

# Leadership Skill of Police Personnel: An Overview of Bangladesh

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**Abstract:** The objective of the paper is to shed light on police leadership skill by interviewing the police personnel. The study is based on the cases. The case studies are plinth upon interviews with 23 police officers at Tangail district in Bangladesh. The fact is that, there was no women police leader as competent respondent in this study. The results were clear; 100% of the respondents were men. From the case study, I identify some leadership skill which should possessed by police personnel. These are, operational skill, ethical decision making, accountability, honesty, predictability, logic, supportive, approachable, higher level thinker, motivation, creative, taking responsibility, respectful, desire to influence, enthusiastic, selflessness, politically astute, good communicator, team builder and intellectual motivation. It is concluded that effective police leaders have particular relational strengths that serve to elevate levels of commitment, work satisfaction, and motivation. The paper also points out that a police leader can encourage and motivate other police within the department to achieve the goal. The findings provide important preliminary insights into the experiences and beliefs of police supervisors.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Police, Management, Intellectual Motivation, Bangladesh

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## 1. Introduction

The Bangladesh Police is a national organization with headquarters based in Dhaka and a number of branches and units, including a special branch, a criminal investigation department (CID), an armed police battalion, training institutions, and range and metropolitan police (including railway police). Its function is controlled by the ministry of Home affairs while the operational responsibilities are vested in police head quarters (Kibria, 1976: 20). Bangladesh police follows the British police system of the colonial era with some minor modifications. At present, the police act of 1861 governs the police administration and operational aspects are guided by the Police Regulation of Bengal (PRB), 1943 (Kibria, 1976: 18). Police are the most visible part of the law enforcement agency and very concerning element of the criminal justice system (Ahuza, 2006:309). A police leader is responsible for establishing vision and mission for the police department, creating strategies to implement that vision and managing external and internal challenges and accountability

for the successful implementation of the vision (Adlam, & Villiers, 2002). Leadership is important trait for the superior police officer. In Bangladesh, within the police department, the officers of and above the rank of inspector are superiors (Kibria, 1976: 72). Sub-inspectors are field officer and also play minor supervisory role (Kibria, 1976: 40). They also possessed leadership quality. Even a head constable of the police leads a small section of the police (Kibria, 1976: 310). In this article, leadership is broadly defined as the ability to influence and work with others to achieve desired outcomes, a definition closely aligned with that of Evans (2000:16), who states that leadership is basically the capacity of someone to bring about change. In this study, I focused on that quality to identify the leadership skill among the police personnel. There are no prior studies about identifying leadership skill of police personnel in Bangladesh. It should be noted that this study is not an assessment of the Bangladesh police. In the police administration, to identify the leadership skill among police personnel I focused on strategic and tactical leadership which are the most relevant

of the various types of leadership on policing. For this reason the focus of this paper is on identifying and measuring leadership skill among police personnel.

## 2. Theoretical Perspectives

Transformational leadership theory is defined by the ability of a leader to motivate followers to their own personal goals for the good of the organization (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). The relationship between the leader and follower depend on the ability of a leader how they influence, inspire, motivate, and provide intellectual stimulation to the followers (Avolio, 1999; Bass, 1990). Some researchers have pointed out that the issue of organizational skill of police personnel also measured by transformational leadership theory (Shamir & Howell, 1999). Because, when police personnel are worked for the common goal on that time they build strong group to fulfill the goal. Influencing skill, of the competent police personnel help the follower to achieve the goal of the department of the police or organization. Clearly, there will be some values and beliefs which are particular to a police leader that influences the follower to achieve the organizational goal. Inspirational motivation has been linked with the vision of the leader (Berson, Shamir, Avolio, & Popper, 2001). Followers feel a sense of collective identity when they inspired by their leader (Conger, Kanungo, & Menon, 2000). An experimental study demonstrated that vision and the implementation of vision of the police leader affected the attainment of the personnel goal achievement (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996). Intellectual stimulation arises when followers are challenged to think about their work situation or behavior in different ways to enhance productivity and working conditions.

For example, in a study of transformational leadership and occupational safety intellectual stimulation was defined in terms of the leader's ability to and motivates them (followers). Several studies have demonstrated that transformational leadership improved perceptions of transformational leadership qualities amongst subordinates (Barling, Iber, & Kelloway, 1996). The very definition of transformational leadership depends on the motivation of followers, which necessarily is an individual factor involving affect, personality, and cognition.

The path-goal theory defined the ability of the motivational function of the leader to increase the performance level of the followers (Yulk, 2002). The superior police personnel in Bangladesh police department support the junior police officer and direct them towards goal. The path – goal theory support the present study, because in Bangladesh, senior police personnel support the junior police personnel and help them to develop their (followers) leadership and management skill.

Hersey and Blanchard (1996) proposed a contingency/situational theory which also supports our present study. This theory related two types of behavioral maturity of the police personnel. One is, job maturity and other is psychological maturity. This theory stated that, police

personnel who have a high level of job maturity they are more skilled and leads the well from them who have low level of job maturity. In the present study, I found that the police personnel who served 10 years or more (can be a constable) can lead the followers well.

Mouton Grid theory defined about the participative leadership style by which a leader can change the environment of organization. Participative leadership style is that style, by which the superior police personnel can maintain a good relation with the other police personnel and also communicate with the general person and reduce the crime from the society by knowing the cause of crime. In Bangladesh, most of the superior police personnel follow this leadership style. In our study, I found that in the department, police personnel maintain a good relation with the other Thana and easily communicate with the public and reduce crime from the society.

Fielder's contingency theory is viewed as the opposite of Hersey and Blanchard's theory. According to this theory, leader skill is not determined not by the leader's ability to adapt the situation but by the ability to choose the right leader for the situation. Some police leaders of police personnel are simply better for specific situations than others who are not even have job maturity. This theory also supports our study, because I found that some police personnel who showed their leadership skill by different types of technical knowledge than others who have more job maturity.

## 3. Methodology

As Clandinin and Connelly (1994) point out, attempting to understand human experience is the basis of all social science inquiry, and furthermore, 'when persons note something of their experience, either to themselves or to others, they do so not by the mere recording of experience overtime, but in storied form' (Clandinin and Connelly, 1994:415). Yukl (2002) supports the widespread 'descriptive studies' in leadership research that involve interviews and observations. In this case study, I interviewed the police officers about their leadership stories, and their experience of the phenomenon in the past and in their current daily work.

### 3.1. Procedures

There were employed semi-structured interviews with probing follow-up questions in an attempt to identify the experience of leadership as perceived by a range of key informants. Each interview (ranging from 45 minutes to one hour) addressed several important facets of leadership skill of the police personnel. In addition to interviews, data were also derived from field notes based on observations and conversations. Stake (1994) comments that, nothing is more important than making a proper selection of cases (Stake (1994: 243). Choosing cases where there is an opportunity to learn and where researchers can spend as much time as possible are two important criteria in case selection. In this case, the researcher spent four full days (8–12 hours per day) conducting interviews, having informal conversations over

coffee and lunch, and observing police officers in the general duty room. Another important consideration is the collaborative nature of the research. Developing relationships of trust between researchers and participants is vital. I informed every person who consented to the interview that the information was confidential and that nothing they said could be linked specifically to them. I also sent each interviewee the raw transcript of their interview (or notes based on the interview) so that they could elaborate, clarify, or change something that they said or I had noted.

### 3.2. Case Site

Tangail district was selected for selecting case. There are 13 Thana in the Tangail district. Outside Tangail district, I also took interview of other higher ranked police personal to identify the leadership skill of the police personnel. Prior to of police personnel's permission to interview, I engaged in informal discussions with other known police personnel.

### 3.3. Data Collection

I interviewed 23 police personnel (see Table 1 for sample demographic data) usingan identical set of open-ended questions that sought to clarify or expand upon a given response. The fact is that, there was no women police leader as competent respondent in this study. The results were clear; 100% of the respondents were men. The interviews were conducted with several important considerations in mind. The implication of this is that all interviewees have knowledge of and opinions about leadership having been leaders and followers at various points in their own personal histories throughout their careers. In this study, qualitative research necessarily implicates the researcher in the field of inquiry. I attempted to establish rapport with all the interviewees by expressing our genuine interest in eachperson and their comments and by providing an atmosphere where each person could freely express their views. From our perspective, participants were a source of provocative information, stimulating stories, and challenging ideas. Every interviewee contributed something valuable to the identifying leadership skill.

Table 1. Sample demographics.

Ranking Structure	Males (n=23)	Years of service
Additional DIG	02	15.5
Superintendent of police (SP)	01	7.5
Senior assistant superintendent of police (Sr. ASP)	01	4.5
Assistant Superintendent of police (ASP)	01	2.9
Inspector	08	15.5
Sub inspector(SI)	05	12.4
Sergeant	01	7.5
Assistant Sub inspector (ASI)	01	5.5
Constable	01	10.2

### 3.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of identifying patterns, and narrative threads in the interviews using qualitative data. This

means that I used the interviewees' words to build the theory of leadership skill. Obviously, no researcher enters a research site in a purelyopen-minded state, without having previous experience and expectancies regarding the nature of leadership. Theoretical biases were evident prior to the first interview; however, the study looked for disconfirming evidence from the data as I analyzed the transcripts. Throughout the data collection period and analysis I kept a number of competing theories in mind and was opento diverse interpretations of the things I heard. I draw a theoretical framework in order to interpret the data. This study specially highlights the leadership skill of the Tangail district's police personnel. From theoretical perspective, I identified idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation as leadership skill of the police personnel. I also noted how followers (subordinate) values and needs were associated with the degree of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the police leader (Superior). Throughout the next section of the paper, I draw upon the words of interviewees to illustrate leadership skill of the police personnel.

## 4. Discussion

From the case study, there identify some leadership skill which should possess police personnel. These are, operational skill, ethical decision making, accountability, honesty, predictability, logic, supportive, approachable, higher level thinker, motivation, creative, taking responsibility, respectful, desire to influence, enthusiastic, selflessness, politically astute, good communicator, team builder and intellectual motivation. This finding of our study is consistent with the study of Abela's (2004: 15) study. He identified 46 leadership skills of the police personnel for Canadian police personnel (Abela, 2004: 15). In this study, I identified 20 leadership skill should have among the police personnel. Some leadership skills are described for the analysis of the data.

### 4.1. Desire to Influence

Desire to influencing leadership skill concerns the fostering of trust and respect in the relationship between leader and follower. Desire to influencing leadership includes the issues of ethics and values, both the leader's and the followers'. (House & Howell, 1992). This skill helps the police personnel to achieve the goal of the organization and work together with the other police personnel in the police department. In orderto valued the police personnel leadership skill subjects placed strong emphasis on the role of predictable, consistent, and fair manner. One officer spoke directly to the importanceof authenticity in the values of the police leader. A police leader of Tangail district (Mr. Md. A.K.M Hafiz Akter- superintendent of police) stated that,

*Our commitments are to our employees and communities to reduce crime from the society. I think it would be using ourmission, vision. I think that our officers aren't fools; they deal with people. As a supervisor, if you'regoing to*

*make a promise — it's the difference between supervision and leadership — as a leader, if you're going to make a promise, then keep it. So you have to be prepared to live your life in a way that's consistent with those things. .... (Narratives has taken from Bengali)*

The statement focuses on the importance of authenticity of the police personnel. This is one type of 'pseudotransformational' leadership skill (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999:187). Where a police personnel motivates others to achieve goal through means. There are instances of police leaders who have the respect and admiration of their officers, but who nevertheless are corrupt (Punch, 2000). The key point here is that a police organization's values and the police leaders must respect for those values both personally and professionally. Such leadership establishes ideals for followers to creating the foundational conditions for inspiring others and motivating them for the public good, not merely the good of the sub-culture or the organization. As Burns points out 'the more we emphasize the moral aspect of leadership . . . the more chance there is, at least to a small degree, that leadership will be viewed as not just power wielding, but as an expression of our highest values' ((Bailey & Axelrod, 2001:119). Desire to influence is more ordinary and more achievable though ethical thinking and action. One officer elaborated at length on the importance of respecting leaders and the values required to have an idealized influence on subordinates. He stated:

*You don't always respect those that you like, but you will always like those that you respect. 'Come in when you want; wear your uniform how you want; do sloppy investigations; treat people poorly, I'll write you a good assessment no matter what you do'. Then you're liked. But you're not respected. I'm going to make decisions that are fair, and that are defensible in every case. But, at the end of the day, I want them (subordinates) to be able to walk away and say that they respected the type of leadership that I showed in the organization, and that I was fair. So, for me is about making fair decisions and being respected, and not about being liked. But when I come to work, my self-worth isn't tied to how much the people I work with like me. I have my friends outside of work, when I come to work my job is to be professional and to be a leader..... (Narratives has taken from Bengali)*

Having an idealized influence on officers also included an understanding of the need for a command and control management style in certain limited instances, but balanced with empowerment and flexibility to fit the context. One officer spoke about the ability to judge a situation and apply the appropriate management style. He stated:

*You don't throw out the command and control completely. I mean, you have to have a combination of the two commands and control skill to lead the other police personnel. There were occasions when I had to have some very short, clear and concise conversations with people in our office because their behavior was inappropriate and had to stop this type of exercise. And I had to deal with it exactly then and there. Every police officer should deal the*

*problem immediately when it occurred by their commanding behavior. .... (Narratives has taken from Bengali)*

One police leader opined that, "Every police personnel should possess leadership quality. He also stated that, to keep the police administration going on sound lines, the unfit police personnel should be screened out and the arrangement for sound in service training for all ranks should be made. He also said for the improvement of management quality of the police personnel and sound management should exist in the police department as other organization. He give more emphasis that, "money is to be made available to finance the police project, the man power and materials must be available and used properly and right type of men are to be selected and promoted." He opined that, "the police personnel must have a philosophy- a set of high standards by which the department is measured, a set of values and beliefs about how the employee, and a set of strong principles that make the police organization unique and distinctive. The police leader should make two commitments. The first is to set an example that is positive, and the second is to plan small wins." He also opined that, police leader must act consistently, especially in the moment of truth. When there is a pressure from political body and outside sources then the police personnel should have barrier mentality to overcome the barrier."

#### **4.2. Motivation**

Motivational skill of police personnel's connects with Yukl's (2002) ideas of transformational leadership skill. Leadership that is consonant with motivation somehow unites people around a common, desirable, and tangible benefit that can be accrued by all, through a variety of means. A key ingredient of motivation at the case site involved communicating the vision. Motivation involves providing meaning to followers through collective action (Ashkanasy & Tse, 2000).

One police officer stated that,

*Each Thana leader (Inspector) is so much supportive. In the misery day, he motivates and encourages the other police personnel to continue their working. Then they (subordinate police personnel) do their best for crime prevention. When police personnel become dedicative on their duty then they don't involve in any types of corruption. As a police leader, he said, a police leader should possess some quality. These are — selflessness, work ethic, team builder, willingness to learn, honest, responsible, dynamic, accountable and higher level thinker. .... (Narratives has taken from Bengali)*

The community based policing model requires a paradigm shift from reactive police enforcement to proactive community involvement aimed at alleviating some of the root causes of crime. Police leaders have the potential to inspire and encourage individual police officers to work toward goals that have value in society beyond the rather narrow constraints provided by typical police work. The optimal emotional orientation to be achieved must bridge basic

emotions that are deeply personal and secondary emotions that have cultural and social significance.

#### 4.3. Intellectual Stimulation

Intellectual stimulation, 'involves engaging the rationality of subordinates, getting them to challenge their assumptions and to think about old problems in new ways' (Kelloway & Barling, 2000:355). This has direct implications for leadership in community policing, for example, because such organizational changes require a new way of understanding police work and a new approach to performing some fundamental duties (Bass, 1990). One officer discussed his approach to developing officers. Police leader stated that,

*"There must be active and widespread support from senior police personnel who must demonstrate an active commitment to help the junior police personnel to learn. He also added that for improving their leadership quality the superior police personnel should help them. The senior police officer must be well educated and meritorious and should work for the organizational vision. The senior police personnel should give opportunity to the junior police officer to take part in the decision making process of the department. .... (Narratives has taken from Bengali)"*

#### 4.4. Individualized Consideration

Transformational leadership is defined by the ability of a leader to motivate followers to transcend their own personal goals for the greater good of the organization (Bass, 1996). Our case study revealed that an essential component of individualized consideration is ensuring that the right people are placed in jobs with opportunities to ignite their passions. This individual attention to placing the right person in the right job was evident in both formal and informal leaders. Respondents placed a strong emphasis on the importance of approachable, supportive and caring leaders. One officer cited:

*We are in a situation where at the last minute we get a call that we have to go to a meeting that evening. So instead of expecting me to work a 15-16 hour day, the phone call that I receive is, 'I want you to take the rest of the afternoon off. I want you to go at night at home for dinner'. . . . 9 times out of 10 when he does that I still stay and work the 18 hours (laughs). But, just knowing that he thinks enough of me and the well-being of my family to make sure that option is open to me. . . . . (Narratives has taken from Bengali)"*

Individualized consideration is neither a constant feature of the leader, nor purely a perception of the follower, rather it is something that emerges in the space between the superior and the followers. Another key component of individualized consideration for respondents involves encouraging individual officer for the development of their own leadership skill. A good leader always inspired others for their work. If one police officer appreciates subordinate police personnel then they got the inspiration to work under

pressure. One police officer stated that,

*I worked under police, one day he called me and he said, 'I just want to tell you you're doing a great job, thank you very much, you're making my work easier as a result, and I really appreciate it'. And that stuck with me for the rest of the time I was working for him. And I thought that's something nice to hear and its good when you do." .... (Narratives has taken from Bengali)"*

Additional DIG (Commandant), Md. Jashim uddin (commandant, police training centre, Mohera, Tangail) said that, "the police personnel should be more dedicative to their work. He also highlights that, "police personnel should have accountability, responsibility, integrity, willingness to learn." Additional DIG Mohammed Abdullahel Baki said that a police leader should be honest and qualified. He said that the critical decisions to be made by any police personnel at any time for sound management purpose. He also said that, the police are part of the social mediator between the government and the people and the people and each other. To police leader major role is order maintenance and law enforcement. He also opined that, "Police personnel in the department should be cooperative." The junior police officer should follow their superior police personnel for developing their leadership skill. Police personnel in the department should work together for the fulfillment of the organizational vision and mission. He suggests that, police personnel should be ethical in their decision making, should be free from political influence and should be accountable for their activities.

## 5. Conclusion

Leaders create more leaders. The findings of the study suggested that, leadership skill should be provided by every police leader who has direct responsibility with other police staff. Leadership is the key factor in the performance of the police personnel and it is important for influencing and managing the other people of the police department. Police leadership refers to 'the varied nature of the interpersonal relationships between police managers and supervisors and the impact of these upon organizational performance. I also hoped to demonstrate that leadership skill of police personnel is that behavior, which distinguishes one police personnel from other police personnel. But in reading, the interview transcripts derive key points about leadership skill of the police personnel in Bangladesh. Leader skills can be learned (Doh, 2003) and that they can have a positive impact on organizations. The key seems to be that police personnel are taught such skills starting early in their career and continuing throughout their tenure in an organization that messages about police leadership skills are consistent with values and personal ethics of the police personnel. It is clear that leader behavior must be authentic, that there must be genuine concern for people's needs and aspirations. All of us are leaders and followers at various moments so we all share some fundamental human needs and desires concerning those roles: the need to feel trust in others, the desire for

recognition when we do good deeds or perform well, a need for belonging to a group, goal or cause, and a feeling that we are likable and liked. There is an expression in psychology that says we see in others what we feel or believe about ourselves — this is the essence of projection and the attribution of something like leadership. If, as a leader or a follower, we can adhere to a consistent manner of relating to ourselves and others that is grounded in an ethic, then we increase the chances that a group's behavior will be goal-directed and successful, and that leadership can get us there. Police morality, ethics, and values are all crucial elements of leadership. Finally, it has been found that, for becoming an effective police leader, police personnel should have leadership skill.

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