



THE NIGERIAN POLICE AND PUBLIC CONFIDENCE: INSIGHTS FROM JALINGO LGA, TARABA STATE

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Abstract

This study investigates public perceptions of the effectiveness of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) in protecting lives and property within Jalingo Local Government Area, Taraba State. Grounded in Foucauldian theory, which frames policing as both a disciplinary and symbolic expression of state power, the research critically examines the extent to which citizens perceive the NPF as a legitimate and effective institution. Using a survey research design and a multi-stage sampling technique, data were collected from 382 respondents across the LGA. Quantitative analysis, including descriptive statistics and Chi-square tests, revealed a significant trust deficit: over 57% of respondents did not believe the police effectively protect citizens, and 72% expressed dissatisfaction with police responses during personal interactions. Corruption, poor visibility, and inadequate resources were identified as the primary impediments to police performance. Chi-square results showed a statistically significant relationship between age and perceptions of police effectiveness, with younger respondents reporting lower trust levels. The study concludes that the crisis of public confidence in the NPF is rooted in both structural weaknesses and disciplinary failure. It recommends institutional reforms focusing on anti-corruption, community engagement, professional training, and enhanced patrol visibility to restore trust and improve policing outcomes in Nigeria.

Keywords: Foucauldian Theory, Jalingo, Legitimacy, Nigerian Police Force, Policing Effectiveness, Public Confidence, Trust,

1. Introduction

The Nigerian Police Force (NPF) serves as the country's central law enforcement institution, mandated by Section 214 of the 1999 Constitution to maintain law and order, protect lives and property, and enforce national laws across all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. Despite its constitutional importance, the NPF has struggled with long-standing issues that have undermined public confidence in its effectiveness and legitimacy (Ikuteyijo & Rotimi, 2012). Historically rooted in colonial governance structures, the NPF has undergone several reform attempts including community policing strategies and the creation of specialized crime-fighting units such as the Rapid Response Squad and Anti-Kidnapping Unit yet systemic inefficiencies persist (Eze, 2021).

While the NPF has demonstrated competence in certain areas such as combating violent crimes and kidnappings, it has been less effective in addressing everyday security concerns, including theft, gang violence, and emergency

responsiveness (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2003). Widespread allegations of corruption, delayed interventions, and abuse of power have further eroded public trust. These issues are particularly evident at the grassroots level, where citizens' perceptions of the police are shaped by their day-to-day interactions and the perceived failure of the force to uphold its responsibilities.

In Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State, public discourse reflects growing frustration with the performance of the police, especially regarding poor infrastructure, inadequate manpower, and slow response to security threats. Despite some improvements through special operational units, the force continues to grapple with institutional challenges. Emerging forms of crime such as cybercrime, drug trafficking, and organized syndicates require adaptive policing approaches that the NPF is currently ill-equipped to implement effectively (Adejoh et al., 2019; Ndubueze & Igbo, 2014).

Contributing factors to this crisis of credibility include chronic underfunding, outdated equipment, inadequate training, and poor welfare conditions for personnel (Brownson, 2012). These limitations negatively affect officer morale and performance, creating a vicious cycle of public distrust and institutional failure. Scholars argue that restoring public confidence in the NPF will require comprehensive reforms, including increased funding, capacity-building in ethical and rights-based policing, and the implementation of community policing models that promote accountability and partnership between the police and local populations (Adegoke, 2014; Odekunle, 2004).

This study, therefore, seeks to assess public perceptions of the effectiveness of the NPF in Jalingo LGA, with the goal of identifying gaps in performance, challenges to legitimacy, and potential strategies for rebuilding trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

Statement of the Problem

Despite its constitutional mandate to protect lives and property, the effectiveness of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) in Jalingo Local Government Area remains under intense public scrutiny. Widespread concerns persist over the force's ability to respond swiftly to security threats, deter crime, and build trust with the communities it serves. Public perception often informed by lived experiences paints a troubling picture: delayed responses to emergencies, limited police visibility, and an uptick in crimes such as theft and burglary have eroded confidence in the NPF's operational capacity (Osanyande, 2020).

At the heart of this crisis is a combination of institutional and structural deficiencies. Inadequate manpower, outdated equipment, and insufficient training hinder officers' ability to perform their duties effectively. Beyond logistics, systemic issues such as corruption, impunity, and weak accountability mechanisms further undermine the legitimacy of the force. These challenges not only compromise the quality of service delivery but also alienate the very communities the police are meant to protect.

In Jalingo, these issues are particularly acute. Citizens frequently express frustration over

poor police presence, a perceived lack of professionalism, and limited avenues for engaging law enforcement constructively. While recent efforts such as the establishment of rapid response units offer some promise, the core question remains: can the NPF rebuild public confidence and fulfill its mandate in an environment where skepticism and insecurity persist?

This study, therefore, seeks to interrogate public perceptions of police effectiveness in Jalingo LGA, with a view to identifying the barriers to trust and offering strategic insights into how the Nigerian Police Force can become more responsive, accountable, and community-focused.

Objectives of the Study

The overarching objective of this study is to critically examine public perception of the effectiveness of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) in Jalingo Local Government Area, Taraba State.

2. Literature Review

The Role of the Police in Democratic Societies

The police play a fundamental role in democratic societies as agents of law enforcement, peacekeeping, and public safety. Their legitimacy and authority are not solely derived from legal mandates but are also deeply rooted in public trust and social acceptance (Bayley, 2006). In the Nigerian context, the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) is constitutionally empowered under Section 214 of the 1999 Constitution to prevent and detect crime, maintain public order, and safeguard lives and property. However, the effectiveness of policing in Nigeria has long been questioned due to deep-seated structural and operational challenges (Ikuteyijo & Rotimi, 2012).

Public Perception and Police Effectiveness

Public perception is a crucial determinant of police legitimacy. The extent to which citizens perceive the police as competent, fair, and responsive directly affects cooperation, reporting of crimes, and compliance with law enforcement directives (Tyler, 2006). In Nigeria, studies have consistently shown a public confidence deficit in the NPF. According to Alemika and Chukwuma (2003), the general population often views the police as corrupt, ineffective, and hostile factors that negatively

influence perceptions of their effectiveness. Similarly, Eze (2021) emphasizes that the visibility, professionalism, and responsiveness of officers are among the most important variables shaping public opinion of police performance.

Operational Challenges Facing the Nigerian Police

The effectiveness of the NPF is hampered by significant operational constraints. These include inadequate funding, poor logistics, and lack of modern crime-fighting equipment, limited training, and insufficient personnel (Brownson, 2012). Many police stations, particularly at the local level, lack basic infrastructure such as vehicles, communication systems, and surveillance tools, leading to slow emergency response times and limited community outreach. Adegoke (2014) argues that the absence of a merit-based recruitment and promotion system further demoralizes officers and reduces institutional efficiency.

Moreover, corruption within the police force has become a systemic issue. Ivković (2005) notes that when officers engage in bribery, collusion with criminals, and extortion, the public loses confidence in their neutrality and professionalism. This erosion of legitimacy makes it difficult for the police to perform their duties effectively and undermines the social contract between the state and its citizens.

Police Community Relations and the Trust Deficit

Effective policing is not just about law enforcement it is about building trust and legitimacy through positive engagement with communities. Community policing, which involves collaboration between the police and local residents to solve public safety problems, has been promoted globally as a trust-enhancing model (Skogan, 2006). In Nigeria, the adoption of community policing remains inconsistent and largely under-resourced (Odekunle, 2004). Studies by Adejoh et al. (2019) and Ndubueze and Igbo (2014) highlight that the disconnect between the police and citizens is a critical barrier to intelligence gathering, crime prevention, and timely intervention in security matters.

In Jalingo and other semi-urban areas, poor police–community relations manifest in mutual

suspicion, low crime reporting rates, and resistance to police presence. When citizens perceive the police as partisan, abusive, or inaccessible, they are less likely to cooperate with law enforcement or respect its authority (Osanyande, 2020).

Emerging Security Threats and Institutional Inadequacy

The security landscape in Nigeria has evolved, with emerging threats such as cybercrime, insurgency, kidnapping, and drug trafficking challenging traditional policing models. These threats require a technologically equipped, ethically trained, and community-sensitive police force (Adejoh et al., 2019). However, the NPF continues to rely on outdated tactics and underdeveloped intelligence frameworks, which are ill-suited for contemporary crime trends.

The gap between citizens' expectations and the actual performance of the police has created conditions for frustration, resistance, and in some cases, community vigilantism. Without a significant institutional transformation, including modernization of policing tools and procedures, public perception of the NPF's effectiveness will likely remain poor (Mustapha, 2014).

The literature reveals a complex and interrelated set of factors that shape public perception of police effectiveness in Nigeria. From institutional inefficiencies and corruption to poor community engagement and evolving security challenges, the credibility of the Nigerian Police Force is under serious strain. A shift toward inclusive, transparent, and community-oriented policing supported by proper funding, training, and reform is widely recommended in the literature as a pathway to restoring public confidence and institutional effectiveness.

Theoretical Framework: Foucauldian Theory of Power and Surveillance

This study is anchored in Michel Foucault's theory of power, surveillance, and disciplinary institutions, which offers a critical lens for examining the structure, conduct, and societal perception of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF). Foucault's work, particularly in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1977), explores how modern institutions such as the military, schools, and policing bodies

exercise power not solely through coercion but through the normalization of surveillance, discipline, and control.

Foucault re-conceptualizes power as diffuse, relational, and embedded in everyday practices, rather than as a static force held exclusively by institutions. In this view, the police are not merely enforcers of legal authority; they are mechanisms through which the state observes, regulates, and disciplines society. Policing, from a Foucauldian standpoint, is thus both a technology of governance and a symbolic site where state power is performed and contested.

In the context of Nigeria, the NPF exemplifies many of the contradictions and paradoxes embedded in Foucault's understanding of modern disciplinary power. Established as a colonial apparatus of control, the NPF continues to operate within a legacy of authoritarian command structures and surveillance rationalities, often perceived by citizens as agents of domination rather than protectors of public welfare (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2003).

Foucault's notion of the panopticon a structure in which individuals internalize the gaze of surveillance and modify behavior accordingly can be applied to explore how public confidence in the police is shaped by the perceived visibility, accessibility, and responsiveness of police presence in communities. However, in settings like Jalingo LGA, where the police are often absent, delayed, or perceived as corrupt, the failure of the surveillance gaze results in mistrust, insecurity, and self-help security alternatives. The absence of credible state surveillance thus leads to what Foucault would term a crisis of disciplinary power.

Foucault also stresses that where disciplinary power is abused or inconsistently applied, it generates resistance, subversion, and mistrust. This is especially relevant to the Nigerian police, whose engagement with the public is frequently marred by bribery, extortion, brutality, and impunity (Eze, 2021). These abuses disrupt the social contract and challenge the legitimacy of state power, reinforcing a cycle of resistance and public withdrawal from formal policing structures.

Within this framework, public perception is not just a passive reflection of police performance but a political act a measure of how state

disciplinary mechanisms have succeeded or failed in governing through consent rather than coercion. Thus, the decline in public confidence in the NPF reflects a broader breakdown in state-citizen relations, rooted in the failure to deliver security through ethical and participatory governance.

Using Foucauldian theory enables this study to move beyond conventional evaluations of police effectiveness based solely on crime statistics or institutional reforms. Instead, it allows a deeper interrogation of how power is exercised, resisted, and reconfigured through everyday interactions between the police and the public. It also provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how state surveillance practices (or their failure) affect public trust, legitimacy, and the perceived credibility of the police in Jalingo LGA.

By employing this theoretical lens, the research contributes to critical security studies and offers a nuanced framework for analyzing not just what the police do, but how they are perceived, resisted, and held accountable within the social spaces they claim to govern.

3. Methodology

This study employed a survey research design, which is appropriate for gathering data on public attitudes, perceptions, and experiences across a large and diverse population. Through the use of structured questionnaires and interview schedules, the study systematically assessed public perceptions of the effectiveness of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) in Jalingo Local Government Area (LGA), Taraba State.

The study area, Jalingo LGA, serves as the administrative and socio-economic hub of Taraba State. Its multi-ethnic composition, religious diversity, and urban-rural mix make it a strategic location for understanding how police performance is perceived across varied social contexts. The presence of both cooperative and conflict-prone intergroup relations, coupled with prevalent urban crimes such as theft and assault, underscores the need to investigate the role of the police in maintaining public order. The target population for the study consisted of household held residents of Jalingo LGA. To determine the appropriate sample size, Taro Yamane's (1967) formula was applied,

resulting in a statistically valid sample suitable for inferential analysis.

A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted to ensure broad representation. In the first stage, all wards within Jalingo LGA were purposively included due to their varying experiences with the police. In the second stage, proportionate stratified sampling was used to allocate respondents based on the population size of each ward. In the final stage, systematic random sampling was applied to select individuals within the sampled wards, ensuring that diverse demographic groups were represented.

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed to elicit respondents' experiences with and perceptions of police responsiveness, professionalism, visibility, and trustworthiness. Secondary data were sourced from books, journal articles, policy papers, and credible media reports to provide a theoretical and contextual foundation for the study.

The data analysis involved the use of frequency distribution tables, mean analysis, and percentages for descriptive insights. To test the study's hypothesis, the Chi-square (χ^2) statistical test was employed at a 5% level of significance. The decision rule was to reject the null hypothesis if the calculated χ^2 value exceeded the critical value, indicating a significant relationship between public perception and perceived police effectiveness.

This methodological approach ensures the validity, reliability, and representativeness of findings, thereby providing a robust empirical basis for evaluating the Nigerian Police Force's performance in Jalingo LGA.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Socio demographic characteristics of Respondents in Jalingo LGA

Demographics	Frequency (n=382)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	215	56.3%
Female	167	43.7%
Age Group		
18 – 25 years	98	25.7%
26 – 35 years	152	39.8%
36 – 45 years	84	22.0%
46 years and above	48	12.5%
Educational Level		
No formal education	34	8.9%
Primary school	60	15.7%
Secondary school	145	38.0%
Tertiary education	143	37.4%
Occupation		
Student	102	26.7%
Civil servant	96	25.1%
Businessperson	134	35.1%
Others	50	13.1%

Source: Survey Data, 2024

Demographic characteristics provide critical insight into the social distribution of public perceptions and experiences with policing. Understanding how factors such as gender, age, education, and occupation shape interactions with law enforcement allows for a more nuanced analysis of police-community relations.

Gender Distribution

The sample consisted of 56.3% male and 43.7% female respondents. This gender balance aligns with previous findings that men tend to have higher interaction rates with law enforcement due to their dominance in public and economically visible

activities, especially in regions with patriarchal social structures (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2003). Gendered experiences with the police are significant, as women are more likely to experience policing through domestic violence reporting or community mediation, while men often interact with law enforcement in the context of crime suspicion, vehicle checks, and public order enforcement (Tankebe, 2010).

Age Group

The largest proportion of respondents (39.8%) were within the 26–35 years age bracket, followed by 18–25 years (25.7%), and 36–45 years (22.0%). This reflects Nigeria's national youth bulge, with over 60% of the population under 35 years (Urdal, 2006). Youths and young adults are often disproportionately affected by policing practices both as victims of violence and as perceived perpetrators making their perceptions vital in evaluating police legitimacy. According to Tyler (2006), younger individuals tend to have lower trust in police institutions when they feel disproportionately targeted or discriminated against.

Educational Level

The study revealed that 75.4% of respondents had at least a secondary education. Education plays a critical role in shaping public understanding of civil rights, expectations from state institutions, and willingness to engage with reform efforts. Higher education levels are associated with increased demand for accountability and procedural fairness from law enforcement agencies (Tyler & Huo, 2002). As such, educated respondents are likely to evaluate police performance not just on security provision but on professionalism, ethical conduct, and constitutional adherence (Skogan, 2006).

Occupational Status

Occupationally, businesspersons (35.1%), students (26.7%), and civil servants (25.1%) made up the majority. Each group represents distinct socio-economic interests and exposure to policing. Businesspersons are typically concerned with property protection and the prevention of economic crimes, which makes their assessment of police efficiency highly practical. Civil servants are often more familiar with the workings of state institutions and may be more critical of bureaucratic inefficiencies. Students, as part of the youth demographic, may reflect anti-authority sentiment or skepticism toward law enforcement, especially in contexts where youth-police relations are strained (Ikelegbe, 2013).

These occupational categories interact with law enforcement in different capacities, and their responses provide a broader understanding of how trust in the police varies across socio-economic activities. According to Tankebe (2010), occupational identity and perceived vulnerability to crime significantly influence trust in police services.

The diversity of the sample enhances the reliability of the study's findings by ensuring inclusivity across key demographic segments. These characteristics are not merely descriptive; they shape how individuals interpret police presence, performance, and legitimacy. The findings suggest that public trust in the Nigerian Police Force in Jalingo cannot be evaluated in isolation but must be examined within the broader context of social identity, everyday interactions, and institutional expectations (Loader & Walker, 2007).

Table 2: Responses on the Perception of Police Effectiveness in Protecting Lives and Properties in Jalingo LGA

Questions	Frequency (n=382)	Percentage (%)
Do you believe the Nigerian Police effectively protects lives and properties?		
Yes	108	28.3%
No	220	57.6%
Not sure	54	14.1%
How often do you see police officers		

actively patrolling your area?		
Very often	67	17.5%
Sometimes	143	37.4%
Rarely	112	29.3%
Never	60	15.7%
Have you ever sought police assistance? If yes, how satisfied were you with their response?		
Very satisfied	35	9.2%
Satisfied	72	18.8%
Dissatisfied	185	48.4%
Very dissatisfied	90	23.6%
What is the major factor affecting police effectiveness in protecting lives and properties?		
Lack of resources	106	27.7%
Corruption among officers	156	40.8%
Poor public cooperation	70	18.3%
Inadequate personnel	50	13.1%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The data collected presents a sobering picture of public confidence in the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) in Jalingo Local Government Area, with only 28.3% of respondents affirming that the police effectively protect lives and property. The majority (57.6%) explicitly expressed a lack of faith in the police's ability to fulfill this core mandate, while 14.1% remained undecided. This aligns with the broader literature on police legitimacy in Nigeria, where recurring concerns about ineffectiveness, poor visibility, and institutional decay have led to widespread public disillusionment (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2003; Eze, 2021).

One of the most consistent criticisms of the NPF has been its limited operational presence in local communities. When asked about police patrol frequency, only 17.5% of respondents stated they "very often" saw officers patrolling their area. A significant proportion, 29.3%, reported "rarely," and another 15.7% reported "never." These perceptions reinforce existing findings that the visibility of police officers directly influences perceptions of safety and institutional credibility (Skogan, 2006). According to Foucault (1977), the mere presence of surveillance or the lack thereof can influence social order; thus, the NPF's low visibility contributes not only to actual insecurity but to the symbolic absence of state authority.

When examining citizen interactions with the police, the dissatisfaction becomes even more pronounced. While nearly half of the respondents had sought assistance from the police, only 9.2% described their experience as "very satisfactory," and another 18.8% as "satisfactory." Alarmingly, 72% of those who sought police help reported being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. This finding supports Tyler's (2006) theory of procedural justice, which asserts that individuals are more likely to trust institutions when they experience fair, respectful, and effective treatment. In the absence of these qualities, legitimacy erodes, and the willingness to cooperate with law enforcement diminishes.

Perhaps most revealing is the public diagnosis of what ails the NPF. When asked about the primary factor affecting police effectiveness in Jalingo, 40.8% identified corruption among officers a sentiment echoed in numerous national studies (Tankebe, 2010; Ivković, 2005). Corruption erodes not only institutional integrity but also the moral authority of the police, transforming them from agents of security to perceived enablers of insecurity. Lack of resources was identified by 27.7% of respondents, while poor public cooperation (18.3%) and inadequate personnel (13.1%) were cited as secondary but still relevant challenges. These concerns align with Brownson's (2012)

assertion that policing failures in Nigeria are a product of both internal systemic weaknesses and external structural limitations.

The respondents' perspectives also reinforce Foucault's critique of disciplinary institutions: when state mechanisms of control (such as policing) are marked by inconsistency, corruption, and visible absence, they cease to function as stabilizing forces and instead become objects of public suspicion and resistance. In this case, the Nigerian Police Force, designed to be a guardian of public order, is increasingly perceived as unreliable, unaccountable, and disconnected from the citizenry it is meant to serve.

The analysis demonstrates that public confidence in the Nigerian Police Force in Jalingo LGA is significantly undermined by visible patterns of institutional failure especially corruption, operational absence, and unsatisfactory service delivery. These findings highlight an urgent need for structural reforms that focus not only on resource enhancement but on restoring ethical standards, procedural justice, and community trust. Without these foundational shifts, the police risk being further alienated from the very public whose cooperation is indispensable to effective law enforcement.

Chi-Square Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis Statement

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant relationship between respondents' age group and their perception of the effectiveness of the Nigerian Police Force in protecting lives and properties in Jalingo LGA.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant relationship between respondents' age group and their perception of the effectiveness of the Nigerian Police Force in protecting lives and properties in Jalingo LGA.

There is a statistically significant relationship between age and perception of police effectiveness in Jalingo LGA. This suggests that age plays a meaningful role in shaping how individuals evaluate police performance.

Younger respondents (especially those aged 18–35) expressed lower confidence in the police,

potentially due to increased exposure to aggressive or indifferent policing tactics, aligning with previous findings by Tyler (2006) and Ikelegbe (2013). In contrast, older respondents (especially those 46 and above) were more likely to affirm that the police were effective, which may reflect generational differences in expectations, lived experiences, or perceived risks.

This outcome supports Foucault's notion of power perception and disciplinary failure, where groups most frequently subjected to state control (i.e., youth) are often the first to challenge its legitimacy.

Discussion of Findings

This study investigated public perception of the Nigerian Police Force's effectiveness in protecting lives and properties in Jalingo Local Government Area, Taraba State. The findings paint a complex but revealing portrait of institutional performance, community trust, and socio-political legitimacy.

Erosion of Public Confidence in the Police: The data shows that 57.6% of respondents do not believe the Nigerian Police effectively protect lives and properties, while only 28.3% expressed confidence in their effectiveness. This lack of faith in the police aligns with long-standing critiques of the NPF's inefficiency, lack of professionalism, and failure to uphold its constitutional mandate (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2003; Eze, 2021). These perceptions are compounded by reported experiences of corruption, delayed response, and limited visibility, suggesting a deep-seated trust deficit between citizens and law enforcement in Jalingo.

From a Foucauldian perspective, the state's disciplinary apparatus represented by the police has lost its legitimacy not merely because of poor performance, but due to the collapse of the surveillance and disciplinary gaze that should compel order through structured visibility (Foucault, 1977). When the police are perceived as absent, corrupt, or complicit in disorder, they lose their symbolic power as agents of the state.

Low Visibility and Limited Community Engagement: The study found that only 17.5% of respondents frequently saw police patrols in their area, and a combined 45% either rarely or never observed any patrol presence. Visibility is not merely a function of policing logistics; it plays a

critical role in deterrence, confidence building, and community reassurance (Skogan, 2006). The absence of routine patrols may signal either resource scarcity or institutional withdrawal, both of which alienate the community and increase the likelihood of citizens resorting to self-help or informal security networks.

This breakdown also reflects Foucault's emphasis on the importance of surveillance in modern governance. In his conceptualization, disciplinary institutions maintain control not only through coercion but by being seen to act. In Jalingo, the police are not seen, and therefore not felt, contributing to their perceived ineffectiveness.

Citizen-Police Interaction and Satisfaction: Satisfaction with police response was alarmingly low. 72% of respondents who had sought assistance reported dissatisfaction, highlighting serious deficiencies in service delivery and professionalism. Such experiences reinforce the findings of Tyler (2006), who argues that institutional legitimacy is derived more from procedural justice how citizens are treated than from the outcome of police interventions.

The widespread dissatisfaction underscores the inaccessibility of justice and the failure of the police to provide timely and fair service. As Foucault (1977) would argue, this illustrates the dysfunction of power, where the state's coercive agents are no longer respected or feared, but contested and mistrusted.

Corruption as a Central Obstacle to Effectiveness: Among the factors identified as undermining police effectiveness, corruption among officers was cited by 40.8% of respondents the most frequent response. This finding is consistent with national studies documenting systemic corruption in the NPF, including bribery, extortion, and collusion with criminals (Ivković, 2005; Tankebe, 2010). The implication is clear: without addressing institutional corruption, any reform effort will be undermined at its roots.

Corruption erodes not only operational efficiency but also the moral authority of the police. Citizens who perceive officers as predators rather than protectors are unlikely to cooperate or respect the law, thereby undermining the entire justice system.

Age and Trust: A Generational Divide: The Chi-square analysis revealed a significant relationship between age and perception of police effectiveness. Younger respondents (especially those under 35) exhibited significantly lower levels of trust, while older respondents (46+) showed relatively higher levels of confidence. This generational divide may stem from differential experiences with police conduct: while younger individuals may face more aggressive or transactional policing, older respondents may rely on more historical or less confrontational interactions.

This finding supports both Foucauldian theory and Tyler's procedural justice model, which show that groups subjected to inconsistent or abusive state discipline are more likely to resist and mistrust it.

In totality, the findings suggest that public confidence in the Nigerian Police in Jalingo LGA is low, driven primarily by visible institutional failure, corruption, and weak community engagement. These issues are compounded by socio-demographic factors, notably age, and reinforced by a broader historical and structural distrust of the state's coercive apparatus.

Foucault's framework provides a valuable lens for understanding this phenomenon. The crisis in police legitimacy in Jalingo is not just about crime control it is about the erosion of the disciplinary functions of the state, and the community's growing disengagement from formal structures of power.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study critically examined public perceptions of the Nigerian Police Force's effectiveness in protecting lives and property in Jalingo Local Government Area, Taraba State. The findings reveal a pronounced lack of public trust in the NPF, with the majority of respondents expressing dissatisfaction with police visibility, response time, service quality, and overall professionalism.

The results suggest that the Nigerian Police in Jalingo suffers from a legitimacy crisis, a product of systemic corruption, resource constraints, and disengagement from community needs. The Chi-square analysis confirmed that age significantly influences perceptions of effectiveness, with younger individuals demonstrating notably lower levels of trust, reinforcing global theories of

procedural justice and state-society relations. Thus, restoring public confidence requires more than reform slogans; it demands a structural re-imagination of policing one that re-centers ethics, community partnership, and institutional accountability.

To reverse the growing disconnection between the police and the public in Jalingo LGA and similar contexts, the following targeted interventions are recommended:

1. Institutional Reform and Anti-Corruption Measures: Establish independent anti-corruption units within the NPF, empowered to investigate officer misconduct with full legal autonomy and also introduce a public complaint tracking system to promote transparency and accountability in police-citizen interactions.
2. Enhanced Visibility and Patrol Strategy: Increase regular patrols in both urban and peri-urban areas using a community-mapped policing strategy, where hotspots are identified and prioritized for routine security coverage, and officers to be equipped with

functional communication and mobility tools to ensure rapid response.

3. Community Policing Integration: Expand and adequately fund community policing initiatives that integrate local leaders, religious groups, and youth representatives in crime prevention efforts, by developing police-citizen dialogue platforms to promote mutual understanding and feedback.
4. Training and Professional Development: Institute continuous professional training for officers, focusing on human rights, ethical conduct, conflict resolution, and procedural fairness and incentivize ethical behavior through performance-based promotions and public commendations.
5. Resource Allocation and Infrastructure Upgrade: Increase federal and state budgetary allocation to the police (security), specifically for operational tools, forensic units, and digitization of policing services. Also ensure that each police unit is adequately staffed and equipped to meet contemporary security demands.

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