
Factors Militating Against Nigerian Police Criminal Investigation: A Study of the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID) Abuja

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ABSTRACT

The stability of Nigeria as a sovereign entity is under growing threat from escalating criminal activities; however, academic inquiry into the challenges confronting police criminal investigations remains insufficient. This gap contributes to widespread misconceptions and underestimation of the severity of threats posed by crime. This study investigates the factors militating against effective criminal investigation within the Nigerian Police Force, focusing on the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID), Abuja. The research assesses whether deficiencies in police criminal investigation contribute significantly to the escalation of crime in Nigeria, especially considering that previous state efforts to combat crime have yielded minimal results. The study employed a survey research design, drawing on both primary and secondary sources. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 306 respondents for questionnaire administration, while 10 informants were purposively chosen for in-depth interviews. The study is theoretically anchored on the functionalist and conflict perspectives of crime. Findings reveal several critical challenges: poor police-public relations, inadequate funding, political interference, and lack of consistent capacity building. These factors collectively undermine the effectiveness of police criminal investigations. The study recommends comprehensive police reform, including the restructuring of the FCID, public sensitization programs to foster mutual trust, and the continuous training and retraining of investigative personnel to improve competency and performance. Such interventions are vital for restoring public confidence and enhancing the operational efficiency of the Nigerian Police Force in combating crime.

KEYWORDS: Nigerian Police, Criminal Investigation, Police Reform, Crime Control

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INTRODUCTION

Globally, internal security is considered a primary responsibility of the police. In most societies, the police are entrusted with the protection of lives and property, primarily through the prevention and detection of crime. Criminal activities can only be effectively addressed when the perpetrators are identified and brought to justice through a robust criminal investigation process. Societies with effective and efficient police institutions tend to enjoy greater peace, order, and development. Conversely, where police forces are weak or ineffective, insecurity, lawlessness, and societal instability prevail. An unstable society creates an environment ripe for chaos and anarchy, highlighting the need for a proactive, responsive, and professional police force capable of conducting thorough criminal investigations to foster public safety and peaceful coexistence (Ifeoma, 2020).

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) traces its origin to the colonial era. It was first established in Lagos in 1861, then the capital of Nigeria. John Beecroft, a British consul, initiated the formation of a police unit due to his overburdened responsibilities, which included maintaining law and order. In response to his request, the British government authorized the recruitment of 30 men into what was known as the "Consular Guard" to assist in performing police duties (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2004; Ozo-Eson, 2016). Over time, this colonial initiative evolved into the Nigeria Police Force we know today.

However, the original purpose of the colonial police was not to protect the Nigerian populace but to safeguard the economic and political interests of the colonizers. As such, the colonial police were frequently involved in suppressing resistance and violently subjugating indigenous communities. This historical legacy continues to influence public perceptions of the police in Nigeria today, contributing to strained relations between law enforcement and civilians, as well as the persistence of internal corruption (Aina, 2014; Nwakanma & Amugo, 2018; Human Rights Watch, 2005).

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LITERATURES REVIEW

The legal framework of the Nigeria Police is grounded in several statutes, including the Police Act of 1967 (as amended in 1985), the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC), and the Public Order Act. These provide wide-ranging powers such as arrest, detention, search, seizure, fingerprinting, granting bail, and even regulating public assemblies. For example, the Police Act empowers officers to investigate and prosecute criminal cases in court (Section 19) and grants authority to arrest individuals with or without warrants (Section 20–21), among other powers.

Criminal investigation is an integral component of the criminal justice system. As former Justice Kalgo of the Supreme Court rightly noted, criminal investigation forms the bedrock of criminal proceedings (Idowu & Nwosu, 2021). The ability of the police to conduct effective criminal investigations is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internally, the police face issues such as corruption, lack of adequate training, low morale, poor welfare, and misconduct. Externally, they contend with poor funding, limited resources, political interference, and negative public perception (Yecheo, 2004; Adebayo, 2013).

According to Igbo (2017), the inefficiency of the Nigeria Police in managing criminal investigations poses a significant setback to the criminal justice system, as the police are pivotal to its effectiveness. The researcher's interest in this study stems from the observation that, although numerous studies have examined various aspects of policing in Nigeria, few have addressed the specific factors undermining the effectiveness of criminal investigations at the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID), Abuja.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria is currently experiencing an alarming rise in insecurity, marked by growing incidences of kidnapping, armed robbery, terrorism, banditry, and ritual killings (Ali, 2013). Despite constitutional mandates, the Nigeria Police Force has struggled to effectively prevent or investigate these crimes. Criminals operate with impunity, as arrests are rare and successful prosecutions even rarer. This breakdown in law enforcement capacity has made Nigeria a breeding ground for criminal activity (Nwachukwu, 2012; Adeyemi, 2001).

The inability of the police to conduct thorough investigations has had grave consequences. For instance, terrorist groups such as Boko Haram have continued their activities largely unchecked. The mishandling of early Boko Haram leadership, particularly the extrajudicial killing of Mohammed Yusuf in 2009, is often cited as a turning point that exacerbated the group's violence and contributed to the crisis in northeastern Nigeria (Ikeji, 2013). Similarly, the widespread kidnapping-for-ransom crisis, especially in northern states such as Kaduna, Zamfara, and Katsina, is a direct consequence of failed investigations and the failure to arrest and prosecute perpetrators (Alemika, 2013).

The causes of this ineffectiveness are multifaceted. Scholars have identified factors such as inadequate training, lack of forensic tools, poor infrastructure, low morale due to poor welfare, lack of public trust and cooperation, and insufficient political will (Olly, 2014; Adeyemi, 2001). Former Inspectors General of Police, such as Ogbonnaya Onovo and Hafiz Ringim, openly acknowledged the shortcomings of the police in preventing and investigating crimes (Akasike & Abimbola, 2010; Chinwokwu, 2013).

As Chinwokwu (2013) observed, the level of crime prevention in a society is directly related to the capacity of the police to investigate and prosecute criminal cases. Therefore, the persistent inability of the FCID to fulfill its investigative mandate calls for urgent academic inquiry and practical reform.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the factors militating against effective criminal investigation in the Nigeria Police Force, with specific reference to the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID), Abuja.

Specific objectives include:

1. To examine how members of the Nigerian Police relate with the public during criminal investigations.
2. To identify the impact of the lack of capacity building within the Police Force on criminal investigations.
3. To assess the effects of poor police welfare on the performance of criminal investigations.
4. To investigate the specific challenges faced by the Nigeria Police during criminal investigations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Understanding the complexities of police criminal investigations in Nigeria necessitates a theoretical framework. This study adopts **Structural Functionalism** and **Conflict Theory** to examine the institutional factors shaping police performance and investigative effectiveness.

Structural Functionalism

Structural Functionalism, associated with theorists such as Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons, views society as a complex system made up of interdependent institutions that work together to maintain stability and social order (Haralambos & Holborn, 2013). Within this framework, the police are a crucial societal institution responsible for enforcing law and ensuring order.

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According to this theory, dysfunction in one institution affects others. A poorly functioning police system, particularly in criminal investigation, can cause ripple effects across sectors such as education, health, and the economy. The EndSARS protests and the formation of regional security outfits like Amotekun underscore how breakdowns in police functions can destabilize broader societal structures.

However, critics argue that Structural Functionalism often romanticizes harmony and fails to recognize institutional abuses, such as police brutality or corruption (Haralambos & Holborn, 2013).

Conflict Theory

Rooted in the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Conflict Theory posits that society is characterized by continuous struggle between dominant and subordinate groups. In the context of Nigerian policing, the theory highlights how law enforcement institutions were designed to serve the interests of the ruling elite rather than the general public (Igbo, 2008; Ozo-Eson, 2016).

This historical foundation helps explain the alienation between police and citizens. The enduring colonial mentality, combined with institutional inequality, poor welfare, and a lack of resources, continues to impair the police's ability to perform effectively (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2005). However, the theory's focus on class struggles may overlook other crucial factors such as ethnicity, religion, or organizational culture.

Theory Adopted

For the purpose of this study, Structural Functionalism is adopted as the primary theoretical framework. It effectively explains the interdependence of institutions and the systemic consequences of police failure. The FCID plays a pivotal role in criminal investigation and national security; when it underperforms, the resulting dysfunction reverberates throughout society. Structural Functionalism enables the analysis of these institutional lapses and their broader implications for peace, order, and justice in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a **mixed-methods research design**, integrating both **quantitative** and **qualitative** approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of the factors hindering effective criminal investigations within the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID), Abuja. This section outlines the study location, design, population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and analysis strategies.

Study Location

The research was conducted at the FCID Headquarters in Abuja, the central investigative arm of the Nigeria Police Force. Supervised by a Deputy Inspector General of Police, the FCID handles complex and high-profile criminal cases across Nigeria. It also oversees specialized units such as Homicide, Interpol, X-Squad, Forensics, and Anti-Human Trafficking. The selection of this location was based on its relevance to the research problem and the researcher's familiarity with the institutional environment.

Research Design

A **triangulated research design** was adopted, incorporating structured questionnaires for quantitative data and semi-structured interviews for qualitative insights. This mixed approach enabled a deeper understanding of the institutional, interpersonal, and operational barriers to effective investigation. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed to complement and contextualize the numeric findings. This triangulation increased the study's validity and reliability.

Population of the Study

The population included 1,649 officers serving at the FCID Headquarters. Only personnel with a minimum of three years' investigative experience were included to ensure relevant input. Additionally, civilians who had interacted with the FCID during criminal investigations were included for qualitative interviews.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample size of **306 respondents** was selected using Gill, Johnson, and Clark's (2010) model, which applies a 95% confidence level, 50% population variance, and 5% margin of error.

$$n = \frac{p(100-p)z^2}{E^2}$$

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	Variance of the population P= 50%		
	Confidence level= 95%		Margin of error= 5
Population size	5	3	1
50	44	48	50
75	63	70	74
100	79	91	99
150	108	132	148
200	132	168	198
250	151	203	244
300	168	234	291
400	196	291	384
500	217	340	475
600	234	384	565
700	248	423	652
800	260	457	738
1000	278	516	906
1500	306	624	1297
2000	322	696	1655
3000	341	787	2286
5000	357	879	2288
10000	370	964	4899
25000	378	1023	6939
50000	381	1045	8057
100000	383	1056	8762
250000	384	1063	9249
500000	384	1065	9423
1000000	384	1066	9513

Source: Gill et al., (2010: 237, 238).

A **multi-stage sampling technique** was employed:

1. **Cluster sampling** was used to select the FCID Abuja Headquarters.
2. **Stratified sampling** divided FCID into departments.
3. **Purposive selection** identified nine investigative sections: X-SQUAD, Terrorist Financing/General Investigation, Special Fraud and Financial Malpractice (PSFU), Interpol, Homicide, Legal, Forensic Science Laboratory, Central Criminal Registry (CCR), and Anti-Human Trafficking and Visa Fraud (AHTU/VF)
4. **Simple random sampling** was then used to select 34 respondents from each section.
For the **qualitative component**, 10 key informants both FCID officers and civilians were purposively selected based on their direct involvement in police investigations.

Methods of Data Collection

Structured questionnaires captured data on demographics, police-public relations, training gaps, welfare issues, and operational barriers. Questionnaires contained both closed- and open-ended items. They were administered face-to-face to ensure completeness and clarity.

Semi-structured interviews were held privately, in English or local languages, depending on participant preference. Informed consent was obtained, and interviews were audio-recorded and supplemented with field notes.

Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data were entered into **SPSS** for analysis. Results were summarized using frequency tables and percentages. Qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed through **thematic content analysis** to identify recurring themes that supported or explained the quantitative findings.

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DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLICE AND MEMBERS OF PUBLIC IN CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

Relationship between Police and members of public in area of Criminal Investigation

Relationship between Police and members of public in area of Criminal Investigation	Frequency	Percentage
Cordial	39	12.9%
Good	21	7.0%
Fairly good	102	33.8%
Poor	84	27.8%
Very poor	56	18.5%
Total	302	100

Source: Field Survey (2022).

Findings from this Table indicate that the relationship between the Nigerian Police and the public is generally poor. While 33.8% of respondents described the relationship as fairly good, 27.8% rated it as poor, 18.5% as very poor, 12.9% as cordial, and only 7.0% considered it good. These figures highlight a significant trust deficit. Interview responses further reinforced this perception, with informants citing experiences of extortion, abuse of power, and unjust treatment for refusing to offer bribes:

Police public relationship is very poor and it can never be good because of Police bad attitudes toward members of public unless they change, such as extortion, excessive use of powers, corruption, extra-judicial killing etc (interview 7 with informant).

Another informant explained her ordeal with Police, she said:

My experienced with Police made me not to have trust on police again, because i refused to give police bribe, they keep me for hours without giving me attention and when someone came to my aids, they claimed that I disrespect them which was not true (interview 3 with informant).

These narratives align with Benjamin's (2021) observation that public distrust in the Nigerian Police is driven by widespread misconduct, ultimately undermining cooperation crucial for effective criminal investigations. These responses show that, the relationship between Nigeria Police Force and members of the public is poor.

Whether members of public have confidence or trust in Nigerian police

Do you think members of the public have confidence or trust in Nigerian police?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	123	40.7%
No	179	59.3%
Total	302	100
If No, give reasons?		
Ineffective police performance	33	18.4%
the structure of the force	32	17.9%
bad attitude of some police officers	37	20.7%
all of the above	41	22.9%
Others	36	20.1%
Total	179	100

Source: Field Survey (2022).

Findings of this Table shows that 59.9% of respondents do not have confidence in the Nigerian Police Force, while only 40.7% do. Among those lacking trust, 22.9% cited a combination of ineffective performance, structural issues, and officers' misconduct; 20.7% blamed bad attitudes alone; 18.4% pointed to poor performance; and 17.9% to structural flaws, with 20.1% offering other reasons. Interviewees echoed these sentiments, describing the police as untrustworthy and motivated primarily by money. One informant remarked they wouldn't trust the police "even if it were a relative," emphasizing widespread distrust. Overall, findings confirm that public confidence in the Nigerian Police remains critically low:

I don't have confidence or trust on police even if the Police is my brother or sister, because they turn white to black in a tinkle of an eye (interview 8 with informant).

Another informant had synonymous view; he asserted that:

Nigeria Police are not to be trust, because they are after money only (interview 6 with informant).

These response shows that, majority of members of public don't have confidence or trust on members of Nigerian Police Force.

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THE IMPACT OF LACK OF CAPACITY BUILDING WITHIN THE FORCE ON CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

Importance of Capacity Building in Criminal Investigation

Do you think Capacity Building is significant in Criminal Investigation?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	298	98.7%
No	4	1.3%
Total	302	100
If Yes, state reasons for your answer above?		
It makes police productive and effective	100	33.6%
It enables police to investigate criminal cases very well	103	34.6%
It enables police to use their discretion well	91	30.5%
Because from the beginning police are to be properly trained	4	1.3%
Total	298	100

Source: Field Survey (2022).

This table result shows that, 98.7% of the respondents ticked Yes that Capacity Building is significant in Criminal Investigation, 1.3% of the respondents ticked No that Capacity Building is not significant in Criminal Investigation.

In the same table, those that responded Yes further gave reasons as follows: 34.6% of the respondents said capacity building enable Police to investigate Criminal cases very well, 33.6% of the respondents said capacity building makes police productive and effective, 30.5% of the respondents asserted that capacity building enables Police to use their discretion well. However, 1.3% of the respondents who ticked No gave reasons that from the beginning police are to be properly trained.

These responses show that Capacity Building is significant in Criminal Investigation.

Significance Relationships between Police Capacity Building and effective Criminal Investigation

Are there relationships between Police Capacity Building and effective Criminal Investigation?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	256	84.8%
No	46	15.2%
Total	302	100
If Yes, state your reasons		
It helps Police to know their duties	85	33.2%
It helps Police to perform their duties effectively	81	31.6%
It helps Police to conclude investigation logically	90	35.2%
total	256	100

Source: Field Survey (2022).

In this table, 84.8% of the respondents answered Yes that there is relationships between Police Capacity Building and effective Criminal Investigation. However, 15.2% of the respondents answered No, that there is no relationships between Police Capacity Building and effective Criminal Investigation.

In same table, respondents who answered Yes gave reasons as follows: 35.2% of the respondents said capacity building helps Police to conclude investigation logically, 33.2% of the respondents said it helps Police to know their duties. However, 31.6% of the respondents said it helps Police to perform their duties effectively.

This view further confirmed the assertion of Eugene & Paoline (2016) who pointed out that, educated Police officers that build their capacity have better attitude and approaches in discharging their constitutional mandate (duties), their daily commitment and evaluation of phenomenon related to their works differs with their counterpart peers who are less educated.

These responses show that, there is Significance Relationships between Police Capacity Building and effective Criminal Investigation.

Ways in which Nigeria Police Capacity can be build

Ways in which Nigeria Police Capacity can be build	Frequency	Percentage
Training and retraining of police	111	36.8%
Encourage courses and workshops	73	24.2%
Encourage further education	97	32.1%
Adequate funding of Nigeria Police organization	21	6.9%
Total	302	100

Source: Field Survey (2022).

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In this table, respondents were asked to suggest ways in which Nigeria Police Capacity can be build, 36.8% of the respondents said through Training and retraining of police officers, 32.1% of the respondents said Police management should encourage further education, 24.2% of the respondents said Police management should encourage attending of courses and workshops. However, 6.9% of the respondents said there should be Adequate funding of Nigeria Police organization by the Government.

In a follow up interview, informant explained how Police capacity can be build, he said:

Police capacity can be build through training and re-training programs, and also by allowing them to further their education (interview 4 with informant).

These shows that Police Capacity can be built through Training and retraining of police officers, encouraging further education by police management, encouraging courses and workshops by police officers and there should be Adequate funding of police organization by the Government.

THE EFFECT OF THE NIGERIAN POLICE POOR WELFARE PACKAGE ON THE POLICE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

Rating Nigeria Police Officers Salary

How can you rate Nigeria police Officers salary?	Frequency	Percentage
Good	11	3.6%
Very good	8	2.7%
Poor	101	33.4%
Very poor	182	60.3%
Total	302	100

Source: Field Survey (2022).

In this table, respondents were asked to rate Nigeria police Salary, 60.3% of the respondents said Nigeria police Salary is very poor, 33.4% of the respondents said Nigeria Police salary is poor, 3.6% of the respondents said Nigeria Police salary is good, 2.7% of the respondents said Nigeria police salary is very good.

These responses show that, Nigeria Police Salary is poor compare to their counterpart in some countries.

Availability of Police Barracks to the personnel of Nigerian Police Force

How adequate are Police Barracks to the personnel of Nigerian Police Force?	Frequency	Percentage
very adequate	0	0.0%
Adequate	1	0.3%
Inadequate	301	99.7%
Total	302	100

Source: Field Survey (2022).

Result from this table indicate that, 99.7% of the respondents asserted that Police barracks are Inadequate to its personnel, 0.3% of the respondents said Police barracks are Adequate to its personnel.

This correspond with Famutimi, (2014) assertion who explained how poor stage of police barracks may be one of the reasons of unpleasant behaviors of the police to the members of public, to him a well sheltered man is happier man which pleasant behaviors is expected from him. Many police officers in Nigeria if not all are suffering from poor accommodation and remuneration.

These responses show that Police barracks are Inadequate to members of Nigeria Police Force.

Nigeria Police Retirees Pension

How do you rate police retirees' pension	Frequency	Percentage
Good	2	0.7%
Fairly good	9	3.0%
Poor	113	37.4%
Very poor	178	58.9%
Total	302	100

Source: Field Survey (2022).

In table 16, respondents were asked to rate Nigeria Police retirees' pension, 58.9% of the respondents said police retirees' pension is very poor, 37.4% of the respondents said police retirees' pension is poor, 3.0% of the respondents said police retirees' pension is fairly good. However, 0.7% of the respondents said police retirees' pension is good.

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From the interview, an informant explained how poor is police pension, he said:

Not only the Police but the issue of retirees pension in Nigeria is problematic, people will work for thirty five (35) years and will be given just a token as gratuity and pension and to even get it is another problem, but that of Nigeria Police is even the worse (interview 9 with informant).

These responses show that, Nigeria Police Retirees' Pension is one among the poorer pension in Nigeria.

These responses show that, Nigeria Police Officers are not properly equipped for effective performance.

Effect of Police poor welfare packages on officer's performance

How does the Police poor welfare packages affect Police Officers performance in Criminal Investigation duties?	Frequency	Percentage
It leads to official corruption	92	31.7%
It leads to compromise in investigation	81	28.0%
It leads to poor investigation and performances	117	40.3%
Total	290	100

Source: Field Survey (2022).

In this table respondents were asked whether Police poor welfare packages affect officers' performances in Criminal Investigation duties, 40.3% of the respondents said poor welfare packages leads to poor Criminal Investigation and performances, 31.7% of the respondents said it leads to official corruption, 28.0% of the respondents said it lead to compromises in investigation.

These responses show that, there is a significant relationship between poor welfare packages of Nigerian Police Officers and ineffective performances in Criminal Investigation

How to improve Nigeria Police welfare packages

In what ways do you think Nigeria Police welfare packages can be improve?	Frequency	Percentage
Good salary structure/allowance/remuneration	32	10.6%
Properly equipped	31	10.3%
Remove police from contributory pension scheme	13	4.3%
All of the above	226	74.8%
None of the above	0	0.0%
Total	302	100

Source: Field Survey (2022).

Respondents in this table were asked to mention ways in which Nigeria Police welfare packages can be improve, 74.8% of the respondents ticked all of the above that Nigeria Police welfare packages can be improve through Good salary structure/allowance/remuneration, properly equipped and Removal of Police from contributory pension scheme, 10.6% of the respondents said through Good salary structure/allowance/remuneration only, 10.3% of the respondents said police should be Properly equipped only. However, 4.3% of the respondents said Police should be remove from pension scheme only.

An informant in an interview explained how police welfare package can be improved, he said:

To improve Police welfare package is just a minor thing, government should pay Nigeria Police good salary and allowances like EFCC, CPC, NNPC, CBN, federal Inland Revenue etc. (interview 2 with informant).

These responses show that, Nigerian Police welfare packages can be improved by given/paying them Good salary structure/allowance/remuneration like EFCC, CPC, NNPC, CBN, federal inland revenue and equipped Nigeria Police properly as well as removing them from contributory pension scheme.

THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE NIGERIAN POLICE IN CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

Sponsorship of cases reported by individual in Police formations

Who sponsor cases reported by individual in the Police Station	Frequency	Percentage
Individual themselves	250	82.8%
Police Management	4	1.3%
Government	27	8.9%
Others	21	7.0%
Total	302	100

Source: Field Survey (2022).

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Respondents in table 22 were asked to mention who sponsor cases reported by individual in the Police Station, 82.8% of the respondents said Individual themselves, 8.9% of the respondents said Government, 7.0% of the respondents had others view. However, 1.3% of the respondents said Police Management.

Informant from the interviews explained how they sponsored cases themselves, they said:

Government needs to do something about sponsoring of cases, because in Nigeria once you report a case you will be the one to sponsor that case to the end (interview 4 with informant).

Another informant explained his ordeal, he said:

My experienced with Police on sponsoring of case is terrible, do you know when I reported one case the police first asked me money for case file and later asked money for transportation to go and invite the suspect, after the invitation they asked me to pay money for mobilization fees to enable them do the work effectively (interview 10 with informant).

In the same vein, a respondent said:

To do case in Nigeria is capital extensive, if you don't have money, you cannot do a case, many cases are swept under the carpet by the police simply because the complainant don't have money to sponsor the case which Government are aware of it (interview 3 wit informant).

This also validate the assertion made by Olusola (2015) that, in most instances, owners of cases or complaint are the once sponsoring/fund their cases under investigation, studies depicted how complainant sponsored/fund their cases. An organization or department that is poorly fund or sponsored suffers serious deficit and poor performances.

These responses show that, majority of cases reported by individuals in the police station are sponsor by the individuals themselves.

Problem of interferences in Criminal Investigation

As an Investigation Police Officer, are you facing problem of interferences in investigating cases?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	292	96.7%
No	10	3.3%
Total	302	100
If yes, what are the categories of persons that interferes in your cases?		
Top government officials	97	33.2 %
Politicians	81	27.7%
Senior police officers	93	31.8%
Prominent traditional rulers	21	7.2%
Total	292	100

Source: Field Survey (2022).

This result shows that, 96.7% of the respondents answer Yes that they are facing problem of interferences in Criminal Investigating of cases, while 3.3% of the respondents answered No.

In the same table respondents who answered Yes were further probe to mention the categories of persons that interferes in their cases, 33.2% of the respondents said top Government officials, 31.8% of the respondents said Senior police officers, 27.7% of the respondents said Politicians, while 7.2% of the respondents said prominent Traditional rulers.

Ways in which problem of interferences in Criminal Investigation can be control

Suggest possible ways in which problem of interferences in Criminal Investigation can be control	Frequency	Percentage
The post of IGP should not be decided by politicians	204	67.5%
Interferences in criminal investigation should be incriminated by the law	67	22.2%
Investigation Police Officers should be autonomous	31	10.3%
Total	302	100

Source: Field Survey (2022).

Respondents in this table were asked to Suggest possible ways in which problem of interferences in Criminal Investigation can be control, 67.5% of the respondents said the post of Inspector General of Police (IGP) should not be decided by politicians, 22.2% of the respondents said Interferences in criminal investigation should be incriminated by the law, while 10.3% of the respondents said Investigation Police Officers (IPOs) should be autonomous.

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General challenges facing Criminal Investigation in Nigerian Police Force

What are the general challenges facing Criminal Investigation in Nigerian Police Force	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate funding of criminal investigation/poor police welfare	75	24.8%
Poor investigation equipment/machine/facilities	91	30.1%
Interferences in criminal investigations	69	22.9%
Complainant/individual sponsor of cases	67	22.2%
Total	302	100

Source: Field Survey (2022).

In this table respondents were asked to mention some of the general challenges they are facing in Criminal Investigation Department, 30.1% of the respondents said Poor investigation equipment/machine/facilities, 24.8% of the respondents said Inadequate funding for Criminal Investigation/poor police welfare, 22.9% of the respondents said Interferences in criminal investigations while 22.2% of the respondents said complainant/individual sponsorship of cases is also a challenges in criminal investigation.

In a follow up interview an informant explained one of the general challenges facing Criminal Investigation in Nigerian Police, he said:

The major challenges in criminal investigation is the issue of individual sponsoring of cases which government supposed to shoulder those responsibilities, because it will make people to report more cases and by extension reduce crime rate and corruption in the police especially in areas of criminal investigation which in turn will strengthen police public relationship (interview 8 with informant).

These responses show that, the general challenges facing Criminal Investigation in Nigerian Police Force are issues of Poor investigation equipment/machine/facilities, Inadequate funding for Criminal Investigation/poor police welfare, Interferences in criminal investigations and Complainant/individual sponsorship of cases.

DISCUSSION OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The study revealed a significant trust deficit between the Nigerian Police Force and the public, largely due to unprofessional conduct, perceived corruption, and incivility. This lack of cooperation hinders effective criminal investigations, affirming prior findings on public-police mistrust (Ajayi, 2014; Idowu & Nwosu, 2021). Respondents recommended public sensitization, professional ethics training, and better funding to rebuild public confidence.

Capacity building was found inadequate, as most trainings were outdated or ineffective. Participants advocated for modern investigative techniques, forensic training, and academic advancement to improve investigative efficiency, aligning with Eugene and Paoline's (2016) view that well-trained officers perform better.

Poor welfare conditions—low salaries, lack of allowances, and substandard living conditions—were identified as critical challenges. These issues undermine morale and professionalism, forcing officers to self-finance basic tools. Similar concerns were raised in previous studies (Onwuka, 2011; Fieldler, 2012), and the End SARS protests highlighted these frustrations.

Institutional problems such as political interference, lack of autonomy, inadequate infrastructure, and internal corruption further hamper investigations. Respondents noted that influential individuals often obstruct investigations, compromising justice. They called for legal reforms, increased funding, and transparent management to safeguard operational independence and restore integrity within the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID).

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance criminal investigation efficiency within the Nigerian Police Force, particularly the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID):

- 1. Comprehensive Police Reform:** The Nigeria Police Force requires systemic reform, including regular public sensitization and internal accountability mechanisms, to rebuild public trust and minimize corruption that undermines police community relations.
- 2. Capacity Building and Professional Development:** The government and police leadership should institutionalize regular training, retraining, and professional development programs particularly in investigative techniques, forensic science, and intelligence gathering to strengthen the effectiveness of FCID officers.
- 3. Improved Welfare and Incentives:** Police salaries and benefits should be reviewed upward, and housing provisions improved. Prompt payment of allowances and removal from the contributory pension scheme will enhance motivation, reduce corruption, and improve investigative performance.

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4. **Modernization of Equipment:** The police should be equipped with up-to-date investigative tools, including forensic labs, surveillance technology, and mobility assets, to meet current crime investigation demands.
5. **Publicly Funded Investigations:** Government should assume responsibility for funding investigations to eliminate reliance on complainants, which fosters corruption and weakens justice delivery.
6. **Institutional Accountability and Maintenance:** A culture of proper equipment maintenance and facility management should be enforced to ensure the sustainability and functionality of available investigative resources.

CONCLUSION

Criminal investigation remains a core function of the Nigeria Police Force, with the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID) serving as its apex investigative arm. However, the department's effectiveness is undermined by several systemic challenges, notably the strained relationship between the police and the public rooted in issues like corruption, brutality, and public mistrust which hinders vital information sharing for successful investigations. Compounding this are problems such as poor police welfare, inadequate capacity building, outdated equipment, insufficient facilities, and external interference from political and traditional elites. The reliance on individual case sponsorship, coupled with institutional corruption and lack of proper funding, further hampers the efficiency of criminal investigations. Addressing these issues holistically is essential for improving investigative outcomes and reducing crime rates in Nigeria.

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