# Social Cognitive Theory in Drivers Compliance to FRSC's Speed Limit Device Communication Campaign in Rivers State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:-** **The social cognitive theory helps in understanding how individuals respond to efforts geared towards behaviour change. The theory is a potent framework for explaining drivers' compliance to the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) communication campaign on installation of speed limit device (SLD) in Nigeria. By Decree 45 of 1988, the FRSC has the responsibility for preventing and minimising accidents on the highways and removing obstructions on any part of the highways and for educating drivers, motorists and the public generally on the proper use of highways. One of the means to accomplish these is the communication campaign on SLD. Communication campaign is a wholistically planned effort with different strategies and use of media to inform or increase awareness, influence or change the behaviour of people over issues of public importance. This paper examined social cognitive theory in drivers' compliance to FRSC's SLD communication campaign in Rivers State, Nigeria. Data were collected from secondary sources with inferences made at the end. It was concluded that drivers in Rivers State would respond to the communication campaign based on their self-efficacy, goal, and result expectancy, which are identifiable in the social cognitive framework. It was recommended that when there is appropriate training for commercial drivers, the process of licensing should not be rigorous in order to encourage discipline. More messages need to reach the commercial drivers on the importance of safe driving through the SLD should be communicated to the drivers.**

*Keywords:- Communication Campaign, Road Safety, Social Cognitive Framework, Speed Limit Device.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Communication has been identified as part of human existence given that people must always interact with each other. This communication could be of a group of persons exchanging information to create understanding (Ugboajah, 1985). It is the creation or exchange of thoughts, ideas, emotion and understanding between sender(s) and receiver(s) or the sharing of information between two or more individuals or groups to reach a common understanding (Sanchez & Guo, 2005). According to Konkwo (2003), communication is not merely about sending, receiving and understanding information and meaning, it is intended to influence the behaviour of

recipients by sharing thoughts, feeling and desires with them.

Communication efforts have always been employed in special aspects of societies to main order in the way things are done. One of such important area is the way the roads are used by motorist and the various traffic rules that are put in place to ensure road safety. By the communication and public enlightenment efforts, road users and the general public are made to understand the issues that concern the safety of lives and properties on the road. It is strongly believed that road users will imbibe safety practices that help them avoid road traffic crash if they are properly informed via various public enlightenment platforms. Elliott (1993) highlights the importance of communication in improving road safety. He particularly advocated the use of mass media campaigns as a communication strategy by road safety enforcement commissions.

Road safety campaigns is one of the means agencies charged with the responsibility of maintaining safe vehicular and human movement on public roads employ to sensitise drivers and other road users. It is for this reason road safety communication campaign is seen as an objective effort aimed at informing and influencing people's attitude and behaviour within a given period in order to ensure road safety, through various communication channels and approaches (European Union, 2010). Given the above, every communication campaign must be able to accomplish the goal for which it was initiated, which would include the audience adjustment or change of behaviour and the success of the campaign is predicated on its outcome.

There are variables that could determine the success or failure of communication campaigns. There are circumstances when the audience feign resistance to messages that are directed at them, be they directly or indirectly. It is in this wise that appropriate persuasive means need be adopted when the attitude of the people have been well understood (Crawford & Okigbo, 2014). Chances are that a communication campaign would fail if the above is not considered.

Among the means of transportation available to man – water, air, and land (rail and road), the Nigerian transportation system is more used to land transportation given that water transportation is restricted to riverine areas, while air transport is above the reach of many. And

according to Samuel (2010), road transportation is now the major means of movement in the country since the railway system has not been as reliable as it ought. Consequently, there is pressure on road usage. This pressure has led to several road crashes and in many instances the loss of lives. It is on record that a total of 10, 026 road crashes occurred in Nigeria in 2017, resulting in 5121 (51%) deaths, of which 4751 (92.8%) were adults while 370 (7.2%) were children (National Bureau of Statistics, 2018).

There are numerous causes of road accidents among which are use of drugs and alcohol, mobile phones, careless overtaking, distractions, and over speeding. While there has been efforts by the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) to checkmate these ugly incidence among motorists, the greater percentage of worries has been over drivers' negligence of traffic regulations. Over speeding is one of the negative attitudes among commercial drivers accounting for regular loss of lives (NBS, 2018). And road safety laws caution against over speeding, especially on specific roads, times and vehicles. This is also why there are road traffic signs like zebra crossing, pedestrian walkways, lighting, and the speed limiting device, among others.

## II. FEDERAL ROAD SAFETY COMMISSION AND SPEED LIMIT DEVICE

The establishment of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) of Nigeria was necessitated by the need to enlighten and regulate road users on the appropriate behaviours towards safe use of the roads. The Commission was formed based on Decree No. 45 of 1988, amended by Decree 35 of 1992, and the 2007 Act, which reads in part that the FRSC has the:

Responsibility for preventing and minimising accidents on the highways and clearing obstructions on any part of the highways and for educating drivers, motorists and other members of the public generally on the proper use of highways, and to provide for other matters connected therewith.

This task has been before the Commission and its personnel such that different campaigns have been carried out from time to time on safe road usage. One such instances took place on the 28th of March, 2019, when the Commission's officers were trained on "Improved Corps Visibility through Public Enlightenment". The effort was a capacity building initiative owing to the enormous task before its personnel. Another important effort was the launch of "The Potency of Public Enlightenment on Road Crash Reduction in Nigeria" on the 20th of June, 2019, by Osundu Ohaeri, a Superintendent Route Commander of the FRSC. It was another means to campaign for road safety attitudes among drivers (Premium Times, 2019).

The recent efforts by the FRSC in reducing road accidents and guarantee safety on Nigerian roads was the Speed Limiting Device (SLD), a motor device installed in vehicles for the purpose of moderating speed limits on

road. It is believed that this technology was necessitated by the herculean task of traffic enforcement arising from insufficient equipment for officers and the need to track as maintain communication (Amalaha, 2017; Kalilu, 2008). The Speed Limiting Device is operational for all vehicles in the country but the process is ongoing for commercial and haulage vehicles. Action towards enforcement began February 1, 2017 with the backing of Section 10 (3) (m) of the 2007 FRSC Act and Section 152 (4) of National Road Traffic Regulations.

In a bid to actualize this, the FRSC is collaborating with the Nigerian Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), the National Orientation Agency, media organisations and other partners to ensure adequate enlightenment about the device. The commission has rolled out communication campaigns to ensure that commercial drivers are informed and educated about the need to comply with the policy. Communication campaigns have been found to increase awareness about problems associated with road safety and have equally influenced drivers' attitude (Wanubo, 2016).

Rivers State is one of the 36 states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which was created in 1967. It is located in the South-South geopolitical zone and is one of the nine Niger Delta states. The State is one of the economic hub of the country owing to its natural and human resources. It is home to many multinational oil and gas companies, tertiary institutions, agriculture and topography. These has made it more of a metropolitan state with different ethnic groups and nationalities plying their trade in the State. To this end, commercial activities are very high. Among this are the commercial transportation system.

Granted that among the core mandate of the Federal Road Safety Commission to ensure a safe highway, which includes educating and informing motorists about safe driving practice, over speeding has been traced as key contributor to road accidents. This informed the use of the SLD beginning with commercial vehicles and communication campaign was initiated to encourage deliberate compliance. Rivers State is one states where motorists seem to neglect the campaign despite the fact that enforcement had commenced on February 1, 2017. Accordingly, the social cognitive theory suggests that self-efficacy, goals and expected outcome are three key factors determining people's behaviour change. It is therefore imperative to highlight how social cognitive theory plays out in drivers' compliance to the FRSC SLD communication campaign in Rivers State.

## III. SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY

Albert Bandura had conducted studies in the 1960s with the Bobo doll on issues that relate with learning. In 1977, he came up with the Social Learning Theory, which was renamed as Social Cognitive Theory in 1986 (Bandura, 2001; 2004). The Social Cognitive Theory has three basic assumptions on chances of individuals adopting behaviour

change. The factors are self-efficacy, goal, and result expectancy. It suggests that before people could adopt a new behaviour, there would be the feeling of being able to perform a particular change in behaviour irrespective of any challenge that may be faced the process. In this wise, Bandura (2002) believes that the self-efficacy serves like an incentive for adopting behavioural change.

There had been efforts by scholars to develop related frameworks, which led to the operant (traditional) learning theory that explains how people learn new behaviours when a stimuli occurs within their environment and they respond to such stimuli, which either rewards or punishes. The direction of the outcome informs whether the behaviour would be continued or stopped and by that learning has taken place (Baran & Davis, 2009). The learning acquired after each encounter is stored in the behavioural repertoire, where is found the responses to occurrence in the environment. Peradventure the outcome of the behaviour was punishment, for instance, driving into a ditch on a flooded road, the expectation is that the individual would be so cautious of that point after that experience.

Sometimes learning can take place without the operant process. People can gain knowledge and experience through observation devoid of the stimulus-response-reinforcement. Once individuals can observe how things evolve, they can learn from it. This is where modeling holds sway. For instance, children can learn from their parents or older ones by watching the way they talk and act and in no distant time, do the same thing. This learning technique contributed to the social cognitive theory by Bandura.

Change in behaviour is affected by the outcomes that people expect their actions to produce. These expected outcomes include physical effects, social costs and benefits, and positive and negative self-evaluative reactions to one's behaviour. Personal goals, rooted in a value system, provide further self-incentives and guides for habits. Personal behaviour change would be easy if there were no impediments to surmount. The facilitators and obstacles that people perceive in changing their behaviour is another determinant of behaviour change.

There are two routes for communication systems go through for large-scale change. It is either direct pathways or socially mediated pathway (Bandura, 2002). In the direct pathway, communication media promote change by informing, modeling, motivating, and guiding people. In the socially mediated pathway, media influences are used to link people in social networks and community settings. These places provide continued personalized guidance, as well as natural incentives and social supports for desired changes. The emphasis is on connectivity between people.

This theory is fundamental to the Federal Road Safety Commission's communication campaign on the installation of speed limiting device in commercial vehicles in the country. While the Commission adopts different campaign approaches to sensitise and influence drivers into adopting safe road use behaviours because they believe that the communication campaigns can inform, model, motivate and lead drivers. More so, the more the contact with drivers, the greater the chances of their adaption to the message given that there will be self-efficacy.

## IV. COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN

Scholars have given varied definitions of communication campaigns, each providing their version to suit their perceived idea of the campaign. Some of the definitions emphasize the process and strategy; others stress the objective, the channels, the duration, audience and other specificities. Clearly, Dorfman (2002) stresses that communication campaigns cover a wide array of different types and characteristics, and can be distinguished in terms of purpose, scope, and maturity. This further adds to the fluidity of the definitions of communication campaigns because they differ from one another depending upon where they fall on the scale of purpose, scope, and maturity. There seems, however, to be a consensus among many scholars that communication campaigns are the "varied, multifaceted, highly planned, and strategically assembled media symphonies designed to increase awareness, inform, or change behaviour in target audiences" (Day, 2000, p. 79).

Information delivery, social education, and mass mobilisation are goals that organisations usually set out in order to accomplish a purpose. It is on grounds like this that communication campaigns are embarked upon. Communication campaign is seen by Rice & Atkin (2013) objective approaches to inform and or influence audience behaviours over a period of time through planned communication initiatives of any of the media platforms that are produced for the public with commercial consideration.

There is no doubt that chances of the effectiveness and success of communication campaigns increases when there is coordination of media efforts with a systematic blend of other interpersonal and community-based communication channels, which may involve what Rice and Atkin (2009) calls a "conventional blend of brochures, posters, advertisements and commercials or a different array of communication methods for the purpose of achieving certain objectives".

It is clear that most campaigns are intended to inspire behaviour change at the individual level but it can also affect the public will. Noar (2006) adds that campaigns seek to "achieve policy change by exerting influence on public will and engagement". He concludes that "targeted and well-executed campaigns can have small-to-moderate effects on knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour" (p. 22). Salama (2015) understands that the purpose of communication campaigns transcends individual behaviour to social change. He states that communication campaigns use a "variety of techniques and strategies in hopes of improving individual lives and making the world a better place". Another definition that is pegged on purpose was

provided by Atkin and Rice (2013) who define communication campaigns as encompassing strategies for producing effects on knowledge, attitudes and behaviour using an array of domains that include political, environmental, health and prosocial effects.

Communication campaigns could be of varied types. Salama (2015) outlines two types of communication campaigns as individual behaviour campaigns and public will campaigns. The former tries to change in individuals the behaviors that lead to social problems or promote behaviors that lead to improved individual or social well-being; whereas the later attempt to mobilize public action for policy change. A public will campaign attempts to legitimize or raise the importance of a social problem in the public eye as the motivation for policy action or change.

The distinction of the communication campaigns was based on what they perceived as the prime purpose of the campaigns or what the campaigns are eventually going to accomplish. They explain that individual behaviour change campaigns seek to reduce in individuals the behaviours that lead to social problems or encourage behaviours that result in improved individual or social welfare. Common campaigns in this category are aimed at behaviours such as smoking, designated driving, drug use, domestic violence, seat belt use, speed limit usage, among others. Policy change campaigns try to drum up public and decision maker support for policy support or change. This type of campaigns is not well understood than individual change campaigns but the need to understand its working will increase as more of such campaigns are executed (Coffman, 2002; Dorfman, Ervice & Woodruff, 2002; Salmon, Post & Christensen, 2003).

## V. FRSC COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS

The Federal Road Safety Corps has initiated several efforts that would facilitate the process of orienting motorists on road safety rules. One of such took place on Wednesday, December 12, 2018 at Ajah Park, Lagos. According to *The Nation* (2018), the Corps partnered with Aid Lives Trust in organizing the sensitization programme tagged "Why Rush Campaign", which cautioned drivers on the imminent dangers of over speeding. It was also the FRSC's aim to curb road accidents within the festive season.

On Thursday, October 4, 2018, "Don't Drink and Drive" was launched at Lagos. It is an annual road safety communication campaign initiative jointly promoted by the Nigerian Breweries Plc. and the Federal Road Safety Corps. The main objective is to create safety awareness on Nigerian roads in order to reduce eventualities that do occur when drinking and driving (Nigerian Breweries, 2018).

On November 30, 2018, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) launched High Visibility Enforcement campaign in Nigeria based on the fact that about 1.25 million lives are daily lost in the world through roads, which has made roads to be traffic crash one

for major source of death (WHO, 2015). It was in view of this fact that UNITAR partnered with the FRSC to assist the government on how to identify and implement feasible approaches to curtail the problem. Its High Visibility Enforcement (HVE) Campaign was geared towards reducing the rate of road crashes arising from alcohol consumption.

## VI. APPLICATION OF SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY IN FRSC'S SLD COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN IN RIVERS STATE

Self-efficacy, goal, and result expectancy are identified as the core factors in the social cognitive process that determine people's adoption of certain behaviours and these are equally possible issues on commercial drivers in Rivers State would respond to the FRSC's communication campaign.

**Self-efficacy Approach:** Self-efficacy highlights the tendency of individuals to see themselves as possessing the capacity to perform a given behaviour safely, not minding any obstacle that might come along the way. (Bandura, 2004; Akhtar, 2008). This stands as people's overall belief in their abilities for success (Ackerman, 2019). Driving in Rivers State is a job that has gained wide participation by not only the illiterate but also the educated, who probably graduated from higher institution but without requisite job. Owing to these and the perceived lucrative independence it creates, driving is common profession in the State.

In a bid to meet up with the socioeconomic demands of the time, most commercial drivers run at high speed to ensure that they meet their target. It is therefore believed to be counterproductive to be on the road without meeting the established target (Ogunmodede, Adio, Ebijuwa, Oyetola & Akinola, 2012). The installation of Speed Limiting Device is definitely an innovation that the drivers need to be convinced that it means well for them. There is the need for the motorists to be convinced that they can meet their personal goals even if installing the device. This is why Chen, Gully and Eden (2001) believe that self-efficacy has been advanced to provide measuring scales of what individuals perceive about their ability.

Self-efficacy is a continual process that can permeate drivers, like every other human, through five basic means. First, *performance experiences* – in this is the understanding that individuals attempt to control their environment is a strong source of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). For instance, if drivers who have not installed the speed limiting device receive a nod from passengers that they drive at controlled speed and the drivers see themselves as professional in the way they handle the steering, chances are that they would be motivated to remain without the device because of that sense of controlling their speed on the road.

Second, *vicarious experiences* – explain how self-efficacy beliefs are developed based on the fact that one observes others behaviours and the consequences of their

actions. Drivers can learn to install the SLD when they observe more harm caused by refusal to install the device. Third, *imagined experiences* – play up on self-efficacy when a hypothetical scene is figured to have happened to another person or the individual. Fourth, *verbal persuasion* – plays out when perhaps, senior drivers, for instance, encourage new commercial drivers of the potency of installing the speed limiting device. The fifth and last, *physiological* and *emotional states* – that highlights how individuals learn to tie failure with aversive physiological promptings and success with feelings of good things.

When commercial motor drivers develop the sense of control over their driving environment, chances are that they will also demonstrate psychological well-being on steering. It has also been found out that people can live physically healthy when the sense of self-efficacy is on the positive. It may be now absurd for a right thinking motorist to engage in intoxicating drink. A form of self-regulation would naturally flow through the activities of the drivers. Through self-regulation, one nurtures a strategy for achieving goals (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007; Ackerman, 2019).

**Goal Approach:** The theoretical background for **goal** points to the end that the process would give birth to. It highlights the objective that would have been accomplished in the course of the exercise. Self-efficacy from every individual often lead to collective efficacy. Because each individual have developed a sense of self, the possibility is that a shared group orientation on its capabilities for specific objective can play out (Zapata & Maddux, 2006).

Before taking off at any point, from the various parks of the drivers, the commuters and drivers expect to arrive at their destination because that is what has been sealed in the contract between both parties. While travelers have a destination, commercial drivers equally need to meet up with their daily target of safe picking and dropping. When this goal is rehearsed before the commercial transporters, they could appreciate the FRSC SLD more than the present. It is therefore necessary to place before the people the end to be reached.

**Result Expectancy:** Drivers in Rivers State would easily buy into the FRSC SLD campaign if they perceive that at the end of the day driving will be safer and better for not just the individual driver but also others who ply the road. It is then imperative that the campaign message and approach should lay much emphasis on what the installation of the device would yield. Safety, peaceful journey, controlled speed, cautious driving are just a few to be mentioned. The lives of both commuters, drivers and other road users are important and that is the goal of the FRSC SLD.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Social cognitive theory is an explanatory framework for appreciating people's attitude to calls for change of behaviour. The theory was used to explain drivers' compliance to the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) communication campaign on installation of speed limit device (SLD) in Nigeria. Given that Decree 45 of 1988, empowers the FRSC to prevent and minimize accidents on the highways through the orientation of drivers, motorists and the public, the communication campaign on SLD was embarked on. This paper focused on social cognitive theory in drivers' compliance to FRSC's SLD communication campaign in Rivers State, Nigeria. Data were collected from secondary sources with inferences made. Drivers in Rivers State would respond to the communication campaign based on their self-efficacy, goal, and result expectancy, which are identifiable in the social cognitive framework.

It becomes imperative that the FRSC build on maximizing the opportunities available encourage and set standards for commercial driving. When there is appropriate training for commercial drivers, the process of licensing should not be rigorous in order to encourage discipline. More messages need to reach the commercial drivers on the importance of safe driving through the SLD should be communicated to the drivers.

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