



## POLICY BRIEF No.6

# Goal Integration Through Leadership: A Panacea to Ghana's Public Sector Corruption Menace

June 2017

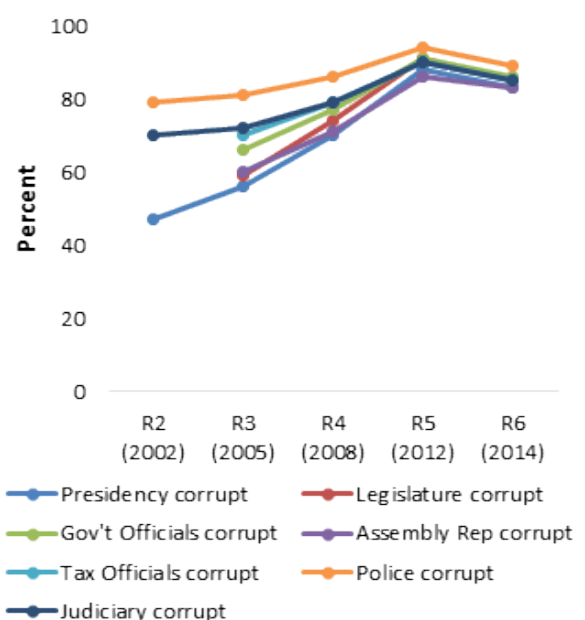
[www.ugbs.ug.edu.gh](http://www.ugbs.ug.edu.gh)

## The Policy Issue

Corruption represents a major impediment to inclusive development in Africa. It deprives many poor citizens of their basic socio-economic entitlements. Across the continent, corruption is deemed to be a systemic problem. Although Ghana is widely hailed as an epitome of democracy and 'good governance' in sub-Saharan Africa, the country remains a typical example where progress in the fight against corruption has remained very disappointing. Indeed, not only has endemic corruption persisted in Ghana; the evidence suggests that the problem is getting worse within several state institutions, including those that have the mandate to fight against the menace (Fig. 1).

In the most recent afrobarometre survey undertaken in 2014, 75% of citizens said corruption levels had increased

Fig. 1: Trends in perceived corruption among key state institutions, 2002-2014



and 71% thought that the government had performed badly in fighting the menace (Fig. 2). More problematically, there has been a significant loss of trust in most public institutions. In 2014, six of every 10 respondents said they had ‘a little’ or ‘no’ trust at all in the police (62%), the Ghana Revenue Authority (62%), ruling political party (61%), and Parliament (61%).

The purpose of this brief is to present a conceptual analysis of how the issue of corruption in Ghana’s public sector can be curbed. It suggests that that efforts aimed at integrating individual and organisational goals within the public sector, combined with transformational leadership – by which is meant a style of leadership that inspires, motivates, transforms and challenges followers or subordinates to go beyond parochial interests and achieve more for the success of their organisations – can play a major role in the fight against corruption in Ghana and other developing countries.

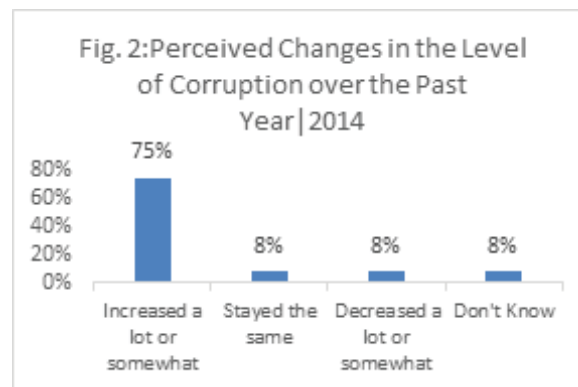
## Summary of Key Findings

Through a review of a large amount of literature across the globe, the study found that there has been a gradual shift (at least theoretically) away from a sole focus on the goals of top level management, strict adherence to rules and regulations set by same, and extrinsic factors such as pay and working conditions as the sole motivation of employee performance. Organisational life where the human capital is integrated into the organisation to enhance effectiveness, and where intrinsic factors such as career advancement opportunities exist was also found to be crucial to enhancing individual performance. This shift has necessitated the need to integrate the goals of the individual employees into the overall organisational goals and effectiveness.

Human needs necessitate the setting of individual or personal goals. Maslow’s needs theory of motivation shows that understanding what motivates an individual is dependent on one’s knowledge of what that individual’s needs (goals) are, which can be either intrinsic, extrinsic, or both.

***When an individual indulges in any economic activity or any social interaction, that individual looks to meeting personal goals, above all else.***

Transformational leadership is geared towards inspiring and motivating followers to achieve greater by identifying individual values, needs and goals, and aligning them with those of their organisations. This leadership style with its dimensions of idealised influence (charisma), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration, helps a leader to build a relationship based on trust with followers, to satisfy the subordinates’ individual interests and goals, and to adopt strategies that fuse individual goals with those of the organisation.



***“Transformational leadership approach presents itself as an effective unifier of organisational and individual aspirations or goals, which in turn engenders both organisational and individual growth and development”.***

Corruption in Ghana has stemmed from factors such as the non-adherence to professional and ethical standards by workers, and weak institutions. Arguably, one cause of corruption in the country, particularly what has become known as petty/bureaucratic corruption, is employee dissatisfaction with pay. Employee dissatisfaction with pay in the public sector in particular motivates individuals to demand bribes and engage in other forms of dishonest behavior. Due to the meagre nature of pay in Ghana’s public sector, employees are, most often than not, unable to refrain from corrupt acts and practices that undermine the state and its institutions; acts that are geared towards satisfaction of personal needs and goals.

***“Several studies have shown that pay satisfaction amongst public sector workers in developing countries (Ghana inclusive) leads to reduction in the emergence of corruption”.***

When an employee is satisfied with job and pay, that employee is able to identify with the overall organisational goals which compels the individual to exhibit ethical behaviours, attitudes and a life of integrity to sustain a healthy relationship with the organisation. Inferring from this analysis, one can state with some level of certainty that when a public sector worker is satisfied with their job (especially with pay, considering the Ghanaian situation), that worker would commit to the organisation, and consequently act appropriately to push forward the organisation's goals, which will in turn promote their stake in that organisation.

In order to mitigate corruption in Ghana, political and administrative leaders must endeavour to create enabling organisational environments that promote job satisfaction of employees in the country's public sector. Leaders can ensure employee job satisfaction by effectively integrating individual goals (intrinsic and extrinsic) and organisational goals; which will in turn enhance employees' commitment to the organisation and their ethical behaviours, thus reducing corrupt practices to foster public sector growth.

***There is the need to incorporate individual employee goals into public sector or state goals through consensus building to ensure satisfaction at both ends so as to mitigate corruption.***

In order to effectively attain individual and organisational goal integration, leaders in Ghana need to adopt a transformational leadership approach. This is because one major hindrance to effective goal integration and stakeholder involvement in public sector goal-setting is the structure of Ghana's administrative system; characterised by tall hierarchies, high centralisation and bureaucracies.

The transformational leadership approach underscores a substantive level of appreciation for the inextricable nature of organisational development and individual development; seeking to ensure the integration of the two. This leadership approach has been noted in literature to employ strategies such as communication, consensus building, follower grooming to leadership positions, the creation of a challenging work environment for the worker and the merging of individual concerns to the concerns of the group.

Nonetheless, it cannot be stated emphatically that goal integration would single-handedly reduce corruption in Ghana. However, satisfying lower order needs such as food and shelter makes higher order needs such as self-esteem attractive to the individual; which could cause them to behave ethically and professionally. In this context, transformational leadership, associated with trust, morals, ethics, charisma, and considerations for individual employee needs can afford leaders in the public sector the ability to direct the focus of subordinates towards goals that are ideal and ethically sound for both individual and organisational development. Thus, the argument being advanced is that transformational leadership can help mitigate corruption both directly, by stressing ethics, morals and through mentorship; and indirectly, by fostering the integration of individual and organisational goals thereby engendering job satisfaction and commitment to the attainment of organisational goals, rather than meeting their parochial interests and goals through corrupt means.

***Transformational leadership can help reduce corruption directly through morals and ethics, and indirectly through goal integration.***

## Conclusion and Policy Implications

- As a result of the socio-cultural setting in Ghana, public sector workers are saddled with a lot of responsibilities and needs to be met. These employees most often than not, try to complement their meagre salaries by demanding and taking bribes.

- In order to effectively reduce corruption, the individual goals and needs of the employees must be adequately integrated into overall organisational goals. Thus, there is the need for leaders to adopt transformational leadership approach to effectively integrate goals.
- Transformational leaders are focused on ensuring the developments of individual employees and their organisations, and are thus well placed to integrate individual and organizational goals to ensure a win-win situation for both parties. Also, to effectively reduce corruption, employees must see the genuineness in the concern of the organisation and their leaders for their wellbeing and development; thus, the more reason why political and administrative leaders in the country's public sector must adopt this leadership approach.
- Training programmes could be organised for both political and administrative leaders on how to exhibit behaviours of a transformational leader as well as how to effectively integrate the goals of the individuals and those of the organisations so as to ensure satisfaction, commitment to organisational goals, and a reduction in corruption.

## Further Readings

- Agbodohu, W. and Churchill, R.Q. (2014), "Corruption in Ghana: causes, consequences and cures", *International Journal of Economics, Finance and Management Sciences*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 92-102.
- Armah-Attoh, D. (2014), "Perceived corruption escalates, trust in institutions drops: A call for ordinary Ghanaians to get involved in the fight". *Afrobarometer Dispatch* No. 6, 2 December 2014.
- Bamidele, O. (2013), "Corruption, conflict and sustainable development in African states", *The African Symposium: An Online Journal of the African Educational Research Network*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 42-54.
- Ghana Integrity Initiative (2011), *The Voice of the People Survey – A National Survey of Corruption in Ghana*, Ghana Integrity Initiative, Accra.
- Lin, R.S. and Hsiao, J. (2014), "The relationships between transformational leadership, knowledge sharing, trust and organisational citizenship behaviour", *International Journal of Innovation, Management and Technology*, Vol. 5 No. 3, pp. 171-174.

- Lunenburg, F.C. (2011), "Goal-setting theory of motivation", *International Journal of Management, Business, and Administration*, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 1-6.
- Transparency International (2013), "Corruption perceptions index 2013", Transparency International, available at: [www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org) (accessed 2 July 2014).

## About this Brief

The UGBS Policy Brief Series are generated from published research papers on topical issues by faculty members of the School. The Series are part of the School's efforts in contributing to policy issues that are critical to national and international development. This policy brief was developed from a recently-published work titled "Goal Integration through Transformational Leadership: A panacea to Ghana's Public Sector Corruption Menace". The paper was published by Kwasi Dartey-Baah in the Seventh Volume of the *Journal of Global Responsibility* in March 2016.

About the Author

Kwasi Dartey-Baah is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Ghana Business School and the Head of the Department of Organisation & Human Resource Management. He holds a PhD in Leadership and Human Resource Development from Trinity College, USA and Canterbury University, United Kingdom. He is a reviewer for reputable international journals and has published extensively in international journals covering areas such as Leadership, CSR and Oil & Gas.

## Correspondence:

Dr. Abdul-Gafaru Abdulai  
Coordinator, UGBS Seminar Series & Policy Briefs  
PO Box LG 78, Legon, Accra-Ghana  
Email: [agabdulai@ug.edu.gh](mailto:agabdulai@ug.edu.gh)  
Tel: +233 (0) 546 695 432;  
Mobile: +233 (0) 203403401.