Analysis of Road Traffic Policing and Traffic Safety in Nigeria

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Abstract

The purpose of traffic policing is to ensure that road users comply with traffic rules and regulations, so as to forestall road traffic crashes (RTCs) and fatalities. By implication, effective traffic policing would result in compliance with traffic rules and its associated safer road traffic on the one hand, while ineffective policing could result in traffic violations and attendant RTCs on the other hand. This paper examined the safety situation of Nigerian roads amidst traffic policing. The paper is based on secondary sources of data such as journal articles, institutional and organizational publications. Newspapers, research reports and other internet materials. Critical analysis was adopted, while conclusion was drawn using deductive approach. The paper argues that copious traffic crashes on Nigerian roads which is mostly occasioned by traffic violation is traceable to inadequate enforcement of existing traffic rules. Therefore, it suggests that intensified enforcement of traffic rules, certainty of offender sanction, and introduction of demerit point system could deter traffic violation, and subsequently drastically reduce road traffic crashes.

Key words: *Traffic Policing; Traffic Safety; Demerit Point System; Traffic Rules*

Introduction

Activities of man such as economic, political, religious, and social activities require transportation from one location to another. Although transportation could be by air, water or land (road), road transportation is the dominant form of transportation in Nigeria (Nwafor & Onya, 2019), probably owing to its affordability and easy accessibility. This indicates that majority of residents in the country travel by road. It is therefore paramount that efforts be made to make the road safe for ever increasing road users. To ensure free flow of traffic and preclude road transport

crashes (RTC) and fatalities, governments around the world make laws to regulate the behaviour of road users (Boris-Antić, Dragan-Jovanović and Dalibor-Pešić, 2011). However, members of the society are not all conformists to laws. While there are conformists, there are also law breakers who contravene the laws, for various reasons, which are not within the scope of this paper. Consequent upon the tendency for law contravention, enforcement agencies are established to police those laws (Reiner, 2010). For effectiveness of laws and enforcement, offenders are prosecuted, and penalized to specifically and generally deter offenders and potential offenders respectively (Siegel, 2005). The nature of such laws and the extent to which they are enforced determine whether they perform deterrent function or not (Gramckow and Green, 2016; Mello, 2018).

Traffic violation endangers the lives and property of road users. Traffic law enforcement is aimed at ensuring that road users comply with rules and regulations governing road usage. In doing this, traffic offenders are detected, apprehended, and prosecuted. As a corollary, the nature of traffic law enforcement would determine road users' compliance with traffic laws or otherwise. On the one hand, if traffic laws are poorly enforced, there is the likelihood that traffic laws would be violated in large scales. On the other hand, adequate enforcement of these laws is expected to result in adherence to traffic rules and regulations. According to Harper (1991), inadequate traffic policing would result in failure to detect traffic violations. Traffic offenders could capitalize on weak enforcement to commit more infringements. Harper (1991) however noted that to adequately police traffic laws, sufficient manpower and facilities are critical. The greater the extent to which these laws are obeyed, the safer the roads.

Causes of road traffic crashes (RTC) include mechanical factors relating to the inadequacies of vehicles (such as brake and engine failures), and environmental factors such as bad road and poor weather condition (Afolabi and Kolawole, 2017). However, Singh (2015); found that 94% of RTC are caused by motor vehicle operators who fail to comply with traffic rules and regulations. In the same vein, European Commission (2003) identified traffic violation as the principal cause of RTC. In other words, widespread violation of traffic rules would make the road unsafe owing to resultant RTC (Ademinaite, Jost, Stipdonk, and Ward (2016)). The rate of RTC globally indicates that traffic rules are inadequately policed. According to World Health Organization report (2018), about 1.35 million people die of road traffic crashes each year (WHO, 2018). The report shows that it is the foremost cause of death of children and young adults between ages of 5 and 29. In terms of

the principal cause of death for all ages, the report ranked road traffic injury 8th. According to WHO (2015), road traffic crashes is one of the primary causes of death and lifelong disability worldwide. Road traffic crashes therefore causes harmful aftermath such as loss of productive population (through accident-induced deaths) and heads of households who provide the material needs of their families (Yusuff, 2015). Similarly, Enu (2014) found that RTC adversely affects economic growth. Apart from deaths occasioned by RTC, property also get damaged and injuries sustained, which could result in permanent deformity. Onyemaechi and Ofoma (2016) summarized the negative consequences of RTC to encompass physical, social, emotional, and economic consequences.

As aforementioned, it has been found that the major cause of unsafe road is violation of traffic laws (Deepa, Vibha, and Naveen 2017). Ademinaite, Jost, Stipdonk, and Ward (2016) found that most of the drivers involved in RTCs committed one traffic offence or the other which resulted in those crashes. Ademinaite et al (2016) identified traffic policing as an effective way of foreclosing deaths and injuries caused by RTC. To make the road safer, therefore, traffic law enforcement must be sufficient and satisfactory, in order to have motor vehicle operators comply with rules and regulations.

Objective

By virtue of the relationship between road traffic safety and adequate traffic rule enforcement (Harper, 1991), the purpose of this paper was to examine the safety of Nigerian roads amidst enforcement of road traffic rules. The paper is based on secondary data elicited from journal articles, institutional and organizational publications, Newspapers, and other internet materials. Critical analysis, guided by rational choice theory was adopted to achieve this objective. In discussing the safety of Nigerian roads amidst traffic policing, the paper is thematically divided into: Introduction, Literature review, Methodology, Theoretical framework, and traffic policing and traffic violation: An appraisal.

Literature Review

Traffic Policing

Traffic policing has to do with adoption of measures to control the behaviour of road users, such as preemptive, persuasive and retributive measures, the purpose of which is to ensure safer vehicular operations on the road (Zaah, 1994). This paper

refers to traffic policing as the use of traffic rules and enforcement of those rules to control the behavior of road users so as to make the road safe. If traffic policing is perceived as weak and typified by uncertainty of arrest and punishment, traffic violation would be widespread. Conversely, if traffic policing is perceived as strict, and characterized by certainty of arrest and offender prosecution, traffic violation is less likely to be committed

Road Traffic Safety

Road traffic safety refers to the situation of road transportation with respect to avoidance of road traffic crashes and attendant fatalities and injuries through adherence to traffic rules and regulations (Tisca, Istrat, Dumitrscu and Cornu, 2016). Safe road transport involves road usage typified by less crash-induced deaths, injuries, and property damage. Conversely, road traffic could be said to be unsafe if the manner of road usage endangers the lives of pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, drivers, and passengers, as well as motor vehicles and other property

Efforts of Nigerian Governments towards Road Safety

The enactment of Motor Traffic Ordinance of 1913 in the Southern protectorate, and the National Motor Traffic Ordinance of 1916 marked the beginning of government efforts aimed at managing transportation affairs and making the road safe for users (Olagunju, 2018). In 1949, the Vehicle Inspection Office (VIO) was established through a Road Traffic Act of that year (Ogunsanya, 2004) cited in Olagunju (2018). This was to improve on the management of road traffic in the country. In 1960, the Traffic Police unit of the Nigerian Police was established (Gana & Emmanuel, 2014). Sumaila (2013) noted that the police was mandated to enforce traffic laws at federal, state, and local government levels. To regulate actions of road users on Nigerian roads, the Nigeria Highway Code was introduced in 1972 (Gana et al). The authors added that concerned about the rising cases of RTC, the FG declared 1974 as National Road Safety year and further created Road Safety Advisory Committee that same year, which was an arm of the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing.

Olaganju (2008) documented some legislative measures taken by government on road safety: Federal Highway Declaration Order 1971, Federal Highway Act 1973 and Road Traffic Accident Act, 1976, and state traffic laws, 1976. In 1977, the spate of RTC in Oyo state prompted the government to create Oyo State Road Safety Corp (OSRSC) (Gana, 2018).

The Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) was established in response to the traffic crashes wreaking havoc on Nigerian roads, following rise in road transportation, which in turn resulted from the economic boom of 1990s (FRSC, 2009). The FRSC was preceded by National Road Safety Commission (NRSC) in 1974. Following the persistence of traffic crashes and its attendant fatalities, the then military government in 1988 created the Federal Road Safety Commission to address the danger to lives and property posed by RTC. This was done through Decree No. 45 of 1988 which was later amended by Decree 35 of 1992. This amendment was made to broaden the operation of the commission to include all public highways in Nigeria, since Decree 45 of 1988 mandated it to operate only on Federal highways. Decree 45 and 35 mentioned above are known as FRSC Act (CAP 141) Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990. In 2007, this Act was replaced with FRSC (Establishment) Act 2007. This amendment was aimed at empowering the commission to wholly handle/deal with issues regarding road traffic administration and management in Nigeria (FRSC, 2009). The FRSC has been mandated to:

a. Prevent and manage road traffic crashes
b. Clear obstructions on the highways
c. Educate drivers, motorist and other members of the public on the proper use of the highways.
d. Provide prompt attention and care to visiting of road traffic crashes
e. Conduct researches into causes of road traffic crashes and put the result of such research into use.
f. Determine and enforce speed limits for all categories of roads and vehicles.
g. Cooperate with bodies, agencies and groups engaged in road safety activities or the prevention of crashes on the highways.
h. Make regulations in pursuance of the functions assigned to the corps by or under the Act.
i. Enforce the regulation on road traffic laws.

Wunubo (2016) examined the impact of FRSC enlightenment of road users on traffic rules and regulations in Maiduguri Metropolis. The study found that FRSC satisfactorily performed its function of educating the public on safety road usage. However, the author submitted that it was not sufficient to educate road users, and have them comply/obey traffic laws, as the educated motor vehicle operators still committed traffic offences. Hence, the need to beam the searchlight on traffic enforcement in an attempt to control traffic violation and associated RTC.

In their study of the challenges faced by the FRSC in enforcing traffic laws, Gana and Emmanuel (2014) found that shortage of operational facilities militated against the commission's mandate of enforcing traffic laws. In terms of educating the vehicle operators on traffic rules and regulations, the authors stated that the enlightenment campaigns of the FRSC were adequate to make road users comply with the prescribed safety measures. Other challenges to traffic enforcement identified in the study were bad roads and narrow lanes. To address these non-human factors in RTC, the study recommended adequate funding of the commission. It one thing to mandate traffic law enforcement agents to discharge their responsibility in such a way that RTC would be prevented, and another thing to provide them with the required resources to undertake this task. If the former is not adequately supplied, their performance is likely to be unsatisfactorily. Gana et al (2014) described as enormous the task of policing about 198,000 kilometers of Nigeria's road network. Hence the need for sufficient resources in order for them to deliver on the mandate.

Traffic laws in Nigeria are enforced through deployment of officials to detect, arrest and sanction offenders. Sanctions could be fine or imprisonment or both, depending on the severity of offence committed (FRSC, 2007). Prescription of fines and imprisonment for law violators, notwithstanding, traffic violation in Nigeria has been on the increase (Emenike and Akpu, 2017).

Methods of Traffic Policing in Nigeria

Traffic Policing or law enforcement refers to activities involving the control of behaviour of road users by preventive, persuasive and punitive measures so as to have efficient and safe movement of traffic (Zaal, 1994). It encompasses detection of traffic violation, arrest, and prosecution of offenders, according to prescribed sanctions. It involves adoption of strategies/approaches to make the road safe and forestall RTC. Different approaches have over the years been used to enforce traffic rules in order to achieve effectiveness. These approaches are discussed below:

Traditional Approach: This approach involves deployment of traffic enforcement officers such as the police or other road traffic management officials to be present on the roads to monitor compliance with traffic rules, detect violations of traffic rules, and sanction offenders. The presence of these officials is expected to deter would-be offenders from committing traffic violations. However, compliance obtained in this manner might not be a sustainable one, as the same motor vehicle

operator who complied in the presence of law enforcement officials might deviate where they (officials) are not available. This approach may also be adversely affected if the number of officials are not adequate to cover all the roads where traffic monitoring is required. Furthermore, compliance secured in this manner does not mean the motorists or motorcyclists who compiled in the presence of enforcement agents, have internalized the need for obeying traffic rules and regulations. Rather, obedience was only a means of avoiding punishment. Consequent upon the disadvantages of visible enforcement, non-visible enforcement has been suggested. This involves stationing patrol vehicles to monitor motor vehicle operators. The rationale is that motor vehicle operators would comply with traffic rules and regulations always, by virtue of not being aware whether an official is present or not. Knowing that there are undercover law enforcement could elicit compliance irrespective of the road users' location, or the time of operation. Owing to the advantages of the above two techniques, Zaal (1994) stated that both techniques have been combined by different traffic enforcement organizations. Owolabi, Anujeonye, Onochie and Eshameh (2014) noted that the use of paper based manual method of recording and storing information of traffic violators/offenders and the offences they committed was typified by drawbacks such as lack of offenders' data base bank, lack of monitoring and tracking of offenders & consistent grading, among others. Consequently, the authors conducted a study in Asaba, Delta State, on the design and development of Biometric Tracking Offence System which they believed would solve the above identified problems. The authors claimed the study developed a system which has the capacity to capture traffic violators' bio data, traffic offence committed, and the penalty imposed for the offence. They hoped that implementation of the computerized system would address the issue of delay experienced by traffic law enforcement agents in storage and retrieval of information on traffic offences. This paper shares the view of Owolabi et al (2014) that the traffic law enforcement agents need to adopt the new trend of electronic control of road user behaviour and handling of traffic offences as practiced in other countries (Martinez-Ruiz, FandinoLosada, Leon, Arango-Londono, Mateus, Jaramilo-Molina, Bonilla-Escobar, Vivas, Vanluar, and Gutierrez-Martinez, 2019).

Automated Policing: This method involves the use of electronic gadgets to control the behviour of road users. With the use of electronic devices, such as speed limiter, the problem of inadequacy of enforcement officials and vehicles is drastically reduced. Studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of automated enforcement. Liu, Zhang, Wang and Xu (2011) examined the effect of Automated

Speed Enforcement on drivers' speed violation on rural highways. The study found significant reduction in speed violation in areas where cameras were mounted to capture those who over-sped. However, the reduction in speed was not sustained beyond the areas where such cameras were mounted. This indicates that offenders willfully break the law and only comply with laws to avoid punishment. In Nigeria, one of the methods of checking violation of the rule on speed limit is the use of speed limiter. In this case, commercial drivers are required to install speed limiter in their vehicles to prevent over speeding. Red Lights are also used to control dangerous driving and wrongful overtaking. This involves installation of red lights at road intersections. At such road intersections, drivers are expected to stop if the light turns red, and to drive on when the light turns green. With this device, the rate of road traffic crashes that could occur as a result collision of vehicles moving from different directions.

Problem of traffic violation in Nigeria

Describing the behaviour of motor vehicle operators in Nigeria, Overseas Security Advisory Council [OSAC] report (2020) stated that road transport in Nigeria was characterized by utter disregard to traffic rules and regulations. The report added that enforcement of traffic rules was limited while the law enforcers took bribes to let offenders go unpunished. The Council further described commercial motorcyclists (*Okada*) as constituting significant nuisance by virtue of utter display of disobedience to traffic rules, such as recklessness in driving. Chinebuli, &Ikeogu (2013) submitted that most RTCs in Nigeria happen as a consequence of traffic violation by road users. Similarly, Olawale (2019) reported that most drivers in Nigeria disregard traffic rules, thereby endangering the lives of other road users.

Federal Road Safety Commission (2018) identified speed violation, dangerous driving, dangerous overtaking, light/sign violation, and tyre burst as some of the major causes of crashes on Nigerian roads. In the same vein, Folagbade (2012) found that road users' negligence majorly caused RTC in Nigeria. Sumaila (2013) in his study of trends in road crashes in Nigeria described drivers as the "main culprits".

Irunokhai, Adigun, Dada, Irunokhai, Onihunwa (2020) examined the rate at which traffic light violation was committed in Sango, Ibadan. The study found high prevalence rate of violation of traffic light in the study area. Emenike&Akpu (2017) submitted that in spite of measures put in place by the government to enforce traffic

rules and reduce RTC, violation of these rules has continually been on the rise. This submission is in line with WHO report (2018) which states that enforcement of traffic laws and adoption of safety standards constitute challenge across the globe, Nigeria inclusive. In some cases, traffic offenders in Nigeria are not deterred by the presence of traffic enforcement officials, according to Emenike et al (2017). Similarly, Asadu & Ayuwo (2018) studied the relationship between knowledge of traffic signs in South-South, Nigeria, and traffic violation. The study found that drivers in the study area had fair knowledge of traffic signs. However, this knowledge did not translate to compliance as drivers deliberately disregarded the signs.

Road Traffic Crashes in Nigeria

The trend of RTC in Nigeria has been worrisome (Ukoji, 2014), as the country has continued to experience rising cases of RTC, and the associated injuries and deaths (Onyemaechi and Ofoma, 2016). In a study conducted among 15 African countries, Adeloye, Thompson, Akanbi, Azuh, Samuel, Omoregbe, and Ayo (2016) found that Nigeria had the highest number of RTCs, injuries, and deaths among these countries. According to WHO report (2019), about 39,000 deaths occur in Nigeria every year, caused by RTC. According to the report, victims of RTCs in Nigeria are mostly young people under 45 years of age. Table 1 below shows yearly RTC in Nigeria. It is worthy to note that the figures presented in the above mentioned table might not be the exact figures of RTCs in Nigeria, as there are possibilities of RTCs occurring without being reported and documented.

Table 1. Road traffic crashes and fatalities in Nigeria: 1990-2019

S/N	Year	Number of RTC	Number of deaths recorded
1	1990	21934	8154
2	1991	22546	9525
3	1992	22864	9620
4	1993	21459	9454
5	1994	18204	7440
6	1995	17030	6647
7	1996	18242	6364
8	1997	17488	6500
9	1998	16138	6538
10	1999	15865	6795
11	2000	16606	8473
12	2001	20530	9946
13	2002	14544	7407
14	2003	14364	6452
15	2004	14275	5351
16	2005	13981	4519
17	2006	13858	4944
18	2007	13012	4673
19	2008	11341	6661
20	2009	10854	5693
21	2010	5330	4065
22	2011	4765	4372
23	2012	6269	4260
24	2013	29494	5539
25	2014	25427	4430
26	2015	24954	5042
27	2016	11363	5053
28	2017	10026	5049
29	2018	9741	5181
30	2019	9698	-

Sources: Adapted from National Bureau of Statistics (2015); National Bureau of Statistics (2018); Adeleke, Salami, and Oyewo (2013); The Nation (2019); Afolabi and Kolawole (2017); Ukoji (2014); Ndujihe and Esekhile (2018).

From table 1 above, it can be inferred that Nigerian roads are not safe by virtue of abundant traffic crashes that occurs on yearly basis. It shows that despite existence of traffic rules and policing of those rules to make the roads safe, Nigerian roads remains grossly unsafe.

Methodology

This paper solely relies on secondary sources of data such as journal articles, organizational and institutional publications, and newspaper reports retrieved from the internet. Guided by Rational Choice Theory, critical analysis was adopted in discussing the ineffectiveness of traffic policing in deterring traffic violation, which is as a major contributor to the massive road traffic crashes on Nigerian roads. Deductive approach was adopted in drawing conclusion. This refers to the use of general theoretical principles to infer specific propositions or assertions regarding the phenomenon being examined.

Theoretical Framework: Rational Choice Theory

Rational Choice Theory

The Rational Choice Theory (RCT) posits that law violation occurs as a result of careful thought and planning. Law violation is preceded by analysis of the perceived benefits the offender stands to derive from violating the law such as money, thrill, revenge, and entertainment. Also taken into consideration is situational factors such as the vulnerability or otherwise of the target and the effectiveness of law enforcement (Hechter, 1997). The rational offender assesses the risk of being arrested, the certainty of punishment, the accruable rewards of law violation, and the need to obtain such rewards. On one hand, commission of certain offences is a product of personal choice made following evaluation of information available to the individual. On the other hand, the decision to abstain from law violation is a product of the individual's perception that the reward associated with breaking the law is not commensurate with the associated punishment, should the offender be apprehended.

RCT submits that offenders evaluate a number of factors such as place, target's characteristics, and availability of means before actual break of law. Regarding place, law breakers carefully select a place considered more conducive to break the law. This involves choosing a place with lower risk of apprehension than places where the risk of apprehension is higher. For instance, a place where security has

been beefed up by the police is likely to experience less criminal activities than places with less police presence. Vulnerability of targets is another factor. Offenders tend to choose targets that are not guarded. In other words, if the potential target is well protected, the calculating offender would perceive it to be risky to attack or victimize them. More so, law violating behaviour involves learning the techniques of law breaking in order to reduce the risk of apprehension and its attendant prosecution.

To forestall violation of the rules, RCT submits that three factor are critical. These are: ensuring that potential targets are adequately guarded; controlling the means to commit crime; and adequate monitoring of potential offenders (Akers, 1990). Those who have the motivation to break the law would do so if they are not adequately policed. Individuals who are desperate may consider violation of the law, but it takes people who are irrational to break the law if adequate policing is provided and punishment for offenders is certain. The decision to break the law would be checked by threat of offender prosecution. It is the fear of apprehension and subsequent punishment that would deter people from breaking the law. Generally, it is expected that the number of law violators would reduce if punishment for crime counterbalances the gain of law violation, and if law enforcement if effective. Certainty of punishment influences would-be offenders' decision to commit crime. Increasing the certitude of arrest for law violation, conviction and sanction has the capacity to reduce the rate at which people break the law. Motivated offender would understand that the punishment associated with the intended violation is greater than the expected benefits.

The prevalence of law breakers is therefore traceable to people's perception poor policing. That is, chances of apprehension is low, and punishment for those apprehended is neither certain nor severe. Certitude of arrest is influenced by the extent of police presence. It is the responsibility of the police to effect arrests and subject offenders to formal prosecution for offences committed (Abell, 2001). This implies that inadequacy of police presence would adversely affect the certainty of arrest for law violation. Therefore, adequate number of police officers on the street would determine the likelihood that those who break the law are arrested. Specifically, RCT holds that sanctions should be applied in such a way that known law violators will not choose law violating behaviour in the future. For instance, a traffic violator on whom sanctions were adequately applied may be deterred from further commission of traffic offences.

Traffic Policing and Traffic Violation in Nigeria: An Appraisal

The essence of traffic policing is to ensure that road users comply with laws governing vehicle operation on the road. Therefore, it is indicative of weak traffic policing if copious road traffic crashes occur. A corollary of traffic situation of Nigerian roads as shown above is that traffic policing in Nigeria has been weak or inadequate. Consequently, motor vehicle operators violate traffic laws, resulting in RTC. Road traffic safety denotes road transportation that is devoid of crashes and fatalities. Having identified violation of traffic rules and regulations as the major cause of RTC (Singh, 2015; Deepa, Vibha, and Naveen 2017), it implies that numerous RTCs occurring in Nigeria is attributable to weak enforcement of traffic laws, resulting in traffic violation

From the standpoint of rational choice theory (RCT), traffic violation is a product of the perception which violators and would-be violators have about it after analyzing the factors identified by RTC such as benefits, likelihood of apprehension, extent of law enforcement, certainty of punishment, and how protected the area or person is, among others. These factors would shape how commercial drivers and motorcyclists perceive traffic violation which would in turn determine whether traffic offences are committed or not. Motor vehicle operators would perceive traffic violation as a rewarding act if there are benefits accruable from it which outweighs the likely punishment. For instance, a speed limit violator might calculate that over speeding would result in arriving at his destination earlier, which affords the opportunity to embark on more trips on a particular day, thereby making more money. The calculating would-be offender would contrast this with the likelihood of getting arrested by officials for over speeding. Perception of traffic policing as weak would encourage the prospective offender to violate traffic rules as a consequence of minimal risk of apprehension. Conversely, perception of certainty of arrest and prosecution has the potential to dissuade potential traffic violators from committing traffic offences. In other words, if it is certain that the speed limit violator would be arrested and made to face penalty that outweighs the benefit foreseen, the offence is unlikely to be committed by virtue of perceiving it as unprofitable. Furthermore, it is expected that the presence of law enforcement officers would shape the perception that potential traffic offenders would have about a particular place/road. A road that is adequately policed has the potential to witness less traffic violations by virtue of prospective offenders' assessment of the place as "dangerous" for traffic violation. It could therefore be argued that there is a connection between perception of the nature of policing and the tendency to

commit traffic violation. An environment would be defined a safe place to violate the law if policing in that area is adjudged to be weak.

Conclusion

Based on profuse road traffic crashes occurring on Nigerian roads, this paper concludes that traffic policing in Nigeria, which is expected to result in safer roads, is weak, and has therefore not yielded the desired result. There is need for traffic law enforcers to re-strategize and improve on the current manner of enforcement. Massive violation of traffic rules indicates that traffic policing in Nigeria does not have adequate deterrent effect with respect to traffic violation. Motor vehicle operators therefore violate traffic rules and cause RTC by virtue of perception of traffic policing as weak.

Recommendations

1. **Certainty of offender prosecution**: From the standpoint of RCT, certainty of prosecution deters would-be offenders from violating the law. Traffic law enforcers should therefore, intensify arrest and prosecution of traffic offenders in such a way that gives motor vehicle operators the perception that traffic violations in Nigeria do not go unsanctioned.

2. **Upward review of sanctions**: Gravity of sanctions for offences committed would determine the extent to which such offences are committed. Fines and imprisonment for traffic offences should be increased in such a way that prospective offenders would perceive that traffic violation is not worth the cost. In other words, the cost of traffic violation should outweigh any likely benefits

3. **Demerit Point System of Enforcement:** This paper suggests that demerit point system, which is currently not in operation in Nigeria be introduced as additional measure to deter traffic law infringement and recidivist traffic offenders. This would involve traffic offenders accumulating or losing points against their driving license. In this regard, for each traffic offence committed, the offending motor vehicle operator would either receive certain points or have certain points subtracted from initial points assigned upon issuance of driving license. Upon depletion of all assigned points, or accumulation of fixed points, the offender's driving license would be suspended for a specified period of time, probably, six (6) months. During this time, the offender should in addition to payment of fines, be sent back to driving school, for retraining, after which, a new license should be

issued. License should be suspended for one year if the same offender depletes or accumulates demerits points for the second time, and equally subjected to the same process he/she has undergone in the first instance. To forestall unending recidivism (in the case of unrepentant offenders), license should be withdrawn for life if an offender exhausts or accumulates maximum demerit points for the third time through traffic violations. This would serve a deterrent function in curbing recidivist traffic violation.

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