thing seems consistent with all the definitions – it is a deviant behaviour one which deviates from the norm with ulterior motive of self-gain. For office abuse, it involves sales of legislative votes, administrative, or judicial decision, or governmental appointment, unauthorized use, acquisition of government or public properties, use office for personal business or to threat and intimidate others and obtaining other sundry benefits not ascribed legally from the office or one's position. Others include; disguised payment in the form of gifts, legal fees, employment, favors to relatives, social influence, or any relationship that sacrifices

the public interest and welfare, with or without the implied payment of money, is usually considered corruption Ojukwu and Shopeju (2010). The purview of police corruption is large, but, in the instance of Nigeria Police Force, the authors will adopt topologies by Prenzler and Ransley (2002) as indicated in table 1 below.

Table 1: Typology of Police Corruption and Misconduct

Type	Dimension
Classic Corruption	Bribery or graft - involves an officer receiving a personal benefit for not doing their duty. This may be organized (e.g. a protection racket) or opportunistic (e.g. accepting a bribe to waive a speeding ticket).
Process Corruption	Involves the fabrication of evidence and other forms of perverting the course of justice (e.g. planting drugs or lying in court).
Brutality	Covers the full range of forms of unjustified violence related to a police officer's work (e.g. violent threats or assault).
Miscellaneous Conduct	Covers remaining types of deviance (e.g. harassment, discriminatory law enforcement, drug abuse, racist slurs, neglect of detainees). It could also include criminal offences and unethical behavior committed off-duty but deemed to reflect adversely on the officer's work (e.g. abusive language, drunk driving).

Source: Prenzler & Ransley (2002).

Prenzler and Ransley (2002) categorized corruption and misconduct within the police force into four. The first type of corrupt practices and misconduct is classic corruption. Prenzler and Ransley (2002) contended that bribery or graft, which involves an officer receiving a personal benefit for not doing their duty, is classic corruption. This may be organized or opportunistic like protection racket or accepting a bribe to waive a speeding ticket. Another type of corruption and misconduct is process corruption. This involves the fabrication of evidence and other forms of perverting the course of justice.

Typical example of process corruption is planting of drugs or lying in court by the police officers. Other form of corruption in the police force is brutality (Prenzler & Ransley, 2002). Brutality encompasses the full range of unjustified violence like violent threats and assault that are related to a police officer's work. Other types of corrupt practices and misconduct are classified as miscellaneous conduct. This covers other forms of deviance like harassment, discriminatory law enforcement, drug abuse, racist slurs and neglect of detainees. It could also include criminal offences and unethical behavior committed off-duty like abusive language and drunk driving but deemed to reflect adversely on the officer's work.

2.2 Other forms of corruption include:

- A. Bribery: The payment (in money or kind) that is taken or given in a corrupt relationship. These include kickbacks, gratuities, pay-off, sweeteners, greasing palms, etc.
- B. Fraud: It involves some kind of trickery, swindle and deceit, counterfeiting, racketing, smuggling and forgery.

- C. **Embezzlement:** This is theft of public resources by public officials. It is when a state official steals from the public institution in which he/she is employed. In Nigeria the embezzlement of public funds is one of the most common ways of economic accumulation, perhaps, due to lack of strict regulatory systems.
- D. **Extortion:** This is money and other resources extracted by the use of coercion, violence or threats to use force. The police and custom officers are the main culprits in Nigeria.
- E. **Favoritism:** This is a mechanism of power abuse implying a highly biased distribution of state resources. However, this is seen as a natural human proclivity to favor friends, family and anybody close and trusted.
- F. **Nepotism:** This is a special form of favoritism in which an office holder prefers his/her kinfolk and family members. Nepotism is most common across ethnic lines in Nigeria and occurs when one is exempted from the application of certain laws or regulations or given undue preference in the allocation of scarce resources (NORAD, 2000).

2.3 Organizational Justice

Perceived organizational injustice entails employees' perception inequity in the organization's scheme of things (i.e. in the management of the organization). Perceptions of injustice are deeply embedded in most employee turnover intentions (Thomas & Nagalingappa, 2012) and tendencies toward sabotage behaviours (McCardle, 2007). Indeed, perceptions of injustice constitute the basis of all organizational harms, deflections, misdeeds, (Gbadamosi & Nwosu, 2011) and allied sabotage behaviours. When employees perceive that they are being fairly treated, especially in reward-allocation methods (procedural justice), they tend to have a strong sense of attachment to the organization; and are less inclined to job-quitting intentions and vice versa.

Perceived organizational inequity (injustice) have been consistently recognized as important and veritable predictors of mixed grill of organizational outcomes (employee commitment, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviour, incivility, sabotage, theft, turnover intentions and other forms of deviant behaviours) in the workplace, (Ahmadi, Daraci, Rabiei, Salamzede & Takallo, 2012; Bakhshi & Kumar, 2009; Flaherty & Moss, 2007; and Henle, Giacalone & Jurkieswicz, 2005; Curraher, 2001), it is therefore important that government integrate a policy to review the conditions of service among public servants as veritable tool in the fight against corruption.

Since people who work in organizations are social beings, a critical concept that is fundamental to their social interaction in the work arena is justice (Owolabi, 2012). Part of employees' reasons for counterproductive work behaviours (CWBs), particularly corruption and abuse of office, has been traced to the perception of injustice. This usually concerns issues bordering on promotion decisions, task assignments, allocation of rewards, or other types of social exchange, and matters of fairness. People are naturally observant of the extent to which justice is inherent or lacking in events and

situations in their everyday lives, and across a variety of contexts. Employees' perceptions of the prevalence or otherwise of organizational justice in work settings, influence their attitudes toward the organization, and consequently, other employee outcomes (Greenberg, 1987). Injustice constitutes the basis of all organizational harms, deflections, misdeeds, (Gbadamosi & Nwosu, 2011) and allied sabotage behaviours. When employees perceive that they are being fairly treated, especially in reward-allocation methods (procedural justice), they tend to have a strong sense of attachment to the organization; and are less inclined to job-quitting intentions and vice versa. The foundation for understanding the varying outcomes of distributive injustice which can be catapulted to explain the relationship between distributive injustice and corruption and office abuse among Nigeria Police Force was laid by Equity theory (Adams, 1963).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Equity theory by Adams (1963) provided a framework for conceptualizing the effects of justice dimension on a number behavioural outcome. Fundamentally, Adams equity theory contended that employees seek to maintain equity between the inputs that they bring to a job and the outcomes that they receive from it, against the perceived inputs and outcomes of others. The theory further states that violation of perceived fairness of outcomes or rewards (e.g. pay or promotions) usually ushers in mixed antecedents of unpalatable employee outcome e.g. absenteeism, lateness, counterproductive behaviours, sabotage and corruption. Equity theory argued that social behaviour is affected by beliefs that the allocation of rewards within a group should be equitable, that is outcomes should be proportional to the contributions of group members. In other words, equity theory argues that people are satisfied when the ratio of their own input to outcome (rewards) equals the ratio of inputs to outcome in comparison to others. Perceived inequality through this comparison feels unpleasant and motivates people to reduce those pleasant feelings (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998) thereby engaging in thoughts or behaviours to restore this imbalance (sabotage).

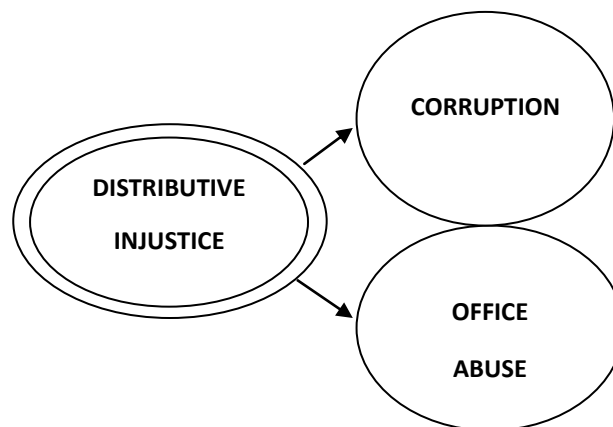
Equity theory proposes that individuals who perceive themselves as either under-rewarded or over-rewarded or will experience distress (feelings of injustice) and that this distress leads to efforts to restore equity within the relationship. Equity is measured by comparing the ratios of contributions and benefits of each person within the relationship. Partners do not have to receive equally benefits (receiving the same amount of care, financial security) or make equal contribution (investing same amount of time, effort, resources) but the ratio between these benefits and contributions has to be similar.

Adams (1965) further proposes that feelings of inequity is induced by underpayment and inequality while feelings of injustice is essentially based on equality exchange between the individual worker and organization in terms of inputs and outcome made respectively. In other words, every employee wants to feel that his contributions and work performance are rewarded with equitable pay.

The strength of this theory lies in its recommendation of equity in the distribution of benefits in relations to contribution and application of fairness in reward and punishment to members. However, the weakness of this theory is that it does not recognize certain human capital appreciation (training and social capital) which may be asset to the organization as cause of discrimination in benefits distribution even when the contribution is same. Equity theory is also criticized for being only materialistic and reward/benefit based without recognizing cognitive aspects of justice (Huseman, Hatfield & Miles, 1987). Despite these criticisms, the theory has stood the taste of time to explain antecedents of certain behavioural outcomes of varying organizational climates bordering on organizational justice dimensions as implied in the current study. In the instance of the current research, it offers an adequate framework for explaining that the feelings injustice occasioned by inequitable rewards to police officers in comparison to their counterparts in the pay roll of public accounts may be the instigating factor of corruption and office abuse.

2.6 Conceptual Model

Figure 1: Conceptual model highlighting the predictive effects of distributive injustice on corruption and office abuse



The conceptual model above depicts predictive effects of distributive injustice on corruption and office abuse. The above model is pivotal in understanding that psychological feelings of inequitable distribution of organizational resources such as rewards and punishments may instigate corruption and office abuse as a restitution mechanism.

In line with the above conceptual and theoretical model, pertinent questions arise

1. Will distributive injustice predict corruption among police officers?
2. Will distributive injustice predict office abuse among police officers?

2.7 Sample

The participants of the study were 294 (two hundred and ninety four) junior cadre police officers (below the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police) who comprised 241 male-police officers and 53 female-police officers. The ages of the police officers ranged from 26 to 47 years, the mean age was 37.51 years with a standard deviation of 2.20. The method of sampling was convenient sampling technique. In terms of work experience, 12 officers had worked 20-25 years, 69 for 16-19 years, 97 for 10-15 years, 83 for 5-9 years and 33 for below 5 years. 199 were married whereas 84 were single and 11 did not indicate their status. As regards academic qualification, 9 had Masters Degree, 49 had bachelor's degree, 61 had HND, 23 had NCE, 29 had Diploma, 9 did not indicate their academic qualification whereas 137 had Ordinary level certificate

2.8 Measurement

Data for the study was collected with the aid of 20-item organizational justice scale by Niehoff and Moorman (1993) and 12-item Unethical Behaviour Tendency Scale by Tang and Weatherford UBTS (1997). Being a survey, predictive design and multiple regression analysis were adopted as the research design and statistic for the study respectively. Unethical Behaviour Tendency Scale has five subscales namely; office abuse, status abuse, theft, corruption and sabotage respectively. Sample items include: "I take personal long-distance (mobile phone) calls at work using office phone lines", "I use office supplies (pen, paper, stapler) for personal purpose." Pilot study was carried out to improve the reliability of the instruments before adopting them in the current study.

3. Results

Table 1: Summary table of mean and standard deviations for variables studied

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	294	26.00	47.00	12448.0	37.508	2.2045
Valid N (listwise)	294					

Table 2: Summary table of multiple regressions analysis of distributive justice on corruption and office abuse

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Distributive injustice	19.2062	1.9006	294
Corruption	11.4038	1.2100	294
Office abuse	10.9845	1.5250	294

Regressions Coefficients (model 1)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	B	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	42.985	.973	-	31.215	.000
	Distributive injustice	3.628	.102	3.76	3.06	.000

a Dependent variable: Corruption

Regressions Coefficients (model 2)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	B	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	42.990	.966	-	30.410	.000
	Distributive injustice	2.320	.065	2.43	3.99	.007

a Dependent variable: Office abuse

Analysis in the regression coefficient in models 1 and 2 above confirmed that distributive injustice significantly and positively predicted both criterion variables corruption and office abuse at $\beta = 3.76^*$, $p < .05$ and $\beta = 2.43^*$, $p < .05$. Consequently, both hypotheses which stated that whether distributive injustice will significantly predict corruption among police officers and distributive injustice will significantly predict office abuse among police officers were accepted. The finding is supported by study carried out by Monanu, Okoli and Ibe, (2015) which found the organizational injustice predicted employee sabotage behaviour. There is also support for the current study in the works of Sanusi (2015); Sa'adatu, Ekoja, and Adaku (2015) which opined that the plaguing issues which border on conditions of service has largely constituted ineffectiveness in the Nigerian Police Force. Earlier, Obikeze and Olukoye (2004) confirmed that organizational injustice is an instigator of deviant behaviours in organizations. In view of these empirical assertions, Equity theory by Adam (1964) equally traced the relationship between perceptions of injustice and counterproductive and deviant behaviours. Based on this empirical and theoretical persuasion, it is not difficult to ascertain that justice system may preempt varying forms of deviant behaviour including corruption and office abuse as hypothesized in the current study. The finding is therefore concurrent with human behavioural patterns in Nigeria Police Force or similar paramilitary establishment with homogeneous characteristics.

3.1 Implications of the Study

The findings of the current study have implicated a number of organizational antecedents namely; unfavourable working conditions orchestrated by organizational climate that instigate unequally distribution of organizational resources which provoke all forms of deviant behaviour as a means of restitution in the presence of feelings of injustice and inequity. The finding has further implicated the fight against corruption in Nigeria as a porous policy unachievable with the cooperation of Nigeria Police Force whose corruption have reached new level. Without sanity in terms of corrupt officers, fighting corruption will remain elusive. The study has further implicated the Paramilitary climate as regard employee welfare which may require a sustainable review.

4. Conclusion

The study explored the predictive effects of distributive injustice on corruption and office abuse among police officers in Anambra State Police Command. The participants

were junior cadre police officers (below the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police) who comprised. After analysis of data collected, the result confirmed that distributive injustice positively and significantly predicted both police officers' corruption and office abuse. The study implicated the organizational climate of Nigeria's Para-military as which is inequitable in distribution organizational resource with heavy consequence for corruption and office abuse and situation which indicts the current government efforts on anti-corruption.

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