



Factors influencing the willingness of motorists to pay bribes in rural areas of Limpopo, South Africa

Ntwanano Patrick Tshabalala*

Senior Lecturer, University of Limpopo, South Africa

E-mail: patrick.tshabalala@ul.ac.za

Witness Maluleke

Professor, University of Limpopo, South Africa

E-mail: witness.maluleke@ul.ac.za

Abstract

Bribery between motorists and traffic officers in rural areas has become increasingly prevalent, raising significant concerns among public officials and regulatory bodies. This unethical practice undermines the credibility of law enforcement and poses a serious threat to overall road safety. When motorists engage in bribery to avoid fines or penalties for traffic violations, they foster a culture of recklessness that contradicts the fundamental purpose of traffic laws. The consequences of such actions extend beyond individual motorists, establishing a dangerous precedent that diminishes the deterrent effect intended by legal frameworks. Moreover, a motorist's decision to participate in bribery is often influenced by a complex evaluation of perceived risks and benefits. Factors such as the likelihood of being caught, the severity of potential penalties, and the relative ease of illicit transactions all play a role in this decision-making process. Rational Choice Theory offers a framework for understanding the dynamics of bribery between motorists and traffic officials.

Through the use of descriptive data analyses, a quantitative approach was employed to assess and illustrate corruption among 289 motorists in the Malamulele area of Limpopo province, South Africa. The findings indicated that approximately 31.5% of motorists acknowledged engaging in bribery with traffic officers, suggesting that this issue extends beyond habitual offenders. Additionally, a significant 72.2% of motorists perceive bribery as a more cost-effective option compared to paying fines. Furthermore, 87.2% of respondents believe that bribery offers a quicker and easier solution when faced with the repercussions of potential traffic violations. Notably, 66.0% of those surveyed admitted to having offered bribes to traffic officers at some stage. In contrast, 68.5% of respondents expressed a strong commitment to ethical behaviour, confidently asserting that they do not engage in bribery towards traffic police officers.

Keywords: Bribery, Corruption, Motorists, Rural areas, Traffic police officials, Rational choice theory, willingness

Introduction and background

In rural areas, motorists' willingness to pay bribes is influenced by a complex interplay of factors, including socioeconomic conditions, cultural norms, and the efficiency of local governance. Therefore, in these regions, the lack of stringent law enforcement and oversight often creates an environment where bribery becomes a pragmatic solution for navigating bureaucratic hurdles (Tshabalala, 2020; Musukwa, 2021). Economic constraints also play a significant role, as motorists may be compelled to pay bribes to avoid fines that could disproportionately impact their livelihood (Onyango, 2022; Tshabalala, 2020). Additionally, local customs and a general mistrust of the formal justice system can perpetuate the practice, with many viewing bribes as a necessary evil rather than an ethical transgression (Martin, Cullen, Johnson & Parboteeah, 2007; Tshabalala, 2020). The prevalence of bribery in these settings is

not merely a reflection of individual morality but a broader symptom of systemic issues that require comprehensive policy reforms and grassroots initiatives to address effectively.

Bribery between drivers and traffic officers in rural areas has become widespread, garnering significant attention from the public and authorities (Foltz & Li, 2023). This unethical practice undermines the integrity of law enforcement and poses a serious threat to road safety (Loughman & Sibera, 2011). When drivers can evade fines or penalties through illicit payments, it encourages reckless behaviour and diminishes the deterrent effect of traffic laws. The willingness of motorists to pay bribes to traffic law enforcement has attracted considerable interest from researchers and policymakers alike (Weigel, 2017). Existing literature has highlighted bribery as a negotiation process involving motorists and traffic officers (Khalil, Lawarrée, & Yun, 2010). Bribery can be viewed as a form of negotiation in which the motorist and the officer bargain to determine the service's price, speed, and quality (Atanasov, 2011; Khalil et al., 2010; Pramanik, 2022).

A motorist's willingness to pay a bribe in rural areas may be influenced by their perception of the potential benefits and costs of the transaction (Atanasov, 2011). For instance, a motorist caught running a red light might offer a bribe to avoid facing a more severe penalty, such as a fine or license suspension (Khalil et al., 2010). Conversely, a motorist who is confident in their ability to navigate the legal system may be less willing to resort to bribery, believing that the expected costs of a formal sanction are lower than the proposed bribe (Khalil et al., 2010; Gneezy, Saccardo & Veldhuizen, 2015). Atanasov (2011) further emphasised the moral considerations that motorists and officers weigh in their decision-making processes. For example, a motorist might be more inclined to pay a bribe if they interpret the officer's request as extortion rather than a straightforward solicitation (Atanasov, 2011; Chakroff, Thomas, Haque, & Young, 2014). Similarly, an officer may be less likely to accept a bribe if they perceive that doing so would represent a more significant moral failing than issuing a formal penalty (Pashigian, 1975). Atanasov (2011) further adds that traffic law enforcement bribery can be viewed as a form of "negotiation" between motorists and law enforcement officials, where drivers aim to minimise costs associated with violations. In contrast, officials seek monetary gains.

Several key factors may influence motorists' willingness to offer bribes to law enforcement officials (Atanasov, 2011). One significant factor is the perceived likelihood of successfully evading a ticket through bribery (Chakroff et al., 2014; Atanasov, 2011). This perception can be shaped by the motorist's assessment of the officer's integrity and the strength of the evidence against them (Atanasov, 2011; Tankebe, Boakye & Amagnya, 2019). For instance, if a motorist believes that the officer is more susceptible to corruption or that the evidence of their infraction is weak, they may be more inclined to attempt a bribery transaction to avoid a ticket. Conversely, if the driver perceives the officer as honest and the evidence as compelling, they may be less likely to engage in bribery due to the potential risks of being caught and facing more severe consequences. Ultimately, motorists' calculation of the probability of successfully avoiding punishment through bribery plays a crucial role in their decision-making process.

Another crucial factor is the value that the motorist assigns to the desired outcome of the bribery transaction, such as the desire to avoid a ticket or to obtain a driving license (Jou, Pai, & Wang, 2013). If the motorist perceives the potential consequences of the infraction, such as a substantial fine or the threat of a lengthy license suspension, as severe enough to significantly disrupt their ability to drive and manage their daily activities, they may be more inclined to contemplate offering a bribe to evade these harsh penalties (DeYoung & Gebers, 2004; Jou et al., 2013; Elias, 2017). In this instance, the motorist evaluates the risk of being caught engaging in bribery against the potential disruption to their livelihood and personal responsibilities that could result from the punitive sanctions associated with the infraction (Atanasov, 2011; Verma & Sengupta, 2015). Conversely, suppose the motorist believes the consequences, such as a minor fine or a short-term license suspension, are insignificant and would not significantly affect their daily lives. In that case, they may be less inclined to engage in the risky and unethical behaviour of offering a bribe. In this case, the potential benefits would not outweigh the ethical and legal consequences (Atanasov, 2011; Rodrigues-Neto, 2014; Verma & Sengupta, 2015).

Additionally, the motorist's ethical considerations and moral reasoning play a significant role in their decision to offer a bribe in rural areas. Additionally, the potential rewards of a successful bribery transaction may be weighed against the various possible consequences of being apprehended, such as the significant financial burden of paying a hefty ticket, the risk of facing legal penalties and criminal charges for engaging in bribery, and the broader ethical and reputational costs to the motorist

(Rodrigues-Neto, 2014). These consequences can extend beyond the immediate interaction with the law enforcement officer and have far-reaching implications for the individual's standing in the community and integrity. Moreover, research has illuminated the phenomenon of "implicature," characterised by the use of ambiguous language as a cunning tactic employed by some motorists when attempting to broach the subject of bribery. This strategy allows them to extend a bribe while skillfully dodging the risk of overt incrimination (Chakroff et al., 2014). Such behaviour underscores a calculated effort on the part of these individuals to cleverly navigate the complexities of the legal system, attempting to sway the outcomes of their encounters with law enforcement without directly grappling with the ethical and legal ramifications of their actions (Atanasov, 2011; Chakroff et al., 2014).

The decision to engage in bribery thus reflects a nuanced and intricate decision-making process. Motorists weigh the perceived benefits against potential risks while employing a deliberate strategy to obfuscate the direct consequences of their actions through indirect and misleading language (Atanasov, 2011). This methodical approach enables motorists to pursue their desired results and provides a protective shield from the full scope of repercussions associated with their unethical and unlawful behaviours. The factors influencing a motorist's willingness to offer bribes are multifaceted. They stem from personal perceptions regarding the likelihood of success, the allure of potential rewards, and the consequences that may follow. This conscious endeavour to veil the ethical and legal dimensions of their behaviour through veiled language reflects a deeper moral conflict, revealing the complexities behind their willingness to transgress road rules.

Methodology

This paper adopts a quantitative research approach, utilising a case study design to explore the complex factors that influence motorists' willingness to engage in bribery within the context of the Malamulele area, Limpopo Province, South Africa. By examining the intricate dynamics of bribery transactions that occur between motorists and traffic police officials, the study aims to illuminate the various factors that facilitate these illicit exchanges. To ensure the results are representative, participants were selected using a simple random sampling technique, recognised for its effectiveness in probability sampling. The sample consisted of 289 motorists selected from a total of 423,258 registered motor vehicles in Limpopo Province, South Africa. This selection was performed using a computer-generated random integer generator (sample size calculator) to achieve a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error.

Data collection involved the use of carefully designed closed-ended questionnaires that included both ratio and Likert-type questions, aimed at capturing detailed responses. Descriptive data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, specifically version 22, enabling a comprehensive and systematic examination of the collected data. The investigation explored various factors influencing the likelihood of offering bribes, aiming to clarify the underlying motivations and broader implications of such behaviours within the context of traffic law enforcement. Moreover, ethical considerations were of utmost importance in conducting this research. Approvals were diligently obtained from several authorities, including the University of Limpopo, the Department of Criminology Research Ethics (DREC), the School of Social Sciences Research Committee (ScREC), the Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC), and the Limpopo Department of Transport and Community Safety. These approvals highlight the commitment to maintain ethical standards and integrity throughout the research process.

Theoretical framework on factors influencing the willingness of motorists to pay bribes in rural areas

Rational Choice Theory

Rational Choice Theory (RCT) offers a compelling framework for understanding the complex decision-making involved in bribery between motorists and traffic officials. This theory posits that individuals are rational actors who carefully evaluate the costs and benefits of their actions to make decisions that maximise their personal gain (Scott, 2000; Cornish & Clarke, 2017; Ramadhan, 2023). In cases of bribery, a motorist facing a potential traffic violation might consider the immediate benefits of offering a bribe to avoid fines or other penalties. This involves assessing the financial savings and the convenience of bypassing time-consuming legal procedures (Tshabalala, 2020).

Motorists often weigh the benefits and risks of offering a bribe, considering factors such as the officer's perceived integrity and the likelihood of avoiding a ticket (Khalil et al., 2010; Atanasov, 2011).

Similarly, traffic officials face a complex decision-making process. They may be tempted by the immediate financial rewards of accepting a bribe, which could significantly enhance their income. However, this temptation must be balanced against the potential repercussions if their actions are discovered. Moreover, this perspective overlooks the broader ethical and societal implications of bribery (Atanasov, 2011; D'Souza & Kaufmann, 2013; Gneezy et al., 2018). While bribery may offer short-term advantages, it ultimately undermines the rule of law and erodes public trust in law enforcement (Khalil et al., 2010).

Offering a bribe is not just a rational assessment of potential rewards and risks; it also presents a significant ethical dilemma (Khalil et al., 2010). Motorists often use "implicature," or ambiguous language, to communicate their bribery offers without directly incriminating themselves, reflecting a deliberate attempt to evade the legal system (Gneezy et al., 2018). This tactic further exacerbates ethical concerns, suggesting a deliberate choice to avoid the consequences of their actions. Additionally, the dynamics of bribery as a negotiation process between motorists and traffic officers suggest that both parties strategically bargain over aspects such as price, speed, and service quality (Khalil et al., 2010; Gneezy et al., 2018). This highlights the complex decision-making process involved, as motorists weigh the potential benefits of avoiding punishment against the risks and moral implications of engaging in bribery.

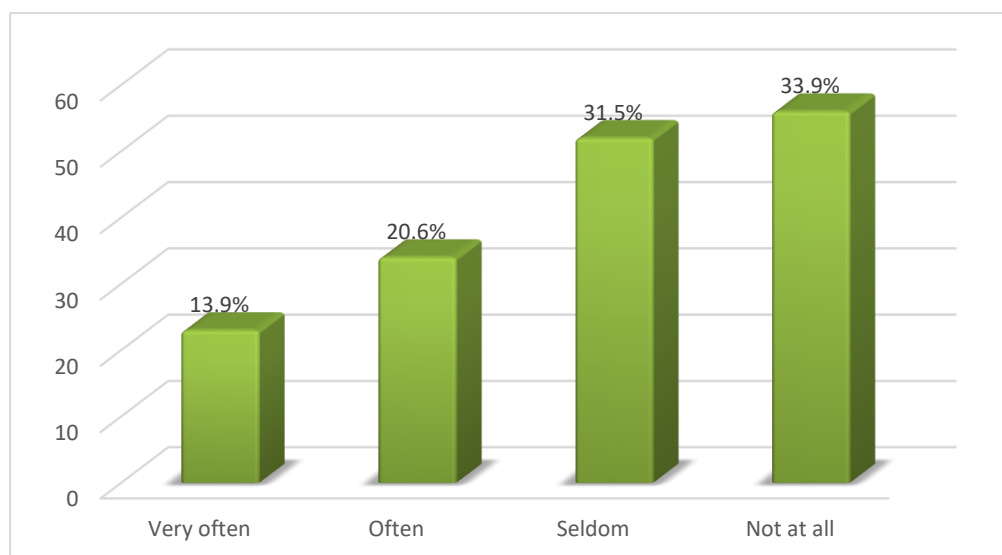
Bribery dynamics can be viewed as a negotiation process in which prospective motorists and traffic officers discuss the price, speed, and quality of services (Atanasov, 2011). This view on decision-making highlights that moral responsibility plays a key role in bribery exchanges (Atanasov, 2011; Gneezy et al., 2018). Research has explored the efficiency and complexity of bribery as a negotiation, showing that the chosen payment method can depend on various factors (Rodrigues-Neto, 2014; Atanasov, 2011). Specifically, studies indicate that elements such as the likelihood of punishment, the bargaining power of involved parties, and the relative effectiveness of monetary payments versus alternative methods like non-monetary favours can influence the choice of payment (Atanasov, 2011; Rodrigues-Neto, 2014). This decision-making perspective highlights the complex considerations potential bribe-givers and bribe-takers must evaluate when engaging in such transactions, weighing the risks, rewards, and advantages of different payment options (Atanasov, 2011; Gneezy et al., 2015).

Study results and discussions

This section presents comprehensive results and discussions on motorists' willingness to offer bribes to traffic police officials, examining the underlying factors that influence this behaviour. The data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 28, a powerful statistical software recognised for its extensive analytical capabilities. This version of SPSS offered an improved user interface and advanced features that significantly simplified the process of data manipulation and interpretation.

Figure 1:

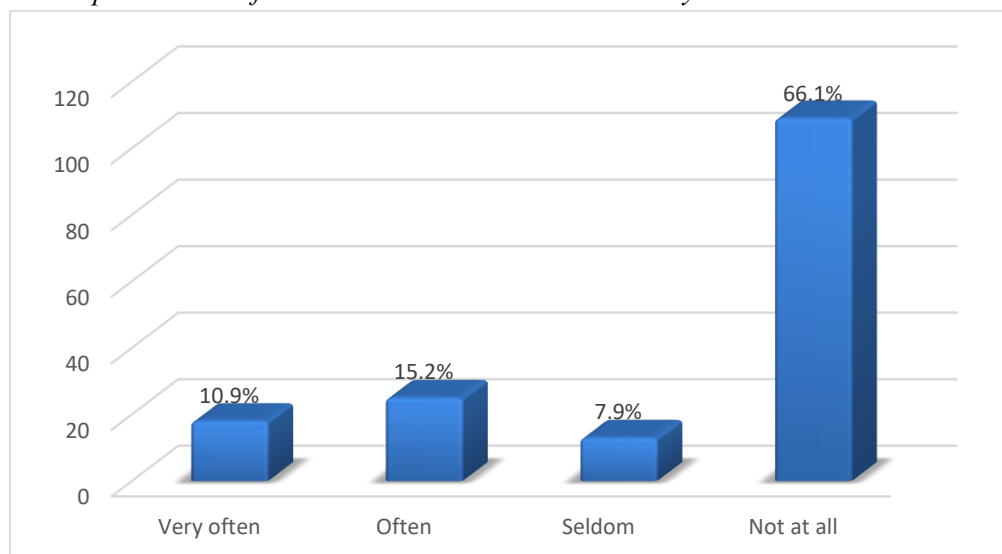
Bribes paid in the past



Source: Prepared by the researchers

Figure 1 reveals a disturbing picture of bribery practices among respondents involving traffic police officers. A staggering 13.9% of individuals admitted to frequently bribing traffic officers, describing this behaviour as "very often." Additionally, 20.6% of respondents admitted to regularly offering bribes to traffic enforcement personnel, indicating a worrying trend of corruption. A substantial portion of the survey, approximately 31.5%, reported having engaged in bribery at least once during interactions with traffic officers, indicating that this behaviour is not confined to habitual offenders. In contrast, 33.9% of those surveyed strongly denied ever resorting to bribing traffic officers, revealing a notable gap in attitudes towards this unethical practice. However, when examining the overall figures, it becomes evident that 66.0% of respondents acknowledged having offered bribes to traffic officers at some point, highlighting the pervasive nature of this issue within the community. This concern is further supported by findings from the South African Citizens' Bribery Survey, conducted by The Ethics Institute, which uncovered a troubling statistic: a significant 36% of all bribes paid in South Africa are directed explicitly at traffic officers, primarily aimed at circumventing various traffic violations (Dobie, 2016).

Hjelmeng and Søreide (2017) note that a law enforcement officer contemplating engaging in corrupt behaviour evaluates the potential benefits, such as financial gain, against the associated costs, which may include the likelihood of being caught, disciplinary actions, and legal consequences. When the perceived benefits considerably outweigh the risks, the temptation to partake in corrupt practices increases (Pohlmann, Bitsch and Klinkhammer, 2016). This perspective challenges the notion that corruption stems solely from moral failings, suggesting instead that it arises from a rational assessment of expected benefits and costs (Abbink, Ryvkin and Serra, 2020).

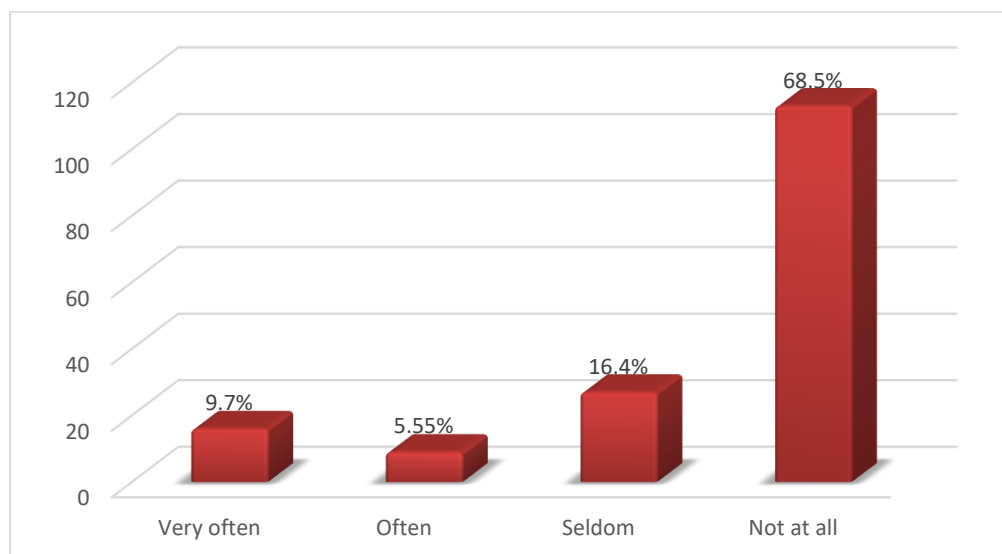
Figure 2:*Bribes paid to elude fines more than once on the same day*

Source: Prepared by the researchers

Figure 2 provides a striking illustration of the pervasive and troubling issue of active bribery among various participants. A disconcerting 10.9% of individuals candidly confessed to offering bribes with alarming frequency, specifically on the very same day they were solicited for such unethical acts. Furthermore, an unsettling 15.2% of respondents disclosed that they often took the initiative to offer bribes to traffic officers precisely when approached for them, revealing a deeply ingrained culture of corruption. In sharp contrast, only 7.9% of participants admitted to infrequently engaging in the act of bribing traffic police, highlighting the stark divide in behaviours. Collectively, these findings paint a sobering picture: a staggering 34.0% of respondents find themselves enmeshed in the grim reality of active bribery, as vividly depicted in Figure 2.

In stark contrast, an impressive 66.0% of respondents demonstrated their commitment to ethical conduct by unequivocally rejecting any involvement in corrupt practices. This statistic highlights not only a commendable moral fortitude but also a significant resistance to the pervasive threat of bribery that plagues many sectors today. Marquette and Peiffer (2018) emphasise the crucial role of deterrence in the ongoing battle against corruption, suggesting that effective strategies must be employed to discourage unethical behaviour. Research indicates that the likelihood of individuals engaging in corrupt activities diminishes markedly when they perceive a heightened risk of detection and the subsequent imposition of sanctions for their misconduct (Abramovaite et al., 2022). This highlights an essential connection: individuals' consciousness of potential repercussions serves as a powerful motivator in preventing unethical behaviour. Fostering an environment where transparency and accountability are prioritised can significantly bolster ethical standards and deter corrupt practices.

Figure 3:
Bribes paid as a habit.



Source: Prepared by the researchers

The data shown in Figure 3 reveals a troubling view of respondents' attitudes towards bribery in their dealings with traffic officers. A significant 9.7% of participants openly admit to frequently bribing these officers, indicating a worrying tendency to engage in corrupt practices that undermine ethical standards and damage public trust in law enforcement. Additionally, an alarming 5.5% of those surveyed acknowledge that bribery has become a common part of their lives, suggesting a deeply rooted cultural acceptance of corruption in their interactions with authority figures. Even more alarming is the discovery that 16.4% of respondents admit to occasionally giving in to the temptation of offering bribes. This suggests that even those who usually uphold their moral principles can be influenced by particular circumstances or pressures, exposing the intricate relationship between ethics and situational factors that can lead individuals to compromise their values.

In stark contrast, a commendable 68.5% of respondents expressed their unwavering commitment to ethical behaviour, confidently stating that they do not engage in bribery aimed at traffic police officers. This figure highlights a significant portion of the population that actively opposes corrupt practices and yearns for a system based on integrity. However, the sobering reality that 23.0% of individuals regularly offer bribes serves as a clear reminder of the widespread presence of unethical conduct in our society. Gul's insights (2009) enrich this discussion by suggesting that criminal activities are more likely to thrive when individuals perceive the potential rewards of such misconduct as outweighing the associated risks. This notion underscores the psychological rationalisations that underpin corrupt actions. Conversely, Umaru (2020) indicates that corruption could be dramatically diminished if punitive measures for engaging in graft are perceived as severe and, crucially, are consistently enforced, thereby creating an environment where ethical conduct is not only advocated but also becomes the societal norm.

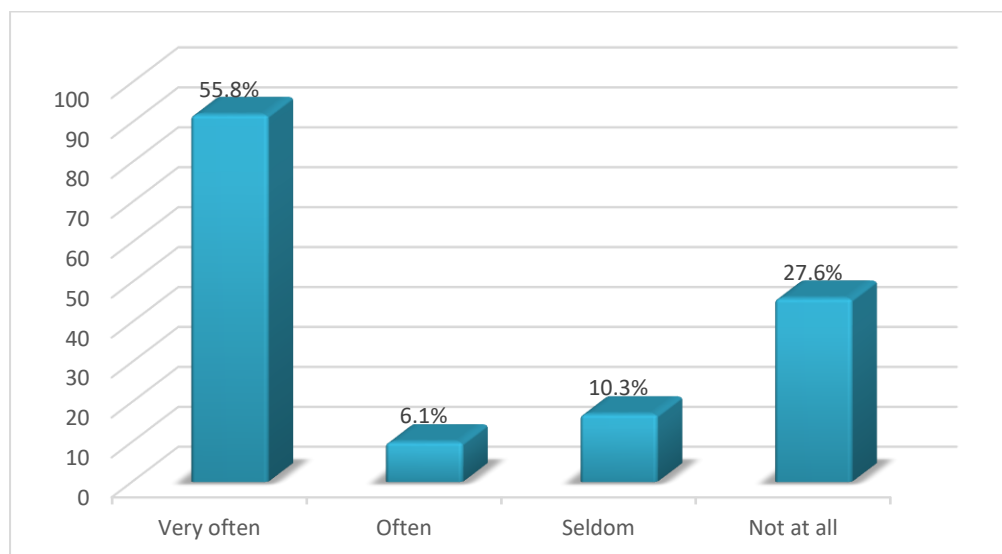
Figure 4:*Bribes paid because it is cheaper than a fine***Source:** Prepared by the researchers

Figure 4 illustrates a striking statistic: 55.8% of respondents frequently resort to bribery, driven by the conviction that it presents a more economical choice than paying fines. In stark contrast, a mere 6.1% of respondents candidly acknowledged their active involvement in bribery, explicitly citing that offering a bribe to traffic officers often proves to be a more financially viable option than incurring a formal fine. Additionally, 10.3% of participants indicated that they occasionally succumb to the temptation of paying bribes to traffic police, operating on the premise that such actions ultimately save them money in the long run. Altogether, an alarming 72.2% of individuals believe that bribery serves as a more budget-friendly alternative to settling fines. In comparison, only 27.6% confidently claim they have not engaged in bribery.

A comprehensive report from the South African Citizens' Bribery Survey highlights a pervasive culture among South African motorists, who often prefer to grease the wheels of bureaucracy by bribing traffic officials instead of facing the consequences of fines (Dobie, 2016). Furthermore, those who frequently flout traffic regulations often perceive paying bribes as a cheaper and more convenient way to avoid the hassle of repercussions (Corruption Watch, 2017). Gul (2009) posits that imposing harsher penalties could compel lawbreakers to reflect more seriously on the consequences of their actions before violating the law. Both motorists and traffic police officers appear to engage in corrupt practices, mainly because the consequences for such behaviours remain lenient. Sampath, Gardberg, and Rahman (2018) opine that if the sanctions for corruption were significantly increased, individuals would likely reassess their willingness to commit corrupt acts or pay bribes, thereby potentially curtailing these unethical practices. In accordance with the rational choice framework, it underscores the pivotal role of deterrence in mitigating corruption (Marquette & Peiffer, 2018). Deterrence theory posits that the likelihood of engaging in corrupt behaviour diminishes as the perceived risk of detection and punishment escalates (Abramovaite et al., 2022; Polinsky & Shavell, 2001; Stafford & Deibert, 2007). Therefore, effective anti-corruption strategies should focus on increasing the tangible costs associated with corruption while simultaneously reducing its perceived rewards (Garoupa & Klerman, 2001; Polinsky & Shavell, 2001; Tongat, 2022).

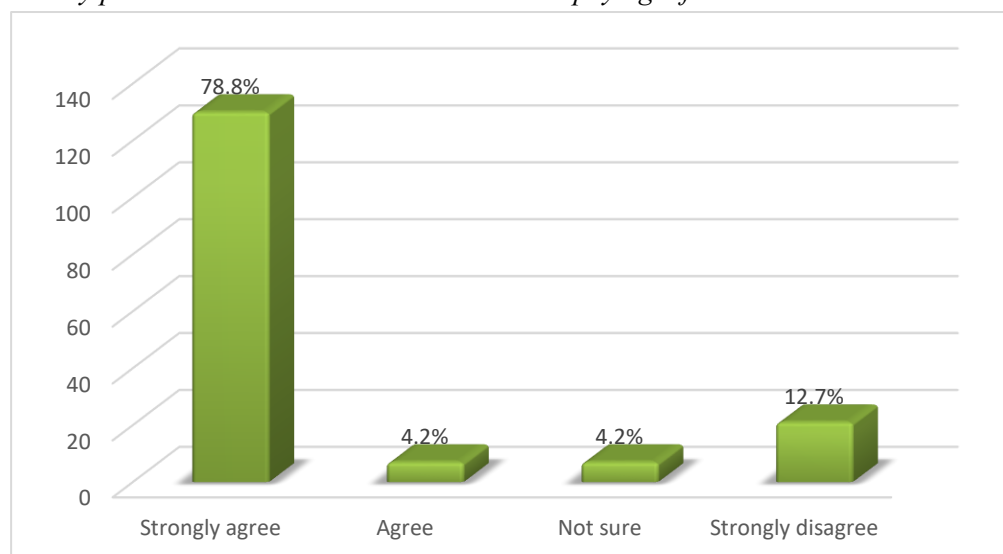
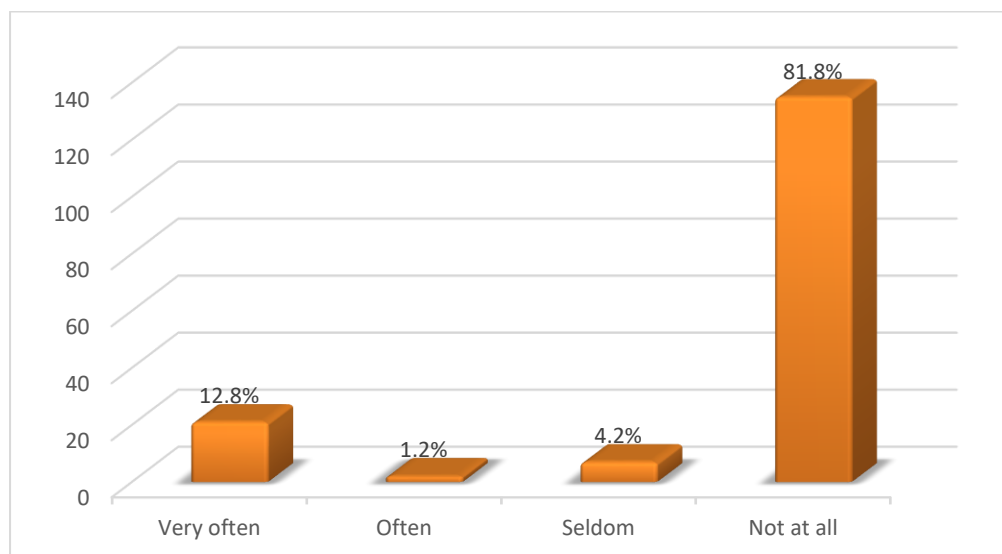
Figure 5:*Bribery paid because it is more convenient than paying a fine***Source:** Prepared by the researchers

Figure 5 presents compelling trends from a study involving 165 respondents, highlighting significant perspectives on the issue of bribery versus fines in the context of traffic violations. An overwhelming 78.8% of participants expressed strong agreement with the notion that paying a bribe is more convenient than paying a formal fine, indicating a widespread belief that informal payments offer a quicker resolution to legal infractions. Furthermore, an additional 4.2% of respondents also agreed with this perception, suggesting an overall inclination towards the convenience of bribery in these situations. On the other hand, 4.2% of those surveyed were uncertain about the advantages of bribery in comparison to traditional fines, indicating some ambivalence within the group. Notably, a minority of 12.8% firmly disagreed with the idea that bribery serves as a more convenient alternative to fines. This data clearly shows that an overwhelming 87.2% of respondents view bribery as the easier and faster option when faced with the potential consequences of a traffic violation. This striking statistic reveals not only a widespread mindset among individuals but also points to deeper societal attitudes towards corruption in everyday situations. Such views could significantly shape the wider discussion on governance and regulation, emphasising the importance of comprehensive reforms and educational programmes to tackle these ingrained attitudes.

The study conducted by Tshabalala (2020) sheds light on the widespread issue of bribery among motorists trying to avoid hefty fines for traffic violations and long waits at traffic departments. In this context, corruption appears in various forms and at multiple levels. Gaston (2006) contends that corruption often involves the misuse of authority by law enforcement officials and the manipulation of public safety regulations. Several factors contribute to this corruption, including opportunistic behaviour and individuals' moral failings (Šumah, 2018). In some instances, a traffic officer may wait patiently for the right moment to create or exploit a situation, thereby enabling corrupt practices and extorting money from motorists (Gaston, 2006). Importantly, Mills (2012) supports Gaston's observations, emphasising that corruption can flourish in any environment where conditions permit such unethical behaviour. Typically, those involved in corrupt activities seek to avoid consequences, which drives them to pursue and exploit options that benefit their interests (Gul, 2009). Furthermore, the systemic nature of this issue raises important questions about accountability and highlights the need for comprehensive reforms to combat corruption within law enforcement agencies.

Figure 6:
Bribes paid to evade a fine for a fault



Source: Prepared by the researchers

According to Figure 6 presented, 12.8% of respondents reported that they often resorted to paying bribes to evade a traffic fine, mainly when their taxis exhibited defects. In stark contrast, only 1.2% admitted to having frequently paid a bribe in instances where their taxis were faulty. Additionally, 4.2% of respondents acknowledged that they seldom engaged in bribery, even when their taxis were defective. Notably, 18.2% of respondents reported paying bribes when their vehicles had visible defects. The overwhelming majority, 81.8%, stated they had not engaged in bribery in such circumstances. The behaviour of motorists reveals a complex decision-making process when it comes to transgressing road rules.

Motorists seem to weigh the potential benefits against the repercussions of being caught. This perspective aligns with Pratt's (2008) assertion that individuals carefully consider the costs and benefits before engaging in corrupt activities. Consequently, when the perceived benefits of bribery overshadow the risks involved, the likelihood of corruption increases, often fuelled by individual impulsivity. Conversely, if the risks involved prominently outweigh the anticipated rewards, traffic police officers are likely to act within the bounds of legality due to their rational calculations. Moreover, the work environment of traffic police officers plays a pivotal role in this dynamic. They often exploit the conditions of their surroundings to their advantage, as the likelihood of being apprehended for corrupt behaviour tends to be low. This environment creates a fertile ground for soliciting and accepting bribes, making it easier for officers to engage in unethical practices without fear of reprisal.

Conclusion and recommendations

When analysing the factors contributing to a motorist's willingness to pay bribes, it is crucial to delve into the immediate incentives and the deeper, systemic issues that foster such behaviour. At first glance, the study shows that many motorists offer bribes to avoid penalties or expedite bureaucratic processes. This practice is often perceived as a more convenient and cost-effective alternative to navigating the drawn-out, convoluted legal procedures that can be time-consuming and frustrating. The immediate motivation to circumvent fines or minimise the extensive time spent grappling with administrative hurdles makes bribery appealing to numerous individuals. However, this superficial reasoning is intricately linked to more profound societal and cultural dynamics. In certain regions, corruption has

become so deeply ingrained in daily life that it is often regarded as a normative and even expected aspect of interactions with public authorities. This normalisation of corrupt practices is further exacerbated by a judicial system many perceive as inefficient, biased, or unresponsive. When individuals lose faith in the legal system's ability to provide fair and just outcomes, they may feel compelled to resort to bribery as a pragmatic solution, viewing it as the only viable means to obtain desired results.

A comprehensive and multifaceted strategy is essential for effectively addressing the pervasive issues within law enforcement agencies. Foremost among these is the critical need to enhance transparency and accountability. This can be achieved by implementing stringent oversight mechanisms to ensure these agencies operate with integrity and are held accountable for their actions. For instance, traffic officers should be required to wear body-worn cameras, accompanied by strict guidelines governing their usage and data management to prevent misuse. Additionally, regular audits of law enforcement practices should be conducted by independent bodies to promote transparency and avoid conflicts of interest. Public reporting of incidents of misconduct should become routine, providing community members with access to detailed records of investigations and their outcomes, thereby fostering trust in the system. Furthermore, it is crucial to establish independent oversight bodies with the authority to investigate allegations of corruption and misconduct. These bodies should consist of a diverse group of community members and experts in law enforcement oversight to ensure a comprehensive perspective on the issues at hand.

Creating and enforcing stringent anti-corruption legislation are vital pillars in the fight against corruption. These laws must be intricately designed to effectively deter both the offering and acceptance of bribes, ensuring they address the nuances of corrupt practices. These regulations must be implemented with unwavering consistency and fairness, applying equally to all individuals, regardless of their societal status or power. Comprehensive training programs tailored for law enforcement officials and public servants are crucial to bolster these efforts. Such programs should focus on instilling a deep-rooted sense of ethics and integrity, nurturing a culture of accountability that permeates all levels of governance. Moreover, public awareness campaigns are crucial in educating citizens about their rights and the vital importance of reporting corruption. These initiatives can ignite a societal transformation, fostering an environment of transparency and trust in our public institutions. Ultimately, the collective endeavour to combat corruption can lead to a robust integrity framework where ethical conduct is encouraged and celebrated.

References

- Abbink, K., Ryvkin, D., & Serra, D. (2020). Corrupt police. *Games and Economic Behavior*, 123, 101-119.
- Abramovaite, J., Bandyopadhyay, S., Bhattacharya, S., & Cowen, N. (2023). Classical deterrence theory revisited: An empirical analysis of Police Force Areas in England and Wales. *European Journal of Criminology*, 20(5), 1663-1680.
- Atanasov, Pavel D. (2011). *Bribery as Negotiation: A Decision-Making Perspective*. IACM 24TH Annual Conference Paper, Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1872132>. [2025/04/02]
- Chakroff, A., Thomas, K.A., Haque, O.S & Young, L. (2015). An indecent proposal: The dual functions of indirect speech. *Cognitive science*, 39(1), 199-211.
- Corbett, C. and Simon, F. (1992). Decisions to break or adhere to the rules of the road, viewed from the rational choice perspective. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 32 (4), 537-549
- Cornish, D.B & Clarke, R.V. (2017). Understanding crime displacement: An application of rational choice theory. In *Crime opportunity theories* (pp. 197-211). Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer,
- Corruption Watch. (2017). Everyday bribery in SA still a serious problem. *Corruption Watch*. 09 January. Available at: <https://www.corruptionwatch.org.za/everyday-bribery-sa-still-serious-problem/> [Accessed: 2018/03/08].

- D'Souza, A., & Kaufmann, D. (2013). Who bribes in public contracting and why: worldwide evidence from firms. *Economics of Governance*, 14(4), 333-367.
- DeYoung, D.J., & Gebers, M.A. (2004). An examination of the characteristics and traffic risks of drivers suspended/revoked for different reasons. *Journal of Safety Research*, 35(3), 287-295.
- Dobie, K. (2016). South African Citizens' Bribery survey. *Ethics Institute of South Africa*. Pretoria, South Africa. *Citizens Bribery Survey, 2016* Available at: <https://www.tei.org.za/phocadownload/userupload/Citizens-Bribery-Survey-2016-FINAL.pdf> [Accessed: 2025/04/01]
- Elias, W. (2018). The role of fines and rewards in the self-regulation of young drivers. *European Transport Research Review*, 10(1), 1-8.
- Fallah, J.E., & Benmamoun, M. (2021). Toward a Cultural Understanding of Corruption: Social Construction of Corruption in Liberia. *The Journal of Developing Areas*, 55(4), pp.465-474.
- Foltz, J. and Li, K. (2023). Competition and corruption: Highway corruption in West Africa. *Journal of Development Economics*, 163(c), 1-19.
- Fujikawa, T. (2005). An experimental study of petty corrupt behaviour in small decision-making problems. *American Journal of Applied Sciences*, 2(13), 14-18.
- Gneezy, U., Saccardo, S & Van Veldhuizen, R. (2016). *Bribery: Greed versus reciprocity*. Available at: <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/130838/1/85756014X.pdf> [Accessed: 2025/04/01]
- Gneezy, U., Saccardo, S. and Van Veldhuizen, R. (2019). Bribery: Behavioural drivers of distorted decisions. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 17(3), pp.917-946.
- Guerrero, M.A & Rodríguez-Oreggia, E. (2008). On the individual decisions to commit corruption: A methodological complement. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 65(2), 357-372.
- Gul, S. (2009). An evaluation of the rational choice theory in criminology. *Girne American University Journal of Social and Applied Science*, 4(8), pp. 36-44.
- Hjelmeng, E. J., & Søreide, T. (2017). Bribes, crimes and law enforcement. *European Business Law Review*, 28(1).
- Jou, R.C., Pai, C.W & Wang, P.L. (2013). Automobile drivers' willingness to pay for moving violation behaviour—Compared to motorcyclists. *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, 59(9), 55-63.
- Khalil, F., Lawarrée, J. and Yun, S. (2010). Bribery versus extortion: allowing the lesser of two evils. *The Rand journal of economics*, 41(1), 179-198.
- Loughman, B.P. & Sibery, R.A. (2011). *Bribery and corruption: Navigating the global risks*. New Jersey, USA: John Wiley and Sons.
- Marquette, H., & Peiffer, C. (2018). Grappling with the “real politics” of systemic corruption: Theoretical debates versus “real-world” functions. *Governance*, 31(3), 499-514.
- Martin, K.D., Cullen, J.B., Johnson, J.L., & Parboteeah, K.P. (2007). Deciding to bribe: A cross-level analysis of firm and home country influences on bribery activity. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(6), 1401-1422.
- Mehlkop, G & Graeff, P. (2010). Modelling a rational choice theory of criminal action: Subjectively expected utilities, norms, and interactions. *Rationality and Society*, 22(2), 189-222.
- Musukwa, S. (2021). *Constructing corruption from minibus and taxi drivers' verbal accounts in the city of Livingstone*. MA (Sociology), The University of Zambia, Lusaka.
- Nagarajan, H.K., Jha, R., & Pradhan, K.C. (2013). *The role of bribes in rural governance: The case of India*. Available at: <https://crawford.anu.edu.au/cama> [Accessed: 2025/02/10]
- Onyango, G. (2022). The art of bribery! Analysis of police corruption at traffic checkpoints and roadblocks in Kenya. *International Review of Sociology*, 32(2), 311-331.
- Pashigian, B.P. (1975). On the control of crime and bribery. *The Journal of Legal Studies*, 4(2), 311-326.
- Pohlmann, M., Bitsch, K., & Klinkhammer, J. (2016). Personal gain or organizational benefits? How to explain active corruption. *German law journal*, 17(1), 73-99.
- Pramanik, C. (2022). *A study on bribery networks with a focus on harassment bribery and ways to control corruption*. Available at: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2201.02804> [2025/04/01]
- Pratt, T.C. (2008). Rational choice theory, crime control policy, and criminological relevance. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 7(1), 43-52.

- Ramadhan, C.R. (2023). Using Rational Choice Theory to Understand Corruption in Indonesia. *Integritas: Jurnal Antikorupsi*, 9(2), 171-82.
- Reid, O., & Weigel, J. (2017). *The supply of bribes: Evidence from roadway tolls in the D.R Congo*. Available at: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59832fbcf9a61eb15deffb3c/t/5cabb07c9b747a7c8e8900e6/1554755734253/reid-weigel_moto_201904178.pdf [2025/04/01]
- Rodrigues-Neto, J.A. (2014). On corruption, bribes and the exchange of favours. *Economic Modelling*, 38(11), pp.152-162.
- Sampath, V.S., Gardberg, N.A. & Rahman, N. (2018). Corporate reputation's invisible hand: Bribery, rational choice, and market penalties. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 151(3), 743-760.
- Scott, J. (2000). *Rational Choice Theory. Understanding Contemporary Society: Theories of the Present*. London: Sage Publications.
- Staff Writer. (2017). Paying traffic fines vs paying bribes in South Africa. May 02, *BusinessTech [Online]*. Available at: <https://businesstech.co.za/news/motoring/172973/paying-traffic-fines-vs-paying-bribes-in-south-africa/> [Accessed: 2018/06/25].
- Tankebe, J., Boakye, K.E., & Amagnya, M.A. (2020). Traffic violations and cooperative intentions among drivers: the role of corruption and fairness. *Policing and society*, 30(9), 1081-1096.
- Tshabalala, N. P. (2020). *Corruption by traffic police in Malamulele area, Limpopo Province, South Africa*. Dissertation Unpublished MA (Criminology), University of Limpopo, Mankweng.
- Umaru, K. K. (2020). *Corruption, human dignity, and an ethic of responsibility in Nigeria: A theological-ethical inquiry* (Doctoral dissertation, Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University).
- Verma, P., & Sengupta, S. (2015). Bribe and punishment: An evolutionary game-theoretic analysis of bribery. *PLoS One*, 10(7), 1-22.