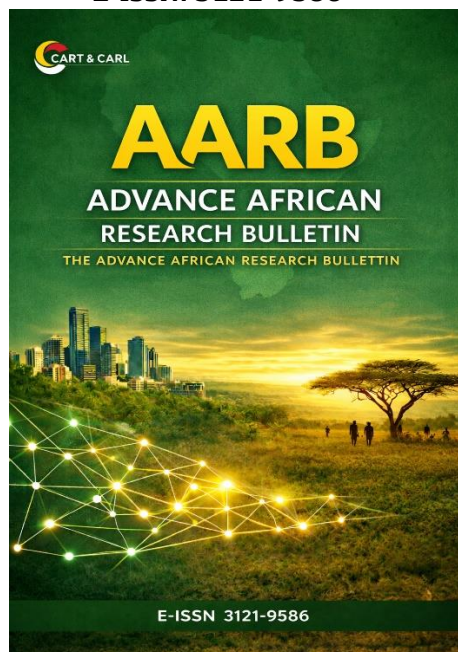


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## Assessment of the Influence of Police Salary Structure on Deviant Behaviour among Officers of the Rivers State Police Command in Nigeria

**Abstract**

Salary structure is a critical component of employee welfare and an important determinant of motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational behaviour. Within law enforcement agencies, an adequate and equitable salary structure is expected to promote professionalism, ethical conduct, and workplace discipline while reducing the likelihood of misconduct among officers. However, inadequate remuneration and perceived inequities in salary administration may create financial stress and dissatisfaction that encourage deviant behaviours such as bribery, extortion, abuse of power, absenteeism, and corruption. This study examines the influence of the police salary structure on deviant behaviour among police officers in the Rivers State Command of the Nigeria Police Force. Specifically, the study investigates the extent to which salary levels and compensation practices affect officers' professional conduct and adherence to ethical standards. The study adopts a descriptive survey research design and is anchored on Equity Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, which emphasize the relationship between employee welfare and workplace behaviour. It is expected that a fair and competitive salary structure will reduce financial pressures, improve job satisfaction, strengthen organizational commitment, and discourage deviant behaviour among officers. Conversely, inadequate salary structures may increase the propensity for unethical practices that undermine public confidence and organizational effectiveness. The study provides empirical evidence on the relationship between police remuneration and deviant behaviour and offers policy recommendations for strengthening personnel welfare and improving professionalism within the Rivers State Police Command.

**Keywords :** Deviant Behaviour, Organizational Commitment, Police Officers, Police Welfare, Rivers State Command, Salary

**Introduction**

Police welfare remains one of the most important determinants of morale, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and professional conduct within law enforcement agencies. Among the various components of welfare, salary structure occupies a central position because it directly influences employees' economic well-being, motivation, and overall attitude toward their work. An equitable and adequate salary structure not only rewards employees for their services but also reinforces organizational values and ethical behaviour. In the Nigeria Police Force, where officers are entrusted with the responsibility of protecting lives and property and maintaining law and order, salary administration plays a critical role in enhancing or undermining workplace behaviour and organizational effectiveness.

The Nigeria Police Force has the constitutional mandate to prevent and detect crime, apprehend offenders, preserve public order, and protect the lives and property of citizens (Odeyemi & Obiyan, 2017). The execution of these responsibilities exposes police officers to significant occupational hazards, stress, and security risks, with many officers making enormous personal sacrifices in the course of duty. Consequently, the provision of

adequate welfare incentives, including a competitive salary structure, is essential for motivating officers and enabling them to perform their functions effectively (Odeyemi & Obiyan, 2017).

The economic environment within which the Nigerian police operate further underscores the importance of adequate remuneration. Nigeria's economy has been described as heavily dependent on oil revenue and characterized by persistent economic challenges that have affected the welfare of public sector employees (Otto, 2014). At the same time, the country continues to experience increasing criminal activities amid inadequate technological resources for effective crime prevention and control (Otto, 2014). Additionally, Nigeria's multicultural and multi-religious environment presents unique challenges to law enforcement, requiring police officers to demonstrate high levels of professionalism, impartiality, and ethical conduct in the discharge of their duties (Yebo, 2015; Agwanwo, 2016). Despite these expectations, the Nigerian Police Force has often been perceived negatively by members of the public due to allegations of corruption, extortion, abuse of authority, and inability to effectively respond to growing security challenges. The increasing prevalence of armed robbery, kidnapping, and violent crimes has generated widespread public concern regarding the effectiveness of policing (Otu, Nnam and Uduka, 2018). Reports indicate that between January and May 2019 alone, more than 1,600 Nigerians lost their lives to various criminal activities (Nigeria Info, 2019). These security challenges, coupled with reports of unethical practices among some police officers, have significantly strained public confidence in the institution (Agwanwo and Ebere, 2020).

Scholars and practitioners increasingly recognize the relationship between police welfare and deviant behaviour as an important area of inquiry. Chronic occupational stress, financial hardship, burnout, and inadequate organizational support may contribute to unethical conduct among officers, thereby compromising departmental integrity and public trust. Conversely, supportive organizational policies and improved welfare initiatives can foster ethical behaviour and reduce the likelihood of workplace deviance. Understanding the relationship between police welfare and deviant behaviour is therefore essential for strengthening institutional effectiveness and restoring public confidence in law enforcement. Salary structure constitutes one of the most significant dimensions of police welfare because it determines the financial security and standard of living of officers and their families. Where salaries are inadequate or fail to correspond with occupational risks and responsibilities, officers may experience financial pressure, frustration, and dissatisfaction that could increase their vulnerability

to unethical practices. Such practices may include bribery, extortion, abuse of office, illegal collection of money from motorists, neglect of duty, and other forms of misconduct that undermine the integrity of the police institution.

The conservation of organizational values and the reputation of the police institution depends largely on the conduct of individual officers. Police officers are expected to perform their duties with honesty, integrity, fairness, and professionalism while avoiding behaviours such as drug abuse, alcoholism, workplace theft, sexual misconduct, extortion, and corruption (Florida Department of Education, 2019). Ethical policing is fundamental to maintaining public trust because police officers are entrusted with enforcing laws and protecting citizens from violations of their rights. According to Weisburd (2020), police deviant behaviour includes actions that violate professional ethics, organizational rules, and societal values. Such behaviour not only damages the integrity of individual officers but also undermines the credibility and legitimacy of the entire police institution. A police force characterized by unethical conduct struggles to establish meaningful partnerships with communities because public trust, which is essential for effective policing, becomes significantly weakened (Weisburd, 2020). Similarly, Punch (2019) argues that misconduct among police officers disrupts the critical relationship between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve, thereby affecting public safety and effective crime control.

Within the Rivers State Police Command, police officers operate in a complex security environment marked by violent crime, kidnapping, oil-related conflicts, cultism, and socio-political tensions. These operational realities require officers to maintain high standards of discipline and professionalism despite difficult working conditions. However, concerns have persisted regarding the adequacy of police remuneration and its potential influence on workplace behaviour. Financial constraints arising from inadequate salary structures may expose officers to temptations that compromise ethical standards and encourage deviant practices. Police welfare extends beyond salary to include healthcare, accommodation, training opportunities, psychological support, and workplace safety. Nevertheless, salary remains the most immediate and visible component of employee welfare because it directly addresses basic economic needs and influences job satisfaction and organizational commitment. When officers perceive their remuneration as inadequate relative to their responsibilities and occupational risks, they may experience diminished motivation and increased dissatisfaction, creating conditions that foster workplace deviance and unethical conduct.

Although previous studies have examined police welfare and deviant behaviour within the Nigeria Police Force, limited attention has been given to the specific influence of salary structure on deviant behaviour among police officers in Rivers State Command. This gap in the literature necessitates an empirical investigation into how remuneration policies affect officers' conduct and organizational performance. Against this background, this study examines how the police salary structure influences deviant behaviour among police officers in Rivers State Command. The study seeks to determine whether adequate and equitable remuneration can reduce unethical conduct, strengthen professionalism, improve organizational commitment, and enhance the effectiveness of policing within the command.

#### *Literature Review (Empirical Review)*

Several empirical studies have examined the relationship between police salary structure and deviant behaviour, producing mixed findings regarding the extent to which financial incentives influence officers' professional conduct. Okafor (2023) investigated the relationship between salary increments and deviant behaviour among police officers in Nigeria using a correlational research design. The study targeted police officers from various commands across the country and selected a sample of 300 respondents through a stratified random sampling technique to ensure adequate representation. Data were collected using the Police Officers' Deviant Behaviour and Salary Increment Questionnaire (PODS-BIQ) and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between salary increments and deviant behaviour, suggesting that officers who received higher salary increments exhibited increased tendencies toward corruption, abuse of power, and other unethical practices. The study further established that this relationship was more pronounced among senior-ranking officers than junior personnel. Okafor concluded that salary increments alone may not be sufficient to curb deviant behaviour without corresponding improvements in accountability and organizational ethics.

In contrast, Olatunji (2003) examined the influence of salary increments on deviant behaviour among police officers in Oyo State using a quantitative correlational research design. A sample of 300 police officers drawn through stratified random sampling participated in the study, while data were collected using the Salary Increment and Deviant Behaviour Questionnaire (SIDBQ). Pearson correlation and regression analyses were employed to test the hypotheses. The findings demonstrated a significant negative relationship between salary increments and deviant behaviour,

indicating that improved remuneration substantially reduced misconduct, corruption, and other unethical behaviours among officers. The study also revealed that lower-ranking officers benefited more from salary increases than senior officers, implying that financial incentives have a stronger behavioural impact on personnel at the lower levels of the police hierarchy. The author concluded that adequate remuneration serves as an effective motivational strategy for promoting ethical conduct and organizational discipline.

Similarly, Smith (2023) explored the relationship between salary increments and deviant behaviour among police officers in metropolitan police departments in the United States. Employing a quantitative correlational design, the study surveyed 300 police officers selected through stratified random sampling across different ranks and operational units. Data were collected using the Police Officer Behavioural Assessment Questionnaire (POBAQ) and analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficients and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The findings revealed a significant negative association between salary increments and deviant behaviour, demonstrating that officers who received regular salary adjustments exhibited lower levels of misconduct. Furthermore, the study found that the behavioural effects of salary increments were more evident among lower-ranking officers than among senior personnel, reinforcing the importance of financial motivation in promoting ethical behaviour and organizational commitment.

Further, Adebayo (2022) investigated the influence of salary increments on deviant behaviour among police officers in Lagos State, Nigeria, with the objective of determining whether improvements in financial compensation could promote ethical conduct within the police force. The study adopted a descriptive and correlational research design and selected 150 police officers through a stratified random sampling technique to ensure adequate representation across different ranks and units. Data were collected using the Police Officer Deviant Behaviour Questionnaire (PODBQ) and analyzed using descriptive statistics, paired t-tests, and regression analysis. The findings revealed a statistically significant decline in deviant behaviours, including corruption, absenteeism, and other forms of professional misconduct, following salary increments. The regression results further established that improved remuneration positively influenced officers' ethical behaviour and compliance with professional standards. The study concluded that an enhanced salary structure serves as a critical motivational mechanism capable of improving workplace discipline, strengthening organizational commitment, and reducing deviant tendencies among police personnel.

In a related study, Okeke (2022) examined the influence of salary increments on deviant behaviour among police officers in Anambra State using a descriptive survey research design. The study sampled 300 police officers through stratified random sampling based on rank and years of service and employed the Police Officer Salary Increment and Deviant Behaviour Questionnaire (POSIDBQ) as the primary instrument for data collection. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Contrary to the findings of Adebayo (2022), the study reported a significant positive relationship between salary increments and deviant behaviour, indicating that officers who received higher salary increases were more likely to engage in unethical practices such as corruption and misconduct. The study further revealed that lower-ranking officers and personnel with fewer years of service exhibited higher levels of deviant behaviour than their senior counterparts. Importantly, respondents expressed the view that salary increments, although beneficial, were insufficient to address broader concerns relating to job satisfaction, organizational justice, and professional conduct. The study therefore argued that financial incentives alone cannot effectively eliminate workplace deviance without complementary institutional reforms and stronger accountability mechanisms.

A critical examination of these empirical studies reveals divergent perspectives on the relationship between police salary structure and deviant behaviour. While Adebayo (2022) presents salary enhancement as an effective strategy for reducing misconduct through increased motivation and improved job satisfaction, Okeke (2022) contends that salary increments may not necessarily translate into ethical behaviour where organizational deficiencies such as weak supervision, poor accountability systems, and ineffective leadership persist. These contrasting findings suggest that the influence of salary structure on police behaviour is multidimensional and may be mediated by organizational culture, institutional integrity, and broader workplace conditions.

The inconsistencies in the existing literature underscore the need for further empirical inquiry within different policing environments. Specifically, there remains a paucity of evidence on how the prevailing salary structure influences deviant behaviour among officers in the Rivers State Police Command, where unique socio-economic and operational challenges may shape workplace conduct differently. Consequently, the present study seeks to bridge this empirical gap by providing context-specific evidence on the extent to which police salary structure affects deviant behaviour among officers in Rivers State, thereby contributing to

policy discussions on police welfare, organizational effectiveness, and institutional reform in Nigeria.

## Materials and Methods

This paper adopted a descriptive survey research design. The survey design is appropriate because it allows the researcher to collect data from a large population to describe the relationship between police welfare and deviant behaviour among officers (Best & Kahn, 2016). Descriptive surveys are particularly useful in examining existing conditions, perceptions, and behavioural patterns, making them ideal for investigating how various welfare models influence deviant behaviour in policing contexts. The design enables the researcher to employ quantitative analysis, ensuring objective measurement and testing of hypothesized relationships between independent variables (police welfare models) and the dependent variable (deviant behaviour).

### *Study Area*

The study was conducted in Rivers State, Nigeria, located in the South-South region and bordered by Bayelsa, Imo, Abia, and Akwa Ibom States. The state is culturally diverse, comprising ethnic groups such as Ikwerre, Ogoni, Kalabari, Okrika, Etche, Andoni, and others. It is an oil-rich and commercially significant state, politically divided into three senatorial districts—Rivers East, Rivers South-East, and Rivers West—and broadly classified into riverine and upland areas, inhabited mainly by farmers, fishermen, and traders. The Rivers State Police Command operates 9 Area Commands, 56 Divisional Headquarters, 25 Police Stations, and 40 Outposts, with a personnel strength of about 17,207 officers (Rivers State Police Command, 2023). Despite this structure, concerns about declining public trust and increasing incidents of police deviant behaviour in the state informed the choice of Rivers State as the study area.

### *Population of the Study*

The population of the study comprised all serving police officers in Rivers State Command, including officers across various ranks, departments, and units. According to official records from the Rivers State Police Command (2025), the total population was approximately 17,207 officers. The population encompasses officers directly involved in field operations, administrative roles, and support services, providing a comprehensive understanding of how welfare impacts behaviour across the command (Rivers State Police Command, 2023).

### *Sample Size Determination*

A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted to select police officers in Rivers State. First, cluster sampling was

used to classify the State Police Command into urban and rural areas. In the second stage, purposive sampling selected 5 Area Commands, 6 Divisions, and 6 Police Stations from the urban cluster, and 1 Area Command, 4 Divisions, and 4 Police Stations from the rural cluster. Finally, simple random sampling was used to select respondents: 26 officers from each Area Command, 18 from each Division, and 15 from each Police Station. This yielded a total of 290 officers from urban areas and 101 from rural areas, giving an overall sample size of 391 police officers.

#### *Nature/Sources of Data*

The nature of the study is quantitative. The source of data was both primary and secondary sources. Primary data source involved the administration of a questionnaire to sampled respondents, while the secondary data source was obtained through academic journals, internet source and newspaper publications.

#### *Methods of Data Collection/Instrumentation*

Two instruments were developed for the study: the Police Welfare Inventory (PWI) and the Police Deviant Behaviour Questionnaire (PDBQ). The PWI assessed police welfare, while the PDBQ measured deviant behaviour. Both instruments contained two sections: Section A captured respondents' bio-data, and Section B consisted of five items on each study variable, rated on a four-point scale (Very High Extent = 1, High Extent = 2, Low Extent = 3, Very Low Extent = 4).

Data were collected with the approval of the Rivers State Police Command, with the assistance of two research assistants during meetings, shifts, and training sessions. Respondents were informed about the study's purpose, confidentiality, and voluntary participation, and questionnaires were retrieved immediately to ensure a high response rate.

#### *Validity and Reliability of the Instrument*

Face and content validity were ensured through expert review by the researcher's supervisor and two specialists in questionnaire design at the University of Port Harcourt, whose corrections were incorporated. Reliability was established using the test-retest method with 30 copies administered to 5 police officers outside the sample. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation yielded reliability coefficients of 0.80 for the PWI and 0.79 for the PDBQ, indicating acceptable reliability.

#### *Method of Data Analysis*

The data analysis was done using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule:

- If  $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$ , reject the null hypothesis (significant influence exists).
- If  $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ , fail to reject the null hypothesis (no significant influence).

## **Results and Discussion**

The results in Table 1 above, indicate that salary significantly influences deviant behaviour among police officers in Rivers State Command (Grand Mean = 3.12, SD = 0.92). Respondents agreed that inadequate salary contributes to bribery and corruption (Mean = 3.50, SD = 0.87), encourages unauthorized absence from duty (Mean = 3.08, SD = 0.81), and leads to misuse of official resources (Mean = 2.91, SD = 0.96). They also indicated that improved salary structures reduce extortion at checkpoints (Mean = 2.97, SD = 1.01) and that fair compensation lowers involvement in criminal activities (Mean = 3.15, SD = 0.93). Overall, the findings show that adequate and fair salary structures play a key role in reducing deviant behaviour and promoting ethical conduct among police officers.

Table 1: Salary Influence and Deviance Behaviour

S/N	Salary and Deviant Behaviour among Police Officers	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D.	Remark
1.	Inadequate salary makes police officers engage in bribery and corruption.	219	59	21	20	3.50	0.87	Agreed
2.	Low salary structure leads to unauthorized duty absence among officers.	100	161	40	18	3.08	0.81	Agreed
3.	Poor remuneration encourages officers to misuse official resources for personal gain.	106	106	79	28	2.91	0.96	Agreed
4.	Improved salary structure reduces the tendency for extortion at checkpoints.	113	130	30	46	2.97	1.01	Agreed
5.	Fair compensation reduces officers' involvement in criminal activities.	140	115	37	27	3.15	0.93	Agreed
	<b>Grand Total</b>					<b>3.12</b>	<b>0.92</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

## Conclusion

This paper assessed the influence of police salary structure on deviant behaviour among officers of the Rivers State Police Command. It focuses on how salary levels and related remuneration issues shape officers' conduct, motivation, and adherence to professional standards. Findings indicate that salary structure has a significant influence on deviant behaviour. Inadequate remuneration is associated with increased tendencies toward unethical practices, while improvements in salary structure are linked to reduced misconduct and stronger discipline among officers. Overall, the study concludes that a fair and adequate salary structure is a key factor in minimizing deviant behaviour and promoting professionalism within the Rivers State Police Command.

In light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to improve welfare conditions and reduce deviant behaviour among police officers in the Nigeria Police Force. The Nigeria Police Force should improve salary administration to adequately meet officers' financial needs and reduce deviant behaviour. Promotion processes should be made regular, transparent, and merit-based to enhance motivation and reduce frustration among personnel. The incentive structure should also be reviewed to ensure fairness, consistency, and relevance to officers' duties. In addition, flexible work scheduling policies that promote work-life balance should be implemented across all units of the Command. A functional and accessible insurance scheme should be established to improve officers' welfare, security, and commitment to ethical policing. Finally, a government-led committee should be constituted to ensure effective implementation of police reform policies.

## Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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