



Police officers' assessments of factors that contribute to police corruption in Ghana

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Abstract

Purpose: Police corruption – the use or misuse of entrusted power for personal, institutional, or third-party advantage, is widespread in emerging economies. Encounters with justice officials in developing nations often involve the payment of bribes, which undermines justice delivery and impedes socio-economic development. Efforts to tackle or address corruption are usually complex due to the secretive nature of corruption, its perceived benefit to both victims and perpetrators and a lack of consensus on the causes. This article investigates the causes of police corruption from the viewpoint of Ghanaian police officers.

Design/methodology/approach: The study draws on data from a survey of police officers across three regions in Ghana. Descriptive, correlational, and linear regression analyses are used to address the issues.

Findings: The results show that factors contributing to police corruption are classified into financial, cultural, institutional, and oversight/guidance. We found that police officers' consideration of a factor as a cause of police corruption is influenced by their perceptions of other factors as causes of corruption.

Practical implications: The results show that corruption causes should not be tackled in isolation as they depend on each other. This suggests that a holistic approach needs to be taken when developing strategies to address the causes of police corruption.

Originality/value: This paper contributes to the debate on the causes of police corruption from an African perspective, where there is little quantitative research exploring the causes of police corruption. Control variables do not impact officers' perceptions of causes of corruption, which contradicts previous studies and contributes to the debate, literature, and theory development.

Keywords: financial pressure, culture of corruption, deterrence, police corruption, oversight and guidance, Ghana

Introduction

Criminal justice systems (CJSs) and institutions such as the police play crucial roles in government administration. In addition to symbolising law, legitimacy and the rule of law, criminal justice systems and institutions provide avenues for people who are wronged to seek justice and/or address grievances (Amagnya, 2020). However, criminal justice institutions, especially the police and judiciary, are often perceived by citizens as the most corrupt public institutions (see Pring and Vrushi, 2019; Karstedt, 2014). In developing countries, the levels of perceived corruption in justice institutions and among officials are frequently supported by actual experiences of corruption by citizens (Amagnya, 2019; Søreide, 2016). So, given the pervasive character of corruption in developing nations like Ghana (see Amagnya, 2019), are there peculiar factors that contribute to corruption in the criminal justice system? Due to limited studies examining the causes of criminal justice corruption in developing nations, this question cannot be readily answered.

This paper addresses this gap and contributes to the discussion on corruption in the criminal justice system by analysing survey data from Ghanaian police officers from three regions to identify perceived causes of corruption in the Ghana Police Service (GPS). Also, the study ascertains whether individual characteristics and contextual conditions of police officers influence their perceptions of factors that facilitate or contribute to police corruption in Ghana. Thus, the study explores the complex interplay between individual characteristics, the immediate context, and corruption within the GPS from the perspectives of police officers. This study is important because corruption in criminal justice, particularly in developing countries, affects vulnerable individuals who lack the financial resources to pay for justice, let alone pay bribes to secure (in)justice (Amagnya, 2023b). In addition, corruption in justice systems allows the affluent and influential to get away with crimes by paying bribes to justice officials in exchange for favourable decisions (Amagnya, 2020).

1
2 Also, when public officials who are to uphold the law engage in unlawful activities, it
3
4 undermines the public's trust and confidence in institutions and officials (Pogrebin and
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6 Atkins, 1976; Akinlabi, 2020). We argue that it is important to investigate the causes of
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8 police corruption because identifying and understanding the causes can help to adopt
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10 measures to eradicate corrupt practices and ensure justice is fairly administered for the
11
12 benefit of everyone, especially the poor and vulnerable.
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15 **Causes, Enablers or Triggers of Corruption**

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18 Corruption, which refers to using or misusing entrusted authority for personal or
19
20 organisational gain (Li, 2012), is a subject of extensive research and debate. However, it is
21
22 often challenging to provide a comprehensive account or systematic classification of the
23
24 causes of corruption due to the complexity and multiplicity of factors that contribute to
25
26 corruption (Caiden et al., 2001). Nonetheless, efforts have been made to organise causes of
27
28 corruption into different categories. For instance, Caiden et al. (2001) categorised causes of
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30 corruption into psychological, ideological, external, economic, political, sociocultural, and
31
32 technological conditions (p. 21–26). Also, Fijnaut and Huberts (2002) put factors explaining
33
34 public corruption cases into social, economic, political, organisational, and individual
35
36 categories. Forson et al. (2016) categorised the causes of corruption in sub-Saharan African
37
38 countries into historical, contemporary, and institutional. Gorta (1998) classified the causes of
39
40 corruption according to the nature of the work performed, working conditions, individual
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42 histories and dependencies, organisational culture, non-identification of improper behaviour,
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44 and factors affecting anti-corruption efforts. Other common categories of corruption causes
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46 include social, economic, political, individual, cultural, institutional and external environment
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48 (Rose-Ackerman, 1999; Mills, 2012).
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55 Analysing data from multiple sources, Forson et al. (2016) discovered that wage levels,
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57 anti-corruption measures, government efficacy, and regulatory quality contribute to
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1 significant corruption. However, press freedom, ethnic diversity, abundance of resources, and
2 educational attainment were correlated with lower levels of corruption. Dong and Torgler
3
4 (2013) found in China that provinces with greater anti-corruption efforts, higher educational
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6 attainment, historical influence from Anglo-American church universities, greater openness,
7
8 greater access to the media, higher relative wages for employees, and a greater representation
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10 of women in the legislature have less corruption. However, abundant resources and
11
12 regulations, social heterogeneity, and economic growth generate substantial corruption (Dong
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14 and Torgler, 2013). Using interviews, focus groups, and observations, Nadeem and Qureshi
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16 (2020) identified the politicisation of the police, cultural practices, and economic conditions,
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18 such as lack of operational resources and poor wages, as primary causes of police corruption
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20 in Pakistan.
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27 Reviewing theories and explanations of police corruption in social science literature,
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29 Pogrebin and Atkins (1976) developed a conceptual framework for studying the causes of
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31 police corruption. The framework focused on individual failings (e.g., low moral calibre of
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33 police recruits), organisational structures of institutions or departments that establish norms
34
35 and role expectations, lack of deterrence, and consensus on victimless crimes (Pogrebin and
36
37 Atkins, 1976). They argued that police corruption is not an exclusive deviance of individual
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39 officers, but a group behaviour guided by contradictory norms in organisations to which
40
41 erring individuals belong (Roebuck and Barker, 1974: 425). While some recent studies agree
42
43 that police corruption is a systemic organisational problem (Nadeem and Qureshi, 2020;
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45 Singh, 2019; Hope, 2018c), others have a different view. Adisa et al. (2018), for instance,
46
47 argue that police corruption is not just a derailment from ethical standards but a symptom of
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49 moral decadence facing the larger part of societies: society accepts corruption as a way of life
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51 and a means to access public services (Hope, 2016).
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57 Subcultures in police agencies perpetuated through the socialisation of new officers
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1 allow deviant means and practices to be seen as normative police behaviour. A key part of
2
3 police agencies is the informal prohibition of reporting misconduct by fellow police officers
4
5 (code of silence), which police officers sometimes regard as a greater subcultural value than
6
7 honesty and lawfulness. Evidence shows that breaching the code of silence can lead to the
8
9 worst form of sanction an officer can receive: deprivation of colleagues' support in time of
10
11 need, exclusion from informal communication or networks, or colleagues refusing to work
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13 with them (see Amagnya, 2023c; Sundström, 2016). Resorting to secrecy frees police officers
14
15 from the constraints of public demands and allows them to participate in criminal activities
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17 (Kutnjak Ivković, 2005). The code of secrecy can be a key contributor to widespread corrupt
18
19 activities in police agencies (Kutnjak Ivković et al., 2018).
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25 Focusing on organisational characteristics, some writers advanced the view that the
26
27 nature of the police profession encourages corruption (Singh, 2022). Thus, the occupational
28
29 structure and the nature of the police profession provide opportunities for the rank and file to
30
31 develop cynical attitudes toward their jobs and perceive police work as a business (Pogrebin
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33 and Atkins, 1976; Amagnya, 2023c; Amagnya, 2020). Police officers who internalise
34
35 cynicism may place much value on attaining material goods, leading to engaging in corrupt
36
37 activities or a tendency to find excuses for corruption. Also, cynicism can flow from top to
38
39 bottom as attitudes and ethical standards of police administrators or supervisors are
40
41 transmitted directly to lower personnel. Therefore, police supervisors and executives can
42
43 significantly influence the formation of corrupt attitudes because when frontline officers see
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45 those in command as condoning dishonesty, then their idea of what is and what is not proper
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47 police conduct is likely to be based on their own concept of departmental norms (Skolnick,
48
49 1966). Moreover, when police officers become committed to subcultural values, they
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51 exchange police authority for graft and legitimise or justify corrupt behaviours (Nadeem and
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53 Qureshi, 2020).
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2 The police are often exempt from being policed through monitoring and supervision,
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4 which leads to little assurance of punishment and deterrence (Pogrebin and Atkins, 1976). In
5
6 addition, officers rarely report their corrupt peers to authorities, partly due to the code of
7
8 secrecy and the fear of counter-allegations of misconduct against reporting officers (Ede,
9
10 2000; Pogrebin and Atkins, 1976). A dominant subculture observed in most police agencies
11
12 generally discourages disclosing aberrant occupational behaviour and actively suppresses
13
14 efforts to expose unlawful actions among law enforcement officers (Kutnjak Ivković et al.,
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16 2018). As a result, individuals who opt to disclose instances of wrongdoing by their
17
18 colleagues in law enforcement may encounter retaliatory counteraccusations of misbehaviour
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20 (Ede, 2000). Moreover, there seems to be a deficiency in the guarantee of punishment
21
22 administered by investigative authorities. The efficacy of internal control measures within
23
24 most police agencies is often lacking, while external scrutiny is typically met with strong
25
26 opposition from local police associations and unions (Amagnya, 2023c). As a result, it is
27
28 commonly observed that police officers are not typically dissuaded by the presence of
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30 regulatory and accountability agencies or the possibility of disciplinary actions within their
31
32 department when it comes to engaging in unlawful conduct. This is due mainly to a
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34 prevailing belief among most officers that they are unlikely to face any repercussions for their
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36 involvement in corrupt transactions.
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43 In the Ghanaian context, Agbodohu and Churchill (2014) argue that a lack of
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45 transparency, accountability, and consistency, alongside vulnerabilities present in institutions,
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47 create favourable conditions for the widespread occurrence of rent-seeking activities. This
48
49 argument highlights the extensive impact of structural deficiencies within the nation's
50
51 governance systems and legal frameworks. This finding is further corroborated by Amagnya
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53 (2019), whose empirical study with justice and anti-corruption officials, including police
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55 officers, reveals the existence of three main factors that significantly contribute to the
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1 pervasiveness of corruption in Ghana's justice system: opportunities, motivation, and
2 weaknesses in guardianship. Opportunities refers to internal structures and procedures such as
3 extensive procedural difficulties, extended delays in criminal processes, discretionary powers
4 granted to authorities, and a lack of transparency and accountability systems that intrinsically
5 enable the occurrence of corrupt practices. The presence of these systemic defects creates
6 favourable conditions for the manifestation of corrupt practices.
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15 The "motivation" aspect revolves around the inherent incentives that drive officials to
16 partake in corrupt practices. The motivations discussed in this context include insufficient
17 remuneration, individual avarice, loyalty to familial connections, and insufficient allocation
18 of resources to justice establishments. Insufficient remuneration and the enticing prospect of
19 personal benefits are significant factors that motivate officials to engage in corrupt practices.
20 Finally, "guardianship weakness" pertains to deficiencies in control mechanisms and
21 processes (e.g., inadequate supervision and monitoring, non-disclosure of corrupt behaviours,
22 and a general deficiency in self-regulatory measures) that facilitate the proliferation of
23 corrupt practices. These vulnerabilities in guardianship further amplify corruption in Ghana's
24 criminal justice domain, emphasising the necessity for extensive reform and enhanced
25 supervision (Amagnya, 2019). The preceding discussion shows that possible causes or
26 enablers of corruption can be put into different typologies, including social, economic,
27 political, organisational, and individual.
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45 Nevertheless, it has been argued that when examining the causes of corruption, it is
46 appropriate to approach the topic as an exploration of the processes and factors that
47 contribute to the occurrence of corruption rather than attempting to identify singular,
48 deterministic causes (see Mills, 2012; Tankebe, 2019; Akinlabi, 2017; Amagnya and
49 Akinlabi, 2023). Mills (2012) highlights that investigations conducted in this domain
50 commonly reveal intricate interactions among situational dynamics, attitudes, and processes,
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1 which can be characterised as factors that indicate, create, or facilitate situations favourable
2 for corrupt practices without being direct causes of such practices (p. 7). These factors
3 encompass observable or believed events and risk aspects that can increase the probability of
4 corruption or foster an environment conducive to individuals' involvement in corrupt
5 practices. It is imperative to underscore that although these characteristics are not
6 deterministic causes, they function as indicators identifying places and possibilities where
7 interventions can be implemented to mitigate future occurrences of corruption proactively.
8 The current study makes a valuable contribution to the existing academic discourse by
9 examining different factors police officers perceive as enabling or contributing to corruption
10 within the GPS.

25 **Context of the Study**

27 This study explores the causes of police corruption in Ghana. Ghana is one of the most robust
28 democracies in Africa, with a fast-growing economy, vibrant media, and a functional justice
29 system (Freedom House, 2023; Amagnya, 2024a). However, widespread public perceptions
30 and experience of corruption in criminal justice institutions like the police seriously threaten
31 justice delivery. For example, several studies have cited the police as highly corrupt and
32 among public institutions perceived as the most corrupt (see Pring and Vrushi, 2019).
33 Specifically, Afrobarometer surveys reported that over 89% of Ghanaians perceived police
34 officers as corrupt (Afrobarometer, 2017; Afrobarometer, 2020a). Apart from Nigeria (90%),
35 Ghana's corruption figure of over 89% is higher than African countries that are similar to
36 Ghana in terms of democracy and economic growth, such as Cote D'Ivoire (88%), South
37 Africa (79%), Botswana (62%), and Kenya (81%) (Afrobarometer, 2020b). Also, in 2015, an
38 undercover journalist secretly captured 34 judges and hundreds of other justice officials,
39 including police officers, accepting bribes to manipulate criminal justice processes and
40 decisions (see Anas Aremeyaw, 2015; BBC News, 2015). This investigation confirmed long-

1 standing and widespread public perceptions of corruption in Ghana's justice system.

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4 Widespread public perceptions of corruption in Ghana's justice system are partly
5
6 attributed to social relationships and tribal and kinship networks, which are an integral part of
7
8 Ghanaian society and a significant source of esteem and status (Tankebe et al., 2019b;
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10 Amagnya, 2024b). Most people in Ghana are bound to traditional communities through
11
12 kinship networks that influence the structuring and governance of public institutions and
13
14 contribute to corruption (Amagnya, 2024b). Indeed, Tankebe et al. (2019b) found that
15
16 commitment to kinship networks and social relations drives public officials in Ghana to
17
18 engage in corruption for the benefit of their families and friends. Moreover, in Ghana, people
19
20 likely to be convicted and sanctioned for criminal behaviour use kinship networks and social
21
22 relations to influence decisions of judges and police officers (Amagnya, 2020). Also, high
23
24 perceptions of corruption in Ghana's justice institutions result from justice institutions and
25
26 officials not complying and adhering to due processes during criminal trials (Freedom House,
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28 2023; Amagnya, 2023a; Amagnya, 2022a).

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34 Corruption within criminal justice institutions and its perceived presence severely
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36 undermines the delivery of justice, erodes the foundation of the rule of law, and significantly
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38 impedes economic development (Amagnya, 2020). For instance, police officers' desire to
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40 make quick wealth influences police enforcement of arrests, investigation and prosecution of
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42 criminal cases (Tankebe, 2013). Police officers who desire to make quick wealth do not
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44 comply with due processes, a rampant phenomenon in Ghana's justice system (Freedom
45
46 House, 2023). Again, high public perceptions of corruption in the justice sector result in
47
48 deep-seated public distrust of justice officials. For instance, a 2020 Afrobarometer survey of
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50 Ghanaians revealed a drop in trust from 2017 for the police (18% to 15%) and judiciary (26%
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52 to 16%) (Afrobarometer, 2017; Afrobarometer, 2020b). Over eighty per cent of Ghanaians
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54 have little or no trust in the two key institutions of the justice system, which can affect justice
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1 administration, governance, and overall security (Tankebe et al., 2019a). Despite widespread
2 public perceptions of corruption in Ghana's justice system and its effect on justice delivery
3 and trust in justice institutions and officials, few studies have explored the causes of
4 corruption from the perspectives of justice officials (Amagnya, 2020).
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10 Addressing this gap, the current research explores conditions believed to cause or
11 enable corruption in the GPS. Focusing on police corruption in Ghana is very important
12 because most transition countries are corruption hotspots with the police at the centre (see
13 Oberoi, 2013; Powell, 2016). Also, many global businesses are projected to move to
14 developing African economies in the 21st and 22nd centuries (Oberoi, 2013; Biegelman and
15 Biegelman, 2010). Ghana will attract substantial businesses moving to Africa due to its
16 robust and stable democracy, production of crude oil in commercial quantities, and being a
17 suitable African country to do business (Amagnya, 2023c; World Bank, 2019). While global
18 businesses will support African countries' economic growth and prosperity, they can
19 exacerbate corruption in a continent already suffering from high corruption. So, exploring the
20 causes of corruption in the justice sector will allow international companies or businesses
21 moving to Africa to understand the challenges they may encounter in the corruption sector.
22 Most importantly, it will assist institutions in addressing corruption, freeing themselves of
23 corruption, or being ready to handle increases in corruption when global businesses shift to
24 Africa.
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45 **Methods**

46 **Data**

47 The data for this study was obtained from police officers in Ghana across three of the then ten
48 regions from July 2017 to February 2018. Ghana is now divided into 16 regions after six new
49 regions were created from Brong Ahafo, Northern, Western, and Volta regions in December
50 2018 (Asare, 2020). The data was collected using surveys, with questions developed based on
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1 existing literature on corruption. The choice of the questions was predicated on the
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4 acknowledgment that corruption is a multifaceted problem driven by a myriad of contributing
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6 factors. Due to the intricate nature of the subject matter, it poses considerable difficulty in
7
8 ascertaining the true essence of the utmost importance within the realm of corruption. So, the
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10 survey was designed to examine diverse aspects and complexities of corruption, elucidating
11
12 its multiple characters and the subtle dynamics of the causes that shape it.
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16 Station officers and divisional and district commanders were pivotal in facilitating
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18 access during the research visits. The first author was introduced to officers on duty at the
19
20 respective police stations. Subsequently, the researcher provided a comprehensive briefing to
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22 the officers, elucidating the study's objectives, the voluntary nature of participation, the
23
24 assurance of anonymity for their responses, and the procedures for survey completion. Any
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26 queries or concerns raised by the officers were addressed at this stage. Following this
27
28 informative session, physical surveys were distributed to all officers present at the stations.
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30 Particular care was taken to ensure that colleagues could not discern the identity of officers
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32 who had indeed completed the survey, thus safeguarding anonymity throughout the process.
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37 During the research project, police officers were asked to indicate their level of
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39 agreement or disagreement with a series of twenty statements that covered a broad range of
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41 factors. These factors encompassed various dimensions such as social, societal, economic,
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43 political, and organisational aspects, including cultural, structure, and leadership elements. In
44
45 addition, the study also examined individual characteristics, including norms, values, and
46
47 income. Before administering the survey, all participants were presented with clear
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49 instructions and were afforded the chance to request clarification on any aspect of the study.
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51 Following that, police officers were given instructions to put their completed surveys into
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53 envelopes provided to them and then placed them into a designated box in the secretariats of
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55 divisional or district commanders and station officers.
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To uphold ethical standards, all participants needed to provide their informed consent by signing consent forms before participating in the survey. On average, the survey required around 25 minutes of the participants' time. After the administration of the surveys, the chief investigator revisited the designated places within two weeks to retrieve the surveys that had been completed and returned by the participants. Nevertheless, to accommodate the possibility that some officers may have submitted their surveys after the initial two-week timeframe, an additional round of survey collecting was carried out throughout all areas at the end of the fieldwork period. Upon the completion of the data collection period, a sum of 780 surveys were received out of the 900 administered. However, 168 were not sufficiently completed and excluded from the analysis. Thus, 616 surveys, representing a response rate of about 68%, were analysed. The surveys conducted in this study had a wide-ranging scope, including 35 police districts across five divisions in Greater Accra, six divisions in Ashanti, and the entire Upper East Regional Police Command.

Measures

This study explores four key variables using questions or statements from the corruption literature. Officers were presented with twenty statements and asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with each statement as a cause of police corruption. Each statement was followed by a five-point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. We ran a principal component analysis to generate the four key variables and ascertain which items belong to each scale (see Appendix). The extracted scales are financial pressure, a culture of corruption, level of deterrence, and institutional (in)action, which serve as dependent and determinant variables. This allows us to determine whether the perception of one form of cause influences the perception of another. The following section discusses how the four key scales are measured and their Cronbach alpha coefficients.

Culture of Corruption

The culture of corruption scale explores officers' perception of the general nature, extent, and

1 attitudes toward corruption in Ghana. This scale is included in the study because prior
2 research suggests a corruption culture exists in Ghana (Agbota et al., 2015). The culture of
3 corruption scale is measured with eight items: 'Paying and taking bribes is common in Ghana
4 (i.e., everybody does it)'; 'Some Ghanaian practices promote corruption'; and 'Politicians in
5 Ghana are corrupt'. The scale scores ranged from 8 to 40, with a mean of 27.70 and a
6 Cronbach reliability score of 0.83. A higher score depicts greater perceptions of a culture of
7 corruption and vice versa.

18 **Institutional (In)action**

19 Actions or inactions of colleagues or supervisors are reported in the corruption literature as
20 having the ability to drive attitudes and perceptions of corruption (Amagnya, 2023c; Donner
21 et al., 2017). As a result, we examine officers' perceptions of their colleagues' and
22 supervisors' behaviours that support or allow corruption to thrive. The institutional (in)action
23 scale is measured with four items. The items are 'Improper training of police officers'; 'Low
24 ethical standards and guidance in the police service'; 'Police officers often decide cases
25 without direct supervision'; and 'Police officers are in frequent contact with citizens'. Sum
26 scales are created, ranging from 4 to 20, with a mean of 10.32 and a Cronbach reliability
27 score of 0.71. While a low score depicts a lesser perception of institutional (in)action, a
28 higher score represents a greater perception of institutional (in)action.

43 **Level of Deterrence**

44 The level of deterrence measures officers' perception of the nature of control and police
45 officers' reactions toward corrupt behaviours. This is included in the study because the level
46 of deterrence in an institution is essential in controlling the behaviours and attitudes of
47 officers (Amagnya, 2023c; Nadeem and Qureshi, 2020; Singh, 2019). The scale is measured
48 using four items: 'Low risk of corrupt officers being caught'; 'Police authorities do not take
49 reported corrupt acts of police officers seriously'; 'Lenient punishment for corrupt police
50 officers', and 'Too little transparency and accountability of the police service to the public'. With a

1
2 Cronbach alpha score of 0.70 and a mean of 10.13, the scores ranged from 4 to 20. A higher
3
4 score depicts a greater perception of a low level of deterrence, while a lower score depicts the
5
6 perception of a higher level of deterrence.
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8 **Financial pressure**

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10 Financial pressure has been reported in the literature as one of the key drivers of corruption
11
12 (see Biegelman and Biegelman, 2010; Amagnya, 2020). As a result, this study explores
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14 police officers' perception of four economic conditions that can lead a police officer to
15
16 engage in corruption. The conditions are 'Low salaries of police officers'; 'Fear of poverty in
17
18 retirement'; 'Financial pressure from family members and/or friends'; and 'Greed of police
19
20 officers'. The four conditions are combined to create the financial pressure scale with a mean
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22 of 12.75 and a Cronbach alpha score of 0.65. The scale scores ranged from 4 to 20, where a
23
24 higher score depicts greater perceptions of financial pressure as a cause of corruption and
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26 vice versa.
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30 **Control Variables**

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32 Some individual and environmental characteristics can influence officers' attitudes toward
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34 misconduct and corruption (Zhao et al., 2019; Amagnya, 2023c). As a result, we included
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36 control variables in the regression analysis to examine whether they mediate officers'
37
38 perceptions of corruption causes. The variables included are rank, department, region of
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40 study, area of work, income, gender, education, age, and years of service. Age and years of
41
42 service are treated as continuous variables, while gender (1 = male, 2 = female), area of work
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44 (1 = urban, 2 = rural), income (1 = above GHC2,000, 2 = GHC2,000 or less), and education
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46 (1 = basic and high school, 2 = tertiary) were dummy coded. Three categories are used to
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48 measure region (1 = Greater Accra, 2 = Ashanti, 3 = Upper East), rank (1 =
49
50 constable/corporal, 2 = sergeant, 3 = inspector and above), and department (1 = motor traffic
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52 and transport unit (MTTU), 2 = criminal investigation department (CID), 3 = general policing
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54 and administration (GPA)). The regression analysis uses Greater Accra, constable/corporal,
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1 and MTTU as reference categories for region, rank, and department, respectively.
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4 **Analysis**

5 The first author physically examined each returned survey to check for surveys that had non-
6 responses, item non-responses, and response errors. Ten returned surveys that were not
7 completed or had less than $\frac{3}{4}$ completion were excluded from the data. Ultimately, 616
8 surveys, comprising 179 from Ashanti, 201 from Greater Accra, and 236 from Upper East,
9 were used for the analysis. The 616 surveys were entered into the Statistical Package for
10 Social Sciences (SPSS) software, which allows us to extract scales for key variables, explore
11 the relationships between variables, and make inferences and predictions about factors that
12 influence findings (Bachman and Schutt, 2023; Field, 2024). The data entered into SPSS was
13 cross-checked through frequencies and percentages to ensure all errors were fixed. Also, the
14 data was checked for its appropriateness for regression analysis with a 0.94 Kaiser–Meyer–
15 Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (see Hutcheson and Sofronniou, 1999: 224-225; Kaiser
16 and Rice, 1974: 112).
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35 The statistical analysis proceeded in three stages. First, descriptive analyses were
36 conducted to comprehend the nature of the data and sample characteristics (see Table 1).
37 Second, a bivariate correlation analysis was completed to determine the association between
38 the variables and issues of multicollinearity (see Table 2). Next, the importance of the
39 correlates was estimated through a stepwise regression analysis (see Olive, 2017) between the
40 four key variables, controlling for participants' age, gender, rank, department of work, years
41 of service, area of work, and income. We started the analysis by entering the control variables
42 for each of the four measured variables, followed by the measured variables. The measured
43 variables were entered simultaneously in a subsequent model for each variable. Focussing on
44 the R^2 and the beta coefficients, the relative contribution of financial pressure, culture of
45 corruption, institutional (in)action, and level of deterrence to officers' perceptions of causes
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of corruption were evaluated. The beta coefficients help establish the complex relationship between measured variables and conditions under which the correlations influence causes of corruption. The relative importance of the correlates has significant policy implications for addressing the causes of corruption.

Results

The descriptive results are summarised in Table 1. As depicted in the table, the majority of participants were males (64.3%) and came from the Upper East Region ((38.3%). Although only 55.3% of participants' education is below the tertiary level, over 82% of officers stated that they earned a monthly income of GHC2000 or less, suggesting that some police officers with tertiary education do not earn over GHC2000. As expected, most officers were ranked below the inspectorate level (77.7%) and worked at the General Policing (51.4%) and CID (40.1%) units. The ages of the participants ranged from 20 to 59 years, with an average of 37 years. The average work experience is 13 years, with years of service ranging from 1 to 40 years, suggesting that the sample comprises a good range of work experience.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of sample and key variables

Items	N	Mean/Percent	SD	Min	Max
<i>Dependent/Determinant variables</i>					
Culture of Corruption	601	27.70	7.22	8	40
Institutional (In)action	606	10.32	3.92	4	20
Level of Deterrence	600	10.13	3.52	4	20
Financial Pressure	604	12.75	3.87	4	20
<i>Control variables</i>					
Age	568	37yrs (Average)	8.29	20	59
Years of Service	581	13yrs (Average)	7.83	1	40
Gender	616			0	1
Male		64.3%			
Female		35.7%			
Area of Work	596			0	1
Urban		60.9%			
Rural		39.1%			
Education	611			0	1
High School or Less		55.3%			
Tertiary		44.7%			
Income (Monthly)	596			0	1
GHC2000 or less		82.2%			
Above GHC2000		17.8%			

Region of Study	616			1	3
Upper East		38.3%			
Greater Accra		32.6%			
Ashanti		29.1%			
Rank	613			1	3
Corporal or Less		59.4%			
Sergeant		18.3%			
Inspector and above		22.3%			
Department	612			1	3
CID		40.1%			
GPA		51.4%			
MTTU		8.5%			

According to the bivariate correlation between the variables presented in Table 2, all the measured variables positively and significantly correlated. Financial pressure correlated with level of deterrence ($r = .436, p < .001$), culture of corruption ($r = .655, p < .001$), and institutional (in)action ($r = .675, p < .001$). Also, the level of deterrence correlated with culture of corruption ($r = .479, p < .001$) and institutional (in)action ($r = .492, p < .001$), and culture of corruption correlated with institutional (in)action ($r = .553, p < .001$). The correlations between the measured variables are positive and strong, showing that as the perception of one cause increases, so do other causes. With control variables, age, rank, department, and years of service did not correlate with any measured variable. Area of work correlated with all the measured variables except for institutional (in)action ($r = .051, p = .216$). Like income, which only correlated with the level of deterrence ($r = .129, p < .01$) and institutional (in)action ($r = .094, p < .05$), gender correlated with financial pressure ($r = -.099, p < .05$) and culture of corruption ($r = -.134, p < .01$). Also, region correlated with financial pressure and education correlated with the culture corruption ($r = .088, p < .05$). The data is appropriate for regression analysis as the highest correlation coefficient of 0.675 is lower than the multicollinearity coefficient of 0.7 (Pallant, 2013).

Table 3 presents the regression results with financial pressure as the measured variable. Model 1 explores the main effects of the control variables, with the model accounting for 6.1% of the variance. Only gender ($\beta = .847, p < .05$), area of work ($\beta = 1.199, p < .01$), and

CID ($\beta = 1.255, p = .05$) significantly and positively influenced financial pressure as a perceived cause of corruption. In Model 2, which accounts for 57.4% of the variance, culture of corruption, level of deterrence, and institutional (in)action were added to Model 1. Culture of corruption ($\beta = .431, p < .001$), institutional (in)action ($\beta = .210, p < .001$), and area of work ($\beta = .657, p < .05$) significantly and positively influenced financial pressure as a perceived cause of corruption. Thus, the tendency of officers to perceive financial pressure as a cause of corruption is more likely when they work in urban areas and perceive the existence of a culture of corruption and institutional (in)action against corruption. However, level of deterrence did not significantly impact financial pressure as a cause of corruption ($\beta = .039, p = .313$). Adding culture of corruption, institutional (in)action, and level of deterrence to Model 1 caused a significant change ($\Delta R^2 = .513; p < .001$) and a loss of the significant impact of gender ($\beta = .174, p = .508$) and CID ($\beta = .477, p = .260$) recorded in Model 1.

The regression results for the level of deterrence are presented in Table 4. All control variables were entered in Model 1, which accounts for 3.1% of the variance. The results show that area of work ($\beta = .740, p < .05$) and income ($\beta = -.842, p < .05$) significantly influence officers' perception of the level of deterrence as a cause of corruption. While the area of work's influence was positive, income had a negative impact. The variables of financial pressure, institutional (in)action, and culture of corruption were added in Model 2, which accounts for 29.4% of the variance. Only institutional (in)action ($\beta = 1.552, p < .001$) and culture of corruption ($\beta = .043, p < .05$) significantly and positively influenced the level of deterrence as a perceived cause of corruption. Thus, officers are more likely to perceive the level of deterrence as a cause of corruption when they perceive a culture of corruption and institutional (in)action against corruption in the police. Adding the determinants to Model 1 caused a statistically significant change ($\Delta R^2 = .264; p < .001$) and a loss of the prediction of the area of work ($\beta = .349, p = .273$) and income ($\beta = .293, p = .339$) recorded in Model 1.

Table 2: Bivariate correlations between all variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1 Financial Pressure	1.00												
2 Level of Deterrence	.436***	1.00											
3 Culture of Corruption	.655***	.479***	1.00										
4 Institutional (In)action	.675***	.492***	.553***	1.00									
5 Region	-.114**	-.029	-.079	.001	1.00								
6 Gender	-.099*	-.047	-.134**	-.057	-.119**	1.00							
7 Age	-.010	.060	-.047	-.005	-.258***	-.227***	1.00						
8 Education	.067	.005	.088*	.002	-.215***	-.123**	.136**	1.00					
9 Rank	.011	.080	-.022	-.009	-.342***	-.098*	.844***	.222***	1.00				
10 Years of Service	.049	.025	.064	-.002	-.341***	.089*	.116**	.115**	.145***	1.00			
11 Department	.071	.028	.059	-.023	-.244***	.175***	.088*	.243***	.198***	.157***	1.00		
12 Area of Work	.159***	.104*	.119**	.051	-.390***	-.004	.167***	.222***	.237***	.178***	.206***	1.00	
13 Income	.063	.129**	.094*	.054	-.166***	-.114**	.535***	.241***	.633***	.052	.176***	.219***	1.00

Note: N = 533 – 616; ***. $p < .001$; **. $p < 0.01$; *. $p < .05$.

Table 3: Linear Regression of Financial Pressure

	Model 1				Model 2			
	B	SE	β	t	B	SE	β	t
Gender (Male)	.847*	.385	.105	2.199	.174	.263	.022	.662
Education (Basic to High School)	.218	.367	.028	.593	-.077	.249	-.010	-.309
Area of Work (Rural)	1.199**	.394	.151	3.040	.657*	.268	.083	2.452
Income (GH¢1500 & Below)	-.409	.398	-.053	-1.027	.333	.271	.043	1.229
Age	-.037	.038	-.079	-.969	.003	.026	.006	.114
Years of Service	.009	.023	.019	.398	-.001	.015	-.003	-.080
Ashanti	-.106	.419	-.013	-.252	-.081	.284	-.010	-.285
Upper East	-.454	.502	-.056	-.903	-.491	.340	-.060	-1.443
Sergeant	-.458	.560	-.048	-.817	-.389	.380	-.041	-1.025
Inspector and above	-.368	.769	-.041	-.479	-.020	.520	-.002	-.038
CID	1.225*	.624	.158	1.962	.477	.424	.062	1.127
GPA	.454	.618	.059	.735	.087	.419	.011	.207
Institutional (In)action					.431***	.036	.441	12.004
Culture of Corruption					.210***	.021	.376	10.027
Level of Deterrence					.039	.038	.035	1.011
<i>Intercept</i>	<i>12.59***</i>	<i>1.50</i>		<i>8.38</i>	<i>1.39</i>	<i>1.14</i>		<i>1.21</i>
<i>F-Test</i>		<i>2.643**</i>				<i>43.929***</i>		
<i>R²</i>		<i>.061</i>				<i>.574</i>		
ΔR^2		<i>.061</i>				<i>.513</i>		

Note: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

Table 5 depicts the regression results for institutional (in)action. The control variables were entered in Model 1, accounting for 2.5% of the variance: none significantly impacted officers' perception of institutional (in)action as a cause of corruption. In Model 2, which accounts for 50.1% of the variance, we added financial pressure, level of deterrence, and culture of corruption, which caused a statistically significant change ($\Delta R^2 = .476$; $p < .001$). Financial pressure ($\beta = .528$, $p < .05$), level of deterrence ($\beta = .218$, $p < .001$), and culture of corruption ($\beta = .071$, $p < .05$) significantly and positively influenced officers' perception of institutional (in)action as a cause of corruption. The results imply that officers' perception of institutional (in)action as a cause of corruption increases when they perceive culture of corruption, level of deterrence, and financial pressure as causes of corruption. Adding the measured variables to Model 1 did not cause a substantial change in the non-predictive power of control variables recorded in Model 1.

Table 4: Linear Regression of Level of Deterrence

	Model 1				Model 2			
	B	SE	β	t	B	SE	β	t
Gender (Male)	.201	.359	.027	.561	-.269	.310	-.036	-.869
Education (Basic to High School)	.340	.342	.048	.995	.163	.293	.023	.555
Area of Work (Rural)	.740*	.367	.102	2.015	.349	.318	.048	1.098
Income (GH¢1500 & Below)	-.842*	.371	-.120	-2.272	.293	.307	.069	.957
Age	-.019	.035	-.044	-.527	-.374	.320	-.053	-1.17
Years of Service	.006	.021	.013	.271	.008	.030	.019	.267
Ashanti	.344	.390	.045	.882	-.001	.018	-.003	-.082
Upper East	.329	.468	.044	.704	.384	.335	.051	1.148
Sergeant	-.265	.522	-.030	-.507	.348	.402	.047	.867
Inspector and above	.336	.716	.041	.469	-.478	.350	-.055	-1.37
CID	-.063	.582	-.009	-.108	-.595	.500	-.084	-1.19
GPA	-.363	.577	-.052	-.630	-.605	.494	-.086	-1.23
Financial Pressure					.054	.053	.059	1.011
Institutional (In)action					.248***	.047	.277	5.291
Culture of Corruption					.141***	.026	.275	5.333
<i>Intercept</i>	<i>10.50***</i>	<i>1.40</i>		<i>7.51</i>	<i>3.01*</i>	<i>1.35</i>		<i>2.24</i>
<i>F-Test</i>		<i>1.298</i>				<i>13.602***</i>		
<i>R²</i>		<i>.031</i>				<i>.294</i>		
<i>ΔR^2</i>		<i>.031</i>				<i>.264</i>		

Note: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

The regression results for the culture of corruption are presented in Table 6. In Model 1, which accounts for 7.0% of the variance, all control variables were entered into the model. The results show that gender ($\beta = 2.140$, $p < .01$), area of work ($\beta = 1.569$, $p < .05$), and income ($\beta = -1.922$, $p < .01$) significantly influenced officers' perception that culture of corruption is a cause of corruption. While gender and work area have a positive influence, income is negative. When financial pressure, institutional (in)action, and level of deterrence were added in Model 2, the model accounts for 48.6% of the variance. Financial pressure ($\beta = .812$, $p < .001$), institutional (in)action ($\beta = .223$, $p < .01$), and level of deterrence ($\beta = .391$, $p < .001$) significantly and positively impact the perception of culture of corruption as a cause of corruption. The results mean that as officers perceive the level of deterrence, financial pressure, and institutional (in)action against corruption as causes, they are more likely to perceive a culture of corruption as a cause of corruption. Adding the new variables in Model

2 caused a statistically significant change ($\Delta R^2 = .415$; $p < .001$) and a loss of the predictive power of area of work ($\beta = .210$, $p = .692$) recorded in Model 1. However, gender ($\beta = 1.262$, $p < .05$) and income ($\beta = -1.102$, $p < .05$) retain their predictive power at the 95% confidence level, down from the 99% confidence level recorded in Model 1.

Table 5: Linear Regression of Institutional (In)Action

	Model 1				Model 2			
	B	SE	β	t	B	SE	β	t
Gender (Male)	.500	.402	.060	1.245	-.143	.291	-.017	-.490
Education (Basic to High School)	.563	.383	.072	1.472	.361	.275	.046	1.314
Area of Work (Rural)	.427	.411	.053	1.037	-.480	.298	-.059	-1.609
Income (GH¢1500 & Below)	-.710	.415	-.091	-1.711	-.174	.301	-.022	-.580
Age	-.034	.040	-.071	-.854	-.002	.028	-.004	-.072
Years of Service	-.001	.024	-.001	-.024	-.010	.017	-.020	-.591
Ashanti	.218	.437	.026	.500	.244	.314	.029	.775
Upper East	.259	.524	.031	.494	.457	.377	.055	1.212
Sergeant	.394	.584	.040	.674	.771	.420	.079	1.835
Inspector and above	-.280	.802	-.030	-.350	-.078	.576	-.008	-.135
CID	.894	.651	.113	1.373	.138	.470	.017	.293
GPA	.447	.646	.057	.692	.247	.464	.031	.531
Financial Pressure					.528***	.044	.516	12.004
Level of Deterrence					.218***	.041	.196	5.291
Culture of Corruption					.071**	.025	.124	2.801
<i>Intercept</i>	<i>10.38***</i>	<i>1.57</i>		<i>6.63</i>	<i>-.69</i>	<i>1.27</i>		<i>-.55</i>
<i>F-Test</i>		<i>1.045</i>				<i>32.756***</i>		
<i>R²</i>		<i>.025</i>				<i>.501</i>		
<i>ΔR^2</i>		<i>.025</i>				<i>.476</i>		

Note: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

Discussion

The main aim of this study is to explore the causes of police corruption and what characteristics influence police officers' views regarding the sources of corruption in the police. Key findings are discussed below.

Influence of individual and contextual factors: The results reveal that police officers' views of factors that cause police corruption are not linked to individual or contextual factors.

Except for the area of work for financial pressure and corruption culture and income for the

culture of corruption, the predictive power of individual and contextual factors disappears when the determinant variables are introduced into the regression models. These results deviate from the literature and previous studies where individual and contextual factors significantly influence perceptions of the causes of corruption (Dong and Torgler, 2013). Our results show that individual traits and work environments do not influence Ghanaian police officers' assessment of factors that contribute to police corruption. This implies that measures to tackle police corruption should focus on factors that cause corruption instead of individual characteristics of officers (e.g., gender, years of service, and rank) or their working environment, such as geographical location and department.

Table 6: Linear Regression of Culture of Corruption

	Model 1				Model 2			
	B	SE	β	t	B	SE	β	t
Gender (Male)	2.140**	.686	.148	3.122	1.262*	.514	.087	2.455
Education (Basic to High School)	.183	.653	.013	.281	-.252	.489	-.018	-.515
Area of Work (Rural)	1.569*	.702	.110	2.233	.210	.531	.015	.396
Income (GH¢1500 & Below)	-1.922**	.709	-.140	-2.712	-1.102*	.532	-.080	-2.072
Age	-.116	.068	-.140	-1.724	-.072	.050	-.086	-1.422
Years of Service	.049	.040	.057	1.210	.039	.030	.046	1.308
Ashanti	-.629	.746	-.043	-.843	-.727	.558	-.049	-1.303
Upper East	-.418	.895	-.029	-.467	-.236	.670	-.016	-.352
Sergeant	-1.086	.998	-.064	-1.088	-.698	.747	-.041	-.934
Inspector and above	-1.146	1.369	-.071	-.837	-.916	1.022	-.057	-.896
CID	1.737	1.112	.125	1.562	.567	.834	.041	.680
GPA	.769	1.103	.056	.697	.464	.824	.034	.563
Financial Pressure					.812***	.081	.454	10.03
Level of Deterrence					.391***	.073	.200	5.333
Institutional (In)action					.223**	.080	.128	2.801
<i>Intercept</i>	<i>30.12***</i>	<i>2.67</i>		<i>11.26</i>	<i>13.48***</i>	<i>2.17</i>		<i>6.21</i>
<i>F-Test</i>		<i>3.092***</i>				<i>30.771***</i>		
<i>R</i> ²		<i>.070</i>				<i>.486</i>		
ΔR^2		<i>.070</i>				<i>.415</i>		

Note: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

Relationship between different causes of corruption: Another key finding is that officers' views of factors as causes of corruption depend on their perceptions of other causes.

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3 This was the case for all measured variables except between the level of deterrence and
4 financial pressure. Level of deterrence predicting institutional (in)action and culture of
5 corruption as causes of corruption may be unsurprising because deterrence research indicates
6 that law-breaking is more likely to occur or accepted if there is no significant chance of being
7 supervised, detected, apprehended and punished (Tankebe et al., 2019b; Amagnya, 2023c).
8 Thus, police agencies characterised by weak oversight and accountability mechanisms (weak
9 level of deterrence) breed a greater probability of high solidarity and impunity among officers
10 (United States Department of State, 2019). So, it is reasonable that officers' perception of the
11 level of deterrence in their organisation will affect their perception of other factors as causes
12 of corruption. In light of this result and similar to the proposals by Amagnya (2023c), it is
13 vital for Ghanaian Police Authorities to expand existing control and oversight measures while
14 ensuring certainty and severity of sanctions against corrupt officers. Such measures are
15 important considering the widespread public perception that the police always shield or
16 protect officers who engage in misconduct and/or corruption. Effective oversight and control
17 of corruption can enhance public trust and confidence in the police as well as ensure citizens'
18 willingness to cooperate with the police in fighting corruption (Tankebe, 2019).
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40 The culture of corruption and institutional (in)action strongly predict all the other
41 causes of corruption, which are exciting results. The finding is consistent with arguments in
42 the literature that institutional ineptitude and systematic corruption breeds a culture of
43 corruption that screws people's perception of what is right and wrong (Hope, 2018b). When
44 institutions do nothing about corruption or do things that promote corruption, corruption
45 becomes widespread, entrenched, and an acceptable culture in institutions, facilitating other
46 factors that cause corruption, especially if senior officials spearhead corruption. A culture of
47 corruption with a climate of unethical leadership and bad governance creates many
48 opportunities for corruption to become a pandemic across institutions or societies (Hope,
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2018a). Since a culture of corruption has the potential to infest an entire organisation or society and facilitate other causes of corruption, significant efforts should be made to address the culture of corruption in Ghanaian society and institutions.

Non-significant relationship between level of deterrence and financial pressure: A lack of significant relationship between the level of deterrence and financial pressure as causes of corruption is an unexpected result. Financial pressure and level of deterrence are two factors that Buscaglia and Dakolias (1999) have found to associate and predict each other as causes of corruption. Evidence shows that weak oversight and control in organisations (i.e., level of deterrence) allow officers facing financial pressures to elicit bribes or engage in corruption to deal with the financial pressures (Wolfe and Hermanson, 2004). Further studies will be needed to explore and unravel the reasons for the inconsistent results between previous research and the current study. **Nonetheless, we argue that the level of deterrence not having a significant relationship with financial pressure could be due to the presence of impunity by senior police officers and the lack of action against corruption in the police (see Amagnya and Karstedt, forthcoming). When officers witness impunity from senior officers, they attribute the occurrence of corruption to the actions of senior officers rather than economic conditions and financial pressures. The result can also be situated in the context of the findings of Foltz and Opoku-Agyemang (2015), where an increase in Ghanaian police officers' salaries resulted in more bribes being taken by police officers.**

Conclusion

This study has remarkable strengths, including a large sample from three regions, multiple measures and controls, and robust analysis. However, some limitations should be noted. First, the study surveyed junior officers predominantly, who are only a subset of police officers in Ghana. Future studies should capture the views of officers from both junior and senior ranks. There is limited scope for generalisation as the data did not come from a representative

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3 sample that can establish the robustness of the findings and their extension to other police
4 officers. Also, the results may be affected by social desirability bias – the tendency for
5 research participants to present themselves in a positive light rather than share actual
6 experiences (see Nederhof, 1985; Amagnya, 2022b). As the study measured police officers’
7 self-reported perception of the causes of corruption, forthcoming studies should explore non-
8 self-reported methods to capture real causes of corruption.
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12 Notwithstanding the limitations, the results have implications for future research and
13 controlling police corruption. First, the results suggest that to recommend holistic measures to
14 deal with corruption, studies of corruption causes must focus on different factors and their
15 relationship. Such explorations can produce significant insights and extend the literature on
16 the causes of corruption. Institutional action or inaction being perceived as a cause of
17 corruption and predicting other causes suggests that deterrence theory may still be relevant in
18 crime prevention, particularly in Africa. **Finally, the results suggest that to control police
19 corruption, police administrations must adopt holistic measures and approaches that address
20 multiple causes or enablers of corruption. Specifically, while existing measures for
21 monitoring officers’ activities should be strengthened to increase the detection of misconduct,
22 they must be accompanied by good economic conditions, a more robust level of deterrence
23 (i.e., rigorous investigation and punitive sanctions that have a substantial deterrent effect) and
24 changing the general culture towards corruption in the country.**
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