

**ROAD TRAFFIC SAFETY: EFFECTS AND CHALLENGES IN AN EDUCATIONAL
CONTEXT**

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the trends and challenges of road traffic accidents in improving youth driver's' habit and behaviour on Nigeria roads and highways. The questionnaire instrument and other information obtained from secondary sources especially published materials and documents of relevant government institutions and agencies were used in selecting subjects, which the questionnaire consists of 210 commercial vehicle drivers in Ibadan, Oyo State Nigeria. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics and Mann-Whitney U Non parametric test to indicate the samples' statistical significant difference at the 0.05. The result showed that accident rates are still generally high in the country with the youth driver being the major culprit. It was also found that there has been increasing trends in the case fatality rates in the severity of the accidents among the youth generation. In addition, the programme has improved commercial vehicle drivers' habit and behaviour on roads. The result also found that there is no statistically significant variation between 18-25 years and above 26 years old. This shows that, age does not matter to be considered in road traffic safety, the experience played significant roles in determining drivers' behaviour on roads. Drivers who have been driving for more than six to ten years of driving experience behaved better on the road than those who have less year driving experience, this could be due to the fact that most of them claimed to have attended various rallies and seminars organised by FRSC. It was there concluded that road accidents can be decreased drastically when the international community, local governments, and civil society come together and work with youth.

Field of Research : Road accident, road safety, safety education, behaviour

INTRODUCTION

Traffic accidents remain the largest cause of death among 15-24 year olds in Nigeria. Irresponsible behaviour is the direct cause of the problem, particularly among the young generation. In addition, Nigeria has a fatality rate of one death per 10,000 vehicles. There are estimated 161 youth deaths per 10,000 vehicles for accident in Nigeria (FRSC, 2012). Up till this moment, the figure is still increasing despite all efforts made by the corps and no thanks to human factors and the bad state of the roads especially due negligence and maintenance culture. Most state and federal roads are regarded as death

traps as they are short of safety infrastructures. According to (Adewale, 2010), "Every six seconds someone is killed or maimed on the world's roads". Majority of these deaths, about 70% occur in developing countries (Sumaila, 2001). The road traffic injury mortality rate in Africa is 28.3 per 100,000 of the population. Hundreds are crippled and injured everyday on Nigeria roads. The deaths toll keep on beating our imagination with increasing number of Nigerians being killed daily and subsequent trauma felt by their families. Road deaths and injuries are sudden, violent, traumatic experience events that require special attention by all and sundry (Ogunsanya, 2004). Thus, the government and people of Nigeria are deeply concerned about the continuing high rate of road accidents and the unnecessary consequential waste of lives and properties. What is worrisome is the fact that road traffic accident and mortality rates are still high despite various remedial measures taken in recent years to combat the problem. This paper therefore provides a critical review of current road safety management approaches in Nigeria with a view to identifying their defects, deficiencies, and limitations in tackling the road traffic accident challenges in the country. On the basis of these the paper offers suggestions on how to improve the effectiveness of the measures and also proposes new strategies for ameliorating the problem.

THE CRUSADE FOR ROAD SAFETY

Contrary to stereo-typed opinions being expressed in certain quarters that accidents are act of God, most accidents, either in the air, on the roads or the sea occur mostly as a result of human factors (FRSC, 2012). In Nigeria, for instance, weak institutions and poor the law contribute to accidents(Ezenwa, 1986).All over the world accidents occur irrespective of the mode of transportation, but the most rampant with high fatalities in Nigeria is road accident (Ogunsanya, 2002). The reason for this is not far-fetched it is because road remains the most popular means of transportation in the country. According to the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), road accidents statistics for the first half of the year (Jan-July) 2014, no fewer than 2,422 were killed and 11,961 injured in 3,708 roads accidents in different parts of Nigeria (FRSC, 2012-2016).

In addition, the records further showed that 64,000 Nigerians died through road accidents within 10 years period, on average of 17 deaths per day. In 2001, the dead numbered 9,946: in 2002, it came to 7,407 and further down to 6,452 in 2003. The figure became little in 2009 and 2010 respectively. However, in the year 2011 the deaths figure was 4,372 while the reduction in road accident deaths, so far witnessed this year is a pointer to the fact that efforts of the Road Safety Action Plan Committee (RSAC) in various traffic management agencies in the country are yielding positive results.

The goal of this Action Plan committee is to meet, discuss and develop a blue-print recommendation for advancing safety efforts that will guide our road safety plan for the next decade (2010-2020) or even in the next five years as deem-fit by the authority. The aim of this laudable strategic highway safety plan should be concentrated on the "4Es" of safety which include; the contributions of Engineering, Education, Enforcement and Emergency Medical Services. This explain further in building effective roads-network, establish and maintain the culture of road safety and ensure that road safety become everybody responsibility.

Furthermore, the committee will be concerned with more important road safety issues which includes; children's traffic education, accident problems and solutions, roadside environment and

infrastructures, driver training, testing and licensing, nationwide emergency medical services (SOS), accident data and research, road safety information system and up-to-date-working equipment, publicity programmes, traffic laws enforcement and sanctions, roles of non-governmental organisations (NGO), vehicle safety standard, inspection and design, road fund for the safety plan, public transport regulation and compliance. Other areas where the committee should embark on integrated approach are to look into the issue of human factors which account for majority of road accidents in Nigeria. These include; young and old drivers, pedestrians, motorcyclists, occupant protection, behavioural countermeasures, speed, seat belt, drunk-driven, and impaired drivers.

This same kind of road safety plan has been a great success in other countries like Malaysia with Road Safety of Malaysia (2006-2010), National Road Safety Plan in Kenya (2005-2010), South Africa and recent road projects. The United Kingdom government has recently launched a decade of action plan to make roads safe. This will take effect between 2010 and 2020.

However, road safety is a shared responsibility and concern of everyone. Road traffic systems are one of the most complex issues which people have to deal with every day. Individual should join hands together to ensure effective implementation of this road safety plan that will detail the steps to reduce Nigeria most serious transportation safety problems (Odero, 1997). Road users' education, awareness, positive attitudes, defensive driving techniques should be developed to avert unnecessary accidents (Adogu, 2009). Furthermore, Toyin (2012) stated that the challenge on the road is not just about the dearth of traffic laws, as the country has enough various law books to ensure sanity to our highways. But with the right leadership as well as sufficient political will coupled with effective implementation and strengthening of road safety institutions, road accidents will be reduced to the barest minimum in the country (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004).

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

It is generally acknowledged that Nigeria has poor driving culture (Kulanthayan, 2000). This is evidenced by the utter disregard by operators for traffic laws underlined by deep belief by Nigerians that accidents are acts of God, while punishments for traffic offences can be waived through negotiation or amicable settlement (Sumaila, 2013). Education is about the only instrument that can be used to change people's behaviour and attitudes. In Nigeria, driver training has remained largely at the informal level. According to Hills (2008) in the United State stated that the enactment and enforcement of traffic safety reinforced by public education brought about an improvement in the traffic situation of the country for the rate of accidents decreased greatly. Majority of drivers especially those operating public transport acquire the skills through apprenticeship system. This is because they are mostly illiterates who cannot cope with formal driver training. This, therefore, is the bane of public transportation and thus the root cause of the poor driving culture in the country (Labinjo, 2009). In compliance with the provision of its Act, the FRSC is working on the establishment of some Standard Model Driving Schools, while also finalizing the modalities vehicle nearest to the accident scene via the use of vehicle tracking suit. Arosanyin, et al. (2012) mentioned that FRSC has also introduced and commenced implementation of the Six Fatality Threshold Investigation plan in which inquiries are made into all road accident which results in six or more deaths). In addition, Agunloye (1989) assertion that road

traffic situation could only improve if adequate measures (such as public education of road users) to improve human behaviour are put in place.

However, since 2000, Nigeria has cut road deaths by a third through a cut-speed safety strategy. Countries such as Thailand and Vietnam have combined public education and law enforcement to increase helmet use. And in Bogotá, Colombia, a combination of road safety and transport initiatives has halved road deaths in less than a decade. For instance, in February 1988, a glimmer of hope appeared when the Federal Government of Nigeria created the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) through Decree No. 45 of 1988 as amended by Decree 35 of 1992 referred to as FRSC Act cap 141 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (LFN). In 2007, it was passed by the National Assembly as the Federal Road Safety Commission (Establishment) Act 2007. The Commission has the following functions:

- i. Making the highway safe for motorists and other road users.
- ii. Recommending works and devices designed to eliminate or minimize accidents on the highways and advising the Federal and State Governments including the Federal Capital Territory administration and relevant governmental agencies on the localities where such works and devices are required and
- iii. Educating motorists and members of the public on the importance of discipline on the highway.

The function of Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) is seen as very important and laudable project to Nigeria at this stage of development. This will form the framework of knowledge against which better policy and resources allocation decisions can be made to ensure most use of the abundant natural and human resources. It needs an urgent action. The government should provide more road safety improvement with proper training and should see expenditure on road safety as an investment and not as a cost. Development and improvement on road safety is a benefit to the entire populace.

According to Oni (1999), there has been so much effort aimed at improving the skills of urban transportation managers in Nigeria. Also, various organizations and many individuals have responded positively to training organized by institutions on transportation. For instance, the National Institute of Transport Technology in Zaria has been training individuals in service wanting to improve their skills. Similarly, the Ogun State University, Ago Iwoye has a comprehensive transportation training centre for the training and re-training of transportation officers with the view to making them technically and professionally equipped for various responsibilities and assignments. In the same vein, the University of Lagos encourages the teaching of transportation and now awards higher degrees in transportation studies. These institutions periodically hold workshops in order to train and re-train transportation experts and also to equip them with new ideas for future tasks (Oni and Okanlawon, 2010).

Federal Road Safety Commission Schemes on Road Safety Administration

Overtime the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) has put in place various schemes to reduce road traffic accidents in Nigeria. These schemes include: -

(1) *Revision of the Highway Code*

The Nigerian Highway Code was revised in 1989 to meet local and international specifications of road traffic management and accident control. The result is a culture-related guide for driver education. The well-illustrated Revised Highway Code was translated to the three major Nigerian languages: Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba as well as Arabic. The French version is in the pipeline.

(2) *National Uniform Licensing Scheme*

The National Licensing Scheme represents a landmark in the achievements of the FRSC. The success of the scheme, introduced in 1989, has continued to provide a veritable avenue for ensuring a good road safety culture among drivers. The scheme is made up of: -

- i. National Driver's Licence
- ii. National Vehicle Licence
- iii. National Vehicle Identification Scheme
- iv. National Driver's Testing and vehicle Examination
- v. National Road Traffic Regulations
- vi. Vehicle Identification Tag
- vii. Road Worthiness Validity Tag
- viii. Proof of Ownership Certificate

(3) *Public Education*

A very important strategy of the Corps is the education of the public on adherence to road safety rules and regulations, and subtle enforcement of it through arrests and fines. Various radio jingles, television and newspaper advertisements form the bulk of the Corps' enlightenment media. Other innovative varieties include public enlightenment at MotorParks, Churches, Mosques, and community gatherings.

(4) *The National Road Traffic Regulations*

The National Road Traffic Regulations, harmonized and standardized by the Federal Road Safety Commission, contains the guiding road traffic rules and regulations for a good road safety culture in Nigeria. It also forms the handbook for enforcing the said rules on the nation's highways.

(5) *Research and Statistics*

Another veritable tool of the Corps is the collation and analysis of road accident and other related data. The bulk of accident data is however collected from the Nigeria Police who have a wider spread in over 2,000 locations in the nation. The FRSC has Command offices in 112 locations in the nation. The finished data are utilized for programme plan and further research activities.

(6)Enforcement

The elements of persuasion, subtle force, fines and prosecution are the components used by the Regular and Special Marshals to enforce all the traffic rules and regulations, including over speeding, over loading, drunk driving, and sundry others. The Corps, on all nations' highways, carry out mobile motorized patrols similar to those of the Police (URL1).

THE NATURE OF TRANSPORT STUDY

Olanrewaju and Falola (1986) stated that transport study as an academic discipline is interdisciplinary in nature. It brings together the geographer, the historian, the urban and regional planner, the engineer, the computer scientist, and the economist. Thus, the scope of transport study is very extensive.

Transport geography is primarily concerned with the study of transportation development, location and operation within territorial or regional economic complexes and its relationship with the location of industrial and agricultural activities of population and settlements and natural phenomena and resources. While the geographer, whose basic interest lies in the spatial dimensions of transportation, focuses primarily on network analysis, connectivity, and accessibility, the historian's interest lies in the historical role played by transport systems in the development process. Meanwhile, the urban planner studies the relationship between transport facilities and land use patterns, as well as the influences and consequences of urban expansion on transport facilities, and vice versa (Maduagwu, 1998).

Urban transport study has come to be a key aspect of transport analysis, with particular attention paid to the problem of urban traffic congestion. Transport economics has grown, over time, as a branch of applied microeconomics; though, the systematic economic analysis of transport is relatively recent. The economist is interested in the cost-benefit analysis of transport capital projects, and in the analysis of the operational efficiency of transport undertakings. The economic analysis of transport focuses on operating costs, pricing policy, market structure, and determination of economies of scale, transport policy, travel demand, and the impact of transport cost on industrial location. The economist shares with the urban planner and the environmental scientist a concern with urban traffic congestion, which imposes additional costs on society, and an interest in the cost-benefit analysis of environmental improvement schemes.

Transport technology has also been an important aspect of civil engineering studies. There are specialized engineering courses in highway and traffic engineering, covering such areas as highway design, traffic planning and engineering. Lastly, computer science plays a role in transport studies, offering considerable scope for simulation of repetitive construction work and traffic movement. Computer science has also found a niche in the study of traffic management in urban areas (Olanrewaju and Falola, 1986).

SOLUTION FOR TRAFFIC PROBLEM IN LAGOS STATE

It is with a view to solving the perennial traffic problem that the government established States Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) in July 2000 to regulate, control and manage traffic and other connected matters with a major function among others of controlling traffic and enforcing state and national laws that governs the safe use of vehicles on roads in the states. Since its inception as a traffic management institution, LASTMA has continued to train and re-trained officers at home and abroad in various technique of road and traffic management. Furthermore, to tackle traffic gridlocks and improve traffic management in the states, about 150 traffic managers were trained in hi-tech traffic software, rescue, incident management, traffic signalisation and synchronisation, road safety audit and use of synchrony simulation (Olagunju, 2001).

In furtherance of its determination to reduce road accidents in the state, the state road safety agencies comprising of Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA), Vehicle Inspection Services and Lagos State Drivers` Institute embarked on safety campaigns with officers despatched to over 500 motor parks across the state to educate drivers on the need to always put their vehicles in good condition before driving them on the road, observing road and highway codes and inauguration of multilingual audio-visual on driving and safety training modules. The modules were on preliminaries of driving, the traffic, the right of way, turning, space cushion, driving on the expressway and adverse conditions.

Equally, in order to curb to use illegal substance and drugs abuse among the commercial drivers, the state government started a campaign across the motor parks in the state which has led to screen over 2,500 commercial drivers for blood alcohol content, substance abuse, hypertension and diabetes (Sumaila and AbdulGaniyu, 2013). Recent research (Ogunsanya, 2004) found that out of the 884 drivers screened at the Ojota Motor Park, for instance 239 were hypertensive and 86 diabetic while another 60 tested positive to substance abuse and 287 had excessive blood alcohol level. In continuation of the campaign against the use of substance by drivers, 988 drivers were screened at the Oyingbo Motor Park, 363 were hypertensive,156 diabetic,59 tested to cocaine/ marijuana, and 494 tested positive to the breathalyser (Oni, 1999).

The establishment of the Lagos State Traffic Radio (96.1), a radio station solely devoted to the dissemination of traffic information to the motorists in advance to plan their journey and movement in advance was unique and a novelty in Africa traffic management system. Without doubt, the state government has been pursuing various programmes and policies in traffic management with zest and vigour capable of enhancing quality of driving and safety on the roads(Sleight, 1972). It is such pragmatic, scientific proactive approach to public transportation that has help in reducing the rate of road accidents in the state (Olagunju, 2001).

On a final it is important to stress the deliberate implementation of various safety policies by the state government is predicated on belief that accidents are not transcendental, neither their causes and solutions are beyond human comprehension, but with political will, leadership and functional institutions accidents on our roads in Nigeria will be minimum.

METHODOLOGY

This study relied on two instruments: questionnaire instrument and other information obtained from secondary sources especially published materials and documents of relevant government institutions and agencies. The descriptive statistics as well as Mann-Whitney Non Parameter Tests were run to analyse the data. The Federal Road Safety Corps provided access to the following documents:

- (i) The Establishment and Enabling act of the organisation and its various amendments.
- (ii) The Accident Record files.
- (iii) The Road Transport Safety Standardization Scheme (RTSSS)
- (iv) Public Awareness Manuals and Printed Materials
- (v) The Nigerian Road Safety Strategy (NRSS)

INSTRUMENTATION

Commercial drivers' perceptions of the effectiveness of FRSC public education questionnaires were adapted from the questionnaire of the Effectiveness of FRSC public education by Adams and ToyinAkinyemi (2012). The adapted instrument covers commercial drivers' perception with 15 items. The questionnaire was structured with only five point Likert Scale format with (1)strongly Agree (2) Agree (3)Neutral (4) Strongly Disagree (5) Disagree.

SAMPLE TECHNIQUE AND SAMPLE

Simple random sampling was used to select Ibadan South West and OnaAra local government areas from Oyo South senatorial district. Purposive sampling technique was used to select OritaAperin, Olohunsogomotor parks in Oyo state while Purposive sampling technique also was used so as to select drivers who have at one time or the other attended or listened to the FRSC public education programme. Thus, two hundred and ten commercial vehicle drivers participated in the study. Table 1 shows the descriptive part of the analysis.

Table 1 The Distribution of the Sample Questionnaires

| PLACE | NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Ibadan South West | 60 |
| OnaAra Local Government | 60 |
| OritaAperin motor park | 50 |
| Olohunsogo motor park | 40 |
| TOTAL | 210 |

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The data collection, which lasted one and half months were collected by the researchers and two assistants by administering the questionnaire on the subjects and by observing them simultaneously.

DATA ANALYSIS

In view of the nature of research being exploratory, the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16.0 was used to organize and summarize the gathered information. Data analysis was conducted in line with the research questions. Percentages simple frequency was used for each data set to present tendencies in the responses of the respondents. All the strongly agree and Agree responses were lumped together under (Agreed) while all the strongly disagree and Disagree were also lumped together under (Disagreed) and “Neutral” remained unchanged. Furthermore, Mann-Whitney Non Parametric Test analysis is as shown in table 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Table 2 Commercial Drivers’ Perception of the Effectiveness of FRSC Public Education Programme

| No | Items | Agreed | Neutral | Disagreed |
|----|----------------------------|--------------|---------|-----------|
| 1 | now make use of seat belts | 86(41%) | (0%) | 124 (59%) |
| 2 | overtake at corners/bends | 136 (65%) | 15 (7%) | 59 (28%) |

| | | | | |
|----|--|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 3 | receive/make calls while driving | 115 (79%) | 22 (11%) | 73 (35%) |
| 4 | overload their vehicles | 93 (44%) | 17 (8%) | 100 (48%) |
| 5 | consider the other road users' right | 92 (43%) | 9 (4%) | 109 (52%) |
| 6 | make U-turn anywhere on roads | 132 (63%) | 8 (4%) | 70 (33%) |
| 7 | disobey speed limit | 116 (56%) | 9 (4%) | 85 (40%) |
| 8 | do not obey traffic signs on roads | 123 (59%) | 2 (1%) | 85 (40%) |
| 9 | do not signal before changing lanes | 110 (52%) | 23 (11%) | 77 (37%) |
| 10 | drink alcohol/drug before driving | 97 (46%) | 5 (3%) | 108 (51%) |
| 11 | drive vehicles with worn out tyres | 58 (27%) | (0%) | 152 (72%) |
| 12 | Smoke /eat while driving | 154 (73%) | (0%) | 56 (41%) |
| 13 | drive without fire extinguisher | 64 (30%) | 23 (11%) | 123 (59%) |
| 14 | park their vehicle anywhere on roads and highways | 87 (42%) | 23 (11%) | 100 (48%) |
| 15 | Drive recklessly on roads | 82 (39%) | 18 (9%) | 110 (52%) |

Table 3: Mann-Whitney Test Ranks

| | Experience | N | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks |
|---------------------|------------|-----|-----------|--------------|
| Road Traffic Safety | 1-5 | 105 | 65.53 | 6880.50 |
| | 6-10 | 105 | 145.47 | 15274.50 |
| | Total | 210 | | |

Table 3 of Mann-Whitney Test shows that the respondents who have experienced driving behaviour for about 6 to 10 years in the country are mostly likely to adhere to road traffic safety than those with driving behaviour less than that year. Table 4 shows the analysis of statistically significant difference between the two groups tested.

Table 4: Mann-Whitney Test Statistics

| | Experience on Road Traffic Safety |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Mann-Whitney U | 1315.500 |
| Wilcoxon W | 6880.500 |
| Z | -9.544 |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |

a. Grouping Variable: experience

According to Table 4 it is likely to deduced that those who have 6 to 10 year experience in driving habit are statistically significantly different in the road traffic safety from those who have less experience in the road traffic safety ($U = 1315.500$, $p = .000$). This means that, being safe in fatal road accident is prone to have a long year experience in driving habit.

Table 5: Mann-Whitney Test Ranks

| | Age | N | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks |
|---------------------|--------------|-----|-----------|--------------|
| Road Traffic Safety | 18-25 | 34 | 117.36 | 3990.00 |
| | 26 and Above | 167 | 97.67 | 16311.00 |
| | Total | 210 | | |

Table 5 displays that the respondents whose age is within eighteen to twenty five know the rules and regulations guiding road traffic safety than those whose age is above 26 years. To further check the statistically significant differences between the two age brackets table 6 shows the result.

Table 6: Mann-Whitney Test Statistics

| | Age on Road Traffic Safety |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Mann-Whitney U | 2283.000 |
| Wilcoxon W | 16311.000 |
| Z | -1.801 |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | .072 |

Grouping Variable: Age

Table 6 explains that although the youths are familiar with the driving habit and the rules and regulations guiding the road traffic safety however, there is no statistically significant variation between those who are eighteen to twenty five years and those who are above twenty five years. This shows that, age does not matter to be considered in road traffic safety, the experience matters most.

RESULT

Table 2 above shows the commercial vehicle drivers' views about the behaviour/habits of most drivers on roads and highways in spite of the implementation of the public education programme by the Federal Road Safety Commission. The table shows that 124 (59.%) disagreed that not use seat belts while driving, and 136 (65%) of the respondent indicated that most drivers still overtake at corners/bend and drive recklessly respectively while 59 (28%) disagreed. About 93 (44%) of the respondent agreed with

statement that “overload their vehicles’ and 100 (48%) disagreed with the statement. The table further shows that only 92 (43%) of the respondent agreed that drivers “consider the other road uses’ right” and 109 (52%) disagreed. 132 (63%) of the respondent agreed that most drivers “make U-turn anywhere on road” while 70 (33%) disagreed with the statement. 116 (56%) of the respondent agreed that majority of drivers disobey speed limit while less than 50% which is 70 (33%) disagreed with the statement. 123 (59%) agreed with statement that “do not obey traffic signs on roads” and only 85 (40%) disagreed. Another 110 (52%) agreed that drives do not signal before changing lanes and 77 (37%) disagreed. However, less than 50% which is 46%) agreed with the statement stated that “drinking alcohol/drug before driving while more than half of the respondent disagreed which is (51%). Only 58 (27%) of the respondent agreed with statement that “drive vehicles with worn out tyres” while majority of drivers disagreed with 152 (72%). 154 (73%) indicated that most drivers smoke/eat while driving and 56 (27%) disagreed, follow by 64 (30.5%) of the respondent agreed with statement that “drive without fire extinguisher” and 123 (59.5%) of the participants disagreed. As regarding of parking side, 87 (42%) agreed that drivers park their vehicle anywhere on roads and highways while 100 (47%) disagreed and 23 (11%) remained neutral with the statement, and less than 40% which is 82 (39%) agreed that drives drive recklessly on roads while 110 (52%) disagreed with the statement. The results of Mann-Whitney U Tests also affirm that to be safe in road accident is to have the experience of driving habit of the road traffic safety not to be aged.

DISCUSSION

The study assessed the trends and challenges of road traffic accidents in improving driver’s’ habit and behaviour on Nigeria roads and highways. Though some acts of indiscipline are still common on road, the effect of the programme has brought about some positive change. This is because (59%)of the commercial vehicle drivers used seat belts while driving, (48%)did not overload their vehicles and (51%) of them did not drive under the influence of alcohol. This implies that the Public Enlightenment programme for the youth has brought about some changes in behaviour of youth drivers (most especially commercial vehicle drivers) on roads. This finding corroborates that of Hills (2008) in the United State when he found that the enactment and enforcement of traffic safety reinforced by public education brought about an improvement in the traffic situation of the country for the rate of accidents decreased greatly. It also supports Agunloye’s (1989) assertion that road traffic situation could only improve if adequate measures (such as public education of road users) to improve human behaviour are put in place. According to Labinjo (2009), education is about the only instrument that can be used to change people’s behaviour and attitudes. Majority of drivers especially those operating public transport acquire the skills through apprenticeship system. This is because they are mostly illiterates who cannot cope with formal driver training. This, therefore, is the bane of public transportation and thus the root cause of the poor driving culture in the country. 73% of commercial vehicle drivers indicated that most of them smoke/eat while driving. The finding also in line with Ogunsanya (2004) found that out of the 884 drivers screened at the Ojota Motor Park, for instance 239 were hypertensive and 86 diabetic while another 60 tested positive to substance abuse and 287 had excessive blood alcohol level. It could be concluded that experience played significant roles in determining drivers’ behaviour on roads. Drivers who have driving experience behave better on the road than those who do not have road driving experience. Recent work has examined crash likelihood of drivers in British Columbia, Canada as a

function of driver age and number of years of driving experience (Coper, Pinili, & Chen, 1995). In the study by David Eby (1995) found that, between the age 15 and above, those drivers with one years of experience tended to have higher accident rates than same age drivers with two or three years of experience when at-fault crashed were considered. This study highlights the important role experience plays in accident likelihood, at least in at-fault accidents.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data and findings from this study, it can be concluded that road traffic accidents lead to death and disability as well as financial cost to both society and the individual involved. The courses of road traffic accidents are not just human error or drive negligence. Unfortunately, Nigerian highways are arguably one of the worst and most dangerous in the world. 'Safe road' in Nigeria is more of changing our driving behaviour than just blaming the government alone and advocating for good road infrastructure. The government should provide road safety improvement and should see expenditure on road safety as an investment and not as a cost. Development and improvement on road safety is a benefit to the entire populace. Accident it occurs puts victims as well as their friends and families under serious emotional trauma. As stated earlier, human factors such as gross disregard for traffic rules and regulations, lack of knowledge of road signs, excessive speeding, and defective eye sights among others are commonly responsible for most accidents in the country.

RECOMMENDATION

First of all, the Federal Road Safety Corps must restructure and reposition itself to effectively and truly play the role of a lead and coordinating agency for road safety matters in the country. It must be seen to take the lead in all matters of road safety. It must go beyond the rhetoric of stakeholder collaboration to build strategic partnerships with Federal, State and Stakeholder organisations to achieve effective results. Secondly, this can be done through clarifying the roles of various government agencies and defining the responsibilities of other stakeholders. In this way, it would play a dominant role across the key institutional management functions which form the bedrock on which road safety initiatives are built. Thirdly, all these would require well trained and skilful staff. A bold and credible human resource development programme is therefore recommended for the youth. Lastly, awareness raising should not simply start with those learning and strategic to drive. Rather, people tend to be more open to behavioural changes at a young age. The first step in the method should be proposed by FRSC project is to emphasise road dangers to all youngsters aged 18 to 25 by making road safety a mainstay of educational curricula.

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