

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FEDERAL ROAD SAFETY CORP (FRSC) ON ACCIDENT REDUCTION IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF BAYELSA STATE

Alafa, Inala

Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Uyo, Nigeria

Email: Inala4alafa@gmail.com

Dr. Etim, Okon Frank

Department of Political Science and Public Administration,

University of Uyo, PMB: 1017 Ikpa Road, 520003, Uyo, Akwa –Ibom State.

ABSTRACT

The Federal Government of Nigeria established the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) in 1988, to deal with the records of road traffic crashes that emanate from the movement of people and goods from one location to another. But despite the establishment /operation of FRSC, the challenges of road traffic crashes are still very high. Consequently, this study was set out to investigate the effectiveness of FRSC on accident reduction in Nigerian roads, particularly in Bayelsa State. The study adopts descriptive and survey research design. It reveals driving under influence of intoxicants, lack of understanding and compliance with road signs, lack of traffic monitoring devices etc. as perceived causes of road accident. Lack of cooperation and hostility from road users, tricycles disobedience to law, lack of government support etc. are identified as the immediate challenges of FRSC in Bayelsa State. The study therefore recommends cooperation through town-hall meetings, strict rule enforcement, continuous re-orientation of road user, serious monitoring of traffic rules and punishment of offender without fear or favour. The government is also asked to provide requisite facilities to aide FRSC in performing their duty effectively.

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

FRSC, Accident Reduction, Road Traffic Accidents

Article History:

Received: 15 Feb 2023

Accepted: 10 Mar 2023

Available Online: 30 Mar 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

Road transportation plays a significant role in the socio-economic life of modern society, as it facilitates movement of people and goods from one location to another. The development of a nation depends greatly on road transportation as it has become the easiest means of movement. However, most parts of the world are facing challenges on road transportation (Siyan et al, 2015). The world is experiencing a high rate of road accident and 90% of the traffic fatalities in the world occurred in developing countries (World Bank, 2018). The World Bank Report on road safety also indicates that one-quarter of every road accident in Africa occurred in Nigeria. In order to proffer solutions to these challenges, different nations have established different modes and agencies to regulate road transport system. In Nigeria, the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) was statutorily established by Decree 45 of 1988, as amended by Decree 35 of 1992, and passed by the National Assembly as the Federal Road Safety Corps (Establishment) Act of 2007 (Aikhionbare, 2016). It became the sole agency with the statutory obligation in Nigeria for road safety management and administration with specific functions. The FRSC is required to recommend necessary works and devices to eliminate or minimize accidents, and educate motorists and members of the public on the need to observe road traffic rules and regulation in order to prevent and reduce road traffic accidents and injuries on the highway (Sunmola, 2014). Despite the constitutional role and enabling laws backing the operations of the FRSC, Nigeria is still recording huge casualties on our roads on daily basis. According to data released by FRSC, a total number of 14,773 died from 31,116 road accidents within January 2019 to December 2021. The year 2021 recorded the highest case of road traffic crashes with 10,637 accidents involving 35,791 people; 5,101 people were killed, while 30,690 people were injured. Bayelsa State alone recorded 40 cases of road traffic crashes (FRSC, 2021).

This has necessitated several studies bothering on level of compliance with traffic rules, causal factors of road traffic crashes, the role of drugs in road safety etc. However, there is still a gap in the issues of road traffic accident reduction in Nigeria, vis-à-vis traffic regulation agencies. Hence this study was carried out to examine the effectiveness of FRSC in

reducing accidents on Nigerian roads, particularly in Bayelsa State. Specifically, the study looked at the following sub-objectives:

- To compare the rate of road accident occurrences in 2020 and 2021 in Bayelsa State.
- To identify the perceived causes of road accidents in Bayelsa State.
- To identify the initiatives that FRSC have introduced, pursuant to accident reduction on roads in Bayelsa State.
- To identify the challenges confronting FRSC in reducing road accidents in Bayelsa State.

The study will illuminate the effective performance of FRSC vis-a-vis reduction of road accidents in Nigeria and Bayelsa State in particular, and also serve as a source of information for policy makers in government and other relevant agencies to make and implement improved policies that will ensure the effectiveness of FRSC in accident reduction.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The relevant theory for this study is Structural Functionalism as propounded by Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell in the 1970s which posits that a political system or society is made up of structures which perform distinct functions for the stability and persistence of society. This approach is of the view that different structures of society perform different functions which together constitute to serve a purpose, and each is indispensable for the continued existence of the others and of society as a whole. According to Almond, though there are differences between developed and developing countries so far as structures are concerned, the structures perform almost similar functions. This theory enables us to understand the role of the various structures that constitute a system, and how well these roles are performed by the various structures. According to Durkheim (1984) society is like an organism composed of different parts which plays necessary roles for the good of the whole, but can't function alone. When one-part experience a crisis, others must adapt to fill the void in some way. According to this theory, an institution only exists because it serves a vital role in the functioning of society. The import of this theory on this study is that it explains the fact that FRSC, drivers and other road users as component parts of the society has to perform their functions effectively for the good of the whole. The effective performance of FRSC requires that each institution or stakeholder involved carries out some specific obligations which contributes to the realization of the goal of reducing road traffic accidents. It is this strength of interconnectedness of different components (the FRSC, drivers and other road users) in creating desired result that provides the relevance for this study. It is therefore, the duty of this study to ascertain if FRSC is effectively performing the roles assigned to it in terms of accident reduction.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Method of Data Collection

This study adopted a descriptive and survey research design. This design was considered most appropriate because it helps gather raw data from a representative sample of the people who are at the center of the research objective. The FRSC Bayelsa State Sector has 170 persons as its workforce (field report). A sample size of 118 was determined using GeoPoll Andrew Fisher's Formula.

3.2 Instrument for Data Collection and Analysis

The study adopted both primary and secondary sources of data to elicit the needed information. The secondary sources included journals, magazine, text books and the internet. While the primary sources of data were obtained through Likert 5 – points design questionnaire. The questionnaire contains 20 items to get information from each respondent. The response options were Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Simple percentage was used to analyze Demographic Data, Mean, Standard Deviation and Pie Chart were used to analyze responses.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Questionnaire Administration

A total of 120 copies were administered, out of which 119 (99%) were successfully retrieved and 1 (1%) was not retrieved. Data obtained from the 119 retrieved instruments were used for statistical analysis.

Table 1:

Questionnaire Administration Information

Number of Questionnaire Distributed	Number of Questionnaire Retrieved	Number of Questionnaire not Retrieved	Percentage Retrieved	Percentage not Retrieved
120	119	01	99%	1%

4.2 Demographic information of respondents

It was observed that 61% (73) respondents were males, while 39 % (46) respondents were females. It implies that there were more males than females. The age bracket 20 – 30 was 20% (24), 31 – 40 was 36% (43), 41 – 50 was 36% (43), 51 and above was 8% (9). This suggests that age bracket of 31 – 40 & 41 – 50 were more, giving a mean age of 40.5. The academic qualification of respondents was revealed to be in the following order, informal education: 10% (12), SSCE: 21% (25), ND/NCE: 3% (3), NHD/BS.c: 45% (54), MSc and above: 21(25). This implies that, there were more persons with HND/BSc. than other qualifications. Table 3 also revealed designation of respondents to be in this order, FRSC officers: 56% (67), FRSC Marshal Assistants: 36% (43), and FRSC Marshal Inspectors: 8% (9). This suggests that, there were more FRSC officers than other cadres. Table 3 also observed marital status of respondents to have 33% (40) singles, 64% (76) married, 3% (3) Divorced and nil (-) widow / widower. This indicate that, there were more single respondents. Table 3 in respect of religion revealed that 85% (101) of respondents were Christians, 12% (15) respondents were Muslims, while 3% of respondents were of other religions. This implies that there were more Christian respondents.

Table 2

Demographic Information of Respondents

S/N	Variables	Frequency (n = 119)	Percentage
1	Gender:		
	Male	73	61%
	Female	46	39%
2	Age:		
	20 – 30	24	20%
	31 – 40	43	36%
	41 – 50	43	36%
	51 and above	9	8%
3	Academic Qualification: Informal Education		
	SSCE	12	10%
	ND/NCE	25	21%
	HND/BSc.	3	3%
	MSc. and above	54	45%
		25	21%
4	Designation of Respondents:		
	FRSC Officers		
	FRSC Marshal Assistants	67	56%
	FRSC Marshal Inspectors	43	36%
		9	8%
5	Marital Status:		
	Single	40	33%
	Married	76	64%
	Divorced	3	3%
	Widow / Widower	-	-
6	Religion:		
	Christianity	101	85%
	Islam	15	12%
	Others	3	3%

Source: Field Survey, 2022

4.3 Rates of Accident Occurrences for 2020 and 2021

Figure 1 shows that number of accident cases for 2020 and 2021 was 14 (22.6%) and 48 (77.4%) respectively, implying that 2021 had more accident cases than 2020. Also indicated is the number of injured persons for 2020 and 2021 as 23 (19.7%) and 94 (80.3%) respectively. This suggests that 2021 had more injured persons due to road accidents. Meanwhile number killed due to road accident was 21(37.5%) and 35 (62.5%) for 2020 and 2021 respectively, indicating a higher extent of number killed due to road accident in 2021. The number of casualties are 44 (25.4%) and 129 (74.6%) for 2020 and 2021 respectively. Therefore, more people were involved in road accidents in 2021 than 2020.

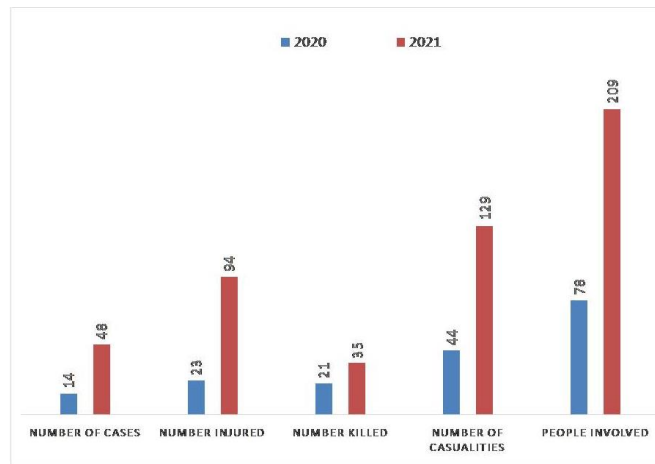


Figure 1
A Multiple Bar Chart Showing Rates of Accident Occurrences for 2020 and 2021

4.4 Perceived Causes of Road Accidents

Table 3 reveals that, out of 119 respondents on items 1, 92% (110) responded “Yes” while 8% (9) responded “NO”. This implies that driving under influence of intoxicants is affirmed to be a contributing factor of road accidents. Item 2 on Table 3 also revealed that 100% (119) responded “Yes” while non-responded “NO”. This indicates that every respondent was of the opinion that the use of phone on wheel account for road traffic crashes. Similarly, on item 3, 95% (113) responded “Yes” while 5% (6) responded “NO”. This suggests that most respondents are of the opinion that faulty engines contribute to road accidents. Table 3 shows that 100% (119 out of 119) responded “Yes” and non-responded “NO” on item 4. This indicates that all respondents are of the opinion that over-speeding causes road accidents. Items 5 on Table 3 also revealed that out of 119 respondents, 95% (113) responded “Yes” while 5% (6) responded “No”. implying that, most respondents support the opinion that, expired tyres accounts for roads accidents in Bayelsa State. items 6 on the Table shows that out of 119 respondents, 97% (116) responded “Yes” while 3% (3) responded “No”, indicating that most of the respondents are of the view that non-maintenance of cars contributes to road accidents. Table 3 further reveals that out of 119 respondents on item 7, 95% (113) responded “Yes” while 5% (6) responded “No”, indicating that a large sunk of the respondents are of the view that lack of appropriate road signs accounts for road accidents in Bayelsa State. Table 3 also reveals that out of 119 respondents on item 8, 8% (9) responded “Yes” while 92% (110) responded “No”. This implies that most respondents are of the view that not all drivers on road understand road signs in Bayelsa State. item 9 on Table 3 shows that, out of the 119 respondents, 9% (8) responded “Yes” while 92% (110) responded “No”. This implies that most of the respondents are of the opinion that not all drivers comply with road signs. Finally, item 10 on Table 3 shows that, out of 119 respondents, 80% (95) responded “Yes” while 20% (24) responded “No”. This indicates that 80% of the respondents are of the view that lack of traffic monitoring devices also contributes to road accidents in Bayelsa State.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Causes of Road Accidents

S/N	ITEMS	YES		NO	
		F	%	F	%
1.	Does driving under influence of intoxicants contribute to road accidents?	110	92	9	8
2.	The use of phone on wheel accounts for road traffic crashes?	119	100	-	-
3.	Does faulty engine contribute to road accidents?	113	95	6	5
4.	Is over-speeding also a cause of road accidents in Bayelsa State?	119	100	-	-
5.	The use of expired types accounts for road accidents in Bayelsa State?	113	95	6	5
6.	No-maintenance of cars is also a contributing factor of road accidents in Bayelsa State.	116	97	3	3
7.	Does lack of appropriate road sign account for accident?	113	95	6	5
8.	Do all drivers on road understand road signs in Bayelsa State?	9	8	110	92
9.	Do all drivers comply with road signs in Bayelsa State?	9	8	110	2
10.	Lack of traffic monitoring devices also contributes to road accidents in Bayelsa State?	95	80	24	20

Source: Field Survey, 2022

4.5 FRSC Initiatives that Reduces Road Accidents

It was observed in Table 4 that response to enforcement of full compliance of speed limiting devices has a mean and Standard Deviation of 3.96 ± 0.96 with a Mean Percentage of 77%. Also, introduction of traffic lights has 3.48 ± 1.02 with a Mean Percentage of 70%. Similarly, daily awareness campaign by FRSC in different motor parks has 4.36 ± 0.73 with a Mean Percentage of 81%. And initiation of new ideas to reduce road accidents has 4.32 ± 0.72 with a Mean Percentage of 87%. This implies that mean values of respondents were greater than the Criterion Mean of 3.0. It indicates therefore, that all initiatives by FRSC reduces road accidents. Furthermore, the Grand Mean / Standard Deviation was 4.04 ± 0.86 with a Mean Percentage of 81% which was greater than the Criterion Mean of 3.0 ($4.04 > 3.0$). It can therefore be deduced that all respondents strongly agreed that all initiatives under investigation can reduce road accidents.

Table 5
Descriptive statistics for FRSC initiatives that Reduces Road Accidents

S/ N	ITEMS	N	\bar{X}	STD	$\bar{X}\%$	CM	RANKING	REMARK
1	The enforcement of full compliance of speed limiting devices by commercial drivers has reduce road accidents in Bayelsa State.	119	3.96	0.96	79%		3	A
1	The introduction of traffic lights reduced accidents in the state.	119	3.48	1.02	70%	3.0	4	A
1	The daily awareness campaign by FRCS on different motor parks in Bayelsa State has reduced the rate of roads accidents in the state.	119	4.36	0.73	87%		1	SA
1	The FRSC in Bayelsa State has initiated new ideas to reduce the rate of road accidents in the state.	119	4.34	0.72	87%		2	SA
Grand Total			4.04	0.86	81%			SA

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Key: Total Number (N), Mean (x), Standard Deviation (STD), Mean Percentage (x%), Criterion Mean (CM), Item Ranking and Item Remark.

Figure 2 shows that 50% of respondents mentioned jingles and massive enlightenment as initiatives introduced by the Corps to reduce road accidents.

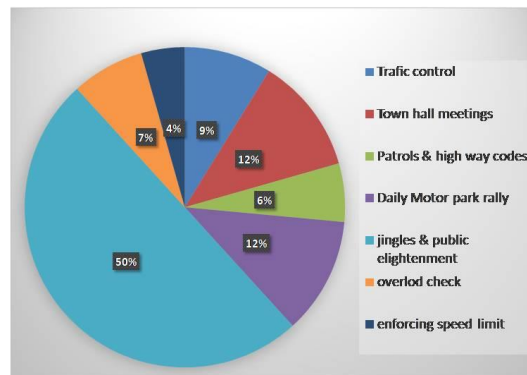


Figure 2
A Pie Chart Showing Initiatives FRSC introduced pursuant to accident reduction in Bayelsa State.

4.6 Challenges confronting FRSC in reducing road accidents in Bayelsa State

It was observed in Table 5 that response to lack of cooperation by motorist has a Mean and Standard Deviation of 4.51 ± 0.74 with a Mean Percentage of 90%. Similarly, driving under the influence of intoxicant has 4.18 ± 0.81 with a Mean Percentage of 84%. Also, lack of adequate facilities has 3.52 ± 1.31 with a Mean Percentage of 70%. And disobedience to traffic rules has a major challenge has 4.44 ± 0.95 with a Mean Percentage of 89%. This indicates that

Mean value of respondents was greater than the Criterion Mean of 3.0. It therefore implies that all the aforementioned issues are serious challenges confronting FRSC in Bayelsa State. Furthermore, the Grand Mean / Standard Deviation was 4.16 ± 0.95 with a Mean Percentage of 83%, which was greater than the Criterion Mean of 3.0 ($4.16 > 3.0$). It was therefore observed that all respondents strongly agreed that all the issues under investigation poses serious challenges to FRSC in reducing road accidents in Bayelsa State.

Table 6

Descriptive statistics for challenges confronting FRSC in reducing road accidents

S/N	ITEM	N	\bar{X}	STD	$\bar{X}\%$	CM	RANKING	REMARK
16	Lack of cooperation by motorist is a major challenge facing the FRSC in Bayelsa State.	119	4.51	0.74	90%		1	SA
17	Driving under the influence of intoxicating substance is also a serious challenge faced by FRSC in Bayelsa State.	119	4.18	0.81	84%	3.0	3	SA
18	Lack of adequate facilities impedes FRSC's effective performance in Bayelsa State.	119	3.52	1.31	70%		4	A
19	Disobedience to traffic rules is a major challenge to FRSC in Bayelsa State.	119	4.44	0.95	89%		2	SA
Grand Total			4.16	0.95	83%			SA

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Key: Total Number (N), Mean (x), Standard Deviation (STD), Mean Percentage (x%), Criterion Mean (CM), Item Ranking and Item Remark.

Figure 3 indicates that 28% of respondents mentioned that lack of cooperation from road users and hostility of road users (LCRU/HRU) is a most frequent challenge confronting the FRSC in reducing road accidents. Similarly, 23% of respondents still mentioned that lack of facilities (LF) and Disobedience to Law by Tricyclists (DLT) posed as challenges in reducing road accidents in Bayelsa State. Others mentioned as challenges include insensate use of round-about (IURA) (14%), poor road network/bad roads (PRN/BR) (7%), ignorance of traffic rules (IT) (3%) and lack of State Government support (LSGS) (2%). This implies that in Bayelsa State FRSC challenge was more from road users and less from government.

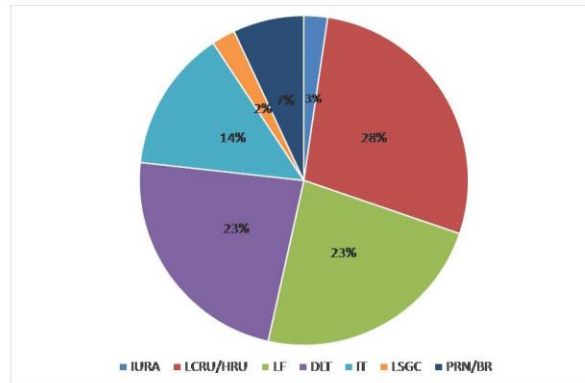


Figure 3

A Pie Chart Showing some other Challenges Confronting FRSC in Reducing Roads Accidents in Bayelsa State.

5. DISCUSSION

The main objective of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of FRSC in reducing accidents on Nigerian roads, particularly in Bayelsa State. Hence, the first research question sought to investigate “to what extent does rate of road accident occurrences in the year 2020 differ from the year 2021 in Bayelsa State?”. It was discovered through this study that number of accident cases from 2020 and 2021 was 14 (22.6%) and 48 (77.45) respectively; number of injured persons for 2020 and 2021 was 23 (19.7%) and 94 (80.3%) respectively; number killed due to road accident was 21 (37.3%) and 35 (62.5%) for 2020 and 2021 respectively; and number of casualties 44 (25.4%) and 129 (74.6%) for 2020 and 2021 respectively. It is therefore clear from the data gathered so far that 2021 had more accidents rate, number of injured persons, number killed and number of casualties; thus implies that, FRSC is not as effective in 2021 as it was in

2020, indicating, that FRSC is retrogressing, instead of progressing in its effectiveness in Bayelsa State. The second research question borders on “the perceived causes of road accidents in Bayelsa State”. The study revealed driving under influence of intoxicants, use of phone on wheel, faulty engine, over-speeding, use of expired tyers, lack of appropriate road signs, lack of understanding and compliance with road signs, and lack of traffic monitoring devices as perceived causes of road accidents in Bayelsa State. This is in line with Oyesiku, (2012), who stated the above as part of the challenges facing FRSC. The implication is that, the FRSC in Bayelsa and Nigeria at large has a lot to do in terms of reorientation of drivers and enforcement of laid down rules, as most of the perceived causes borders on disobedience to laid down rules.

The third research question sought to investigate “what initiatives have been introduced, pursuant to accident reduction on roads in Bayelsa State”. Revelations obtained from the study showed that, the FRSC in Bayelsa State had initiated the enforcement of full compliance of speed limiting devices by commercial drivers, introduction of traffic lights, and ensured daily awareness campaigns on different motor parks. About 50% of respondents mentioned jingles and massive enlightenment as initiatives introduced by the corps to reduce road accidents. This is in line with Dada (2017), where the installation of speed limiting devices was reiterated. This implies that FRSC in Bayelsa had initiated good ideas in doing their work effectively, if the initiatives are taken seriously.

The last research question examined “the challenges confronting FRSC in reducing road accidents in Bayelsa State”. The study revealed lack of cooperation and hostility from road users, lack of requisite facilities, disobedience to law by tricycles, insensate use of roundabout, ignorance of traffic rules, poor road network / bad roads, and lack of government support as challenges faced by FRSC in Bayelsa State. This is in line with Adeiele, (2015) who reported on mob attacks on personnel and offices across the country. This implies that Bayelsa State FRSC challenges were more from road users and less from government.

The movement of people and goods from one location to another is an important aspect of human life, and this movement is greatly dependent on road transportation. As the movement of people and goods through road transport increase, so also its challenges. The Federal Government of Nigeria established the FRSC in 1988 to deal with these challenges. Despite the establishment and operation of the FRSC, the challenges of high rate road traffic crashes leading to loss of lives and properties are still very prominent in our society. Consequently, this study was set out to investigate the effectiveness of FRSC on accident reduction in Nigeria, particularly in Bayelsa State. After thorough investigation, it was revealed that accident rate in 2021 was higher than that of 2020, indicating a worsening situation in the state and that FRSC in Bayelsa State had not been making the needed progress. Most of the perceived causes of accidents in Bayelsa State are as a result of lack of continuous re-orientation and enforcement of laid-down rules by the FRSC. The study found out that the FRSC in Bayelsa State had initiated some useful ideas such as jingles and massive enlightenment on motor parks to combat accident in the state. If this is well carried out, it will ensure the body’s effectiveness in combating road accident and definitely reduce accident rate in the country. The study also revealed lack of cooperation, hostility from road users, ignorance to traffic rules etc. as challenges faced by FRSC, indicating that in Bayelsa State, FRSC challenges are more from road users than from the Government. One thing that must be noted from the foregoing is that, the reduction of road traffic accident is dependent on the human element who are both the operators (enforcers) and users (abiders) of the road, if the duo does not cooperate positively, road traffic crashes cannot be reduced appreciably. This understanding and consideration must be paramount in the hearts of policy makers and implementors.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the revelations from the study, the following have been recommended:

- i) In as much as rule enforcement is important, cooperation from road users is key to effective accident reduction. It is therefore recommended that FRSC should secure the cooperation of their host communities through different modes of dialogues / meetings.
- ii) The FRSC must be up and doing on its role of rule enforcement without fear or favour. This will limit most of the perceived causes of accidents.
- iii) The study revealed that the FRSC in Bayelsa State had initiated the use of jingles and daily awareness campaign in different motor parks. The FRSC should also take this initiative to religious gatherings so as to reach out to private vehicle drivers and not just commercial vehicle drivers.
- iv) It has been identified in the study that the challenges facing FRSC in Bayelsa State were more from road users and less from government; it is therefore recommended that road users should be given continuous re-orientation on traffic rules, and traffic rules should be given serious monitoring with offenders being punished accordingly. The government should also provide the requisite modern facilities to aide FRSC in performing their duty effectively.

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