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ETHICS AND GOVERNANCE OF THE NIGERIA POLICE FORCE: A STUDY OF THE LAGOS STATE POLICE COMMAND (2015-2016)

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Introduction

The Nigeria police force which is an organised security agency today was not always in that manner, the existence of security agencies can be traced as far back as the pre-colonial traditional society and colonial era. (Ojukwu, 2016) “It is known that both in ancient and contemporary times, nation states, cities and villages, organised, and still organise structures and services to keep their environments and people from attack and threats of attack.” In the traditional Nigeria society i.e before the arrival of the colonial masters the people were guarded and guided through a system of native laws, customs and sanctions gotten from traditional religion. The organised body which carried out the functions during that period was the age-grade system; the kwav was the age-grade that performed the function among the Tiv people, ilari in Oyo, Odi in Ijebu, amongst others.

The importance of security agencies cannot be over-emphasised as enforcing of law, maintenance of law and order, prevention and detection of crime is done by them. They are

numerous security offices saddled with the obligation of Nigeria's National security be it interior or outer, they are; the Army, Air Force, Navy, the Nigeria Police Force, and so on.

(Ojukwu, 2016) believes that the art of policing has always been an integral part of human psychology. He follows it to the beginning of creation that it has been basic for people to look out for what is theirs. This implies man has dependably in a way had a thought on policing regardless of how primitive it may have been. The threats facing the people might not be territorial alone, therefore there is a need to protect people from themselves, maintain peace, order, and social relationships.

By the arrival of the colonial masters all existing security unit were brought under the then Royal Niger Company (constabulary) to guide the life and property of the British nationals in 1861(Ikogho, 2006). Therefore the origin of the police force as an organised government agency in Nigeria is traced to 1861. It experienced many stages through the time the Royal Niger Company was at the seat of Nigeria, they made two police forces; Northern Nigeria Police Force and Southern Nigeria Police Force in the early times of the 1900's. By the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates the two major forces still operated differently not until April, 1930 when they were merged to form the modern Nigeria Police Force we all know today under the command of an Inspector General of Police and the headquarters in Lagos (Chukwuma, 2014).

By 1960 when Nigeria picked up her freedom from the British government there were trusts in the Nigeria Police force to be fundamentally redesigned since it would have been in a democratic rule setting and transformed from a colonial rule to a people's police service, yet that did not come to be. Therefore the government that took over from the colonial masters agreed

with the colonial structures of coercion, the only the thing that was changed was allegiance from the British crown to the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the crest symbol was changed to the Federal coat of arms.(Chukwuma, 2014)

The Nigeria Police Force is ruled by a Nigeria Police Council which comprises of the President of the nation as the Chairman, the Governor of each state, the Chairman of the police service commission and the Inspector-General of Police. The first Nigerian citizen to head the Nigeria Police force since its origin in 1930 was Inspector General of Police Lt. Louis Edet in 1964, ever since then eighteen other Nigerians have headed and led the force including the current IGP Ibrahim Kpotun Idris.

According to Alemika and Chukwuma (2000) and Ojukwu (2016) the Force is organized and covers 5,000 Village posts; 5,515 Police Stations; 1,115 Police divisions; 123 Area Commands; 37 Commands and the Force Headquarters(in FCT). Each of the 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory is aided by a Command of the Police Force. The Police Force Headquarters in Abuja is the office of the Inspector General of Police.

The Nigeria Police Force has been working to carry out a means to ensure that the internal security of the country is sustained, even with this effort, there seems to be increasing uncertainty in the order of the public, as reports of increasing crime rates such as armed robbery, the rise and presence of terrorist groups, assassinations, kidnapping and child trafficking, amongst others (Punch Newspaper, May 29, 2009). It was recorded that the murdering of 3 blameless subjects by a Sergeant James in Ketu, Lagos who was affected by liquor in the wake of slaughtering them he took his own life too (NaijNews, 2015). With the existence of all this the public sees the Police has incapable to eradicate crime. The general population likewise

scrutinizes the police in light of the numerous states of mind they put while playing out their obligations, (Davis, 2015) majority of the population dislike the police due to the pay off and blackmail, bribery, languid mentality to work and other unscrupulous practices. Public views of the police in Nigeria, as captured in surveys and in popular culture, are strongly negative, despite the many training and development the officers receive upon selection and training, why is that when they join the force then the many unruly behaviour kicks in. In this research, the knowledge of police officer on their ethics is identified, to understand how it is governed and the impact ethics has on the Nigeria Police Force. It's against this background the study examines the ethics and governance of Nigerian Police Force

Statement of the Problem

The Nigeria Police has not possessed the capacity to do their obligations in a way which the natives of the nation will acknowledge, recognize and support. Many reports of arrogance, torture, harassment, killings in some part of Lagos State, intimidation, rape, extra judicial killings in the North (summary execution) and other scandalous crimes perpetrated against the same citizens they ought to protect. It was recorded in Punch newspaper that a police officer (Inspector Mike Edem) killed an innocent citizen named Nduka few days to his wedding in NNPC mega station in Owerri, Imo state, to mention but a few. This to a large extent makes police-citizen relationships in the country to be characterized by mutual hostility and resentment. Despite its popularly known slogan: "Police is your Friend," most Nigerians see the police as an enemy that must be avoided.

As it is recorded that the recruitment and selection of police officers should be done by the Police service commission, the process of these is known to be good and validated. But upon entry into the police force or as full officers of the force that is when the officers begin to have or commit crimes and many atrocities. The question is; what causes it? is it that they are not properly trained in ethics? Or they are not closely governed? As a result that makes them venture into criminal activities or portray unethical and unacceptable behaviours. Hence the study looked at the ethics and governance of the Nigeria Police Force; A study of the Lagos State Police Command (2016-2018). While the objectives of this study are to examine the ethics of the Nigeria Police Force, to study the governance strategies of the Nigeria Police Force and to identify the implication of ethics on the Nigeria Police Force.

Concept of Ethics

“Ethics derives from the Greek word “ethikos” meaning custom. This Greek word has a Latin Synonym known as “mors” which translates to custom or mores. The mores of a particular place or group of people are the customs and behaviour that are typically found in that place or group. As a field of inquiry, ethics developed as a branch of philosophy, and this explains why it is referred to as moral philosophy or taken as being synonymous with morality.”(Ibietan& Joshua, 2013) Ethics is similar to morality simply because their meanings are closely related, it deals with moral principles; what we believe to be right and wrong

Dibie (2007) was of the strong opinion that ethics involves the use of reason in determining the proper course action. He went further to say Ethics could be regarded as the

search for moral standard. And moral standard means the means we use to determine if actions are right or wrong, just or unjust, etc.

Most scholars or researchers have closely and intertwined meanings about ethics, seeing it has a branch of philosophy which deals with moral principles, or as “as an inquiry into how men ought to act in general, not as a means to a given end, but as an end in itself” (Ekennia, 2003).

Ethics refers to the discipline dealing with what is good or bad and with moral duty and obligation. It is a set of moral principles or values; the rules or standards governing the conduct of the members of a profession, and streamlining their desired behaviours and attitude. (Ojukwu, 2016)



Code of Ethics

(Dibie, 2014) there are universal values and principles that govern ethics in all areas.

These values and principle include;

- Respect for other people
- Human equality
- Honesty
- Fairness.

The Nigerian Police Force is a sensitive agency of the government which deals with the enforcing of law, detection and prevention of crime, and the protection of life and property. As a

result it is essential for them to have a code of ethics or code of conduct that guide the police officers in the way and manner to operate has enforcers of the law.

Ethics of the Nigeria Police Force

Over the years the ethics of the Nigeria Police has been questioned because the way some officers of the police force act is quite disturbing. They've been report of various unethical behaviours portrayed by some officers in uniform giving the Nigeria Police Force a bad name in the sight of the citizens of the Country. The Nigeria Police Force makes provision for a code of conduct which contains its ethics each police officer to follow;

Code of conduct and professional standards for police officers

To achieve the Mission and Visions, it is beneficial to formulate a Code of Conduct for all Police officers employed into the Service of the Nigeria Police Force. "The code will be regarded as an accountability code that will apply to all officers (irrespective of rank) and will reflect International conventions for Law Enforcement Agents, the provisions of sections 353-368 of Part XV of the Police Act (cap 359) and other relevant Force Orders as well as Public Service Rules." However, the purpose of having a code of conduct is to provide all members for the Nigeria Police Force with a set of guiding principles and standards of behaviour while on or off duty. It is intended to be used by Police officers in determining what is right and proper in all their actions. The code should set an outline which every member of the Force can easily understand. It will enable Policemen to know what type of conduct by a Police officer is right and what is wrong. The code will encompass the following:

Primary Responsibilities of a Police Officer

“A police officer acts as an official representative of government who is required and trusted to work within the law. The officer’s powers and duties are conferred by statute. The fundamental duties of a police officer include serving the community, safeguarding lives and property, protecting the innocent, keeping the peace and ensuring the rights of all to liberty, equality and justice.

Performance of duties as a police officer

A police officer shall perform all duties impartially, without favor of affection or ill will and without regard to status, sex, race, religion, political belief or aspiration. All citizens will be treated equally with courtesy, consideration and dignity. Officers will never allow personal feelings, animosities or friendships to influence official conduct. Laws will be enforced appropriately and courteously and in carrying out their responsibilities, officers will strive to obtain maximum cooperation from the public. They will conduct themselves both in appearance and composure, in such a manner as to inspire confidence and respect for the position of public trust they hold.

Discretion

A Police officer will use responsibly, the discretion vested in his position and exercise it within the law.

Use of Force

A police officer will never employ unnecessary force or violence and will use only such force in discharge of duty, as is reasonable in all circumstances. The use of force should be used only after discussion, negotiation and persuasion have been found to be inappropriate or ineffective. While the use of force is occasionally unavoidable, every police officer will refrain

from unnecessary infliction of pain or suffering and will never engage in cruel, degrading or inhuman treatment of any person.

Confidentiality

Whatever a police officer sees, hears or learns which is of a confidential nature, will be kept secret unless the performance of duty or legal provision requires otherwise. Members of the public have a right to security and privacy, and information obtained about them must not be improperly divulged

Integrity

A police officer will not engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will an officer condone such acts by other police officers. The public demands that the integrity of police officers be above reproach. Police officers must therefore, avoid any conduct that might compromise integrity and that undercut the confidence reposed by the public, in the Police. Officers will refuse to accept any gifts, presents, subscriptions, favours, gratuities or promises that could be interpreted as seeking to cause the officer to refrain from performing official responsibilities honestly and within the law. Police officers must not receive private or special advantage from their official status. Respect from the public cannot be bought; it can only be earned and cultivated.

Cooperation with other Police Officers and Agencies

Police officers will cooperate with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice. An officer or agency may be one among many organizations that may provide law enforcement services to a jurisdiction. It is imperative that a police officer assists colleagues fully and completely with respect and consideration at all times;

Personal Professional Capabilities

Police Officers will be responsible for their own standard of professional performance and will take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve their level of knowledge and competence. Through study and experience, a police officer can acquire the high level of knowledge and competence that is essential for the efficient and effective performance of duty. The acquisition of knowledge is a never ending process of personal and professional development that should be pursued constantly.” (Source; Nigeria Police Code of Conduct)

Organizational structure of the Nigerian Police Force

The Nigerian police Force is further structured in line with the geopolitical structure of the Country, with provisions for supervisory formations. The structure formation enables Police operational of the internal Territory of Nigeria. The organizational structure of the Police Force is represented as shown below:

- Force Headquarters
- Zonal Headquarters
- State Commands Headquarters
- Divisional Police Headquarters
- Police Station
- Police Post
- Village Police Post

By this nature, the Police Operational crime fighting function is felt by the populace. The relevance of the structuring of the Police to the defence and internal security of the nation can be appreciated by the totality of Police role in internal security. The whole weight of the powers and duties of the Police are spread on the balance of these structures. A periodic assessment and review of these structures to determine their relevance in the scheme of the nation’s defence

mechanism has remained a traditional exercise in the Force, in order to catch-up with current global policing strategies as prescribed in international defence policies (Source: www.npf.gov.ng)

Discussion of Demographic Data of Respondents

Table 1: Sex					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Male	187	68.0	68.0	68.0
	Female	88	32	32	100.0
	Total	275	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey (2018)

The above table shows the gender distribution of the respondents. Out of the total population under consideration, 187 respondents representing 68% of the population represent male folks while 88 respondents representing 32% represent female folks respectively.

Table 2: Age Distribution					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	16 – 20	2	.7	.7	.7
	21 – 25	21	7.6	7.6	8.4
	25 – 35	99	36.0	36.0	44.4
	36 – 46	108	39.3	39.3	83.6
	46 – above	45	16.4	16.4	100.0

	Total	275	100.0	100.0	
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Source: Field Survey (2018)

The table above shows the respondents age range. Of the total population under study, 2 respondents representing 7% falls within the 16 – 20 age bracket group while another 21 respondents representing 7.6 % falls within the 21 – 25 age bracket. Also, another 99 respondents falls within 25 – 35 age bracket while another 108 respondents representing 39.3%, the remaining 45 respondents representing 16.4% falls with the age bracket of 46 - Above group.

Table 3: Marital status					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Single	25	9.1	9.1	9.1
	Married	237	86.2	86.2	95.3
	Separated	1	3.3	3.3	98.5
	Divorced	1	.4	.4	98.9
	Widowed	3	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	275	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey (2018)

Table 3 above shows the respondents marital status. Of the total population under study, 25 respondents representing 9.1% were within the single category and another 237 respondents representing 86.2% falls within the Married category 9 respondents representing 3.3% falls within separate category and another 1 respondent representing 0.4 % falls within the divorced category. The remaining 3 respondents representing 1.1% falls within the widowed category.

Table 4: Religion Affiliation					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative

				percent	percent
Valid	Christianity	171	62.2	62.2	62.2
	Muslim/Islam	90	32.7	32.7	94.9
	Traditional	10	3.6	3.6	98.5
	Others	4	1.5	1.5	100
	Total	275	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey (2018)

Table 4 above shows the respondents' statistics on their religion affiliation. 170 respondents representing 62.2% were from the Christian folks while another 90 respondents representing 32.7% represents the Muslim/Islam folks. Another 10 respondents representing 3.6% were from traditional folks while the remaining 4 respondents representing 1.5% of the respondents were from others category.

Table 5: Educational qualification					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Primary School	1	.4	.4	.4
	Secondary School	90	32.7	32.7	33.1
	ND/HND	75	27.3	27.3	60.4
	NCE/DIPLOMA	65	23.6	23.6	84.0
	University Degree	44	16.0	16.0	100.0
	Total	275	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey (2018)

The table above shows the respondents statistics on the educational qualifications of the respondents. 1 respondent representing 4% came from primary school while 90 respondents representing 32.7% came from the Senior Secondary School (SSS) category. Another 75 respondent representing 27.3% came from ND/HND category while another 65 respondents representing 23.6% came from the NCE/Diploma category. The remaining 44 respondents representing 16 % came from the graduate category.

Table 6: Rank					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	IG, DIG, AIG	8	2.9	2.9	2.9
	CP,DCP,ACP	22	8.0	8.0	10.9
	CSP, DSP	21	7.6	7.6	18.5
	ASP, IP	95	34.5	34.5	53.1
	Sergeant, Corporal, Constable	129	46.9	46.9	100.0
	Total	275	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey (2018)

Table 6 above shows the respondents statistics of the officers designation at their various duty posts, of the total population under consideration, 8 respondents representing 2.9 % of the population under study falls within the IG DIG and AIG category while 22 respondents representing 8.0% falls within the CP, DCP, and ACP category, 21 respondents representing 7.6 % falls within CSP and DSP category while another 95 and 129 respondents representing 34.5% and 46.9% respectively falls within the ASP, IP and sergeant, corporal and constable respectively.

Data Analysis of Respondents and Interpretation

Table 7: B1: Nigeria Police force has a code of conduct that contains her ethics?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	199	72.4	72.4	72.4
	Agree	60	21.8	21.8	94.2
	Strongly Disagree	5	1.8	1.8	96.0
	Disagree	11	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	275	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey (2018)

The above table 7 shows the distribution of the respondents on whether the Nigeria Police force has a code of conduct that contains her ethics or not . The population under study witnessed (199 + 60 = 259) respondents representing (72.4 + 21.8% = 94.2%) respectively strongly agreed and agreed that Nigeria Police force has a code of conduct that contains her ethics another (5+11 = 16) respondents representing 1.8 % and 4.0 % respectively strongly disagree and disagree that the Nigeria Police Force does not have a code of conduct that contains her ethics. From the above analysis, it the total percentage of those that agree that the Nigeria Police Force has a code of conduct that contains her ethics outweigh that of those that disagree with the above mentioned statement.

Table 8: B2: Ethics is a set of guiding principles and standard of behavior?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	140	50.9	50.9	50.9
	Agree	113	41.1	41.1	92.0
	Strongly Disagree	9	3.3	3.3	95.3
	Disagree	13	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	275	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey (2018)

The above table shows the distribution of the respondent's opinion on whether the ethics is a set of guiding principles and standard of behaviour for the Nigeria Police Force or not. Of the total population under study (140 + 113 = 253) respondents representing (50.9 + 41.1% = 92.0%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that the ethics is a set of guiding principles and standard of behaviour while the remaining (9 + 13 = 22) respondents representing (3.3 + 4.7 = 8.0%) strongly disagree and disagree with the statement. From the analysis above, the percentage of those that agreed that the ethics is a set of guiding principles and standard of behaviour for the Nigeria Police Force that is 92% strongly agreed and agree while the remaining 8% strongly disagree and agree.

Table 9: B3: Code of conduct enlightens officers on what is right and what is wrong?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	153	55.6	55.6	55.6
	Agree	102	37.1	37.1	92.7
	Strongly Disagree	8	2.9	2.9	95.6
	Disagree	12	4.4	4.4	100.0
	Total	275	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey (2018)

Table 9 shows the distribution of the respondent's opinion on whether the code of conduct enlightens officers on what is right and what is wrong or not. From the above analysis, (153 + 102 = 255) respondents representing (55.6 + 37.1% = 92.7%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that the code of conduct enlightens the Nigeria Police officers on what is right and wrong while the remaining (8 + 12 = 20) respondents representing (2.9 + 4.4 = 7.3%) strongly disagree and disagree about the statement. The analysis shows that the percentage of those that strongly agree and agreed surpass that of their counterpart that disagreed with the above written statement.

Table 10: B4: Regulations are put in place to check the activities of officers?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	155	56.4	56.4	56.4
	Agree	103	37.5	37.5	93.8
	Strongly Disagree	8	2.9	2.9	96.7
	Disagree	9	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	275	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey (2018)

Table 10 shows respondent's opinion on whether there are regulations put in place to check the activities of the officers or not. The analysis above shows that (155 +103 = 258) respondents representing (56.4+ 37.5% = 93.9%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that the regulations are put in place to check the activities of officer of the Nigeria Police force while the remaining (8+9= 17) respondents representing (2.9 + 3.3 = 6.2%) does not agree with the statement. The statistics shows that the percentage of those that strongly agree and agree that regulations are put in place to check the activities of the officers was put at (93.9%)while those that do not agree was put at 6.2%. Hence, 93.9% statistics will be upheld.

Table 11: B5:Ethics of the Nigeria Police Force applies to all officers irrespective of the rank?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	152	55.3	55.3	55.3
	Agree	92	33.5	33.5	88.7
	Strongly Disagree	16	5.8	5.8	94.5
	Disagree	15	5.5	5.5	100.0
	Total	275	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey (2018)

Table 11 shows respondent's opinion on whether the ethics of the Nigeria Police Force applies to all officers irrespective of their rank or not. The analysis above shows that $(152 + 92 = 244)$ respondents representing $(55.3 + 33.5 = 88.8\%)$ strongly agreed and agreed respectively that the ethics of the Nigeria Police force applies to all officers irrespective of their ranks while the remaining $(16 + 15 = 31)$ respondents representing $(5.8 + 5.5 = 11.3\%)$ does not agree with the statement. The statistics shows that the percentage of those that strongly agree and agree that the ethics of the Nigeria police force is more than that of those that do not agree with the statement. Hence, it is observed that ethics in the Nigeria police force applies to all the officer irrespective of their ranks.

Table 12: B7: The Presence of the code of conduct affects or betters police-citizen relationship?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	105	38.2	38.2	38.2
	Agree	123	44.7	44.7	82.9
	Strongly Disagree	12	4.4	4.4	87.3
	Disagree	35	12.7	12.7	100.0
	Total	275	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey (2018)

The table above shows respondent's view on whether the presence of the code of conduct affects or betters police–citizen relationship. Of the total population under study, (105 +123 = 228) respondents representing (38.2+ 44.7 = 82.9%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that the presence of the code of conduct better police –citizen relationship while the remaining (12+35=47) respondents representing (4.4 + 12.7 = 17.1%) does not agree with the statement. The statistics shown above clearly distinguishes that the presence of the code of conduct to better the police citizen relationship rather than affecting it in a negative way.

Summary

This research set out to look into the ethics and governance of the Nigeria Police Force and took on Lagos police command as a case study in order to achieve validated result. The research viewed the code of conduct of the Nigeria police force which clearly states its ethics. The document noted that it was a set of guiding principle and standard of behavior for all officers of the police force. The document details the way their expected to act as upholders of the law be

it on or off duty. As a result of these we can conclude that a good number of police officers are aware of the ethics of the Nigeria Police Force, but some are lacking in that area partially cause as a result of the field study some questionnaires were not filled because they claimed not to understand it upon its simplicity and some respondents chose wrongly.

Conclusion

This research concludes that majority of the police officers are aware of their ethics while a few do not know about their ethics based on their responses. Also that Ethics has a good impact or effect on the Nigeria Police Force, and it also affects the activities of the police officers positively. Also it was concluded that the governance strategies of the Nigeria Police Force is one which is accountable and transparent. The policies of the Nigeria Police are nationally regulated which means whatever applies in the federal capital territory applies in every state, local government area and community. The study also concluded through its hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between ethics and governance of the Nigeria Police Force, both phenomenal are inter twined and dependent on each other good.

Finally the research agrees with the view of Ibietan and Joshua (2013) which is that the country should adapt a strategy that is anchored with sound public service values and enduring ethical practices. If the Nigeria Police Force along with other security forces adapts this strategy they will be no presence of corruption in the country and development will begin to kick in.

Recommendations

- The police officers of the Nigeria police force should continually undergo training and development centered on ethics and public service delivery all through their service years.

- Body camera should be provided for each police officer on their uniforms so those carrying out unethical activities of officers could be identified easily and be discharged from the Nigeria police force dishonorably. This practice is done in the United States of America and it is really productive.
- The Nigeria Police watch platform (the platform to report police crimes) should be improved so that when citizens report unethical and corrupt Nigeria police officers they can know that their reports have been heard,
- Also officers that have been caught practicing unethical behaviors should be publicly punished so that all citizens including every police officer can also know about it which will make them to act right.
- The Nigeria Police should also be more lenient with their dissemination of information to citizens who carry out research on the police force.

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