



**THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS BY ROAD SAFETY PERSONNEL FOR
ADVOCACY PROGRAMMES ON TRAFFIC REGULATIONS IN NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the use of SM platforms by road safety personnel in public advocacy programmes on traffic regulations in Jigawa State Nigeria. The study used quantitative research method and adopted a correlational research design. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection from 198 respondents comprising road safety personnel serving in Jigawa State. Frequency distribution table, correlation coefficient and multiple regression analyses were carried out on the data collected. Findings revealed that, respondents are aware of SM platforms and use them for public advocacy on traffic regulations. Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and Youtube are the types of SM platforms used by the respondents. On the hypothesis tested the study found that, ditto there is significant relationship between the awareness and use of SM platforms. The study concludes that, road safety personnel are aware of, and used four types of SM platforms for public advocacy. The study recommends that, Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) should adopt and support the use of SM for public enlightenment through reward and incentives to serve as an encouragement and motivation to their personnel in order to facilitate the use of SM platforms so as to educate road users and reduce road traffic crash to the barest minimum.

Keywords: Social media, Road safety, Personnel, Advocacy, Traffic regulations

Introduction

In the present age of information superhighway, millions of people around the globe are building online local, regional, and global communities. This is made possible through sharing and disseminating information and interacting through a variety of web based or SM platforms (Eid & Ward, 2009). Social Media (SM) remained an important tool of connecting members of various communities who use web based applications to share, collaborate, contribute and communicate over the communities. SM scale business, marketing activities, education and entertainment, research and development and public service activities. For example, SM opens windows of opportunities among the security agencies such as the Road Safety personnel to interact and share information among them as well as reach out to the public effectively. With the potential of reaching millions of people within the shortest possible time, SM can serve as an avenue for road safety personnel to interact with public and present different enlightenment programs on road traffic regulations. Social media platforms capable of recording videos, sound and photos to share online



and can be used as a channel to educate road users so as to reduce road traffic crash (RTC), which according to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2013) is a major public problem, killing nearly 1.3 million people each year and injuring as many as 50 million worldwide.

It is generally acknowledged that Nigeria has a poor driving culture, which is as a result of weak traffic education, public awareness and enforcement programs (FRSC, 2007). Education is the only instrument used in changing people's behavior and attitudes. Road safety personnel are expected to make optimum use of the SM platforms particularly in educating road users with the aim of improving good driving culture in Nigeria. It is on this note that, this study explores and reveal the result of an evidence based investigation on the Use of SM platforms by road safety Personnel for Advocacy Programmes on Traffic Regulations in Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

According to Devis, Rios, Anguilar and Canche (2012) the term 'Social Media Technology' (SMT) refers to web based and mobile platforms that allow individual and organization to create, engage and share new user-generated or existing content, in digital environment through multi-way communication. It includes the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue. The creative and engagement nature of social media, allows users to connect with people they might not otherwise met. This sharing of information, ideas and resources ultimately creates an increased level of productivity among Road Safety personnel because their learning and knowledge base expands as does their ability to complete work tasks. SM is becoming an integral part of life where users are both the consumers and producers of online content. With these platforms road safety personnel can constantly evaluate and update content to meet the changing needs of roads users, these platforms are used for collaboration and sharing of ideas and information.

With the flow of information and ideas in both directions – from road safety personnel to road users, road safety services have ability to evolve and improve rapidly. However different types of SM platforms exist and are can be used for different purposes such as enlightenment campaign, raise awareness, rescue, and enforcement. Common examples include blogs, micro blogging, social network sites, video sharing sites, professional network and content-driven sites. Sachdeva and Kumaraguru (2015) reported the use of SM by police organizations, among the types used are Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Youtube. Some platforms are used to communicate with citizens (Facebook and Twitter) and others only within the organization (*WhatsApp* and *Youtube*). These may be due to the fact that, uniform personnel have unique powers, unique responsibilities and a unique relationship to the public. Law enforcement agencies need their own models, their own best practices, and their own discussions and philosophies about how to incorporate social media to achieve their distinct purposes.

Similarly, WHO (2012) found that *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *YouTube*, and *Vimeo* are the types of social media use by Youth for Road Safety (YOURS) in order to improve sharing of information and support of its overall programs objectives to promote road safety globally create a thriving network of youth for road safety and build their capacity to advocate more effectively. In support of this, Mohammed (2012) highlighted some social media applications that are useful in Nigerian context so as to increase awareness and improve road traffic regulation as: Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Inshare, Badoo, LinkedIn, Twoo, and Adult.com. SM contribute immensely in the enhancement of advocacy and enlightenment. According to Adaja and Ayodele (2013) "the potentials of the new media are seamless and boundless in terms of interactions, interrelationships, and information sharing and exchanges". Therefore, the fundamental aim



of social media platform is to enhance communication through the act of socializing. SM provides innovative and interesting resources for advocators to reach millions of users quickly and effectively (Nkechi & George, 2014).

Using these platforms road safety personnel can educate a large number of road users individually or collectively. This is true because the development of social media over the last few years has given ordinary people the possibility of expressing themselves to a large audiences than ever before in the blink of an eye. They are able to create a digital network that has no borders. They can use simple method to transmit videos of road traffic crash, pictures of victims and damage properties, enlighten messages and record sound. Everything can be uploaded in a split of second and potentially made available to all users of the internet, which according to Internetlivestats (2015) totaled 3,230,322,078 users.

The causes of road traffic crash have been categorized into human, mechanical, and environmental factors. According to Umar (nd) the human factor accounts for up to 90% of accidents, while the mechanical and environmental factors contribute to the other 10%. Human factors include visual acuteness, driver fatigue, poor knowledge of road signs and regulations, illiteracy, health problems, excessive speeding, drug abuse, and over-confidence while at the steering wheel. Among the mechanical factors that lead to fatal car accidents are poor vehicle maintenance, tyre blowouts, poor lights, un-roadworthy vehicles, and broken-down vehicles on the road without adequate warning. The environmental factors are including heavy rainfall, harmattan winds, sun reflection, heavy wind, pot holes, and un-tarred roads. These factors have independently and/or collectively contributed to the high rate of road accidents in Nigeria (FRSC, 2007).

Federal Road Safety Corps as a lead agency in Nigeria to eradicate road traffic crash and create safe motoring environment in the country, the effectiveness and efficiency of the agency depend on her ability to educate road users throughout the country on road traffic regulations and enforcement provides relevant and timely information on traffic issues. Therefore, it is imperative for road safety and other emergency management staff to use SM platforms as a means of communication in advocating, enlighten and educating public on traffic safety. Realizing the potential of SM platforms and to involve citizens in policing activities, law enforcement agencies have made themselves present on various Social Networks such as Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, and Whatsapp. In the study conducted by Sachdeva and Kumaraguru (2015), reported that SM can help increase the personnel (citizen volunteers) available for police to identify offenders. According the report using social network, citizens can easily report defaulters and lawbreakers.

SM can be used to create a community of people who will be using these applications to identify crimes. For example, before the introduction of SM only traffic police on roads were responsible for catching traffic violators, but now anybody can use Online Social Network pages to post pictures of traffic violators. Delhi Traffic Police page involves public [citizens] in finding traffic violators, on the basis of which fine are issued. It is also believed that using SM, citizens can help report issues related to traffic and crime. These issues include traffic congestion, accidents, beggars, corruption, unruly behavior of taxi or auto rickshaw drivers and other issues related to public transport. Facebook content analysis shows that citizens use these pages to report activities such as the use of tinted dark glasses in cars, crimes against women, and neighborhood issues like drunken men on streets. For example, a citizen may complaints about drunken men and posts a video as evidence, these observations show that citizen participation on SM can increase the personnel ability for identifying crime and law offenders (Sachdeva and Kumaraguru, 2015).

A popular law database known as Lexis Nexis (2012) reported that, among the law enforcement agents SM is widely used for investigations, with four of every five law enforcement professionals using SM for this purposes including crime investigations, listening/monitoring for potentials criminal activity,



in-service training, background investigation for job candidate, community outreach to build public relation, notifying the public on crimes, notifying the public on emergency/disaster, soliciting crime tips and notifying the public on traffic issues. In the same vein Central Bureau for Investigation (2013) revealed that about ten major cities in India are using SM platforms for citizen engagement in traffic regulations in which the study indicates that 48% of law enforcement personnel used SM platforms for these purpose.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to investigate the use of SM platforms by road safety personnel for advocacy programmes on traffic regulations in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. identify the demographic information of the road safety personnel in Jigawa State.
- ii. determine the level of awareness of SM platforms by road safety personnel in Jigawa State;
- iii. identify the types of SM platforms available for advocating road traffic regulations in Jigawa State; and
- iv. ascertain the extent of use of SM platforms by road safety personnel for road traffic advocacy programs.

Methodology

This study employed quantitative research method to investigate the use of SM platforms by Road Safety Personnel for advocacy programmes on traffic regulations in Nigeria. The researchers also adopted a correlational research design in order to describe the relationship that exists between the variables. The study used the entire road safety personnel serving in Jigawa state at the time of the conduct of this research. In all a total of 198 copies of questionnaires were distributed to personnel of the Road Safety in the state in which 172 were successfully filled and returned and found useful for analyses. The responses were analyzed using statistical measure of frequency distribution and percentage tabulated and with correlation coefficient respectively.

Results and Findings of the Study

Table 1: Response Rate

| Questionnaire | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Number of Questionnaires Administered | 198 | 100% |
| Number of Questionnaires Returned | 172 | 86.8% |
| Number of Questionnaires not returned | 26 | 13.2% |

A total of 198 copies of questionnaires were distributed. In all, 172 (86.8%) were completed, returned and found useful for analysis making a total of 86% of the response rate. The high response rate was attributed to the fact that the respondents are within the reach of the researcher.

Table 2: Demographic Information of the Respondents

| Demographic information | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| The Name of your Command | | |
| RS1.4 Dutse | 73 | 42.4% |
| RS1.41 Hadejia | 47 | 27.3% |
| RS1.42 Gumel | 38 | 22.1% |
| Zebra 22 Shuwarin | 14 | 8.1% |
| Total | 172 | 100% |
| Rank | | |



| | | |
|------------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Officers | 66 | 38.4% |
| Marshals | 106 | 61.6% |
| Total | 172 | 100% |
| Gender | | |
| Male | 156 | 90.7% |
| Female | 16 | 9.3% |
| Total | 172 | 100% |
| Qualification | | |
| SSCE | 18 | 10.5% |
| 9 Month post-secondary Certificate | 8 | 4.7% |
| OND | 16 | 9.3% |
| ND / NCE | 45 | 26.2 |
| HND | 13 | 7.6 |
| DEGREE | 67 | 39% |
| MSC | 5 | 2.9% |
| Total | 172 | 100% |
| Age | | |
| 18-29 | 28 | 16.3 |
| 30-39 | 97 | 56.4 |
| 40-49 | 37 | 21.5 |
| 50-59 | 10 | 5.8 |
| Total | 172 | 100% |
| Years in Service | | |
| 0-5years | 64 | 37.2% |
| 6-10years | 56 | 32.6% |
| 11-15years | 20 | 11.6 |
| 16-20 | 24 | 14% |
| 20 above | 8 | 4.7 |
| Total | 172 | 100% |

Table 2 provides the demographic details of the respondents. The results indicate that the respondents were sourced from four different commands of Dutse, Hadejia, Gumel and Shuwarin. Majority of the respondents however came from Dutse command with a frequency distribution of 73(42.3%). This disparity of respondents from the Dutse command against other commands is exactly a mirror of what is actually on ground taking into consideration the number of their total population which was obtained from the staff nominal roll in the commands. In addition, the fact that Dutse is the capital city of Jigawa State could be additional reason for the high concentration of the respondents in this study. In addition, data on respondents' rank which was categorized based on two cadres of Marshals and Officers. The marshals constituted the majority of the respondents with 106(61.6%) and 66(38.4%) Officers, respectively. On gender the table 2 shows 156(90.7%) of the respondents are males while 16(9.3%) of the respondents are



females. The academic qualification of the respondents revealed that majority of the respondents were holders of first degree with 67(39%) while 45(26.2%) are those with ND/NCE, 18(10.5) are those SSCE, 16(9.3) are those with OND, 13(7.6) are those with HND and 8(4.7) have 9 month post-secondary certificate while only 5(2.9%) are those that have MSC as their highest educational qualifications. On the respondents age, more than half of the respondents 97 (56.4%) are within age group of 30-39yrs and 37 (21.5%) aged 40-49, respectively.

Table 3: Awareness of SM platforms for Road Traffic Regulation

| Awareness | Frequency/Percentage | | | |
|---|----------------------|-----------|-----|------|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Are you aware of the Social Media | 172 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Sources of awareness | Yes | No | | |
| Muster Parade | 123 | 71.5 | 49 | 28.2 |
| In House Lectures | 135 | 78.5 | 37 | 21.5 |
| Colleagues | 114 | 66.3 | 58 | 33.7 |
| Family and Friends | 114 | 66.3 | 58 | 33.7 |
| Workshops and Conferences | 43 | 25 | 129 | 75 |
| Others | 21 | 12.2 | 151 | 87.8 |
| Awareness on the use of Social Media Platforms for Public Enlightenment | 170 | 98.8 | 2 | 1.2 |

When asked about awareness of the existence of SM platforms, apparently, all the respondents 172(100%) indicate evidence of awareness with SM platforms as clearly depicted in table 3 above. The findings further revealed the different sources of the respondents' awareness on SM. The sources include that of muster parade with 135(78.5%) and In-House Lectures 123(71.5%) responses. In addition, 114(66.3%) respondents testified that they got their awareness from colleagues, families and friends, respectively.

Table 4: Types of Social Media Applications Available for Public Advocacy

| Available Social Media | Frequency/Percentage% | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------|-----|------|
| | Yes | | No | |
| Facebook | 170 | 98.8 | 2 | 1.2 |
| WhatsApp | 158 | 91.9 | 14 | 8.1 |
| Twitter | 137 | 79.7 | 35 | 20.3 |
| Youtube | 113 | 65.7 | 59 | 34.3 |
| 2go | 55 | 32 | 117 | 68 |
| BBM | 46 | 26.7 | 126 | 73.3 |
| Instagram | 34 | 19.8 | 138 | 80.2 |
| Naija.com | 31 | 18 | 141 | 82 |

| Available Social Media | Frequency/Percentage% | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----|-----|------|
| | Yes | | No | |
| Palmchat | 12 | 7 | 160 | 93 |
| Skype | 8 | 4.7 | 164 | 95.3 |
| Viber | 8 | 4.7 | 167 | 95.3 |
| Blogs | 7 | 4.1 | 165 | 95.9 |
| Badoo | 6 | 3.5 | 166 | 96.5 |
| Wechat | 4 | 2.3 | 168 | 97.7 |
| Linkedin | 2 | 1.2 | 170 | 98.8 |
| Myspace | 2 | 1.2 | 170 | 98.8 |
| Pinterest | 2 | 1.2 | 170 | 98.8 |

The findings on the type of SM available for public enlightenment in the commands. The finding indicates that, Facebook 170 (98.8), WhatsApp 158 (91.9), Twitter 137 (79.7), and Youtube 113 (65.7) are the most popular SM platforms available for public advocacy. In addition, some of the respondents also indicated that 2go 55 (32), BBM 46 (26.7), Instagram 34 (19.8) and Naija.com 31 (18) as SM available for public enlightenment.

Table 5: Use of SM Platforms for Public Advocacy Programs

| Use of Social Media | Frequency/Percentage (%) | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|------|----|------|-----|------|
| | SA/A | UD | | D/SD | | |
| I use SM platforms to advocate Road Traffic Regulations | 166 | 96.2 | 5 | 3.2 | 1 | .6 |
| I learned how to use SM platforms through trial and error | 135 | 78.5 | 16 | 9.3 | 21 | 12.2 |
| I learned how to use SM platforms through friends and colleagues guidance | 135 | 78.4 | 8 | 4.7 | 29 | 16.9 |
| I learned how to use SM platforms through special training by the Federal Road Safety commission | 36 | 21 | 20 | 11.6 | 116 | 67.5 |



Perceived Usefulness

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----|------|----|-----|----|-----|
| Using SM platforms raise the social status of Road Safety Personnel | 162 | 94.2 | 4 | 2.3 | 6 | 3.5 |
| Using SM platforms enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of my work | 158 | 91.8 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 8.2 |
| Using SM platforms help in reaching road users easier and faster. | 158 | 91.8 | 10 | 5.8 | 4 | 2,3 |
| Using SM platforms enhance road - user's adherence to road traffic regulations. | 151 | 87.8 | 7 | 4.1 | 14 | 8.1 |
| Using SM platforms reduce road traffic crash. | 152 | 88.4 | 10 | 5.8 | 10 | 5.8 |

Perceived Ease of Use

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----|------|----|-----|----|-----|
| Learning how to use SM platforms is easy to me | 158 | 91.8 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 8.2 |
| I find it easy to use SM platforms in educating road users | 155 | 90.1 | 10 | 5.8 | 7 | 3.9 |
| I will become more skilful using SM | 161 | 93.6 | 6 | 3.5 | 5 | 2.9 |
| Overall, I find SM technology easy to use | 155 | 90.3 | 3 | 1.7 | 14 | 8.2 |

The data collected on the use of SM platforms for public advocacy programs indicates evidence of use of social media, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use for public enlightenment. On the use of SM, the result revealed that majority of the respondents 166(96.2%) used SM for public enlightenment or to advocate for road traffic regulations. In addition, majority learned how to use SM through trial and error and guidance and counseling with 135(78.5%) for each response respectively. This result however indicated that only 36(21%) respondents learned how to used SM through special training organized by the management of the corps. It is also evident from the data that the respondents agreed with the perceived usefulness of SM as majority of them revealed that using SM platforms raises the social status of road safety personnel 162 (94.2%). Furthermore, the data collected concerning perceived ease of use of SM platforms indicates that majority agreed to the perceived ease of use (PEOU) of SM.

Hypothesis Results

In order to establish the use of SM for road traffic regulations from the hypothesis testing in which respondents' awareness and use were tested the Spearman's Correlation test was used, the result of which is presented in Table 6.



Table 6: Relationship between Awareness and Use

| | | Awareness | Use |
|----------------|-------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Spearman's rho | Awareness | | |
| | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | -.304** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .000 |
| | N | 172 | 172 |
| Use | Use | | |
| | Correlation Coefficient | -.304** | 1.000 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . |
| | N | 172 | 172 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The result in Table 6 indicates that significant correlation at 0.01 (2- tailed) with p-value 0.01, greater than 0.000, and for which the null hypothesis is rejected. . This means that, there is significant relationship between the awareness and use of SM platforms in public enlightenment program.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings revealed that majority of the respondents were aware of SM in which majority of them indicated high level of the awareness, with the main sources of awareness being through muster parade, in-house lectures, family and friends and colleagues. The study established that, road safety personnel are aware of SM platforms with a high level of awareness. This intensify the effort of the Corps’ management in rendering its statutory mandate of educating road users through public enlightenment program so as to reduce road traffic crash to the barest minimum. The findings of this study is in line with that of Madhudson (2012) and Parvarthamma and Danappa (2013) which shows that, their respondents were very aware of SM.

On the types of SM available, the study identified Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and WhatsApp as the major SM platforms available for public advocacy on traffic regulations in the study area than the other which recorded low usage. The outcome supported the findings of Murray and Lewis (2012) where they found four SM platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and smart phones recommended for road safety advocacy which is in line with the findings of Mohammed (2012) and Kumaraguru (2015) where they found Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and WhatsApp as SM platforms used by law enforcement agencies. These may be due to the fact that, uniform personnel have unique powers, unique responsibility and unique relationship to public as such they need their own models, their own best practices and their own discussions and philosophies on how to incorporate SM to achieve their distinct functions. Based on the inference above it indicated that, there are four major SM platforms suitable for used in public advocacy on traffic regulation in the study area.

The result of findings on the use of SM revealed that, majority of the respondents indicated the use of SM for public advocacy in which majority of them learned how to use the SM platforms through guidance and trial and error. This may be due to the enhanced features of ICTs such as mobile phones (Smart phones and Blackberry) as observed by Okenedo (2012) which stated that Blackberry device is becoming increasingly popular in Nigeria. The study also revealed Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and WhatsApp as the applications frequently used in public advocacy by the respondents which are, as a result of their features similar and easier to use. Based on the inference above it can be conclude that respondents under study used



SM platforms for public advocacy on traffic regulations which they learned how to use through guidance and counseling/trial and error.

Conclusion

Road safety personnel in Jigawa State are aware of SM and they used different types of SM platforms for public advocacy program this include Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and WhatsApp platforms which were in disseminating information on road traffic regulations to road users. The hypothesis tested revealed that, there is significant relationship between the awareness and use of SM platforms in public advocacy on traffic regulations.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommend that:

- i. From the findings it is evident that workshops and seminars doesn't seems to be one of the major sources of awareness of SM among the corps members. It is therefore recommended that the management of the Corps members should be organizing such for a so as to enables staff exchange and share knowledge in this regard. In this way also, members may come to understand and appreciate other available social media such as naija.com, linkendin, myspace, badoo, etc
- ii. The corps management should adopt and support the use of social media for public enlightenment.
- iii. Rewards and inceptives inform of promotion gifts and recommendation letters should be given to the personnel using SM platforms for public education to serve as an encouragement and motivation.

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