UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

A QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AGAINST

POLICE OFFICERS IN GHANA
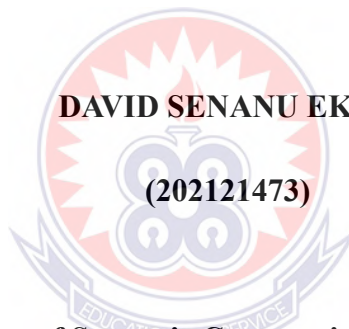
DAVID SENANU EKLU

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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A QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AGAINST

POLICE OFFICERS IN GHANA

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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, **David Senanu Eklu** declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE: …………………………...

DATE: ……………………………………

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of Dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: MR. KWESI AGGREY

SIGNATURE: ……………………….

DATE: ………………………….…

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my son Sedem Andrew Eklu and the Almighty God for giving me

the strength and grace to undertake this study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My earnest appreciation goes to the Almighty God who has been my strength and pathfinder all these years. He, who bestowed on me the knowledge and wisdom throughout my study in the Graduate School and to everybody who has in diverse ways contributed to my accomplishment.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Complaint Information System - CIS

Ethical Standard Department - ESD

European Union - EU

External Citizen Oversight - EC

Ghana Police Service - GPS

Office of Police Integrity - OPI

Police Intelligence and Professional Standards Bureau - PIPS

Police Ombudsman in Northern Ireland - PONI

Police Professional Standards Bureau – PPSB

Special Police Command - SPC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime - UNODC
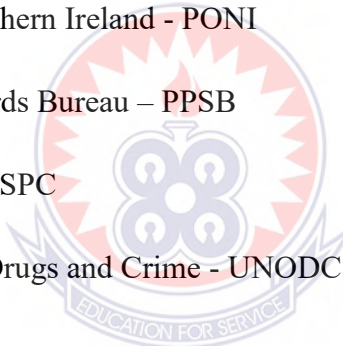
ABSTRACT

This study employed the qualitative approach to examine complaints lodged by citizens against some police officers of the Ghana Police Service. Particularly, the study relied on documented complaints at the Police Professional Standards Bureau (PPSB), a body established under the Police Service to deal with issues of police conduct and professionalism. Relying on the Procedural Justice and the Media Richness theories, the researcher analysed the kind of complaints lodged against the police, the channels of lodging these complaints and how the complaints were resolved. Out of the 1709 complaints lodged at the bureau in the year 2018, 987 of them were connected to the theme of unfair treatment and abuse of power. The second most dominant category of complaints included performance deficit which encapsulates unprofessional handling of cases, undue delay of investigation, enlistment fraud, inability to apprehend criminals, involvement in civil cases and lackadaisical attitude towards work. Also, complaints were lodged against the off-duty conduct of some police officers. The study found that the most paramount channel of lodging complaints is through letters to the Director of the PPSB. Nonetheless, some complainants rely on their lawyers or law firms to lodge complaints. Findings suggest that the complaint resolution process is largely rigorous. When complaints are lodged, they are first processed, investigators are assigned to investigate the issues and the issues are dealt with based on the outcome of the investigation. In light of the findings gathered from this study, it is recommended that the bureau optimises the use of other media, particularly social media, and emails for receiving complaints because the over-reliance on official letters, might inconvenience other complainants. Other digital channels could also be adapted to support the complaint process in order to minify police misconduct.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a general overview of the study by focusing on the background to the study, research objectives, research questions, statement of research problem, significance of the study, scope of the study and finally the organisation of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

According to the UNODC as cited by Boateng, Makin, Abess and Wu (2019), policing is a function of governance which is responsible for the prevention, detection, and investigation of crime; the protection of persons and property; and the maintenance of public order and safety. The police have been given with the mandate to protect lives and property, and the responsibility to uphold the law by acting independently and responsibly (Boateng et al., 2019). Similarly, the Ghana Police Service Act, 1970 (ACT 350) and reinforced in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana outlines the functions of the Ghana Police Service as follows:

a) To prevent and detect crime

b) Apprehend offenders

c) Maintain public order and the safety of persons and property.

Based on this mandate, police interference with everyday life in society is inevitable. Law enforcement institutions (particularly the police) are entrusted with a diverse set of tasks requiring a high degree of integrity. Law enforcement officers may become

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vulnerable to acting unlawfully and outside their remit where this role of police does not function well (Smith, 2014). Police accountability, thus, is critical to effective policing. Police accountability involves a system of internal and external checks and balances aimed at ensuring that the police perform the functions expected of them to a high standard and are held responsible if they fail to do. Accordingly, an effective accountability system involves dealing with public complaints against police officers. Boateng et al., (2018) affirm by stating that, while accountability comprises more than a complaints system alone, an effective structure that appreciates the confidence of the public and the police alike is a good indicator of high standards of accountability and has higher potential of building public trust in the police. Smith (2014) acknowledges the necessity of self-regulation for the fair delivery of police services to public. Police accountability has been researched by many scholars from different jurisdictions around the world. Harris (2012) for instance, has investigated the correlation between police accountability systems, particularly the existence of External Citizen Oversight (ECO) on police, and lower levels of police misconduct.

Accountable policing means that the police accept being questioned about their decisions and actions, and accept the consequences of being found guilty of misconduct, including sanctions and having to compensate victims (Smith, 2014). There is no doubt that the global conversation on policing and police accountability has heightened over the past decade due to happenings around the world (Boateng et al., 2018). Organisations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have also

been especially vocal on the subject of police impunity for misconduct and the need to investigate complaints. Particularly, Amnesty International in 2009 asserts that failure to conduct prompt, thorough and impartial investigations perpetuated the culture of impunity of European Union (EU) nations such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Spain, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine. In the United States, however, studies have found that a few police officers account for a disproportionate amount of citizen complaints (Harris, 2011; Lersch & Mieczkowski, 2000; Walker, 2001). Scholars like Harris (2012) and Manis, Archbold and Hassell (2008) identified a significant number of complaints made by officers against other officers, where age, gender, education and experience were the bases of these complaints.

In as much as all these cases are foreign, the story may appear not very different in the Ghanaian context. Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative Report as authored by Corston et al., (2007) point out that years of colonial style policing prior to Ghana attaining independence has left a legacy of rigid policing in the country which appears violent, heavy-handed and politicised policing that has always focused on protecting the interests of the ruling government rather than serve the Ghanaian community. The report further explained that the Ghana Police Service (GPS) is a direct descendant of the colonial police force, and this has had a carry-over effect on the organisation as there are still traits of colonial policing even though Ghana is now a democratic state. The report by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (2007) argues further that several factors account for the almost love–hate nature of police public relations in

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Ghana. It further points to a survey conducted by the University of Ghana in 2001 where findings of the study confirmed that the Ghanaian public was in support of an efficient and friendly police service in Ghana, but there was mistrust and discomfort among the Ghanaian public. The survey concludes that the Ghana Police Service performed one of the most essential and key services to the state but yet was seen as the most misunderstood and misperceived state organisation in Ghana.

The Ghana Police Service has since 1970 established internal public complaints mechanism, as indicated in a report by the Commonwealth Human Rights Institute in 2018. Owing to this legally mandated duty, the police inevitably interfere in the lives of people. This results in disputes and conflicts which lead to complaints from those who are dissatisfied with police conduct. It is crucial for members of the public to be able to file complaints against the police (Chapman, 2014). In most countries, people can file complaints directly with the police, usually with the station commander or a District Chief of Police, who then decides on the next step, which could include an investigation (Nalla & Mamayek, 2013). The Ghana Police Service has created notable structures to deal specifically with complaints lodged against officers, these include Public Complaints Unit, Special Police Command (SPC), Monitoring and Inspection Unit, Police Intelligence and Professional Standards Bureau (PIPS) and currently the Police Professional Standards Bureau (PPSB). Further to these structures, Act 350 (70) section 23 details the process involved in making a complaint by the public against police officers. Specifically, the section 23 indicates that;

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1. Any member of the public shall be entitled, without prejudice to any other means of redress legally available to him, to make a complaint in writing signed by him, as to;

a) Any instance of bribery, corruption, oppression or intimidation by a police officer

b) Any neglect or non-performance of his duties by a police officer

c) Any other misconduct by a police officer.

2. A complaint of bribery, corruption, oppression or intimidation shall be addressed to the superior police officer in charge of the district or unit to which the police officer concerning whom the complaint is made belongs or to the Inspector General of Police.

3. A complaint of neglect or non-performance of duty or other misconduct shall be addressed to any superior police officer.

4. The Inspector General of Police or superior police officer, as the case may be, on receiving a written complaint under this section, shall cause a full and impartial investigation to be made, and shall;

a) Send a report of his conclusion on the complainant;

b) Take such action on the report as the circumstances may require

5. Any person who knowingly makes false or malicious complaint under this section shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding one hundred new cedis.

1.1.1 Profile of the Police Professional Standards Bureau (PPSB)

The Ghana Police Service has evolved over the years from the colonial state where it was known as a police force to its current state where it is known as the Ghana Police

Service (Aning, 2006). Several interventions have been made over the years by successive administrations in the service to deal with all manner of complaints from the public. This necessitated the establishment of the Police Intelligence and Professional Standards Bureau (PIPS). Before the establishment of this Bureau, other internal public complaints mechanisms such as suggestion boxes, public complaints units, special police command units, and monitoring and inspection units had been in place since 1970 as channels for the public to lodge complaints against police officers for all forms of professional misconduct. Further reforms in the Police Service with the aim of raising professional standards, led to the replacement of PIPS with the current Police Professional Standards Bureau (PPSB) with an expanded mandate to deal with all police misconduct, receive and investigate public complaints against the police and resolve such complaints.
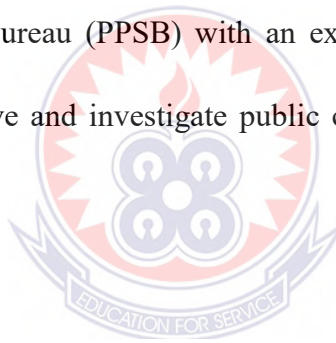
The Bureau which was renamed the Police Professional Standards Bureau (PPSB) in 2018 is the site for this study. It was previously known as Police Intelligence and Professional Standards (PIPS). The mandate of the Police Professional Standards Bureau (PPSB) classified as one of the Directorates of the Service is to ensure that Professional Standards in the service are maintained at all times and that, power and authority officers possess are exercised responsibly. The mandate is exercised through investigation into conduct of personnel, monitoring of officers at their duty points, inspection of police station facilities and books, education of personnel and to recommend appropriate sanctions on officers where infraction against the law are

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established. According to the 2020 annual report of the PPSB, the Bureau has four (4) offices with its Headquarters in Accra. The Bureau has a total staff strength of thirty-five (35) including eight (8) Senior Police Officers (SPOs) and The Northern Sector Office in Kumasi has a staff strength of thirteen (13) including two Senior Police Officers. The Takoradi office has a staff strength of six (6) with no Senior Police Officer. The Ho office has a staff strength of eight (8) including one (1) senior police officer. According to the annual report for the year 2018, 2019, and 2020, the following cases were recorded respectively: One Thousand, Seven Hundred and Nine (1,709), One Thousand, Three Hundred and Seventy-Nine (1379), and One Thousand, One Hundred and Seventy-Six (1,176).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The police's mandate anywhere in the world is to protect the public and to keep the peace (Smith, 2014). The ways in which governments attempt to attain these goals will vary from country to country but in many parts of the world, especially in the developed countries of Europe, and in Africa, a democratic society necessitates a police service that can protect the public under the rule of law (Harris, 2012). The success and effectiveness of any police system rests extensively upon public acceptance, public confidence and trust in the police and members of the public should have the opportunity to register their dissatisfaction with certain unacceptable conducts of police officers within the framework of the law under a democratic dispensation. The credibility of a police complaints system must certainly meet important criteria set by

police leaders, police associations and front-line officers (commanders) (Nalla & Mamayek, 2013). However, the public uptake of and support for these systems are contingent upon a better understanding of the precise elements that will contribute to accessible, accountable, fair, independent, and transparent principles and practice of the police (Murphy & McKenna, 2007).

Several studies have been conducted on policing globally. These studies have focused on police misconduct (Boateng, Makin, Abess & Wu, 2018; Chapell & Riquero, 2004; Weizer, 2002), policing and human rights (Griffiths, 2004; Human Rights Watch, 2007), police accountability (Appiagyei-Atua, 2006; Atuguba, 2006; Tsidi, 2006), democratic policing (Bayley, 2001; Stone and Ward, 2001), and public relations practices in the Ghana Police Service (Amoakohene, 2001; Abudulai, 2017; Aglagoh, 2021).
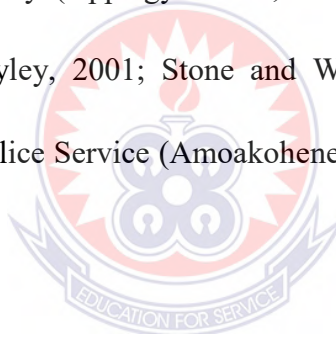
These efforts were somewhat sporadic attempts to examine issues relating to policing. Not surprisingly, these studies have been quite discrete and limited in scope, as they failed to investigate documented complaints against police in a broader perspective especially within the Ghanaian context. Arguably, there is relatively little detailed research that specifically describes analyses complaints against the police (Appiagyei-Atua, 2006; Atuguba, 2006; Boateng et al., 2018). Terrill and Ingram (2015) explored citizen complaints against the police in eight cities using a quantitative approach in the United States of America (USA). This study does not actually describe the actual position of respondents and as such very difficult to make any informed decisions.

This study therefore seeks to comprehensively analyse documented complaints against police officers using a qualitative approach with a view to understanding the main public concerns about police conduct whiles performing their statutory duties.

1.3 Research Objectives

Complaint is a grievance of a citizen against a department, or a grievance of a citizen against one or more police people. Specifically, complaints against police officers are a grievance of a citizen against one or more police officers or from a police officer or officers against another police officer or officers. Complaints against police officers are filed from the perspective of the citizen. Previous research suggests that police officers define misconduct narrowly, while citizens define it more broadly (Adams 1996; Lersch 1998b; Lersch & Mieczkowski 2000). According to UNODC as cited in Smith (2014), effective accountability requires a proper complaints system that is easily accessible to the public and that can effectively investigate allegations and recommend disciplinary sanctions or refer cases for criminal prosecution. Generally, this study seeks to:

1. Identify and describe types of complaints lodged against police officers at the PPSB.

2. Examine the communication channels used by citizens in lodging complaints against police officers.

3. Analyse the processes for handling complaints against Police Officers.

1.4 Research Questions

There is concern about the method by which complaints are handled in an agency and the channels for communicating or filing these complaints. Also, the processes of resolving these complaints in a fair and transparent manner have not been clearly documented. If citizens are aware that the PPSB takes complaints seriously, this may affect their decision to file a complaint. This study therefore seeks to answer the following questions;

1. What are the types of complaints documented against police officers at the PPSB?

2. What communication channels do citizens use in lodging complaints against police officers in Ghana?

3. What are the processes for handling complaints against Police Officers?
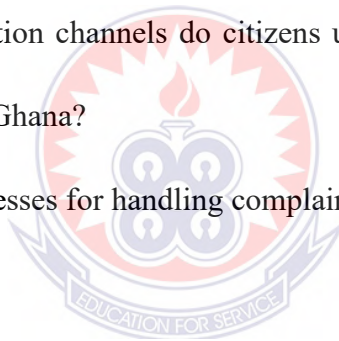
1.5 Significance of the Study

This study will add to existing body of knowledge on public complaints against police officers. It will bring to the fore issues relating to public complaints against police officers, and how these complaints are resolved. This will extend the theoretical and empirical literature on the topic highlighting holistically issues regarding public complaints as part of police accountability within a democratic society.

This study will help the Police Management through the Police Professional Standards Bureau (PPSB) to obtain feedback on how the public feel about the conduct of police officers. It will be a useful mechanism for training police officers and formulate

appropriate policies towards a more proactive, responsive, accountable, and transparent relations between the police and the public they serve.

This study will identify international best practices in communication channels used in handling public complaints and empower the public to make inputs into acceptable police standards in a democracy to support the police. It will also be beneficial to individual public complaints agencies as well as contribute to a broader understanding of police-public/citizen relationship.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focused on documented public complaints against the Ghana Police Service reported to the PPSB. Specifically, the scope of the study covers documented complaints at the PPSB from 2018. The justification for selecting this period is because preliminary investigation by the researcher confirmed that the unit received more complaints of police misconduct during that period under review (1,709). Again, it coincides with the period in which the initial PIPS was restructured and renamed PPSB. The study also examines the channels that are being employed by the unit for the public to lodge complaints against police officers for professional misconduct. Additionally, the study analyses complaint resolution mechanisms at the PPSB.

1.7 Organisation of the Study

The study is organised into five chapters. Chapter one focuses on the introductory aspects of the research topic. This chapter is made up of the background to the study,

statement of research problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study and finally organization of the study.

Chapter two deals with literature review, theoretical framework and review of related and relevant literature. The researcher considered theoretical and empirical literature on the subject matter and designed a comprehensive theoretical framework to guide the study.

Chapter three focuses on the research methods; this chapter deals with the methods used for the research: that is the various methods that the researcher adopted in carrying out the research. This chapter includes sources of data, data analysis tools, the study area and the reasons for employing such techniques.

Chapter four is concerned with the analysis of data, interpretation of data and the discussion of the data collected. That is, how the data was processed, presented, arranged etc. to bring out the meaning in them so to help achieve the objectives of the study.

The last chapter for this study, chapter five, presents the summaries, conclusions, suggestions, and recommendations. This chapter deals with summarizing the findings, making conclusions from the findings of the study and its implication. In addition, it considers recommendations and suggestions based on the findings of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section of the research reviews previous studies which are relevant and related to the current study. The purpose of this literature review is to discover what has been done and known in the literature about the issue of public complaints against police officers in Ghana in order for the present study to establish the gap. The literature review of this study, therefore, discusses topics that focus on the overview of policing, historical overview of the Ghana Police Service, police accountability, public-police relations, public perception of the police and complaints against police officers. The chapter also discusses the theories that underpin the study. It explicates the procedural justice theory and media richness theory and subsequently expounds on how these theories are of relevance to the study. The chapter then ends with a conclusion.

2.1 The Police Institution: overview and definition of police work

There have been stark variations in the historical, cultural and social context of several police organisations and their functions across the globe (Fijnaut, 2016; Johansen, 2017). In that, the development and growth of police work in countries with relative stability are largely contrastive with countries that suffered political unrest, dense criminality and civil wars (Manning, 2014). Be that as it may, most countries around the world have witnessed some profound re-orientation of their police organisations due to myriad causal factors. It is widely suggested that in stable and democratic states,

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policing is built on legal and cultural frameworks that are defined and codified in their conventions and systems (Bonner, 2020; Burke, 2020; Manning, 2014). According to Manning (2014), most democratic states which were previously under colonial authorities adopted the form of policing of their colonisers and largely aligned with the policing work of maintenance of peace and conflict resolution. The police are therefore considered a public service worker who performs constitutionally mandated functions in a professional way in order to safeguard the peace and security of the state (Burke, 2020).

Although this is the case, police work in some Western countries usually encapsulates a secretive posture, the employment of sophisticated surveillance devices, reliance on informants and other illicit approaches to obtain information and apprehend people they suspect of planning mayhem (Kuzmarov, 2012). Brodeur (2010) refers to this form of police work as 'high policing'. It is understood that in this form of policing, citizens who are considered to have bad intents against the state are apprehended instead of the police reacting to an actual criminal act.

Manning (2014) postulates that major police work could be grouped under the governance function. They perform functions that align with the wishes of a specific population within a given territorial location, and are postured as the face of civil authority. According to Manning (2014), national resources are made available to the police in the performance of their duties just like any governmental agency. It was also indicated that the police perform governance functions by engaging in rhetoric about

their mandates in society. They engage in subtle political duties too, through the maintenance of active presence during some public functions. Their presence during these events is basically to deter and foil attacks by individuals or groups who might want to threaten the peace of society by causing mayhem on a public figure or the entire gathering. They also maintain an active presence during events that are crucial to the survival of the state such as elections, court proceedings, and other national events. Based on the fact that the police are tasked to ensure orderliness and obviate chaos, they as well escort and provide protection to public figures and celebrities.

The police organisation also holds press conferences and releases press statements to address some growing concerns of the public, as well as educate the public on crime prevention, among others (Crump, 2011). Another governmental function of national police organisations is the fact that they could be deployed to foreign countries to enforce peace and security in cases where there are wars and political unrest (Manning, 2014). They typically work under the United Nations (UN) the European Union (EU) and other inter-state agencies such as African Union (AU). Aside from its governmental functions, Manning (2014) indicates that the police organisation also performs 'petite functions' such as dealing with and assisting people involved in natural disasters such as floods, tsunami, road accidents, hostage situations, homicides, human-induced disasters, thievery and burglary, and rape, among others.

Transformation of the contemporary society, modernisation and modifications in criminal activities has necessitated the diversification in the police organisation and

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functions of the police. Owing to this, a number of specialised units are created under police organisations to attend to specific issues and crimes. Due to this phenomenon, the roles of the police organisation have experienced appreciable increases over the years. For instance, in a research study conducted by Maguire (2003) to understand the organisational structure of the American police agency, the author listed about 28 different job roles performed by patrol officers in the United States of America.

Studies have indicated that the police organisation largely relies on other state institutions in order to be effective and fully functional (Johansen, 2017; Manning, 2014). In essence, without its connection with some specific state organisations that support its aims and objectives, policing would be relatively non-existential. According to Manning (2014), based on the conventions of many democratic states, the balance of power between the basic organs of government, namely, the legislature, executive and judiciary are instrumental in the proper functioning of the police organisation. Also, the public is one of the most domineering institutions that support the work of the police. Scholars have indicated that without the trust and the assistance of the public, policing will be a very daunting task (Brodeur, 2010; Shearing, 2005).

The nature of police work as highlighted by these foreign scholars above might not be entirely different from the nature of police work in Ghana. The ensuing sub-heading provides an overview of the Ghana Police Service focusing on its historical developments and efforts being made by successive administrations to transform it into an organisation that can be likened to any other citizen-focused occupation where public

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complaints about the quality of police performance are critical in building public trust and ensuring that the police are held accountable for their actions and inactions.

2.2 The Police Institution in Ghana (Overview and Historical Development)

It is recorded that professional policing began in Ghana, formerly the Gold Coast, in the colonial era by the British colonial authorities in the year 1821 (Pokoo-Aikins, 2002). Before the introduction of a formalised police organisation in the country, policing was primarily organised by traditional authorities who engage guards and messengers to oversee the implementation of traditional policies and decrees (Aning, 2006). This was essentially done to ensure orderliness in their communities. Aning (2006) states that as the number of people recruited to perform police work increased, there was the need to regulate their functions in an enacted document and this enactment was done in 1873.
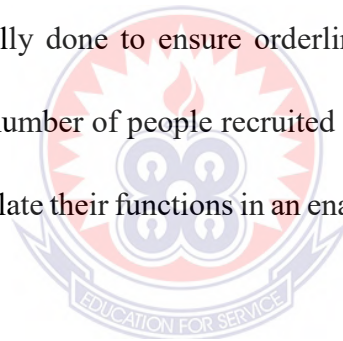
The growth and expansion of the police force also led to the formation of a number of units and divisions tasked to deal with specific functions (Aning, 2006; Pokoo-Aikins, 2002). These specialised units were Railway Unit, Escort Unit, Marine Police, Criminal Investigation Department (Aning, 2006). The police force was later segregated into General Police and Escort Police. The general ones were more lettered and performed clerical, administrative and specialised police duties whereas the escort police were unlettered and largely assigned to serve as guards (Aning, 2006).

During the period of the country's independence in 1957, the name of the police

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organisation was changed from the Gold Coast Police Force to Ghana Police Force (check) (Pokoo-Aikns, 2002). This period also witnessed a drastic change in the administration of the police organisation when Ghanaian police officers took over leadership of the organisation from the British (ibid). After the Police Service Act, 1970 (Act 350) was enacted 1970, the nomenclature of the organisation as a "Force" was altered to "Service" in order for the organisation to assume the posture and attitude of serving the public interest as opposed to the reliance on force in imposing the will of governments on the people (Aning, 2006). At present, the functions and operations of the Ghana Police Service are regulated by the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. The constitution mandates the police service to maintain law and order, ensure the safety of persons and property and safeguard the country's internal peace and security. According to the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, the core functions of the Ghana Police Service are the detection and prevention of crime, as well as the apprehension and prosecution of criminals and offenders.
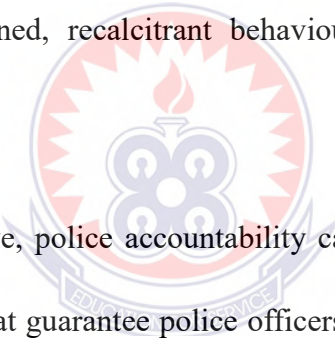
The foregoing overview of the development of the Ghana Police Service reflects a historical trajectory of the police towards a more public service-oriented organisation to reflect democratic tenets of police accountability. This is significant to the present study on how public complaints about police performance are handled by the Ghana Police Service as part of the accountability mechanisms of policing in a democracy.

2.3 Police Accountability

Accountability as a term relates to 'answerability' and hence lies at the heart of democratic political theory and practice (Olugbuo & Ojewale, 2018). Accountability in broad terms relates to processes and practices where politicians, public servants, public institutions and others who may include civil society and the private sector workers, account for their conduct and performance, who they answer to, and what they answer about (Hodgkinson et al., 2019; Olugbuo & Ojewale, 2018). As a social issue in democracies, police accountability has gained prominence globally in recent decades (Olugbuo & Ojewale, 2018). When dealing with police accountability, one is delving into how to give effect to accountability processes in the police institution as an integral part of the state apparatus in each nation, particularly with respect of issues of social control (Hodgkinson et al., 2019). Fridell and Walker (2019) opines that the debate about accountability of the police is essentially a debate about how and in whose interest social control is carried out by the police. Walker and Archbold (2018) posited that in policing, accountability largely describes a phenomenon where citizens hold police officers and the police organisation responsible for the performance of their duties in view of the remits of the law.

The issue of police accountability is of major concern to citizenry in most parts of the world as people continuously demand of police organisations to discharge their duties in a style that reverberates their relevance and function in the society. Essentially, citizens expect the police organisation to safeguard and mirror the rule of law while enforcing peace or orderliness in the society. According to Walker and Archbold (2018),

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to ensure police accountability, systems and structures must be put in place by police organisations to allow citizens to lodge complaints against police officers who misconduct themselves in the discharge of their duties. This is to ensure that misdemeanors by police officers are checked, perpetrators disciplined, and citizens feel safe in dealing with the police organisation. Archbold (2021) additionally indicates that accountability has a moderating impact on police personnel in ensuring that personnel are cocksure that their colleagues will operate within the confines of the law so that the name of organisation is not marred. This implies that some police officers are particular about the image of the organisation among the citizenry and feel that when accountability is heightened, recalcitrant behaviours of other colleagues will be defeated.

From the arguments above, police accountability can be basically referred to as the methods and processes that guarantee police officers are held liable for their acts and conduct, and that they are scrutinised and overseen by the public and other authorities. Police accountability also encompasses a variety of initiatives aimed at preventing and addressing police misbehavior, abuse of authority, and breaches of the law, as well as promoting openness, impartiality, and confidence in the police.

The extant literature on policing has largely suggested that police accountability is recognised as one of the key aspect of police reforms (Archbold & Walker, 2018; Fridell & Walker, 2019). Emphasis on police accountability is grounded in the recognition that the police have extensive powers to interfere in individuals' lives and to restrict their

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freedom by sometimes resorting to use of force against the individuals (Olugbuo & Ojewale, 2018). A significant reason for the expansion of the field of police accountability has been a concern to make sure that police powers, which include remarkably, the power of the police to use force in extreme cases, are not exercised in an inappropriate way (Archbold, 2021).

In relation to the questions asked about controlling police conduct to bring about accountability, Ongweso (2020) has questioned whether measures instituted to bring about accountability can really have a meaningful influence on how the police relate to civilians in carrying out their police duties. Within the last decade, a greater recognition of the value of police accountability has been given preference as there is recognition that police abuses can serve as an immediate cause of why civilians take to uprising with certain minority groups having resorted to the use of violence in response to the high-handed approach of police in attempting to suppress the insurgency (Olugbuo & Ojewale, 2018). In the context of championing police accountability, Wong (2023) asserts that some civil society groups are also taking keen interest in holding security agencies accountable to the rule of law in the context of fighting insurgency.

White and Fradella (2016) conducted a case study of the Minneapolis Police Department's efforts to examine accountability with regard to community policing. Data was gathered from variety of sources including interviews with police officers, community residents, and other stakeholders. Public documents and reports and media coverage were also examined. Based on the analysis of data, the researchers established

that the Minneapolis Police Department has made tremendous progress in encouraging accountability through the adoption of community policing and the implementation of variety of programs and policies aimed towards transparency and good police work. The study also indicated that despite these efforts, police activity and the use of force in some situations continue to hamper accountability programs. The authors propose many solutions to these problems, including improved officer training, increased transparency about police operations, and encouraging greater community engagement in police monitoring and decision-making. Based on this study, it is in place to suggest that efforts to promote police accountability are largely frustrated by some individual police officers who indiscriminately abuse their power and use force in situations where they should not.

In another study, Walker and Archbold (2018) reviewed existing literature on the historical development of police accountability in the United States. The study examined reports from various sources including academic articles, government reports, legal cases, and media accounts and found that there is a long history of tension between law enforcement and the communities they serve. According to the Walker and Archbold (2018), this tension is primarily rooted in issues related to police responsibility and transparency. The authors also indicate that the use of force by police is a major area of concern, and there is a need for clearer policies and better training to ensure that officers are discerning in their dealing with the public. Walker and Archbold (2018) as well established that although the use of citizen review boards and other oversight mechanisms can be effective in promoting accountability and transparency,

these mechanisms often face challenges related to funding, political support, and resistance from law enforcement officials. The study however concludes that government and authorities must not relent in efforts to promote police accountability. This study evidently suggests that policies are being advanced to critically ensure that there are some appreciable levels of transparency, fairness, and trust in the police service. Essentially, the aforementioned phenomena could also be successful if structures are optimised to serve as checks to police conduct.

There seem to be an overt relationship between findings from White and Fradella's (2016) study and that of Walker and Archbold (2018). Both studies clearly established that despite the formulation and implementation of policies to foster police accountability, the superfluous use of force by some police officers threaten the progress of accountability.
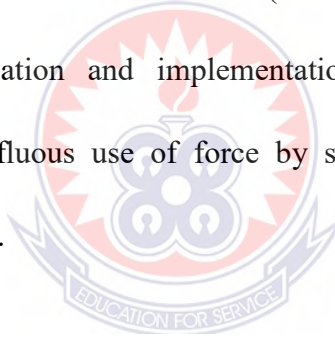
The Lammy Review (2017) developed by member of Parliament, David Lammy, examined issues of police accountability with particular focus on police relationship with Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people in England and Wales. The review indicated that due to biases and lack of effective structures of police accountability, there is an over-representation of BAME individuals in police custody and in the criminal justice system. The review also revealed unwarranted use of force, stop and search and remands meted out to BAME individuals. For police accountability to be functional as possible, the Lammy Review (2017) suggested the need for improved training for police personnel to curtail police use of force, tackle pointless

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biases and ensure fairness and effective policing. The review also indicated that stop and search powers must be reformed to ensure that they are employed fairly and proportionately and that they not disproportionately affect BAME individuals.

From the studies reviewed so far, it appears the issue of police accountability is a global problem and efforts are being made by lawmakers and policy formulators to check the lapses that characterise the responsibility of policing. Just like the previous studies, Africa is also confronted with difficulties as far as police accountability is concerned (Derso, 2018; Olusegun, 2014).

Africa is bedeviled with policing problems due to the continent's colonial and post-colonial legacies that created authoritarian rule which took away autonomy of policing institutions (Ashimala, 2013; Dersso, 2018). Ashimala argues that ineffectiveness in policing in Africa is as a result of corruption and political interference in the operations of the police which affects how the police engage with civilians. Similarly, Dersso (2018) pointed out that the widespread authoritarianism that characterised the system of governance throughout Africa largely contribute to the lack of accountability on the part of public officials and law enforcement agencies which consequently lead to limited respect for human rights. He argues that these problems have been exacerbated by a lack of political will to reform police institutions, as well as by the lack of resources available to support effective policing.

Dersso (2018) conducted a extensive review of available literature on police work in Africa to provide a detailed understanding of the challenges and opportunities for police

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accountability. He particularly draws on a wide range of academic and non-academic sources such as research articles, policy documents and reports to provide a critical assessment of the state of policing in Africa and the prospects for reform. Findings from the review states that colonial-era policing structures continue to shape the nature of policing in many African countries. He argues that these structures tend to be authoritarian, focused on maintaining order, and resistant to external oversight. According to Dersso (2018), issues of police accountability in Africa can be attributable to lack of political will, insufficient resources, and resistance from within police institutions. The study however recommends that civil society organisations can play an important role in promoting police accountability and oversight. He notes that civil society groups can help to raise awareness about police abuses, advocate for reform, and engage in monitoring and oversight activities. Dersso (2018) adds that the international community can play an important role in supporting police reform in Africa. He argues that international actors can provide financial and technical support for reform efforts, help to build capacity within police institutions, and engage in monitoring and oversight activities.

Similarly, Biegon (2019) qualitatively studied police accountability in South Africa by relying on government reports, other research findings, and media coverage and found that police oversight system in South Africa is complex and fragmented, with multiple oversight bodies and mechanisms. According to Biegon (2019), although this system was designed to provide a robust framework for police accountability, it has been criticised for being unwieldy and ineffective. The study revealed that inadequate

resources, insufficient powers and mandate for oversight bodies, and a lack of political will to hold police officers accountable are some of the fundamental problems confronting the efforts of promoting police accountability in the country. Biegon further postulates that police misconduct is often a symptom of deeper social and political problems, including inequality, poverty, and corruption.

In the Ghanaian context, it was also found that although efforts are being made to advance police accountability, systemic issues tend to affect the outcome of accountability programs by the police administration (Anin, 2018; Asiedu, 2017; Tankebe & Akosah-Sarpong, 2019). Employing the qualitative approach, with particular focus on document analysis and interviews, Asiedu (2017) found that the legal framework for ensuring police accountability and protecting the ordinary citizen is feeble. Essentially, structures to ensure that police officers are held liable for misconducts against civilians are not strong and stringent enough to promote accountability. Asiedu (2017) also highlighted that because the police service is under-resourced, corruption invariably is tolerated by the police which consequently inhibit the pursuit of accountability.

Similarly, Tankebe and Akosah-Sarpong (2019) in examining the issue of police accountability, employed in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to gather data from some selected police officers and civilians in three selected regions of Ghana (Greater Accra, Western and Ashanti). The researchers found that there is a general demand for police accountability by the citizenry based on data that incidents of police

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abuse and misconduct are not always investigated or punished. The authors also found that police officers in Ghana often use force indiscriminately, without proper justification or in violation of citizens' rights. Tankebe and Akosah-Sarpong (2019) highlight the need for stronger legal frameworks to promote police accountability and ensure that incidents of police abuse are properly handled.

Another study was conducted by Asiamah et al. (2019) to understand factors that influence police accountability in Ghana. Using the quantitative approach, and relying on a survey of 387 respondents which included police officers, government officials and community leaders, the study found a significant results of political interference and corruption as some elements affecting police accountability. Just like other studies (Asiedu, 2017; Tankebe & Akosah-Sarpong, 2019), Asiamah et al. (2019) also established that weak legal structures and under-resourcing of the police organisation are some other contributory factors impacting on accountability.

Appiagyei-Atua (2006) in a qualitative study explored accountability mechanisms in the Ghana police service. Using document as data collection instrument, the study revealed that Ghana has foundations of a robust and effective police accountability structure. Internally, the police service in Ghana has clearly set out standards of conduct and behaviour, and a high-profile accessible complaints unit within the police service to deal with incidences of misconduct among the police. Some of the external mechanisms the police service employs in dealing with police accountability are the police council, an independent advisory body, which is principally tasked with advising

the president of Ghana on matters of appointment within the police, finance and administration, a series of regional police committees that give support to the police council, and a human rights commission that can handle complaints against the police.

From the reviewed studies, it can be established that issues bordering on police work and inhibiting police accountability are historical, structural and systemic. This then suggests that a more comprehensive approach is required to deal with the issue. In essence, structural reforms and cultural changes are necessary for promoting police accountability. For instance, legal frameworks that regulate operations by law enforcement agencies must be strengthened. This can include reforms to existing laws and policies, such as creating an independent oversight body to probe reports made against police officers and determine punitive measures that should be meted out. There is also the need to foster transparency approaches such as publishing data and records on police activities as well as making open findings into police misconduct. This could invariably promote police accountability. Additionally, training and education programs must be enhanced to make officers understand their roles better, and equip with skills in dealing with different situations. Advancement in technology, for instance providing body-work cameras and ensuring its use can limit police misconduct and consequently impact on accountability.

2.4 Public-police relations in Africa

The perception of the public about the police service vary owing to several factors. For instance, personal experiences with the police, geographical location, and historical

antecedents can influence the views of people regarding the police organisation or its personnel (Brown, 2017; Mathura, 2022). According to Mathura (2022), in some places, the police are accorded high regard and considered as protectors of the public. However, it is the reverse in other places, where people get suspicious or feel intimidated with the presence of the police (Mathura, 2022). The unsavoury and unfavourable perception about the police could stem from a detected lack of accountability, evidences of police corruption or brutality, or records of discriminatory practices (Brown, 2017; Usman, 2019).

It is also identified that media reportage can play a huge role in influencing how people perceive the police (Miethe et al., 2019). This is to suggest that negative news items about misconduct and unnecessary use of force by the police could erode trust in law enforcement and shape people's view about these officials. On the other hand, positive news items highlighting heroic actions, impressive operations and community engagement efforts could make the public judge the police favourably. According to Miethe et al. (2019), evidences of police misconduct such as the excessive use of force, abuse of power and unfair treatments against crime suspects have become a commonplace in various media sources (social media, TV news reports, newspaper websites/blogs etc.). Essentially, this dissemination of visual, pictorial and audio evidences of police misconduct has largely contributed to public perception of the police (Campbell & Valera, 2020).

Essentially, people's perception and attitudes towards the police is shaped by the

people's belief in effective policing and procedural fairness (Bolger & Walters, 2019). These arguments clearly suggest that people gain trust in the police when they believe that the police are efficient in providing security, preventing people from breaking law and maintaining general order, protecting lives and property and effecting arrests when necessary. Effective policing is therefore a key determinant of legitimacy and trust.

The perception of police performance is as significant as actual police efficacy when it comes to civilians' assessments of the police (Wu & Boateng, 2019). It has been indicated that the way people perceive the police generally impact on how some police officers conduct themselves. The implication of this is that, in areas where the police is perceived positively, officers conduct themselves to reflect this notion (Marier & Moule, 2019; Wu & Boateng, 2019). However, in places where people have negative notions about the police, some officers tend to bask in that perception by continuously abusing power and using force hence reinforcing the negative perception (Marier & Moule, 2019). In principle, real ineptitude on the part of the police regarding how they undertake their duty, is not necessarily to undermine trust. But rather, believing that the police are performing poorly or unproductively is an indispensable condition for continuous misconduct by some policemen which invariably affect the general perception about the service.

Marier and Moule (2019) did a study in the US to understand how public dislike for the police impact on police work. Relying on a sample size of 12, 376 sworned police officers, the study particularly examined whether public perception affect the cultural

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orientation and job performance of these officers. Findings uncovered that officers who perceive higher public aversion and antipathy were more likely to experience higher levels of social isolation, maintain work-group solidarity, entertain cynicism toward the public, and rely on coercive attitudes.

In a study conducted by Nadal et al. (2017) to examine public perception about the police based on racial groups, it was found that it is more common for black people to perceive the police in a less pleasant manner than whites and Latinos. Another study conducted by Braga et al. (2014) reveals that social status and level of education could influence some people's perception about the police. The study indicated that persons with higher academic qualifications and influence are more likely to perceive the police more favourably than those with lesser academic qualification and exposure. In essence, people with higher social status view the police as competent law enforcement agents whereas there is a general negative view about the police among the less privileged. In a relatively recent development, age has also been linked to public perception about the police (Fine et al., 2020). In their study, Fine et al. (2020) found that older youths tend to have antipathetic perceptions about the police than the younger ones. There is therefore the likelihood that the perception of the younger ones will worsen as they grow older (Fine et al., 2020).

Corresponding findings were recorded in Jackson et al.'s (2021) study that individuals who generally encounter police violence were the less educated youths who are generally not financially endowed. Basically, these people tend to have a more negative

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perception about the police based on their experience with them.

To Tyler (2017), individuals may obey the law that governs them out of fear of being constrained, but personal compliance and general social order is achieved in a longer term when people believe authority is legitimate. Tyler (2017) argues that peoples' obedience to legal authority and the laws they (authorities) enforce are dependent on the judgements people make about their personal experiences with the police and the courts, and how this experience has shaped their (public) behaviour and perception (Tyler, 2017). In effect, individuals feel the duty to obey the law of their community when they believe that the legal authority is rightful and in line with their (individuals) normative expectations.

From studies conducted in other parts of the world, it is manifest that public perception of the police could be two-sided depending on variety of factors. A few works from the African perspective are reviewed here in order to fully capture the nature of the issue and to identify if any of these happenings would be peculiar with findings from the present study. Chirisa and Mutekwe (2018) examined public perception of Zimbabweans about the police relying on a survey of 900 residents of Harare. Findings show that respondents generally perceive the police as corrupt and ineffective. A similar study was conducted in Kenya by Ondieki and Owino (2018) to analyze factors that influence public view of the police and findings show that police sensitivity in dealing with civilians, perceived corruption and involvement of citizenry in policing significantly affect public perception of the police. In Uganda, LaPira and Muwanga

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(2015) found a general antipathy against the police among the citizenry. The study indicates that citizens largely expect a reform of the police service based on the opinion that this would positively impact on police accountability.

Usman (2019) in a qualitative study examined the public perceptions of the police in Nigeria with the intention of obtaining the views of Abuja residents on how they experience the police in their city. The study found that, respondents' experiences with police make them perceive law enforcement agents as generally unfair based on claims that the police prohibited people from having a say or defending themselves in cases that involved the people. This assertion of the study participants emanated from the general agreement that fair decision making should involve the cordial relationship between the police and the policed in the sense that the policed should be offered the opportunity to present their views fully while the police carefully listen.   The study again revealed that most of the study participants perceived the police to have a discriminatory attitude towards a section of the community with the participants believing that the police are biased in their dealings as they often show favour to the elite and discriminate against the non-elite. Usman (2019)'s study also revealed that study participants, especially from rural towns and urban non-elites perceive the police to be disrespectful, unapproachable and willing to violate people's dignity and human rights as the police made use of rude language and name-calling in their interaction with them. On the issue of trust, Usman's (2019) study found that participants will trust the police when there is a more friendly relationship between these two parties (police and the people).

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Bello and Steyn (2019) conducted a qualitative study to assess whether university students' trust in the South African police is shaped by the behaviour of South African police. The study used interviews and focus group discussion as data collection instruments. The study found that students' generally have an unfavourable disposition towards the police and that this disposition affected their trust in police officials. The study found that students view the police as unfair and corrupt and that these negative perceptions engendered mistrust in the police. However, social determinant such as gender played a role in how students trust the police as the male students' perception differed from those of the female. This suggests that although students generally perceive the police in a negative way, male students view were more hostile than the female students.

Olusegun (2014) also conducted a qualitative study that investigated public perception of the police in relation to crime prevention in Nigeria. The study found that there is a huge gap between public expectation and police actual performance in dealing with crime as 87.5% of the police respondents indicated that the police is effective and efficient in providing public safety as against 81.3% of the public who claim the police to be ineffective and inefficient in providing safety in the community. The study shows that there is a loss of confidence in the police to deal with crime. The study further revealed that there is a bad relationship between the police and the public as 56% of the civilians indicated that the relationship between the police and civilians is that of antagonism. Respondents adduced reasons such as police corruption and insensitivity, unfriendliness of the police and excessive use of force on civilians. The study again

revealed that, 84.8% of the civilians have had personal experience of brutality such as verbal assault, slapping, injuring and murder threats from the police. This shows that the modes of operation of the police are often detrimental to the civilians they are supposed to protect.

From the studies conducted in the African context, it is observed that public perception about the police is largely unpleasant. As indicated earlier, in other jurisdictions, public perception about the police is two-faced but that does not seem to be the situation in Africa. The relationship between the public and the police in Africa is convoluted and for the most part strained (Alemika, 2010). Alemika (2010) indicated that despite the fact that there are records of positive public-police relations in some areas on the African continent, these are isolated cases because the general relationship is not so idyllic. According to Biegon (2019), in many African countries, the police are seen as an instrument of state power, and their actions are viewed with suspicion and fear by the public. This friction is alluded to past occurrences, personal experiences, and police brutality (Alemika, 2010; Biegon, 2019).

Murphy and Barkworth (2014) conducted a qualitative study to investigate citizen-police interaction in South Africa. Murphy and Barkworth's study used interview as data collection instrument. The study found that citizens' satisfaction with police interaction is dependent on how the citizens were treated by the police in a dignified and respected manner, rather than whether citizens' problem was resolved or not. Murphy and Barkworth's (2014) study is supported by Wu et al.'s (2011) study which

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revealed that citizens reported satisfactory experiences when police officers exhibited friendly, courteous and professional conduct in their dealing with citizens. On the other hand, citizen-police relationship is marred when the police exhibited unsatisfactory conduct such as unfriendliness, rudeness and arrogance when dealing with citizens. The implication of this is that interactions between the police and citizens have the potentials of crippling or sustaining a warm relationship.

Similarly, Boateng, Makin and Yoo (2014) conducted a qualitative study to investigate police-public relations in Ghana. The study used interview as data collection instrument. Boateng et al.'s (2014) study revealed that how the Ghana police officers' perceive Ghanaians influence the police's behaviour and attitudes towards effective crime combat in Ghana. In essence, when police officers perceive the public to be cooperative, the police tend to be effective and behave friendly towards them. It is therefore worthy to note that police perception about the citizenry also affect the relationship that exist between these two parties. Essentially, when police officers believe that citizens trust in them, these officers are more likely to have a good relationship with these citizens.

In another study, Commey (2020) examined the surge in police-public mistrust and hostility in Ghana using qualitative approach. Commey (2020) asserted that the police service in Ghana has persistently been accused of lack of professionalism in executing their policing duties in the country as some use extreme force to brutalize citizens. Commey (2020) further opine that some political parties and government politicians engage the police force in terrorising their opponents and citizens, thereby contributing

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to the lack of trust and confidence in the Ghana Police Service.

Mwaeke (2019) conducted a quantitative cross-sectional study to investigate public perceptions of the effectiveness of policing and the social costs of crime in Nairobi policing region of Kenya. With a sample size of 384, the study employed questionnaire, focus group discussion, and pain assessment scale as data collection instruments. The study revealed that, the Kenyan public perceive that anytime there is an increase in police effectiveness, the cost of social crime is automatically reduced. The study found that there is police ineffectiveness in Kenya due to a lack of mechanism to gather views of the Kenyan public on policing. Mwaeke's (2019) study again found that there is selective policing in Kenya that gives preference to the needs of certain categories of people such as the rich and wealthy against the poor. This is evident in the rate of crime as crime rate in Nairobi police regions is relatively higher in low class residential areas and slums as compared to high class residential areas. This finding acknowledges Wu and Sun (2010) aversion that there is a link between social class and perceptions of the police as people of lower socio-economic status are more likely to have fewer positive views of the police than the more Upper middle class.

These findings corroborate broader assertions that the relationship between the police and the public in Africa is poor and that police brutality, corruption, and a range of other police transgressions corrode public trust in the Police Service in most African countries (Ashimala, 2013; Usman, 2019). This study seeks to analyse public complaints against police officers in Ghana. There is an expectation that some of the police-public relations

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identified in the literature will be revealed in the findings of this study as well. The review of literature on police-public relations will help in understanding the relationship between the police and the citizens. Citizens have the mandate to make complaints against police officers.

2.7 Complaints against the Police

Scholars such as Hymon (2020) and Riley et al. (2021) indicate that one of the most elementary and pronounced facet about police work is the fact that it draws scores of complaints from the public on regular basis. Scores of studies have indicated that the police organisation is relatively the most complained-about organisation among the public service institutions in a country (Mugari, 2021; Riley et al., 2021).

Basically, complaints against police officers could either be formal or informal expressions of dissatisfaction with the conduct or behavior of a police officer. These complaints can be made by members of the public, other police officers, or other stakeholders, such as community groups or civil rights organizations (Riley et al., 2021). Complaints that are lodged against police officers can range from minor incidents of discourtesy or unprofessional behavior to serious allegations of misconduct, excessive force, or abuse of power (Mugari, 2021, Terrill & Ingram, 2015). According to Hymon (2020), although a great number of citizens lodge complaints about police brutality, there has also been increasing levels of complaints against police officers involvement in lower-level misconducts like manhandling, negligence, and incivility (Hymon, 2020).

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Prenzler et.al. (2010) point out that because complaints mostly have inadequate 'forensic information', efforts to verify these complaints are thwarted by unavailability of compelling evidences. Lum et al. (2022) for instance mention that for the most part, the available accusatory information is rather scant hence validating the truth of the reported occurrence becomes problematic. It is also suggested that some people file complaints against the police after when are prevented from committing some particular offenses (Khalid, 2020). In essence, miscreants could lodge inaccurate complaints as a way of retaliating against an officer who frustrates their illegal activities. During clashes, complaints against police could surface when blameless minority parties feel misunderstood and mistreated by the police (Riley, 2021).

In an earlier study by Mrozla et al. (2022), it was revealed that citizens largely complained about the unwarranted use of force by the police. The study also revealed that complaints were lodged against police officers for making abusive utterances. The aforementioned authors referred to this behaviour as verbal discourtesy. It is worth noting that complaints of verbal discourtesy and the use of force regarding police officers were largely recorded in studies that preceded Mrozla et al. (2022) (Porter & Prenzler, 2017).

A survey was conducted by Prenzler et.al. (2010) to examine the experiences of complainants regarding complains made against police officers. The study was conducted in Victoria, Australia. Based on responses from 83 respondents, it was found that most of them had complains about 'abuse of authority', 'rudeness' and 'neglect of

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duty' by police officers. However, few of the complainants pointed out corruption and criminal behaviours of police officers. With regard to criminality and corruption of the police, complains ranged from violence and assault, wrongful arrest, falsifying evidence, theft and drug use. The study also found that complainants were not motivated by vindictiveness when lodging their complaints but rather wished to be listened to, have their feelings validated or wanted an explanation or apology. In essence, respondents indicated that they did not make complaints because they sought to be compensated or have the offender punished.

An analogous study was conducted by Terrill and Ingram (2015) where they analysed 5563 citizen complaints against the police across eight cities in the United States. The data for the study was from the project, *Assessing the Police Use of Force Policies and Outcomes by the U.S. National Institute of Justice.* The coding of the data indicated that the use of force and verbal discourtesy were some of the dominant types of complaints lodged against police officers across the selected cities. The study also revealed that citizens filed complaints ranging from the inability of the police to effectively carry out their tasks, lack of professionalism, and unbecoming conducts. Another interesting finding from the analysis of the data was that male police officers were more likely to be subjects of complaints than female officers. Terrill and Ingram (2015) also analysed complaints in view of racial identities, and the findings indicate that many of the complaints were leveled against black police officers than their white counterparts. In light of the aforementioned finding, the researchers suggested that race bias could be a contributory factor. In that, there is a possibility of black officers and citizens being

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overly and unfairly scrutinised which could result in the police organisation ignoring complaints from black citizens against white officers but sustaining complaints from white officers against black officers.

In a prior research study by Ratcliffe, Biles, Green and Miller (2005), it was found that one of the recurrent complaints against police officers in the New South Wales Police Service of Australia was the trade and use of illicit drugs. Further findings show that out of the 1063 complaints about the police involvement in illicit drugs, 674 officers were identified. Also, the identified officers were mostly constables and others of relatively lower ranks. According to Ratcliffe et.al. (2005), length of service largely determines police involvement in misconducts such as illicit drug trade, in that relatively younger officers were more susceptible to these behaviours than older officers who have served in the service for a long time. The study also found that cannabis was the most used drug by delinquent police officers captured in the study.

Other studies across the globe have indicated that complaints against police officers encapsulates racial abuse and racial profiling (Edwards, 2009); unlawful detention and assault (Fyer, 2016), and breaches of privacy (Riley et.al.2021). The aforementioned scholars found some other common complaints made against police officers. Some of these complaints include, assaults on people in cuffs, assault on bystanders, neglect of the needs of people in custody which comes in the form of denying them food, good hygiene and health needs, sexual assault, and assault on protesters.

While complaints about serving police officers are numerous and varied, a close

examination of the foregoing studies reveals some trajectories such as the use of force by officers, abuse of authority, racial and gender discrimination, and harassment, among others. It appears each of the empirical scholarly works cited here focus on one issue or the other. It is possible that either all these issues or some of them may resurface in the current study. The dynamics may however vary.

In all these, there is no gain saying the fact that communication plays a central role in these engagements and relationships. The following subhead therefore reviews the modes of communication channels citizens use to lodge complaints against police officers.

2.7.1 Channels of lodging complaints

From the foregoing review, it is evident that citizens lodge complaints against police officers who somewhat met out unfair treatment to them. Complaints against police men are many-sided just like how channels or ways of filing these complains are also multifaceted. For instance, Riley et.al. (2021) suggested that one of the ways citizens could get to lodge complaints about the misconduct of police officers through police-community contact numbers. In their study on complaints against police, Prenzler et al., (2010) however found that the commonest medium used by citizens in filing complaint was through writing letters to the Ombudsman or the Office of Police Integrity. Findings also show that some complaints were filed by way of making direct phone calls to police stations, telephone calls to the Ombudsman or the Office of Police Integrity and through

written letters to police stations. According to the findings, some respondents indicated that some efforts were made to prevent them from lodging their complaints. Also, a relative majority of the complainants expressed the need for their complaints to be investigated by an official of the Ombudsman or an officer from the Office of Police Integrity. In essence, these complainants did not want their complaints to be investigated by police.

In an earlier related study by Ratcliffe et.al. (2005) it was found that an employee management system was developed for the Australian New South Wales Police Department (NSWPD) for receiving complaints against the police. However, some objections were raised concerning this system which led to a more computerised channel of receiving complaints from the public regarding police officers who misconduct themselves. The system, known as complaint information system (CIS) is believed to be an efficient alternative for managing and dealing with complaints against the New South Wales police officers. The study found that letters, phone calls and in-person reports were mostly used to file complaints.

Prasad and Kotwal (2012) conducted a study to examine bodies responsible for receiving complaints against police officers across India. Through document analysis, the study found that there is statutory body known as Police Complaint Authority sanctioned by the supreme court to be a channel through which citizens can file complaints about police misconduct. The study indicates that the Police Complainant Authority has consequently developed websites and online interactive channels

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dedicated to receiving complaints from the general public.

Hopkins (2009) on the other hand found that in some Australian towns such as Moonee Valley, complaints of police misconduct were initially lodged at local legal centers by victims of such incidences. However, these legal centers are now working in consonance youth services so that victims directly file these complaints at the Office of Police Integrity. According to Hopkins, the Office of Police Integrity (OPI) has been given the mandate by the Police Regulation Act 1958 and the Police Integrity Act, 2008 to receive and process complaints of police misconducts. Although this institution is charged with handling these complaints, Hopkins (2009) suggested that the OPI tends to delegate its authority to Ethical Standard Department (ESD). Because most of the complaints against police officers are assault-related, the Ethical Standard Department also refers these cases to the Victoria Police. According to Hopkins (2009), victims of police misconduct largely rely on letters in lodging complaints against these police officers despite the availability of websites for such purposes.

Seneviratne (2010) also indicated that Police Ombudsman Departments have been established across Northern Ireland to serve as channels for receiving complaints from citizens with regard to police misconduct. These departments also serve as mediums through which police officers can make complaint against other police officers who work in opposition to the laws and dictates of their job. Nations like England and Wales have created the Independent Police Complaint Commission for the purposes of receiving complaints. Seneviratne mentioned that Police Ombudsman in Northern

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Ireland (PONI) in most cases receive complaints of police conducts through established channels such as emails, letters, fax, telephone calls and personal visits to the PONI offices. In some peculiar cases, officers of PONI pay visits to complainants in their homes or meet them at agreed venues.

From the discussions above, it is observed that there are variety of communication channels used in several jurisdictions for lodging and receiving complaints about police misconduct. While emails, letters, and fax are employed in some places, telephone calls and personal visits to office were adopted as the channels of lodging complaints against police (Hopkins, 2009; Prasad & Kotwal, 2012; Prenzler et al., 2010). It is also worth-mentioning that all of the abovementioned channels are used in some particular jurisdictions (Prenzler et al., 2016). However, the finding of Ratcliffe et.al. (2005) presents a new channel of lodging complaints called complaint information system (CIS).

Since the present study also seeks to examine the channels of lodging complaints against police officers, it is prudent to review related literature on channels of communication. This is because findings from this study may confirm, contradict or add to the other existing channels in the literature. In addition to the varied channels of lodging complaints, there are processes and mechanisms for dealing with complaints against police officers (Riley et al. 2021). The next subsection therefore delves into how complaints against police officers are dealt with.

2.7.2 Dealing with complaints against police officers

There are extant discussions in literature regarding how the police organisation and other designated institutions deal, manage and address complaints filed against the misconduct police officers. Carter and Klinger (2019) reviewed the literature on administrative investigations of police misconduct and analyzed data on police misconduct cases from several large police departments in the United States. Findings from the study indicate that administrative investigations can be an effective means of addressing police misconduct, as they allow police departments to hold officers accountable for their actions and improve police-community relations. However, the authors also observed that administrative investigations can be costly and time-consuming, and that some departments are reluctant to investigate allegations of misconduct. Based on this findings, Carter and Klinger (2019) recommend that police departments prioritise administrative investigations of police misconduct and ensure that they are conducted in a fair and transparent manner.

In a related study, Fagan et al., (2017) analysed data on complaints of police misconduct and the use of force by the New York City Police Department (NYPD) before and after the creation of the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB), an independent agency tasked with investigating complaints of police misconduct. The analysis show that the creation of the CCRB was associated with a significant increase in the number of complaints of police misconduct filed by citizens. They also found that the CCRB was effective in investigating complaints and holding officers accountable for their actions. The authors however recommend that other police departments consider implementing

similar independent oversight mechanisms to improve accountability and reduce police misconduct.

Similarly, Schafer and Morreale (2018) examined reports on citizen complaints and use of force complaints filed with the police department in a large Midwestern city to examine the relationship between complaints and disciplinary action against officers. Findings indicate that officers who had multiple complaints filed against them were more likely to receive disciplinary action, including suspension or termination. The authors also found that officers who used force inappropriately were more likely to be disciplined. However, the authors noted that the disciplinary process can be influenced by a range of factors, including departmental culture, the severity of the misconduct, and the officer's race and gender.

Mastrofski et al., (2016) examined the principle of procedural justice in view of citizens complaints against police officers in a mid-sized city in the United States. They analyzed data on 654 complaints that were filed over a three-year period, and used statistical methods to test the theory of procedural justice. The authors found that the way in which complaints were handled had a significant impact on citizens' perceptions of police legitimacy. Specifically, citizens were more likely to perceive police as legitimate when they felt that the complaint process was fair, impartial, and respectful. The authors also found that citizens were more likely to perceive police as legitimate when they felt that the officers involved in the complaint process were responsive and communicative.

Alpert and Dunham (2014) analyzed documents on disciplinary actions taken against police officers in response to citizen complaints in a large city police department. The authors found that although most complaints did not result in disciplinary action, complaints that alleged excessive force or false arrest were more likely to result in discipline. The study also found that citizen complaints were more likely to result in discipline when they were supported by witness statements or video evidence.

Although there are structures for dealing with citizen complaints against misconduct as indicated in the foregoing articles, a number of scholars including Schuck and Papachristos (2019) observe that there are some misgivings among citizens about filing formal complaints about police officers who misconduct themselves based on popular notion that most of these cases are not investigated or attended to. Relying on semi-structured interviews of 26 residents of a predominantly African American and Latino neighbourhood in Chicago Schuck and Papachristos (2019) examined reluctance to report police misconduct. They also reviewed police complaint data from the city. The findings of the study show that fear of retaliation and mistrust of the police were the main reasons why residents did not report police misconduct. The authors found that residents were more likely to report police misconduct if they had positive experiences with the police in the past, if they knew someone who had successfully reported police misconduct, or if the misconduct they witnessed was severe.

Walker et al. (2018) also surveyed 750 residents of a large Midwestern city about their attitudes towards the police and their willingness to report police misconduct. The

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researchers conducted focus groups with residents who had experienced police misconduct but had not reported it and found that residents were more likely to report police misconduct if they believed that the police department would take their complaint seriously. Residents were less likely to report police misconduct if they believed that the police department would not take their complaint seriously or if they believed that they would face retaliation for reporting.

In the foregoing studies (Schuck & Papachristos, 2019; Walker et al., 2018), the study participants indicated that some investigators were not so enthused about verifying the issues and deliberately delay the investigation process until complainants get frustrated and consequently give up on the issue. It was also suggested that the investigation process could be overly bureaucratic. Another interesting finding is that the complaint process and its resolution could take about 3 months in most cases and more than 6 months in relatively fewer cases.

Killean (2014) also indicated that the Office of the Ombudsman has prerogative to receive, investigate and address complaints filed against police officers. Findings however show that majority of the complainants prefer to file their complaints at the Office of the Ombudsman or the Office of Police Integrity. This finding somewhat agrees with findings by Fagan et al. (2017) when they suggest that complainants largely prefer independent bodies dealing with their complaints than the police.

The European Commission of Human Rights suggests that when dealing with complaints, thorough measures should be employed in the investigation process to

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verify if the reported events truly occurred and if officers' response to situation was lawful or unlawful (ECHR, n.d.). According to the commission, the adequacy and exhaustiveness of the investigation process is crucial in the determination of the case. The aforementioned author also indicated that there is the need for celerity in dealing with complaints against police officers in order to preserve trust in the rule of law and prevent misgivings among complainants and the citizenry.

Studies reviewed in this section show that there are structures and systems in place in several jurisdictions for handling complaints of police misconduct. However the review also points out why some citizens may be hesitant to report police misconduct and the factors that influence their willingness to do so. Specifically, the studies find that fear of retaliation, mistrust of the police, lack of knowledge about the complaint process, and concerns about not being taken seriously are common reasons why citizens do not report police misconduct. The studies also highlight the importance of prior positive experiences with the police, severity of the misconduct, and perception of the police department's responsiveness to complaints as factors that can increase citizens' willingness to report. Overall, these studies offer important recommendations for improving police complaint systems and increasing trust between the police and the communities they serve.

Because the present study examines the complaint process and how citizen complaints are dealt with, it is noteworthy to review the situation in other jurisdictions in order to determine whether the Ghanaian orientation is a peculiar one or reflects happenings in

those contexts. There could be possibilities that there will be close relationships between the Ghanaian situation and the case in other areas. All the same, because social and cultural orientations differ, there could be disparities.

2.8 Theoretical framework

2.8.0 Introduction

This section of the chapter delves into the relevant theories that underpin the present study. Particularly, the Procedural Justice Theory and Trust as well as the Media Richness Theory are the selected to help in the adequate and thorough analysis of the available data. It is worth pointing out that these theories are selected based on the nature of the study and the fact that they align with the research objectives.

2.8.1 Procedural Justice Theory (Tyler, 1990)

Research around Procedural justice has significantly influenced concepts and questions of legitimacy in relation to criminal justice institutions such as the police service. As a social psychologist, Tyler was interested in understanding the issue of legal compliance, and sought to question the long-established belief that what promotes obedience in people was rewards and punishments (Tyler, 2017). Tyler was able to establish through a survey study that, reward/punishment, which were, the outcome of exchange was not the main motivator of obedience. Rather, how people were treated and how they perceived authorities, in other words, the procedural aspects of experience, had a strong influence on belief and behaviour. Tyler (2011) suggested that the keen balance of fundamental human rights and procedural justice are upshots of "quality of decision-making." This quality of decision-making is limited to neutrality, objectivity, consistency and impartiality (Tyler, 2011). The theory also looks at the "quality of treatment" and connects it to the respect, dignity and politeness people ought to

experience in their interaction and dealings with law enforcement agents (Tyler, 2006).

The primary theme in Tyler's assumptions is the "fairness of legal authority" in every encounter with members of the community (Tyler, 2006). Tyler and Huo (2002) assert that this theme evolves with many other themes such as voice, neutrality, trust and motive. According to Tyler (2006), there are two factors that shape people's attitude towards the police; when they believe in effective policing and procedural fairness. On one hand, effective policing elicits trust when people believe that police officers are efficient in providing security, preventing people from breaking law and ensuring general order. Also, effective policing is viewed from the perspective of the polices' ability to protect lives and property and effect arrests when necessary. Effective policing as a determinant of legitimacy and trust surrounds the idea. On the other hand, Tyler (2015) suggested that procedural fairness is occurs when there are desirable element of legitimacy and trust among people when dealing with the police. The main assumptions of Tyler are that people may obey the law out of fear of being compelled to, but personal compliance and general social order is achieved in the long run when people believe authority is legitimate. In essence when the citizenry trust that law enforcement agents, like the police, conduct their duties in a lawful and fair manner, citizens shall have high regard for the law without being compelled to do so (Tyler, 2015).

Tyler (2006: 25) further extended his notion of legitimacy and trust to personal commitment resulting from "internalised obligation." Internalised obligation according to him rests on individual voluntary compliance; hinged on "personal morality", namely,

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the feelings of the individual concerning what is morally right (Tyler, 2006:25). In his assessment, obedience to legal authority and the laws they enforce are based on the judgements people make about their personal experience with the police and court, and how this experience has shaped their behaviour (Tyler, 2006). The commitment to obey legal authority is not associated with the entitlement of such authority rather obedience is linked to individual assessment that the authority makes use of procedurally acceptable means of dealing with the citizenry. Citizens feel the duty to obey the law of the land when they believe that the authority is rightful and in line with their normative expectations.

A number of studies (Wood et al., 2021; Tyler, 2017) have established that an authority's legitimacy is associated with people's satisfaction with the procedural justice aspect of the encounter they have with authority. In essence, when people are treated fairly, they tend to be more satisfied with authority than when they are not treated fairly. According to Wood et al. (2021), fair treatment is a major concern to people more than an outcome of an encounter.

Procedural justice is concerned with people's experiences of formal justice officers and how these shape people's experiences. Tyler and Huo (2002) provided four distinct determinants which procedural justice is based on; these are voice: an opportunity to present one claims and to be heard and listened to. Neutrality: openness of the decision makers by treating people without being bias. Respect: the awareness that interaction is regarded rather than disregarded; and trust: subjective assessment of officers'

intention (motives) or observable qualities of the legal officers. These elements have a powerful influence on increasing and evaluating the quality of people's experience of legal processes or institutions (Tyler, 2017).

However, the postulation of the procedural justice theory may be understood as police must earn the authorization and consent of the public. In gaining legitimacy from the people, the police must demonstrate professionalism and responsible conducts. The police must exhibit to the citizens why the public should appreciate, work in partnership with them, and conform to their dictates. The accomplishment of this act by the police assists in building the essential bond links the police to the public, which ultimately helps in the active functioning of the police and successful policing (Tyler, 2015).

2.8.1.1 Relevance of the Procedural Justice Theory to the study

This study primarily examines the public complaints against police officers in Ghana. For the data to be critically examined, it is crucial to select a theory that aligns with the focus of the study. The procedural justice theory is pointedly relevant to this study based on assertions (Matrofski et al., 2016) that the tenets of this theory helps in determining police relationship, fairness and exercise of authority in their dealings with citizens. Matrofski et al. (2016) indicated that the Procedural justice theory is highly relevant to studies on complaints against the police. Complaints against the police are a mechanism by which citizens can express grievances about police conduct that they perceive as unfair, biased, or otherwise illegitimate. Tyler (2015) hinted that when examining the

kinds of complaints lodged against police officers, it is important to consider how the perceived fairness of the procedures used in those encounters may have influenced individuals' attitudes towards the police. For example, complaints that allege unfair treatment, bias, or abuse of power may be more likely to be characterised by the perception of unfairness and general mistrust for law enforcement agents.

Procedural justice theory suggests that the fairness of the complaint process itself is critical in shaping citizens' perceptions of the legitimacy of the police institution as a whole (Tyler, 2017). Research on complaints against the police has consistently demonstrated that the perceived fairness and impartiality of the complaint process is a crucial factor in shaping citizens' attitudes towards the police (Wood et al., 2021). The procedural justice theory also indicate that the fairness and transparency of the complaint process is crucial in determining the equity and impartiality of the police institution (Tyler, 2017). Based on Tyler's (2017) assertion, the theory of procedural justice is relevant in discussing the objectives 2 and 3 of the present study, which respectively examine the processes used by citizens in lodging complaints against police officers and the mechanisms of dealing with these complaints. In essence, the theory of procedural justice guides the researcher to discuss and determine whether these processes are transparent and fair in the Ghanaian context.

Moreover, studies have shown that the failure to provide fair and transparent complaint procedures can lead to increased levels of public distrust and negative attitudes towards

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the police. Complaints that are dismissed without proper investigation, or that are met with hostility or retaliation from police officials, can erode citizens' trust in the police and damage the legitimacy of the institution. Because this study interrogates the type of complaints, the complaint process and how complaints are resolved, it is instructive to rely on a theory which tenets examines legitimacy and fairness of police conducts, as well as the transparency of complaint process.

As earlier indicated, this study finds the theory of procedural justice relevant considering evidences that suggest earlier studies on public complaints against the police relied on this theory (Crehan & Goodman-Delahunty, 2019; Matrofski et al., 2016; Tyler, 2017; Wood, 2020). In sum, procedural justice theory is highly relevant to this study because it emphasises the importance of responsible police conduct and, the legitimacy and fairness of the police institution in dealing with citizens concerns.

2.8.2 Media richness theory
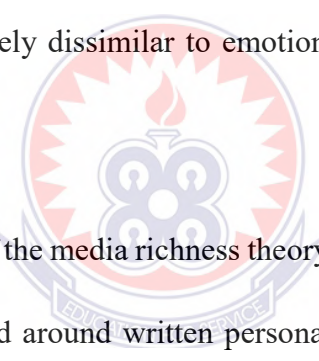
The media richness theory, also referred to as information richness theory was developed by Richard Daft and Robert Lengel in their attempt to establish the argument that the channel used in sending information is largely consequential in determining the impact of the message and its feedback. In essence, the theory suggests that different types of communication mediums hold different degrees of richness pertaining to the information they provide. Alan, Valancich and Joseph (1999) indicate that there is a variegation that is typical of every communication media which consequently affect the

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way users communicate and the degree of understanding that is captured from their messages. The theory further indicates that the ability of a particular media to efficiently communicate a complex message determines its richness. In essence, media that can expeditiously surmount various barriers and clearly explain equivocal or ambiguous issues are considered to be relatively richer than media that use more time and effort to convey an appreciation of a message.

This theory was originally developed to examine how communication channels help in the effective transmission and exchange of information within the organisational set-up for the realisation of organisational goals. It was identified that some types of communication channels increase ambiguity (uncertainty) and equivocalness (lack of message) whereas other channels reduce and eliminate these factors. According to the Media Richness Theory, the medium used in sending a particular message largely determines the ability to clearly and fully comprehend the message, without any shred of probable misinterpretation. The medium also enhances the possibility of obtaining prompt and effective feedback. The theory also suggest that complex information require the use of rich media channels in order for effective communication to be achieved.

Daft and Lengel (1986) provided four characteristic components of the media richness theory. These are effective handling and conveyance of multiple cues, promptness of feedback, capacity to include personal focus and capacity to utilise a natural language. Conveyance and handling of multiple cues suggests that there are various cues that are

employed in the communication process and these cues can either be visual or auditory. For instance, an advertisement on the dangers of smoking can present dull visuals with someone in agony and at the same time utilise voice overs that suggest severity. Promptness of feedback explains that feedback is necessary when an information is sent and the immediacy of a needed feedback determines the effectiveness and richness of the selected communication medium. Capacity to include personal focus suggests that every communication media has distinct characteristics that enable the effective conveyance of emotions. In essence, some emotions are better communicated through certain channels than others. For instance, emotions communicated through textual document could be relatively dissimilar to emotions communicated through face-to-face interaction.

During the development of the media richness theory, the discussion of communication media was mostly centered around written personal or formal documents, telephone calls, face-to-face communication and according to Daft and Lengel, face-to-face communication comparatively has richness than the other media of communication. This is based on the fact it capsulises the visual and audio channels as well as having the propensity to elicit social cues and immediate feedback.

The discussion on media richness theory has however been extended to encapsulate new media or new forms of communication that are characteristic of our contemporary times. For instance, video telephoning, video conferences, online discussion boards and interactive websites have all been captured in the 'Media Richness' conversation

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(Ina, Orli, Eshet-Alkali & Yoram, 2017). Although media richness theory was originally developed for examining information flow in the organisation, it has largely been appropriated into the study of individual and interpersonal communication by communication scholars and researchers to better understand why individuals select and use particular media channels (Dennis & Valicich, 1999; Ina et al. 2017). Scholars such as Sheer and Chen (2004) suggested that deciding on which type of media to use in communicating an information is largely crucial to performance and feedback in that using information rich media enhances performance whereas using less-rich media has adverse effects on performance.

2.8.2.1 Relevance of the Media Richness Theory to the study

This study sought to examine complaints against police officers of the Ghana police service. As such it was pertinent to develop a research objective that aims to understand the channels used by citizens in lodging complaints against against police officers. Owing to this research objective, the theory of Media Richness has been appropriated to adequately understand the communication channels largely used by citizens and the impact of their complaints based on the selected channels. In essence, the theory is relevant in understanding how the selected communication media influence the response to complaints.

Another compelling reason for using this theory is the fact that other studies that investigated communication between individuals and organisations as well as studies

on public complaints employed this theory (Lipowski & Bondos, 2018; Oliver, 2019; Susskind, 2015). For instance, Susskind (2015) relied on the Media Richness Theory to examine why some complaints of guests at restaurants go directly to the top managers whereas others do not. Using the same theory, Oliver (2019) also examined the use of contemporary communication channels between construction industry professionals and their publics.

2.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter of the study reviewed related literature in light of public complaints against the police. More particularly, the chapter focused on the overview of policing, the development of policing in Ghana, police accountability, public-police relationship and complaints against the police. The purpose of the review was to reveal related studies conducted in academic literature by previous scholars with respect in order to discover the apparent gaps and consequently establish the relevance of this study. This is done in order to avoid unhealthy replication of an existing study. From the review, it is evident that the present study is unique, in that there has not been any of its kind conducted in the Ghanaian setting. The literature review section of this study also discussed the relevant theories underpinning the study. The purpose of this was to establish a fitting lens through which filed complaints can be analysed.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section addresses the researcher's methodical approach to data collection and analysis for this study. It also discusses the ideas that underpin the data collection and analysis methodologies and procedures. The following subheadings summarize the content of this chapter: research approach, research design, sampling procedure and sample size, data gathering method, data analysis method, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Approach

The qualitative research approach was employed in this study. Qualitative research approach is essentially used to explore people's experiences, behaviors, and beliefs in-depth (Brennen, 2017). According to Creswell (2013), this approach of conducting research rely on exploratory methods to unearth the opinions, thoughts and feelings of participants. Because the present study focuses on examining the experiences and feelings embedded in citizens' complaints against law enforcement agents, particularly, the police, it is crucial to adopt an approach that helps in the thorough examination of these complaints. The qualitative approach therefore serves as an ideal approach that aligns with the focus of the study.

Brennen (2017) again indicates that the qualitative approach primarily deals with meanings. In essence, this approach focuses on the way people understand and attribute

meaning to their subjective experiences (Brennen, 2017). Because the qualitative researcher relies primarily on human perception and understanding to establish the meaning of a phenomenon from the perspectives of participants (Brennen, 2017), this research approach allows the current study to assess, interpret and evaluate public complaints against police personnel at the PPSB. The researcher can also appreciate the inherent human experiences and interactions in the sense of the language employed in the complaints.

This study also utilised a qualitative research approach because it describes social phenomenon as they occur naturally without the artificiality associated with experimental or survey research (Wimmer & Dominick, 2021). According to Wimmer and Dominick (2021) the qualitative research approach involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach into real-life situations. This implies that data for a qualitative study is mostly collected from its natural source and gives the researcher the prerogative to make informed interpretations. The nature of the present study required that data is collected from the natural source which clearly aligns with the aforementioned feature of qualitative approach. Moreover, this research was conducted without any attempt to influence or manipulate the phenomena under study. Appropriate themes were generated from the information gathered from participants and were analyzed, and well interpreted with the help of the theoretical framework underpinning the study. For all intents and purposes, this study was conducted without any attempt to modify or influence the complain process or ascribe any extraneous descriptions to the documented complaints and interview data. This is because qualitative research is

concerned with participants' opinions, experiences, and feelings rather than the researcher's (Wimmer & Dominick, 2021).

Additionally, Creswell and Creswell (2018) state that qualitative researchers rarely make external generalisations but to gain insight into specific social, and interpersonal processes and practices that exist within a particular context. This process therefore does not require any statistical or mathematical methods as the case is with quantitative research (Creswell, 2014). Because, the purpose of this research requires that data are collected and examined in an interpretive way, there was no need encountering any complex mathematical methodology. Similarly, data obtained from documented complaints against police at the PPSB were exclusively based on the complainants' standpoints and experiences. Essentially, the study's aim was to gain a thorough understanding of specific contexts relating to the state of complaints lodged against police personnel with the PPSB, therefore the researcher was not required to make external statistical generalisations.

3.2 Research Design

Creswell and Creswell (2018) defined research design as a form of inquiry technique within any research paradigm that provides clear guidance that is most appropriate for reaching the study purpose. Research design may therefore be the technique utilised by researchers to help them draw credible conclusions (Yin, 2014). There are many research designs including but not limited to, phenomenology, ethnography, case study,

content analysis, among others (Yin, 2014). Research designs are tailored to suit the focus of the research, the aims and objectives of the research as well as the researcher's own experiences and philosophical position (Creswell, 2013). Taking into account the fact that this study is aimed at examining individual complaints lodged against police officers at the PPSB, the qualitative content analysis serves as one of the most ideal designs to adopt.

This study employed qualitative content analysis as the research design on the basis that it provides the strategy, plan and structure that characterises this research work. The study also adopts qualitative content analysis because it provided the logical link that connects the data to be collected and the conclusions to be drawn to the research questions as pointed out by Yin (2014). In light of the above assertion, this design helped the researcher to adequately analyse and examine the presence of particular words and expressions that were used by the complainants. The qualitative content analysis was helpful in objectively evaluating and making logical inference regarding the use of language for expressing grievances.

According to scholars like Hsieh and Shannon (2005), qualitative content analysis serves as a suitable technique in analysing all sort of texts including visuals texts. Hsieh and Shannon (2018, p.2) argue "qualitative content analysis has gained popularity as a means to interpreting data by identifying codes and common themes (manifest content) and then constructing underlying meanings (latent content)." The aforementioned argument makes this design appropriate and justifiable for this study because this study

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analysed and interpreted underlying codes and themes drawn from the data in order to explore relevant embedded meanings.

3.2.1 Qualitative Content Analysis

According to Krippendorf (2017), content analysis is a research technique or method for establishing reproducible and valid connections between a set of data and its context, whereas Palmquist (2016) defines it as a method for objectively examining the presence of specific words, phrases, characters, themes, concepts, or any communicative language in a body of text. On the other hand, Kenix (2018) contends that content analysis enables the discovery of embedded meanings within media texts and can be conducted qualitatively or quantitatively.

When content analysis is conducted beyond the realm of quantification in order to uncover hidden meanings, patterns, and themes within the communicative text, it is referred to as qualitative content analysis (Kenix, 2018). According to Kenix (2018), a qualitative method to content analysis enables researchers to grasp social reality in a subjective but scientific manner. Based on Kenix's (2018) assumption about qualitative content analysis, the current study used this method to analyse the texts of the complaints logged at PPSB in order to understand the nature and orientation of infractions that usually dominate police-public relationship.

Hseish and Shannon (2018) are of the view that qualitative content analysis is one of the qualitative data analysis methods that is most suited for interpreting text quality or

meaning. The scholars stress the importance of qualitative content analysis while attempting to comprehend the meanings and patterns hidden in a communication text. This was done by examining the meanings and patterns found in PPSB complaints, whether manifest or latent. To do this, Zhang and Wildemuth (2018) indicate that qualitative content analysis requires the collection of appropriate data and the selection of an appropriate unit of analysis. The current study used a complaint as the unit of analysis. The interpretations of complaints were derived from active reading and re-reading across the basic unit of texts, as well as condensing the bulk of data into important patterns and meanings.

3.3 Sampling Technique

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2018), sampling is the procedure through which a subgroup is selected for a study. A sampling technique therefore enables the researcher to determine who to study, where to examine, and when to study them. This method eliminates the danger of wasting time and effort because the precise unit or units to be investigated are chosen (Lindlof & Taylor, 2018) and this is highly dependent on the nature of the research as well as the study's objectives and scope (Daymon & Holloway, 2017). For this reason, this current study employs the purposive sampling technique. Lindlof and Taylor (2018) describe purposive sampling as a form of non-probability sampling which includes data or subjects that are selected for possessing specific features that are in line with the study. The PPSB was purposefully chosen as the data site for this study because it is the officially mandated Unit in the Ghana Police Service

responsible for investigating all police misconduct, receiving and investigating public complaints against police officers, and resolving such complaints.

3.3.1 Sample size

Three participants, who are official at the PPSB were purposefully selected. The officials were sampled for the study based on the fact that they work at the bureau and possess extensive knowledge of police-public complaints and its resolution. The sampled officials include two directors of the PPSB and the administrative officer at the bureau.
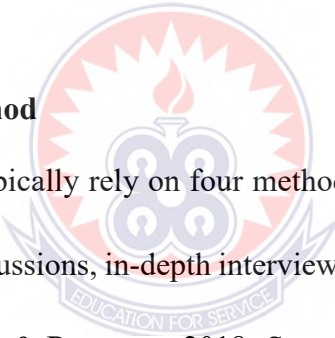
The Director General PPSB reports directly to the Inspector-General of Police about the day-to-day administration and operation of the bureau. The Director of the PPSB, who is directly in charge of PPSB operation, reports to the Director General PPSB. Thus, the inclusion of the Director General of PPSB and the Director of PPSB in the current study provides the researcher with expert knowledge on the operations of the Ghana Police Service, as well as their handling of police-public complaints and their resolution. The Administrative Officer at the PPSB, on the other hand, is in charge of receiving and documenting complaints at the Unit, among other things. He is therefore in a unique position to contribute to this research because of his role at the Unit.

1709 complaints received in 2018 at the PPSB was selected.

3.4 Period of Study

The data collection period spanned January - December, 2018. The rationale was to have data covering at least a 12 months period. This helps to improve data reliability and validity as argued by Madichie and Hinson (2014) who assert that the longer the period, the more likely it is to be reliable and valid. Again, the study covered documented complaints at the PPSB in the whole of 2018 because preliminary investigation by the researcher confirmed that the unit received more complaints of police misconduct during that period and the period also coincides with the period in which the initial PIPS was restricted and renamed PPSB.

3.5 Data Collection Method

Qualitative researchers typically rely on four methods for gathering data: observation methods, focus group discussions, in-depth interviewing, and analysing documents and material culture (Marshall & Rossman, 2018; Spencer & Snape, 2017). Even though other secondary and specialised methods of data sources supplement these four primary methods, they nonetheless, remain the core of qualitative inquiry (Marshall & Rossman, 2018). For the purposes of this study, document analysis and interviews were employed as data collection methods in answering the research questions.

3.5.1 Document Analysis

To systematically analyse police-public complaints at PPSB, this study used document analysis as a data collection method. Organisational and institutional documents,

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according to Morgan (2022) have been a mainstay in qualitative research for many years. Analysing or evaluating documented complaints at PPSB allows the researchers to gain insight, elicit meaning, and build empirical evidence about the sort of complaints reported, the communication channels deployed, and how the complaints were resolved (Flick, 2018).

Documents that can be utilised for systematic evaluation as part of a study come in a variety of forms. These include, advertisements; manuals; background papers; books and brochures; diaries and journals; event programs (i.e. printed outlines); letters and memos; maps and charts; newspapers (clippings/articles); press releases; program proposals, application forms, and summaries; radio and television program scripts; libraries, newspaper archives, historical society offices, and organizational or institutional files (Bowen, 2009). Documents contain text (words) and photos that were recorded without the participation of a researcher (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Police complaints log books are part of organisational or institutional files of the police force. They are usually written documents that provide a viable source of recorded proof of police misbehaviour. Notably, these documented complaints were compiled in the absence of a researcher, making document analysis an appropriate choice for this study.

Also, using documents as the data collection method can serve a variety of purposes as part of this research. To begin, the police complaints record books will provide data on the context of the phenomenon under investigation. The document will provide evidence to earlier incidents as well as background information on public complaints

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about police wrongdoings. Such information and insight will help this current study grasp the historical foundation of the specific issues in the complaint record books. Additionally, documents can be analysed as a way to verify finding or corroborate evidence from other sources (Spencer & Snape, 2017). The researcher can use data drawn from documents, for example, to contextualise data collected during interviews (Spencer & Snape, 2017).

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2021) document analysis is often used in combination with other qualitative research methods as a means of triangulation – the combination of the methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. Although Lindlof and Taylor (2018) argue that document analysis can also be used as a stand-alone data collection method, Wimmer and Dominick (2021) maintain that the qualitative researcher is expected to draw upon multiple (at least two) sources of evidence; that is, to seek convergence and corroboration through the use of different data sources and methods. Apart from documents, such sources include interviews, participant or non-participant observation, and physical artifacts (Wimmer & Dominick, 2021). This study relied on interviews as additional data sources.

3.5.2 Interviews

While qualitative interviews are characterised by professional conversation with participants in which they offer their opinions on a phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), the objective of interview is to elicit relevant information from the participant

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often in his/her own language (Braun & Clarke, 2018). In other words, any exchange of opinions between an interviewer and interviewee on a subject of a mutual interest, whether in person or by electronic means, may be regarded as an interview (Braun & Clarke, 2018).

The current study employed in-depth interviews to explore how complaints are resolved at the PPSB. The interviews were conducted with the Director General of Police, the Director of PPSB and the Station Officer at PPSB. Due to the knowledge, position and wealth of information that participants possess, made them quite suitable at the heart of the research and put them in the right position to answer the various questions fundamental to meeting the specific objective of the study. As earlier noted, interviews with the study participants aided in explaining, verifying, validating, and clarifying concerns emerging from the document analysis.

There are three forms of interviews namely; informal conversational interview; general interview guide approach; and standardized open-ended interview (Braun & Clarke, 2018). The standardised open-ended interview design was employed by this current study because it is structured in such a way that participants are asked identical questions, but the questions are framed in such a way that responses are not limited. The open-ended interview design also allows participants to give as much comprehensive information as they want, as well as the researcher to ask probing questions as a sort of follow-up (Braun & Clarke, 2018).

Participants were free to say whatever they wanted, and follow-up questions were asked to ensure a better understanding of what was being stated. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2018), because open-ended interviews require participants to completely express their thoughts in as much detail as possible, it can be difficult for researchers to extract similar themes or codes from interview transcripts as they would with less open-ended responses. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2018), open-ended interviews, on the other hand, reduce research biases, especially when more than one participant is involved in the interviewing process.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection processes examine how the researcher collects data for the study. It utilises a range of data gathering methods (Marshall & Rossman, 2018). The research examines the various forms of complaints lodged against police personnel with the PPSB, as well as the different channels through which citizen lodge complaints. Similarly, the research investigates how PPSB complaints are resolved. To do this, the researcher formally requested authorization to conduct the study from the National Police Headquarters via the PPSB Headquarters (see Appendix B). Permission was finally given following four follow-ups on the letter, primarily through visits to the offices of the Director General of Police and the Director of the PPSB.

To get a better understanding of the various types of complaints lodged against police officials, the Administrative Officer at the PPSB made available to me the lodge book

of all filed complaints. In all, one thousand, seven-hundred and nine (1,709) complaints were analysed for this study. The shortest complaint was seventeen (17) words long, while the longest complaints were one hundred and forty-seven (147) words long.

Additionally, the researcher conducted interviews to learn about the various channels via which citizens lodge complaints and how the complaints are resolved. Given that both data collection procedures (analysing documented complaints and conducting interviews) were specified in the researcher's letter to the Ghana Police Service, the researcher proceeded to schedule an interview session with the participants after receiving approval. All participants agreed to have face-to-face interviews with the researcher in their separate offices. This guaranteed that the interview took place in an environment that was convenient for the participants, devoid of all distractions and also making the interviewee feel at ease (Braun & Clarke, 2018). Prior to the interviews, participants received email messages that conveyed the interview guides to assist them in preparing for the interview, as well as a consent form with information about the research.

The interview generally lasted for 30 to 35 minutes to allow sufficient time to cover all of the interview items and to allow participants to elaborate on them in detail. All interviews were also recorded with the participants' consent. Additionally, the researcher took notes while concurrently recording the interaction. Transcripts of the recording were compiled, and open coding was utilised to uncover common themes throughout the data. The researcher printed out and read over all the transcripts several

times in order to make sense of the data, noting significant ideas with various coloured markers.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

3.7.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a method of qualitative analysis in which patterns within data are identified, analysed, and reported. It is used to analyse categories and identify recurring patterns in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2018). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), this can be accomplished by classifying and organising data into themes. The procedure entails classifying, categorising, and identifying patterns in order to establish relationships between variables and components and to construct an acceptable and logical chain of evidence. The researcher coded the different interviews done with participants as well as the data from the documented complaints. While Zakaria (2017) employed both analytical methods in his work, Braun and Clarke (2018), affirm that combining the two methods for document-related analysis provides a scientific foundation for identifying inherent patterns as well as declustering a large volume of data into simplified themes for easier presentation and comprehension.

In this current study, the researcher identified recurring themes and sub-themes in the interviews and document analysing and organised them into various themes and sub-themes within the specified study objectives to facilitate data interpretation. In answering the research questions underlying the study, the researcher was guided by the main concepts gleaned from the interviews and the applicable literature on the

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subject. This sort of thematic data analysis is referred to as inductive, as the researcher does not attempt to fit the data into any pre-determined interpretation or pre-existing coding categories (Braun & Clark, 2008).

3.8 Ethical Issues

According to Halai (2006), good research is a moral and ethical task, and the researcher should be concerned with ensuring that the interests of study participants are not jeopardised in any manner. In order to prevent or eliminate harm, ethical norms must be followed in all methods of research. This is due to the importance of having to protect human subjects or volunteers in any research (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2017).

Ethical considerations are very vital in qualitative studies because:

qualitative researchers focus their research on exploring, examining, and describing people and their natural environments. Embedded in qualitative research are the concepts of relationships and power between researchers and participants. The desire to participate in a research study depends upon a participant's willingness to share his or her experience (Orb et al., 2017, p. 93).

In line with this, Halai (2006) proposes three essential ethical problems that researchers must follow during their research and it includes informed and voluntary consent, confidentiality of information supplied, anonymity of study participants, among others. The current study made an effort to adhere to these ethical norms in order to maintain high standards. In the area of informed and voluntary consent, the researcher informed various participants about the study and its purpose. This was accomplished first by submitting introductory letters for permission to collect data (check appendix A). Later,

an email was sent to the participants, and a meeting was scheduled with the participants to debrief them on the study's scope, purpose, and significance.

The participants were also informed that their participation was entirely voluntary and that the study was solely for academic purposes. They were equally given copies of the interview guide to preview before the planned interview. Permission was sought from participants to record the interviewing process. The recordings of the interviews were shown to the participants to corroborate the information they had provided. Participants were once again informed of the confidentiality of the information supplied and their anonymity. To safeguard participants' identity, their names were replaced with pseudonyms such as PPSB- OF P1 meaning officer one at the PPSB.

The researcher also informed the participants of the possibility of lengthy interviews and follow-up interviews. This was due to the fact that the participants were busy professionals who might not be available for other periods of information gathering process. This information was intended to assist them in readjusting their schedules as well as the researcher's work plan in order to ensure that both the interviewer and the interviewees were available for the interviews. Adhering to this approach forestalled any potential conflicts between the scheduled interviews and the participants' work schedules. This procedure thus facilitated a smooth interview process.

3.9 Trustworthiness

Golafshani (2016) reports that whereas validity and reliability are widespread in

quantitative studies, they have recently gained prominence in qualitative research circles. The scholar's argument is based on the assumption that since reliability and validity are anchored in a positivist perspective, they should be interpreted for use in a naturalistic approach (Golafshani, 2016). As a result, the current qualitative study used validity and reliability approaches to verify adherence to accuracy principles, strive for objectivity, and present authentic and trusted data.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative validity is the extent to which the researcher validates the veracity of the findings using specific techniques, whereas qualitative reliability demonstrates that the researcher's approach is consistent across different researchers and projects. As a result, Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommended eight dependability strategies and four validation tools for any qualitative investigation. The reliability techniques are triangulation or using multiple data sources, the use of member checking, thick descriptions to convey findings, clarification of the biases the researcher brings to the study, presentation of negative evidence, spending prolonged time in the field, and the use of peer briefing to enhance the accuracy of the account and the use of an external auditor to review the entire project. Validation techniques on the other hand, as espoused by Creswell and Creswell (2018) are checking of transcripts for accuracy, avoiding redefinition of codes, coordination among coders in the case of team research or when the researcher is assisted by another person during the coding process and employing intercoder reliability or agreement.

Following from the above, the researcher ensured the validity and reliability of the

study in a number of ways. The researcher used multiple sources of data. The researcher did that by triangulating data from interviews with participants and document analysis. The researcher also played back recorded and transcribed interviews to participants to ascertain their validity while rich and thick description was carried out by the researcher, especially during data analysis. The debriefing was done via weekly seminars of my academic department. To boost the validity of the study, the researcher employed coders to assist with the data analysis. To safeguard inter-coder reliability, the researcher trained coders prior to the data collection process and frequently cross-checked data with the coders to ensure agreement with the guidelines of the coding process as well as objectives of the research. In the area of reliability, the researcher re-checked interview transcripts to ensure obvious mistakes were avoided.
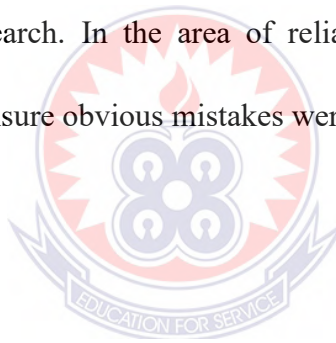
3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a detailed process and procedure for data collection and analysis. The study which is qualitative, drew on a case study design. Data was collected through triangulation of methods such as interviews and document analysis. The information collected were analysed using content and thematic analysis while validity and reliability of data collected were upheld. The chapter that follows presents an analysis of the data gathered and discusses the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter of the research work analyses and discusses the data gathered from the study. The study particularly aimed at examining public complaints made against police officers. It was pertinent to undertake document analysis of codified complaints and reports as well as conduct interviews. The data generated from the aforementioned sources were thoroughly analysed by the researcher with recourse to existing related literature and relevant theories. The theories of Procedural Justice and Media Richness were the relevant lenses through which the data were analysed. This is in accordance with Brennen's (2017) suggestion that qualitative research approach presents the researcher the avenue to interpret and discuss the data in an exhaustive manner in order for meaning to be thoroughly constructed. This chapter also primarily discussed some selected individual complaints in order to inform the reader about the peculiarities of the issues.

Data were, therefore, gathered from the 2018 report of the PPSB. In order to understand how complaints were handled, the researcher also conducted interviews with three officials from the PPSB. Relying primarily on the techniques of content analysis, the report was analysed to ascertain the kinds of complaints that were made against the police. The interview data was also transcribed, and thematically analysed to answer the research questions. It is worth mentioning that for ethical purposes of anonymity,

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codes were ascribed to the interview participants. Throughout this chapter of the study, the two interviewed participants are accordingly referred to as PPSB-OF 1and PPSB-OF 2.

The entire research study was based on three research questions;

1. What are the types of complaints documented against police officers at the PPSB?

2. What communication channels do citizens use in lodging complaints against police officers in Ghana?

3. What are the processes for handling complaints against Police Officers?

Number of complaints

Before delving into the discussion and analysis of data in light of the individual research questions, it is important to highlight the number of complaints analysed and some attendant issues. Data were collected from the 2018 reports of the PPSB. For that year, one thousand, seven hundred and nice (1709) complaints were filed at the bureau against police personnel. One thousand, five hundred and ninety-eight (1598) (93.5%) of those complaints were filed against junior officers, whereas 111 were filed against senior officers (6.5%). Below is a graphical representation of defendants.

Figure 4.1: Percentile of ranks of defendants of citizen complaints
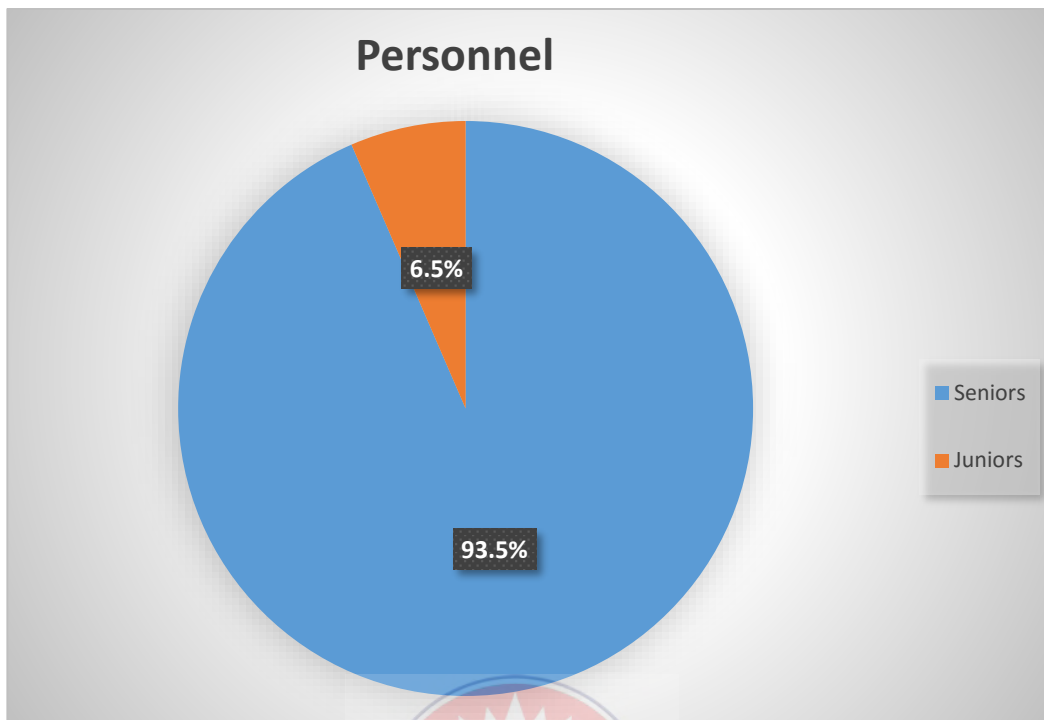
Source: Fieldwork, 2022

This finding resonates with findings from previous studies about citizen complaints against the police (Ratcliffe et.al. 2015; Riley, 2021; Terrill & Ingram, 2015). In their respective studies, the aforementioned scholars found that mistreatment by the police against citizens usually came from officers with lower ranks. Ratcliffe et.al. for example, suggested that length of time served in the service was a key determinant of police misconducts such as assault and unprofessionalism.

It is also worth pointing out, however, that the majority of personnel against whom complaints were levelled against were male officers. In essence, out of the 1709 documented complaints in 2018 at the PPSB, 1625 were against male officers whereas 85 were against their female counterparts.

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Figure 4.2: Gender of defendants
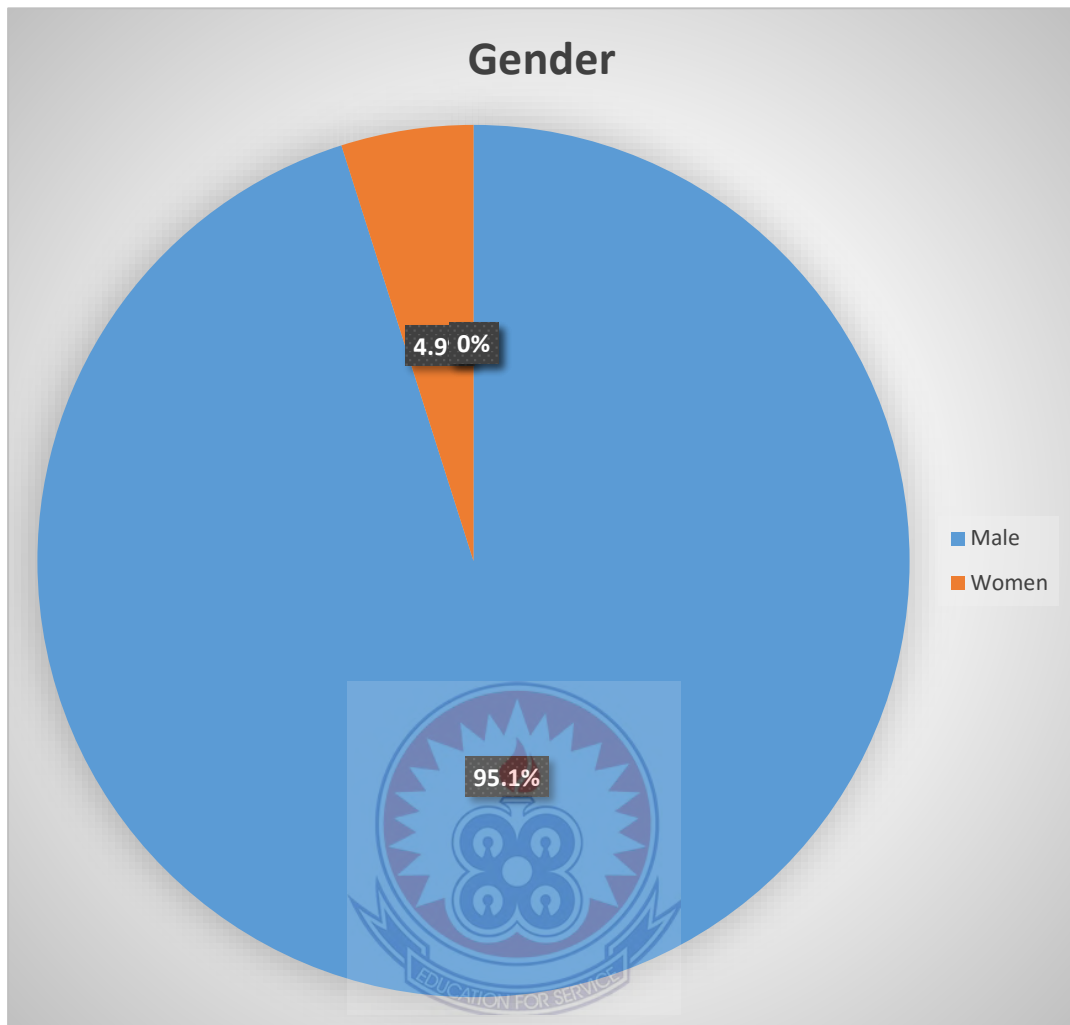
Source: Fieldwork, 2021

It is interesting to note that this finding is also not different from what has been discovered in studies from Europe and America (Cubitt et.al. 2022; Terrill & Ingram, 2015). In essence, male officers are generally likely to be reported of misconducting themselves as compared to their female counterparts.

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4.1 Research Question 1: What are the types of complaints documented against police officers at the PPSB?

The first part of the discussion centers around the complaints that were largely lodged at the PPSB against police personnel. In order to generate data in answering this research question, the researcher largely relied on the 2018 annual report of the bureau as well as the documented individual complaints in the files of PPSB. The 2018 annual report of the bureau categorised major complaints into five sections. However, after critically perusing the 1709 individual complaints that the bureau received, vis-a-vis the report, it was realised that there were very close linkages between these sub-sections. Employing the content and thematic analysis techniques, as well as relying on extant literature on complaints against police, these sections were conveniently clustered into three distinct themes for analysis and discussion. It is worth mentioning that the interviewed participants also acknowledged the relatedness in these sections and admitted that the initial categorisations of complaints in their records are susceptible to further interpretations and could be grouped to reflect peculiar situations. The three major themes for discussion include the following: unfair treatment and abuse of power; performance gap; and issues with off-duty life.

4.1.1 Unfair treatment and abuse of power

Drawing from studies by scholars such as Hassell and Archbold (2010), as well as Terrill and Ingram (2015), the theme, *unfair treatment and abuse of power* encapsulate the use of force, unlawful arrest and detention, harassment, and sometimes extortion.

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This finding is also largely corroborated by the aforementioned scholarly position. Hence complaints of unfair treatment and abuse of power in view of this study suggest police officers' involvement in brutality, unlawful arrest and detention, extortion, harassment, and over detention. Issues of unfair treatment and abuse of power are the most dominant complaints made by citizens against police officers. Out of the one thousand, seven hundred and nine (1709) complaints, analysis shows that about nine hundred and eighty-seven (987) of them were connected to this theme. From the 2018 annual report and analysis of individual cases, it was clear that complainants were largely disturbed and unsatisfied about the way they were handled by police officers. Hassell and Archbold (2010) indicated that unfair treatment and abuse of power by the police usually involve cases where the police take undue advantage of citizens they swore to protect. Some isolated cases connected to the theme are hereby discussed.

In a typical complaint in this situation was when, a motorcyclist petitioned the Bureau to take action against some police officers who meted out inhumane treatment to him and few others for riding motor cycles without having their licenses on them. According to the complainant, he was made to sit in a gutter, slapped and severely beaten by these policemen because he attempted to explain why he did not have his license on him. This complaint fits into Amnesty International's description of police brutality. According to Amnesty International (2020), police brutality refers to human rights violations by police officers which might include assault, beating, unlawful killings, torture, and the use of unnecessary and excessive force, among others. Police brutality has largely been captured under unfair treatment and abuse of power by many scholars

(Faber et.al. 2019; Skinns et al., 2020). According to Skinns et al. (2020), mistreatment by police stems from abuse of power and invariably undermines the dignity of the accused. The scholars add that conducts of this nature are nowhere close to good policing.

There were complaints filed by commercial vehicle drivers and sometimes owners of these vehicles about how they were unlawfully arrested and detained by traffic police officers. An example of such complaints involves a Police Chief Inspector arresting and locking up a commercial car driver for filing a report at the PPSB about his unprofessionalism. The complainant who is the actual owner of the vehicle in his petition, narrated how his vehicle was impounded by the police because some task force officers had issues with where his driver alighted a passenger. According to the complainant, when the vehicle was released to them a day after the incident, some monies and items that were in the car were missing. They then informed the station but the officers were adamant about assisting them to recover the lost items so they took the matter to the PPSB. This infuriated the Police Chief Inspector at the station and he arrested the driver of the car. In like manner, another petitioner suggested that he was physically abused and put behind bars because he was unable to produce his drivers' license upfront when a police corporal requested for it. This particular finding resonates with earlier indications by scholars such as Adisa, Adejoh, and Alabi (2018); Enweremadu (2019); Human Rights Watch (2012). According to Adisa et.al. (2018), commercial drivers are more likely to be victimised by police officers than the other categories of drivers. In their study to examine police misconduct on the road, Adisa

et.al. found that complaints are made against the Lagos police for manhandling and arresting commercial drivers at the least provocation especially in cases where they are unable to extort money from them. Similarly, the Human Rights Watch (2012) and Enweremadu (2019) indicate that police officers are likely to get overly emotional and abusive when questioned or somewhat challenged by commercial drivers, and are quick to resort to violence and aggression to the point of effecting undue arrests. From the foregoing, it could be suggested that police unfairness and abuse towards commercial drivers is not peculiar to Ghana only. It could also be argued, based on evidence from this study that police officers generally get irritated when they have been given indication that they can not have their way. In essence, police officers could be provoked into abusing their authority if their position is being disputed by civilians (Enweremadu, 2019).
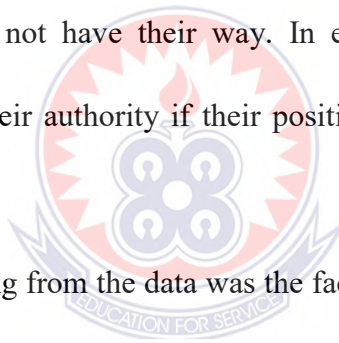
Another interesting finding from the data was the fact that complainant of the police's abuse of power and unfair treatment were sometimes the elderly or senior citizens. Although scholars such as Rodriguez et.al. (2019) indicated that the police is largely responsible for protecting the vulnerable in society, documented complaints at the PPSB against some police officers suggest otherwise. For instance, a senior citizen lodged a complaint about unlawful arrest and detention meted out to him by a corporal at the Accra Regional Police Command for engaging in verbal exchanges with another person. According to the complainant, the police officer indicated to him that he just needed to be detained in order to 'satisfy' the fellow who reported him. In the same vein, another senior citizen also lodged a complaint about how he was unlawfully

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arrested and detained after a confrontation he had with people who were encroaching upon his property. The complainant indicated that he had earlier reported the case to the police about a kiosk which was left on his property which had become a hideout for miscreants but the police failed to take action. However, after he removed the kiosk and sent it to the Municipal Assembly, the same police officers came in to arrest him.

Apart from unlawful detention, police harassment and intimidation are also labeled as abuse of power and unfair treatment (Chowdhurry, 2016). According to Remch et.al. (2021) police officers sometimes abuse their authority as law enforcement agents to harass and intimidate individuals, or groups of people who are somewhat vulnerable. Tankebe (2018), indicates that the police in Ghana is characteristically identified with intimidation and harassment. The gathered data largely show that complaints were made against police officers who allegedly intimidated and harassed citizens. In one of the complaints on harassment, the Youth of Vui (a suburb of Keta in the Volta Region), were appealing to the PPSB to call to order a police divisional commander who is allegedly colluding with an influential traditional priest to bring into their community foreign idols. According to the complainants, because they revolted against this action, the police commander deployed armed policemen to intimidate them. The complainants alleged that this influential traditional priest had been conniving with the commander to engage in a number of illegal dealings in the community and both had constantly harassed members of the township. In another complaint, a group that identified itself as onion traders' association also complained about how the police harass and take unwarranted monies from them at every checkpoint on the Bawku-Techiman highways.

According to the group, at every checkpoint on their route, police officers harass every individual to pay around GH¢20.00 and by the end of their trip they would have ended up paying about GH¢800.00 to police officers.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (2016) defines harassment as "unwanted or uninvited conduct that demeans, threatens or offends another person". The association maintains that harassment could be intimidating and largely hostile. Based on this backdrop, it can be argued that the complaints of extortion fits into the caveat of harassment.

The issues of harassment, unlawful arrest and detention, over-detention and police brutality, were altogether captured as unfairness and abuse of power because there were individual cases which captured all of these elements. The researcher therefore thought it wise to lump all these issues under the broad theme of unfair treatment and abuse of power because these individual misconducts are close off-springs of the phenomenon of unfairness and abuse of power as suggested by scholars such as Terrill and Ingram (2015).

To a large extent, this finding reinforces earlier observations by Lersh (1998) and others such as Adisa et.al. (2018) and Faber et.al. (2019) that police abuse of power which results in rather severe misconduct such as harassment and unlawful detention are mostly meted to people or citizens who are considered less powerful, and with limited resources and connections. According to Lersh, these classes of people are more likely to lodge complaints about police unfairness and abuse of power than those of relatively

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higher social status and resources. Lersh's observation fits uniquely into this finding. From the analysed data, it is largely found that complainants were not people who wielded power or authority in the society and could be considered as "ordinary citizens" (Inch, 2014).

4.1.2 Performance deficit

The term performance deficit implies a difference between current and desired performance levels of individuals, teams, employees or organisations. In the realm of policing, Baldwin et.al. (2022) describe this phenomenon as a discrepancy between expected performance and actual performance of officers. This study has therefore appropriated and operationalised this term to define complaints of unprofessional handling of cases by the police, undue delay of investigation, enlistment fraud, inability to apprehend criminals, involvement in civil cases and lackadaisical attitude towards work, among others. From the documented complaints, it was found that some citizens have petitioned the bureau to investigate police officers who were not performing their duties as expected. For instance, although the role of the police is limited in land-related cases (Agegnehu et.al. 2021; Darkwa & Attuquayefio, 2012), several complaints have been filed against police officers who were somewhat deemed to be supporting factions in land disputes or taking sides with land grabbers and giving these encroachers the leeway to trespass. According to a petitioner, he filed several complaints to the police that someone else was developing a structure on his property, but they failed to take action even after he had provided all the necessary documentation that shows that the
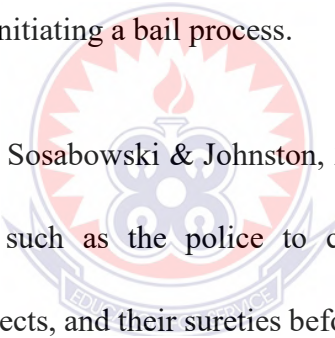
property belonged to him. He later decided to demolish the property himself and when this new developer reported him to the same police officers, the police asked him not to do so. According to the complainant, he then took the matter up to the court and the court directed the new developer to stop developing the land and allow the court to decide the case. The complainant further indicated that whilst the case was pending in court, the police sat unconcerned as the new developer developed the land.

In the same vein, another complainant indicated that some unknown estate developers came to demolish a structure he was putting up on his land and when he approached the police with the case, nothing was done. In spite of the fact that conflict about ownership of properties and land disputes are largely regarded as civil cases and should be mediated by a competent court of jurisdiction or alternative dispute resolution bodies or mechanisms (Darkwa & Attuquayefio, 2012; Santiago, 2017), complainants still believed that the police did not handle the cases in a professional manner. This finding is consistent with earlier findings by Agegnehu (2021) where complaints were lodged against police officers for either colluding with influential factions involved in land grabbing cases or being negligent about enforcing the court's sanctions. That notwithstanding, some part of the data collected also suggested that some complainants did not know that the police cannot be a sole mediator in land-related cases and therefore expect officers to help them in resolving land cases. Additionally, based on the complaints, it is also obvious that the police do not offer education to disgruntled landowners about how to seek redress but rather entreat them to remain apathetic.

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In another document relating to the theme of performance gap, a lady filed a complaint about the Chokor police for not investigating several reports she made to them about being assaulted and her family being constantly harassed by her ex-boyfriend. According to the complainant, the police officers at the station have a close relationship with her ex-boyfriend hence the failure and their inability to bring a lasting solution to his misconduct. She also indicated that the man goes around suggesting that the police cannot stop or control him. As suggested by Jawad (2022), complainants end up dissatisfied and feeling cheated by the system, when the police fail to deal with their concerns. According to Jawad (2022), close relationships between police officers and perpetrators of crimes, unavailability of sufficient evidence, or other peculiar roadblocks with the investigative process such as overlooking aspects of key evidences, sometimes inhibits the professionalism of these officers in apprehending offenders. Similarly, Tengpongsthorn (2017) found that citizens' complaints about the nonchalance of the police in apprehending offenders is sometimes borne-out of the close rapport officers have with these offenders. The aforementioned author (Tengpongsthorn, 2017) also points out that there are increasing complaints and growing concerns by citizens, (especially from among people with limited resources and social influence) regarding the police's inability to investigate or apprehend offenders when complaints are lodged at local police stations. It is therefore worth pointing out that this assertion has a close nexus with findings from the present study.

Also, this theme caters for situations where suspected criminals skipped bails. For instance, a documented complaint revealed how two suspects who allegedly made away

with the complainant's ¢4000.00 jumped bail and officers were unable to locate them and their sureties. Another complainant from Kasoa indicated that after a CID granted bail to someone who allegedly defrauded him of ¢20.000.00 on the pretext of getting him a car, the suspect absconded and could not be found. According to the complainant, the CID failed to do due diligence by ascertaining the identities and the addresses of the suspect and of the sureties hence the failure and inability to locate them and continue with the case. In the same vein, another complainant indicated that the police did not attend to a case he filed with them about the theft of his wood work machine and other properties, and after he managed to identify the suspects, they were allowed to abscond without bonding them or initiating a bail process.

Studies (Hendricks, 2021; Sosabowski & Johnston, 2022) suggest that it behooves on law enforcement agents such as the police to conduct necessary and thorough background check on suspects, and their sureties before granting them bail or releasing them pending investigations. However, there are complaints about the police's failure to ensure that necessary precautionary measures are taken before offering bails to suspects or releasing them (Cape, 2018) and this is evident in the present study as well. According to Jawad (2022), petitioners are likely to be disappointed and frustrated when issues of this nature occur.

Similarly, a complainant petitioned the bureau to investigate a CID who is deliberately delaying a robbery investigation after having been provided with hard evidence of a CCTV footage. Likewise, another individual filed a complaint with the PPSB about a

police CID who had been unwilling to give his telecommunication service provider (MTN) the police statement in order to track down the driver of his stolen vehicle. The failure of the police to adequately conduct investigations into reported cases is known to be a major causal factor of citizen distrust in law enforcement (Prenzler et.al. 2010; Terrell & Ingram, 2015). In their study to examine citizen complaints against police officers, Prenzler et.al. (2010) found that police's failure or reluctance to undertake investigations after citizens make cases at local police stations, was one of the significant types of complaints that police chiefs and other stakeholders must give attention. The aforementioned scholars also consider this type of complaint as an evidence of performance gap.

4.1.3 Issues with off-duty life

Generally, law enforcement agents such as police officers are held in high esteem in the society and most people expect that their personal lives reflect the integrity of their position (Davids, 2006; Topping 1997). According to Topping (1997), because policing exposes officers to constant public scrutiny, it is required of them to maintain a professional disposition at all times and prioritise their off-duty life. The aforementioned author indicated that unlike other professions, police officers cannot undertake industrial actions (strikes, demonstration etc.), must avoid association with criminals, should be cautious about who stays in their homes and must avoid debts, among others. Davids (2006) also suggested that police personnel must keep their off-duty conducts in check so it does not conflict with their social standing. According to

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Davids (2006), it is not advisable for police personnel to engage in businesses of ill-repute like operating brothels, must avoid the use of recreational drugs, and inappropriate relationships with criminals or suspects.

Be that as it may, there are quite a number of complaints at the PPSB against the off-duty life and personal integrity of police officers. This theme discusses issues ranging from child neglect, theft, refusal to pay debts or loans. From the 2018 documented complaints, it is recorded that some people petitioned the PPSB to investigate and discipline police officers who defrauded them under the pretext of letting them join the service. For instance, a complainant indicated that a police officer took an amount of GH¢3000.00 from him and promised to influence his recruitment but after almost a year, he had not been given the opportunity. Another complaint was made against a police officer by a petty trader who indicated that the officer bought clothes (suit, jeans and under wears) worth GH¢2380.00 from her which he promised to pay but failed to meet his end of the bargain for over 7 months. According to the complainant, although the case was reported to his commander, the officer had refused to pay.

Some other complaints regarding off-duty life were relationship issues. For instance, a man lodged a complaint of giving a loan of $15000 dollars to his girlfriend, a police officer who later refused to refund the money after the relationship ended. According to the complainant, the policewoman took the loan to start a business which she did and was profiting from but refused to pay back. In another documented complaint, a chief inspector refused to give a sum of ¢2000.00 to his lover to abort a pregnancy he claimed

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he was not ready for. He instead gave her ¢300 and threatened her not to contact him anymore.

A spare parts dealer also lodged complaint about a police officer who is allegedly refusing to pay for a car engine (Mazda 626, ¢2000.00 cedis) he bought from him. The man also claimed that the officer additionally took a loan of 500 cedis from him and had not been diligent about paying back. There is also a complaint filed against a police constable by a loan facility because the officer allegedly defaulted payment. The company also indicated that the constable has taken a transfer from his station and they could not locate him.

Another complainant filed a petition at the bureau against a police CID who is conniving with a self-acclaimed chief to develop fraudulent documents to sell lands belonging to the complainant's family to others although the appeal court had ruled in favour of the complainant's family. It was also alleged that the self-styled chief had offered the CID plots of land free of charge for his building project hence the misbehaviour. Similarly, a complaint has been filed against another police officer who had sold someone else's land although the matter was in court.

Meanwhile, a policeman had also been reported to the bureau for trying to forcefully usurp the properties (car, house, lands etc) of a deceased friend of his although the deceased had surviving siblings. The complainant indicate that this particular officer had started using documents he took from the deceased room to secure letters of administration from the court. The complainant also revealed that this policeman even

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assaulted the biological sister of the deceased because he found her doing a renovation work on the property.

The foregoing complaints seem to conflict with the professional and social expectations of these personnel as espoused by scholars such as Davids (2006) and Toppings (1997). According to the scholars, these conducts largely undermine the reputation of individual officers and the service in general.

Research Question 2. What communication channels do citizens use in lodging complaints against police officers in Ghana?

This research question examines the process involved in lodging complaint and the available channels adopted by complainants in petitioning the PPSB. In order to get the needed response to this research question, it was necessary to engage with the administrators of the bureau. The interview response suggested that over the years, the bureau has received complaints through handwritten or typed documents by complainants, in-person (face-to-face), telephone calls and emails. One of the interviewees also indicated that some complaints are received by the bureau through media reportage or news items which could be in print or electronic media. The interviewees also pointed to the fact that the bureau is trying to use social media to receive complaints.

4.2.1 Direct petitions from complainants

The excerpt below is a response from an interviewee (PPSB-OF 1) concerning the communication channels used in lodging complaints;

> *Sometimes, complainants write letters to the bureau narrating their issues and requesting that we take actions, some people also lodge complaints through face-to-face. Telephone calls are also considered and you can even file complaints through emails.*

Similarly, PPSB-OF 2 also pointed out;

> *Complaints are received as petitions brought by petitioners directly to the office. It can be written or electronic, some through telephone. Sometimes senior police officers call to lodge complaints. Also, we take some from the media. With the news item it can be print or electronic and social media too. We try to use the email too but it is not working properly. We also receive citizen complaints through police commanders such as regional or divisional commanders. Sometimes, citizen complaints come from the public relations directorate, then others through the Inspector General himself, or the Director General of CID.*

From the interview responses, it is quite obvious that there are various channels that citizens can explore in lodging complaints against police officers. This finding is consistent with earlier research findings by Riley et.al. (2021) as well as Prenzler et.al. (2010). According to Riley et.al. (2021), complaints against police men are many-sided just like how channels or ways of filing these complains are also multifaceted. In their study on complaints against police, Prenzler (2010) as well as Prasad (2012) also found that some citizen complaints against police officers were filed by way of making direct phone calls to police stations, telephone calls to the Ombudsman or the Office of Police

Integrity and through written letters to local police stations They usually rely on electronic mails or websites and online interactive channels dedicated to receiving complaints from the general public.

Although the interviewees indicated that the bureau receive complaints through in-person verbal statements, phone calls, social media and emails, the annual report of 2018 and the individual documented complaints at the bureau for that year were all typed and printed petitions from complainants. In essence, most complaints received by the bureau were through letters. This is to suggest that electronic and digital media were not largely explored either by the bureau or the complainants. This finding is in consonance with earlier findings by Prenzler et.al. (2010), Prasad (2012), Riley et.al (2021) as well as Hopkins (2009). According to Prenzler et.al., the commonest medium used by citizens in filing complaint about police misconduct was through writing letters to the institution in charge of receiving and dealing with citizen complaints. Hopkins (2009) and Riley et.al. (2021) in their respective research studies, also found that despite the availability of other communication channels and media for lodging complaints against the police, citizens predominantly preferred the use of letters.

In light of the Media Richness Theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986), it is in place to suggest that written addressed documents (letters) are considered the most relevant, effective and convenient medium of sending and receiving complaints by both complaints and the bureau. According to Daft and Lengel, the channel employed to send information is considerably relevant in determining the impact of the message and its feedback. The

evidence that complainants predominantly relied on letters coupled with interviewees'

response that the email and telephone systems are not so effective in lodging and

receiving complaints, typically highlights the theoretical position that the capacity of a

particular media to adequately communicate a complex message without any

inhibitions determines its richness. In essence, media that can expeditiously surmount

various barriers and clearly explain equivocal or ambiguous issues are considered to be

relatively richer than media that use more time and effort to convey an appreciation of

a message. It is therefore worth pointing out that the senders (complainants) and

receivers (PPSB) appreciate the letters as a "rich media" (Oliver, 2019).
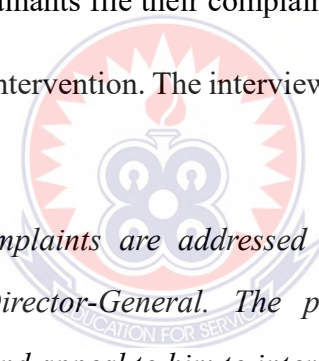
Although the officials of the PPSB indicated that complaints could be lodged at the

PPSB through several communication channels and people, they subsequently outlined

the official processes of filing complaints against police officers. The study found that

there are three major alternatives to file complaints. The first option is through local

police stations. The participants indicate that the police service recommends that

complaints of minor misconducts by junior officers should first be reported to

immediate supervisors of the identified officer. These supervisors predominantly

include station officers, district and divisional commanders, and in some cases regional

commanders. Findings suggest that these police chiefs have the prerogative to conduct

investigation into such complaints.

Also, complaints of police misconduct can be made directly to the PPSB. However, it

is found that the PPSB is designed to mostly receive and deal with cases of major

misconduct by officers, cases where the officer's station and rank is unknown, or situations where complaints have not been dealt with at the local police station. In addition, the study found that the Ghana Police Service works with complaints filed with other institutions or stakeholders such as the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, the Parliament, the Interior Ministry, and the Police Council.

Be that as it may, the study found that most complaints made to the PPSB, were addressed to the Director-General. This finding came to light through the perusal of the individual complaints received by the bureau. From the document analysis, it was clear that majority of the complainants file their complaints directly to the Director-General of the bureau, seeking his intervention. The interview data also corroborate this finding. According to PPSB-OF 1;

> .....*Mainly, the complaints are addressed by petitioners themselves directly to the Director-General. The petitioners mostly narrate incidences to him and appeal to him to intervene.*

The figure below is a typical complaints at the PPSB addressed to the Director-General:
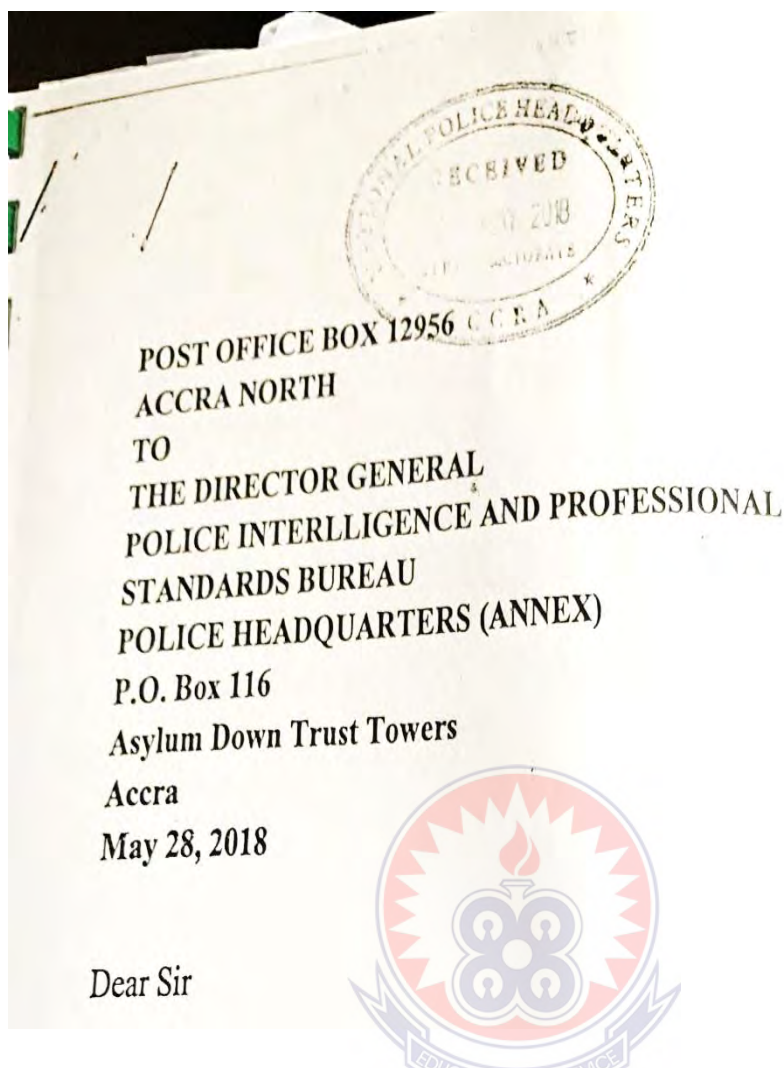
Fig 4.3: A complaint addressed to the Director-General (*Source: PPSB*)

This finding to a degree reflects the assertions by Prenzler (2009) that complainants are more likely to address complaints directly to the official in charge of supervising complaint departments because they believe these personnel will act fairly and expeditiously in dealing with the case.

4.2.2 Petition through lawyers or law firms

It is also worth pointing out that analysis of the individual documented complaints also shows that apart from individuals petitioning the bureau directly about alleged misconduct of a police officer, some others lodged their complaint at the bureau through

their lawyers or law firms. In essence, lawyers write petition on behalf of their aggrieved clients to the PPSB detailing mistreatments by the police.

The figures below are examples of complaints filed through lawyers and law firms;
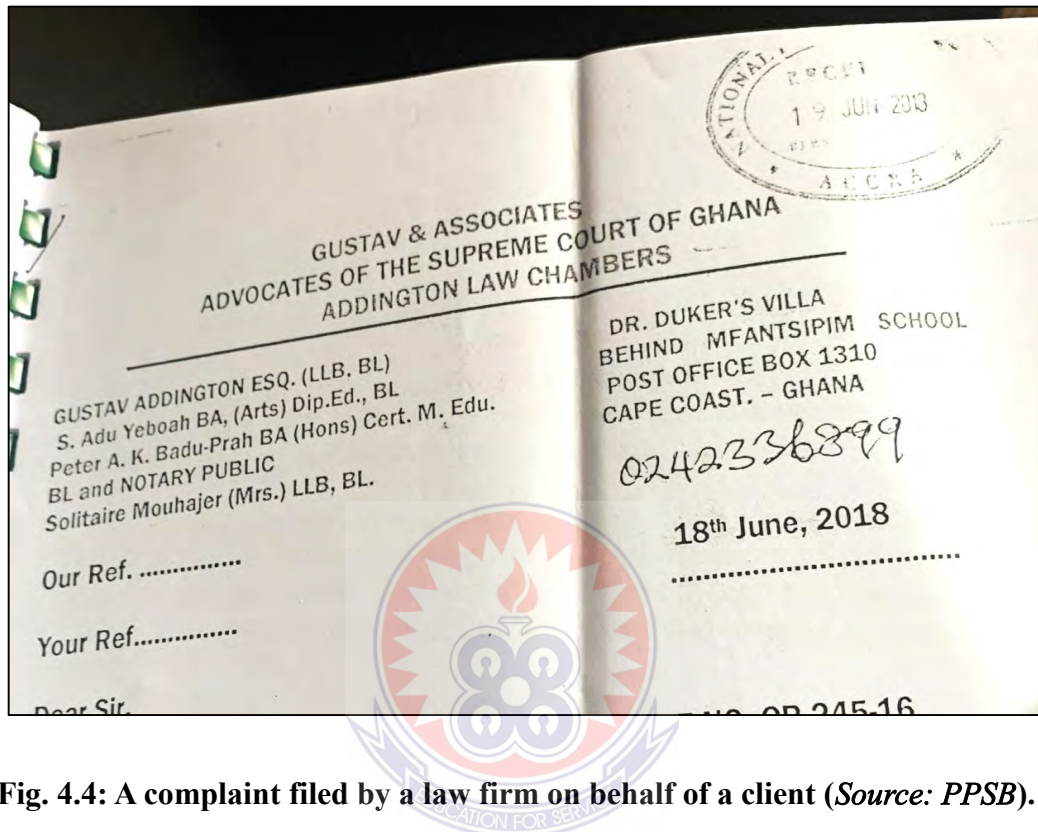
Fig. 4.4: A complaint filed by a law firm on behalf of a client (*Source: PPSB*).

Fig. 4.5: A complaint filed by a law firm on a client's behalf (*Source: PPSB*).

In spite of the fact that a lot of studies on citizen complaints about the police did not capture the phenomenon of filing complaints against police officials through legal apparatuses, Crehan and Delahunty (2019) state that some people prefer the use of solicitors in filing complaints about police misconduct because they believe that the authorities and social standing of lawyers will help in expediting the case. According to the aforementioned scholars (Crehan & Delahunty, 2019), some complainants also hold the notion that involvement of a legal practitioner in the complaint filing process will ensure that the case is adjudicated fairly.

4.3. Research Question 3: What are the processes for handling complaints against Police Officers?

This section of the study analyses data and presents findings on how complaints are handled and resolved by the PPSB. Owing to the focus of this question, data was predominantly generated through interviews.

According to the European Commission of Human Rights as cited by Smith (2008), there is the need to rely on exhaustive and absolute measures in dealing with citizen complaints against police officers in order to determine the verity of the issue. According to the commission, the investigation process ought to be thorough and unbiased for the purposes of ascertaining whether or not accused officers' action, reaction and handling of issues were lawful or unlawful (Smith, 2008). Essentially, celerity is a crucial factor in dealing with complaints in order to preserve trust in the rule of law and prevent misgivings among complainants and the citizenry.

4.3.1 Processing complaints

From the interview data, it is suggested that after complaints are received by the bureau, they are forwarded to the Director General or the Director to assess the issues expressed, and then assign an investigator or investigators to commence investigations. One of the interviewees also indicated that the directors sometime determine if particular cases need to be investigated or not depending on the content of the complaint. According to the interviewed participants, the directors sometimes do not sanction the investigation of some peculiar cases. Particularly, it was found that complaints which suggests that

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complainants did not exhaust internal mechanisms at their local stations are likely to be unattended to by the bureau or referred to the commander within the jurisdiction to tackle the issue.

The interview excerpt below from PPSB-OF 2 elucidates this point;

> *Sometimes people bring petitions to the bureau meanwhile they have units at their local stations that could handle the issues they bring to us. So sometimes, if the unit or senior officers at the nearest police station are adamant to attend to the issue, or fail to handle the issues properly, then we handle it here.*

The interview response above suggests that when complainants fail to rely on the services of police units or police commanders within their jurisdiction (especially, if the case is against a junior officer) without any just cause before coming to the bureau, their complaints may be unattended to or they might be directed to go and exhaust that option first. This finding is in consonance with reports from earlier studies which suggested that complainants are sometimes unwillingly and reluctant to lodge complaints at local police stations because they believe that thorough investigations will not be conducted. In essence, complainants tend to doubt the credibility and diligence of their local officers when it comes to complaints against policemen in that jurisdiction (Skinns et.al. 2020; Tankebe, 2010).

It was also found that the nature of the complaint largely determines whether the PPSB or the police would be in the position to handle the issue. The interviewees indicated that cases that may appear too civil in nature are not handled by the bureau. The

interview excerpt below highlights this point:

> *Some cases are not directly our mandate, some are of civil nature like the bank loans. So in cases like this, we normally advise the complainants to seek redress in the court of law. Sometimes too, complainants come to us with cases that are already being handled by the court, but still want the bureau to also handle it. In cases like this, we don't have any option than allowing the court to do its job. See, it will even surprise you that people come to us with cases that have already been adjudicated by the court and expect us to launch another investigation. So you see? How can we handle such cases?*

This finding relates with earlier suggestions by Riley et.al. (2021), as well as Prenzler et.al. (2010) that processing complaints can be sometimes bureaucratic and some cases against police personnel can be properly adjudicated by an independent body and not the internal structures of the police organisation.
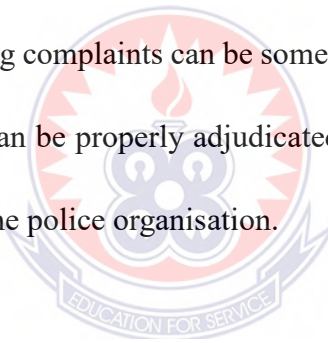
4.3.2 Investigation of the complaint

Based on the document analysis of individual complaints, it was found that sometimes investigation of cases are time-bound and some other peculiar cases are not time-bound. Complaints of this nature are therefore investigated and determined based on the gravity of the issue, the availability of petitioners and defendants, as well as the availability of sufficient evidence. According to the respondents, complaints that are not so complex are usually resolved earlier than those that are more intricate. The study also revealed that, the expedition with which cases are handled and resolved could be frustrating in situations where the petitioner fails to present herself or himself when invited by the

bureau or the investigators. The data primarily revealed that defendants sometimes delay the investigation process by failing to appear before the bureau in respect to the time they are asked to. In essence, these factors wholly determine the duration of handling and dealing with cases. The interview excerpt below corroborates this finding:

> *Sometimes, the processing of a case and resolving it depends on the petitioner and the defendant in the sense that the two of them need to be present. If they are unavailable or their phone numbers do not go through, we find it difficult continuing with the investigation process.* (PPSB-OF 1)

PPSB-OF 2 also indicated that
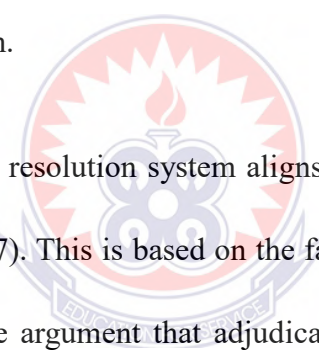
> *If the officer that is being complained about is out of town, or deployed on an operation elsewhere, we have to wait for their return before investigations can be effective.*

From the response, it is evident that petitioners are sometimes hard to reach after they have lodged complaints with the bureau. Similarly, defendants' schedule can also determine the time for resolving the issue. Literature suggests that sometimes after lodging complaints, petitioners and defendants are unwilling to avail themselves for investigators and complaint offices to deal with the issue (Worden et.al. 2017; Waters, 2000). According to Hopkins (2009), this largely derails the complaint resolution process.

4.3.3 Resolution of complaints

After complaints are received, processed and investigated, they are then resolved

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through some practicable ways. Findings show that after the PPSB conducts investigations, they often submit their reports through the Chief Staff Officer to the Inspector-General of Police. After studying the report, the office of the IGP refers the issue to various internal disciplinary bodies of the Ghana Police Service such as Regional Disciplinary Board, Central Disciplinary Board, Central Adjudicating Panel and the Disciplinary Panel. In addition, the IGP's office refers some of the complaints bothering on criminal conduct to the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) for further investigation and prosecution at the court. These bodies under the police service review proceeding and finding against officers and subsequently approves charges that should be imposed on them.

The rigorous nature of the resolution system aligns with the tenets of the Procedural Justice Theory (Tyler, 2017). This is based on the fact that, like the procedural justice theory which advances the argument that adjudicating citizens agitations about law enforcement must be thorough and exhaustive in order to ensure fairness, justice, trust and legitimacy in the law enforcement agencies and legal structures, the police service in Ghana also employs various offices to ensure that complaints are adjudicated fairly as indicated by the processes explained above.

Respondents highlighted some of the resolution mechanisms or tools used by the PPSB in dealing with citizen complaints. As explained below, they include the following; apologies, referral for prosecution, and refund/ compensation.

Apologies

According to the research participants, after complaints are assigned to respective officers or personnel of the PPSB, investigation then commences. The investigators who are sometimes detectives begin the investigation by also going through the petitions and approaching the parties involved to take their statements. The study however discovered that sometimes, cases that are somewhat trivial, civil and not so technical are resolved immediately by the bureau by inviting the complainant and the defendant. With cases like this, officials at the bureau assist parties involved to initiate a healthy dialogue between them, reach a compromise and eventually smoke the peace pipe. Oftentimes, if officers (defendants) could admit guilt and render apologies to the complainant, and the complainant also accept the apologies, then the case is automatically resolved. Thereafter, the officer is admonished to be of good behaviour. One of the respondents (PPSB-OF 1) indicated:

> *Sometimes, as soon as investigation begins, the officer who is at fault accept his mistake and says 'I am sorry' and if the complainant accepts it, there and then the case is resolved. And if this happens, we just write a report on the resolution process and forward it to the director and the IGP.*

This complaint resolution mechanism aligns with suggestions by scholars such O'Brien, Tyler and Meares (2019; 2020), which note that when officers offer apologies and acknowledge their fault in involvement with citizens, it makes resolution of issues easier and faster. In view of the procedural justice theory (Tyler, 2017), O'Brien et.al. (2020) indicates that officer apology has the probability of restoring the trust of citizens

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in the police. This is because complainants relate with these officers as fallible beings who admit fallibility. According to O'Brien et.al. (2020), reconciliation is a major tool for building consensus between police and citizens and this can only be achieved when guilt is sincerely admitted and apology is also rendered in a sincere manner. Based on the theory of Procedural Justice, O'Brien et.al. (2019) state that sincerity is pivotal for building consensual relations between the police and citizens. According to the scholars, apologising is an initiative to build trust and the apology must be sincere in order to restore or enhance legitimacy.

Referral for prosecution

Findings also reveal that the PPSB sometimes writes a report to the IGP for a case to be finally determined by the court. The study suggests that the bureau does not have the mandate to solely determine cases that are technical and criminal in nature since some of these cases require thorough interpretation, determination and subsequent prosecution by a competent court of law. In essence, after the bureau launches and completes an investigation into a rather complex and criminal case, it forwards the case to the IGP with recommendation for criminal prosecution or administrative service inquiry.

The finding suggests that the police service is committed to ensuring justice and fairness (Tyler, 2017). In essence, the police service does not shield officers who are found to have problems with the law but rather ensures that they face the full rigour of the legal system. This finding reverberates the Procedural Justice theory based on the fact that

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systems are put in place to guarantee trust, fairness and legitimacy in the law enforcement and legal structures of the country.

Refund/ compensations

Findings also showed that another notable way of resolving complaints by the PPSB is by requesting of the defendant, and ensuring that she or he makes a refund in cases of extortion and defaulting payment of one kind or the other. According to the study, when police officers are found guilty of taking unwarranted monies from complainants in the cause of performing their duties, the bureau ensures that they refund these monies in full and sometimes even add some more as a compensation. This, according to the respondents, was to ensure that the police officer do not repeat these deeds again. It is also found that defendants who are found guilty of owing monies from either credit facilities or individuals are also made to pay back what they owed so that the case is resolved. According to the research participant (PPSB-OF 1),

> *You know sometimes people come with complaints about our officers owing them monies, sometimes credit unions or loan facilities, individuals, and even traders who sold items to these officers and did not take their full payments. In cases like this, if the investigations show that the officer truly owes money, we ask and ensure that he pays back. We make him understand that if he does not pay back within a stipulated period of time, dire disciplinary measures would be taken against him.*

From the data above, it becomes obvious that the PPSB relies on diverse resolution

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mechanisms to ensure that complaints are resolved amicably, particularly minor and civil cases. This finding resonates with assertions by Riley et.al. (2021) as well as Terrell & Ingram (2015) which indicate that internal structures of the police service could be effective in resolving some citizen complaints against police officers. Based on the procedural justice theory, when law enforcement is able to effectively address citizen concerns, there is a great likelihood of encouraging the trust of citizens in the institution.

4. 4 Chapter Summary

This chapter of the study discussed the findings obtained from the research data. Based on the focus of the study, the chapter revealed the types of complaints that citizens lodged against police personnel, the communication channels relied on for filing those complaints and how complaints are largely resolved at the PPSB. The Media Richness and Procedural Justice Theories served as pertinent lenses through which data were exhaustively discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND

CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter encapsulates the summary of the entire study. Essentially, the chapter provides conclusions drawn from the analysis of data, and offers relevant recommendations that would be useful for the Police Service. Additionally, the chapter also provides suggestions for researchers who would wish to conduct further studies around citizen complaints against police officers.

5.1 Summary

The present study examined citizens' complaints against police personnel of the Ghana Police Service. Against this backdrop, three research questions were developed. The research questions that guided the study are specified below;

1. What are the complaints documented against police officers at the PPSB?

2. What communication channels do citizens use in lodging complaints against police officers in Ghana?

3. What are the processes for handling complaints against Police Officers?

In the extant literature on policing in Africa, it is observed that the relationship between police and citizens in Africa has often been characterised by a lack of trust and respect, and in some cases, outright hostility (Brown, 2017; Derso, 2018; Usman, 2019). According to scholars such as Derso (2018) this situation is rooted in a number of

historical, social, and political factors that have contributed to a culture of abuse of power, corruption, and impunity within law enforcement agencies. Usman (2019) suggests that because of this marred relationship, there are often complaints from citizens about lack of accountability by law enforcement agents, unnecessary use of brute force, unlawful arrest and detention as well as corruption and harassment.

Based on all these observations from other regions of Africa, the present study examined the citizen complaint situation in Ghana by paying particular attention to the kind of complaints that citizens lodge against police officers and the entire complaint process as far as petitioning and resolution are concerned.

The qualitative approach was employed to collect and analyse data. In essence, the qualitative approach was employed to examine meanings that were ascribed to individual complaints by the complainants and the body to which the complaints were addressed. The qualitative approach was also relevant because the interpretation of the data and the analysis of the meanings required the direct involvement of the researcher. A phenomenon which is peculiar with this approach. Qualitative content analysis was also relied on in order to critically analyse the latent and manifest issues characteristic of the complaints, the processes of lodging the complaints and the mechanisms of dealing with such complaints. Data was drawn from documented individual complaints as well as from interviewed participants.

5.2 Findings and Conclusions

In addressing the first research questions, three major themes emerged; unfair treatment and abuse of power; performance deficit; and issues with off-duty life. The theme, unfair treatment and abuse of power covers the use of force, unlawful arrest and detention, harassment, and sometimes extortion by police officers. Based on the analysis of documented petitions, as well as the 2018 annual report by the PPSB, it was observed that citizens were largely concerned about the extent to which police officers abuse their authority in their dealings with the public. In essence, out of the analysed 1709 complaints, it was found that 987 were connected to this theme.

The theme, performance deficit, discusses complaints about unprofessional handling of cases by the police, undue delay of investigation, inability to apprehend criminals, involvement in civil cases and lackadaisical attitude towards work, among others. Findings from the study showed that a good number of Ghanaians have petitioned the PPSB to look into cases where police officers were not performing their duties as they should. The third theme discusses complaints that bothers on the off-duty lifestyles of police officers. Because police personnel are mandated to enforce law and order within the society, they are expected to maintain dispositions that would not be an affront to their code of service. Findings, however, revealed that a number of complainants registered their displeasure about how some officers handle themselves in the society. This set of complaints cut across child nneglect, theft, refusal to pay debts or loans, and relationship/marital issues. Although complaints against police officers have been

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categorised and labeled in many forms, majority of citizen complaints were about police'

abuse of power and unfair treatment.

The second research question examined the communication channels employed in lodging complaints against police officers. Based on the document analysis, it was found that majority of the complainants directly wrote letters to the PPSB and sometimes the IGP. It was also discussed that some people petitioned the bureau through their lawyers or law firms. Although the interviewed participants hinted that emails and other communication channels were available for lodging complaints, findings clearly suggested that the predominant channel was direct petition to the bureau. The reliance on letters as the most relevant, effective and convenient medium of sending and receiving complaints reinforces the argument of the Media Richness Theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986), which states that communication is effective when both the sender and receiver subscribes to the same medium of exchanging information. The evidence that complainants predominantly relied on letters coupled with interviewees' response that the email and telephone systems are not so effective in lodging and receiving complaints, typically highlights the theoretical position that the capacity of a particular media to adequately communicate a complex message without any inhibitions determines its richness.

In handling complaints, it was found that after complaints were received by the bureau, they were forwarded to the Director General or the Director who then assigned an investigator or investigators to look into the issues. Findings showed that after the PPSB

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conducts investigations, they often submit their reports through the Chief Staff Officer to the Inspector-General of Police. After studying the report, the office of the IGP refers the issue to various internal disciplinary bodies of the Ghana Police Service such as Regional Disciplinary Board, Central Disciplinary Board, Central Adjudicating Panel and the Disciplinary Panel. In addition, the IGP's office refers some of the complaints bothering on criminal conduct to the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) for further investigation and prosecution at the court. These bodies under the police service review proceeding and finding against officers and subsequently approve charges that should be imposed on them. Findings reveal that the process of handling complaints by the PPSB is quite rigorous. The thorough nature of the resolution system reflects the tenets of the Procedural Justice Theory (Tyler, 2017) which indicates that adjudicating citizens' agitations about law enforcement must be thorough and exhaustive in order to ensure fairness, justice, trust and legitimacy in the law enforcement agencies and legal structures.

5.3 Limitations of the study

Limitation of a research encapsulates issues with available related study, sample size, time and resource constraints, among others (Schutt, 2019). The present study therefore encountered some issues of limitation. Firstly, although there are available studies regarding police conduct in the African and Ghanaian contexts, there is stark evidence of unavailability of research on citizens complaints against the police in the

aforementioned contexts. This led to the over-reliance on western literature in discussing the issues.

This study was limited to only complaints that were lodged at the PPSB in the year 2018. Although the researcher wished to extend the study beyond the period of 2018, documented complaints at the bureau from that time till the time of the study were voluminous. Time constraints and limited resources did not allow for that extension. The study therefore concentrated on the 2018 annual reports because it was in that year that the bureau was structured and renamed.

It is also worth pointing out that due to time constraints, the study did not collect data from identified complainants to examine their attitude towards the complaints process and find out if they were content with how their individual complaints were dealt with.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

Based on the scope and findings from this study, future research can be conducted to examine the nature of complaints lodged at the PPSB from 2018 to a more present era. Essentially, a comparative analysis could be conducted to examine the complaints of 2018 and a later period in order to determine whether there has been any developments with the nature of complaints and the complaint-filing processes.

Additionally, studies can be conducted to examine complainants' experience and attitude in regards to the complaint resolutions. Similarly, research works can be

conducted to investigate defendants' experience and attitude toward complaint resolution process by the PPSB.

5.5 Recommendations

In light of the analysis and discussion of the study, some relevant recommendations are offered. Findings suggest that letters were the predominant mode of lodging complaint at the PPSB. Among other inconveniences, traveling to a PPSB office to lodge complaints could be daunting. Therefore, it is recommended that the bureau prioritises and capitalises on the availability of new media platforms like electronic mails and websites to receive and document complaints.

Ratcliffe et al. (2005) indicate that employee management system was developed for the Australian New South Wales Police Department (NSWPD) for receiving complaints against the police. However, after sometime a more computerised channel of receiving complaints from the public regarding police misconduct was created. The new system known as complaint information system (CIS) is believed to be an efficient alternative for managing and dealing with complaints against the New South Wales police officers. The Ghana Police Service can also develop computerised media in order to facilitate the complaint lodging process in order to reduce police misconduct.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

My name is David Eklu, a graduate student at the University of Education, Winneba, pursuing a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) Degree in Communication and Media. I would like to interview you on my study titled **"A Qualitative Content Analysis of public complaints against police officers in Ghana".** Kindly assist by answering the following questions as candidly as possible. Please be informed that participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you have the right to decline your participation. Please remember you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to. All responses will be kept confidential as the collected information is strictly for academic purposes. All responses provided will be anonymous and non-identifiable.

1. Kindly give a brief background of yourself (rank, academic qualification)

2. How many years have you been in the Police Service?

3. How many years have worked at the PPSB?

4. Briefly state your duties /responsibilities at the PPSB?

5. Could you please describe the complaints you receive at the PPSB?

6. How are the complaints handled and processed when you receive them?

7. What are the commonest means of receiving the complaints?

8. Are there other sources that officers forward complaints to the PPSB?

9. Do you document the complaints when you receive them?

10. Briefly describe how the complaints are processed at the PPSB
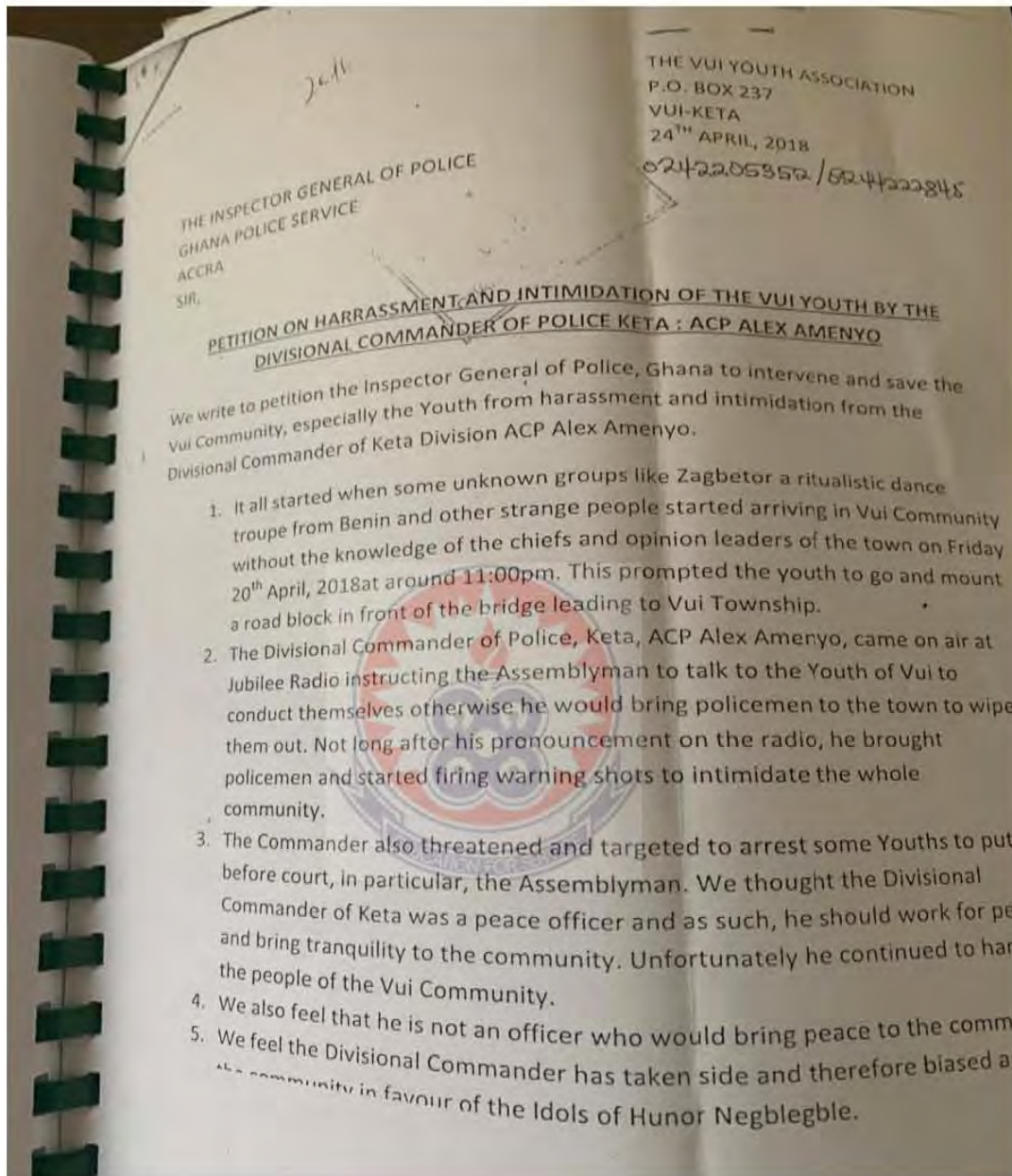
11. How are the complaints resolved at the PPSB?

12. Is there anything that you may want to add apart from the discussions that we have

had?

13. Do you have any question for me?

APPENDIX B

SOME SELECTED DOCUMENTED COMPLAINTS AT THE PPSB

THE VUI YOUTH ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 237
VUI-KETA
24TH APRIL, 2018
0242205352/0242222845

THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE
GHANA POLICE SERVICE
ACCRA
SIR,

PETITION ON HARRASSMENT AND INTIMIDATION OF THE VUI YOUTH BY THE DIVISIONAL COMMANDER OF POLICE KETA : ACP ALEX AMENYO

We write to petition the Inspector General of Police, Ghana to intervene and save the Vui Community, especially the Youth from harassment and intimidation from the Divisional Commander of Keta Division ACP Alex Amenyo.

1. It all started when some unknown groups like Zagbetor a ritualistic dance troupe from Benin and other strange people started arriving in Vui Community without the knowledge of the chiefs and opinion leaders of the town on Friday 20th April, 2018at around 11:00pm. This prompted the youth to go and mount a road block in front of the bridge leading to Vui Township.

2. The Divisional Commander of Police, Keta, ACP Alex Amenyo, came on air at Jubilee Radio instructing the Assemblyman to talk to the Youth of Vui to conduct themselves otherwise he would bring policemen to the town to wipe them out. Not long after his pronouncement on the radio, he brought policemen and started firing warning shots to intimidate the whole community.

3. The Commander also threatened and targeted to arrest some Youths to put before court, in particular, the Assemblyman. We thought the Divisional Commander of Keta was a peace officer and as such, he should work for pe and bring tranquility to the community. Unfortunately he continued to har: the people of the Vui Community.

4. We also feel that he is not an officer who would bring peace to the comm

5. We feel the Divisional Commander has taken side and therefore biased ag ... community in favour of the Idols of Hunor Negblegble.

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6. The citizens of Vui are peace loving people and believe in the rule of law. If Hunor Negbegble and his cohorts equally believe in the freedom of worship and the rule of law, then they should not have defiled our gods which our forefathers have left behind. We shall not allow Hunor Negbegble, assisted by ACP Alex Amenyo, to impose his deities over and above the gods of our fathers thereby imposing his supremacy over the town of Vui and its occupants.
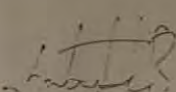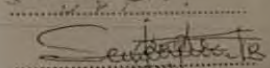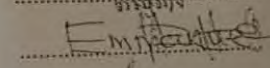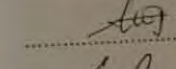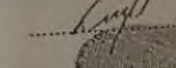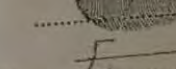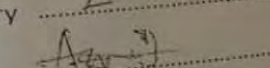
Sir, we wish to appeal to you to intervene to bring a lasting peace and unity to the community so that the intimidation and the harassment from the Divisional Commander of Police, ACP Alex Amenyo, would stop, please.

We are aware that the Divisional Commander is covering Hunor Negbegble from prosecution for dealing in the sales of uncostumed vehicle and has refused to hand over Hunor Negbegble to Ghana Revenue Authority (CEPS) and therefore condoning with crime against the State and denying the so much needed revenue for the state which is used to pay him.

Thanks in anticipation for your concern in this regard.

Yours faithfully,

VUI YOUTH ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES

1. Sallah Bless	Chairman	
2. Agboworkunu Seth	Vice Chairman	
3. Sukah Mawutor	Secretary	
4. Akafia Delali Graham	Vice Secretary	
5. Dedzo Stephen	Treasure	
6. Dzakpasu Ben	Vice Treasure	
7. Ekuadzi Anthony	Financial Secretary	
8. Agbetsi William	Organizer	
9. Atsiwo Lumor	Asst. Organizer	

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THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
PIPS
NATIONAL POLICE HEADQUARTERS (ANNEX)
P.O. BOX 116
ASYLUM DOWN

RECEIVED
1 0 MAY 2018
ACCRA

18th May, 2018

Dear Sir,

PETITION AGAINST THE ADENTAN DISTRCIT COMMANDER, DISTRICT CRIME OFFICER AND INSPR. SETH ALSO AT ADENTAN HOUSING DOWN POLICE POST FOR UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

I, Rev. Michael Amponsah-Ababio, Head Pastor of Sanctuary Praise Ministries of Adentan Commandos, in the Greater Accra Region of the Republic of Ghana hereby petition against the aforementioned officers.

I have two (2) plots of land situate and lying at Adenta Commandos with valid documents covering the said land. About a year ago, somebody trespassed the said plot which I reported the matter to the Adenatan Police Station and the case was referred to one INSPR. Frank Yeboah but along the line the trespasser abandoned the case because he had no documents to claim ownership of the said land.

Somewhere March/April 2018, I had information that someone had gone unto the land to construct fence wall so I rushed there to stop the encroacher. Upon arrival, I met one Alhaji Rasak, Millicent Yeboah and others. I confronted them and Alhaji Rasak told me that the District Commander had given them orders to work. I contacted the commander at his office and he could not deny or confirm to what Alhaji Rasak and Madam Millicent Yeboah attributed to him but what he sought to say was that I want to defame him and even warned me severally not to say that else he will seek legal redress against me in court which I challenged him to go ahead. I referred the previous case which was investigated by INSPR. Frank Yeboah but the District Commander was not interested. The District Commander referred us to the Crime Officer and the Crime Officer also instructed both parties to hold on and allow them to conduct further investigation into the matter but Alhaji Rasak and Kwaku Oppong who are working for Madam Millicent Yeboah went back to continue building the wall. I then went back to inform them District Commander about what they are doing but he couldn't stop them. I noticed that these people can't help me so I asked the Crime Officer to prepare Extract for me to send to the PFU and the Crime Officer became furious and said he cannot give me the extract. I did all could I but the Crime Officer said he has been in the service for over 23yrs and that he does not think somebody can direct him what to do.

That notwithstanding, I proceeded to the PFU/CID/HQRS lodge a complaint but the officer who received me told me that I cannot lodge a complaint without the extract so I should go back and make sure the Adentan Police furnish me the extract. I went back to the Adentan Police Station and met the Crime Officer who still insisted that he cannot prepare the extract and that those at the PFU are junior officers who cannot teach him his work. I left there and decided to go to Housing down Police Station where the land is located to lodge a complaint but INSPR. Seth asked me to go and that whenever I see them working I should come back to inform them.

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'THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
PIPS
NATIONAL POLICE HEADQUARTERS (ANNEX)
P.O. BOX 116
ASYLUM DOWN

10ᵗʰ May, 2018

Dear Sir,

GBAME

**PETITION AGAINST INSPR. KOFI YESU – 0232656100 OF SOWUTUOM-POI
STATION**

My name is Ayisha Bashiru, a resident of Sowutuom Oman Dzor in the Greater Accra Reg
the Republic of Ghana do hereby petition against the aforementioned officer.

INSPR. Kofi Yesu and I has been in relationship for about four (4) years and now blesse
one child who is about five (5) months old. We have been living very peacefully until wher
admitted in hospital for delivery before he started behaving very strangely to me. I went t.
operation before I delivered the baby and during that period INSPR. Kofi Yesu did not vis
to check the condition I found myself but the only called to find out how much I spent
GH¢370.00 he gave me. When I offered to explain the number of things I bought to enc
undergone through the operation, he became angry and started raining insults on me, it i
intervention of one of midwifes who calm him down and asked him to consider my situatic

The hospital charged an amount of GH¢650.00 for the services rendered but because of
and manner he treated me, the nurse called to inform him the medical bills and he was
transferred the money through the nurse mobile money wallet and I was discharged to g
When I came back home, INSPR. Kofi Yesu accused me of conniving with the nurse to
him of his money and later confided in one of my friends that he will not going to take co
and the baby for a period of four (4) and his reason was the money he claimed mysel;
nurse stole from him and because of that he will not take care of us.

I thought that was a joke but it wasn't the case. INSPR. Kofi Yesu has never contril
money for that past five (5) months; all he does is to assault me at a least provocatic
few weeks ago, the officer assaulted me and tore all my dress and just yesterday (09/0
went to him to demand money to take care of the baby and he launched unprovoked att
he brutalized me, bite my back, head and other parts of my body and after that said n
do him anything.

led to protect lives and