

## **A STUDY OF FACTORS INFLUENCING ATTITUDE TOWARDS TRAFFIC SAFETY AMONG MINI BUS DRIVERS IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*Traffic violation in Nigeria is becoming a public health concern, and minibus drivers primarily commit the menace of traffic violations. Perhaps, there are stipulated traffic safety rules and regulations to prevent road traffic crashes and save lives and properties. Consequently, the set of traffic rules are continually ignored in the country. This present study examined the influence of some psychosocial factors such as sense of self and religious commitment on the attitude of minibus drivers toward traffic safety. The participants comprised 87 minibus drivers from public and private bus terminals and bus repair workshops in Enugu states. They completed a self-report measure of sense of self and religious commitment. The multiple regression analysis conducted on the data revealed that a sense of self and religious commitment positively influenced minibus driver's attitudes towards traffic safety. Thus, the study concluded that a sense of self and religious commitment are essential determinants of driver's attitudes towards traffic safety in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Mini Bus Drivers, Sense of Self, Religious Commitment, Attitudes

### **Introduction**

The population of Nigeria is steadily increasing, making the country one of the most populous black nations in the world (Anyanwu et al., 2020). Nigeria occupies a vast landmass with an extensive road network connecting the 36 states, including the federal capital territory. Nigerians are travellers. However, with the decay in rail transport and the high cost of air travel, road

transport becomes the most popular means of transportation(Akomolafe et al., 2009; Kuye et al., 2017; Mayomi et al., 2014; Odeku, 2020; Ogunbodede, 2008; Olusina & Ajanaku, 2017; Sodeinde et al., 2020; Usman, 2014). This situation leads to the high vehicular traffic on her roads. Although Nigeria has expansive road networks, most of them are deplorable due to damage and inadequate maintenance that made them primarily not motor vehicle conducive(Odeku, 2020).

The increasing demand for road transportation as the primary means of transportation in Nigeria has been identified as the leading cause of injuries and deaths and the most common cause of disability(Chukwubuike, 2021; Edomwonyi & Enoma, 2018; Eke et al., 2000; Elachi et al., 2015; Mac et al., 2019; Nzegwu et al., 2008; Ogunyemi et al., 2021; Onyemaechi et al., 2020; Oyetubo et al., 2018; Venkatraman et al., 2020). The phenomenon constitutes a significant public health burden in Nigeria as it is reported daily, leading to a high incidence of morbidity and mortality and economic loss to the country. Perhaps, the incidence of road traffic accidents reflects a large extent on the non-compliance associated with traffic regulations.

Traffic safety is the most public health determinant related to transportation(Rojas-Rueda, 2020).It refers to the stipulated measures aimed to mitigate traffic crashes by attempting to influence road users'attitudes and behaviour.In Nigeria, typical road users include all persons that use the road for various purposes. Traffic safety attempts to regulate drivers' driving patterns and responses to the driving environment in road transportation. Traffic safety rules such as speed limits, road signs, and other regulations are critical in driving and should be observed. Traffic safety law is primarily designed to avert risky driving behaviour by making it illegitimate to engage

in these behaviours (Eby, 2004). Nonetheless, poor traffic safety has long been recognized as a detriment to individual and public health (Singleton et al., 2020).

Extensive literature around the world has attributed the cause of traffic crashes to human error, comprising over speeding, non-use of seat belts, use of mobile phones while driving, road rage, drunk driving, traffic violation (Agarwal et al., 2020; Amedorme & Nsoh, 2016; Dash et al., 2020; Dawson et al., 2018; Khan & Lee, 2019; Moran et al., 2010; Mphela, 2020; Muhammad et al., 2017; Poudel et al., 2021). These perceived causes of road traffic accidents can be attributed to an individual's attitude toward traffic safety.

In Nigeria, data from the National Bureau of Statistics suggest that overspeeding, loss of control, and dangerous driving were supposedly the cause of most traffic accidents. The data noted that commercial vehicles accounted for the majority of crashes than private cars. Similarly, the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) stated the intention of the commission to refer traffic offenders to psychiatric tests. The psychiatric evaluation is intended for drivers who commit life-threatening traffic offenses such as answering or making phone calls while driving, traffic light and route violation, dangerous driving, and overloading. The commission stated that the decision resulted from the perceived driver's disrespect to traffic laws and regulations and aggravated crashes.

There is a growing concern about the attitudes of the minibus drivers towards traffic safety in Nigeria. Insinuation suggests that these drivers increasingly ignore traffic regulations without regard to the protection of other road users. An observation of the attitudes of the minibus drivers reveals an unbearable

level of traffic violation. Whereas most of them comply with traffic rules, many ignore the rules.

Attitudes are among those components of an individual's psychological makeup, making that person behave not passively or neutrally but selectively and characteristically, especially about certain specific stimulus situations. Attitudes are the positive or negative evaluation of an object, person, or event. It is influenced by many factors and comprised cognitive, affective, and behavioural components. For example, the cognitive part is a driver's belief, understanding, or knowledge toward traffic safety. The affective component is the feelings occurring from a driver's view of traffic laws and regulations. The behavioural element represents the response towards traffic safety. In other words, an understanding of how a driver perceives and feels about road safety will predict how the driver will respond to traffic laws and regulations.

The negative attitudes of drivers towards traffic rules and regulations could lead to a behavioural pattern, such as ignoring traffic lights, speeding, answering calls while driving, lane violation, etc. These attitudes can affect a few people, but when we look at it on a larger scale, it affects general society, and the danger is serious. However, drivers with a favourable attitude toward traffic requirements will tend to abide by the rules, thereby maintaining safety on the Nigerian road. The purpose of the current study is to examine the attitudes of minibus drivers towards traffic safety based on a sense of self and religious commitment. Sense of self is a social psychological construct that reflects a person's overall perception of the self. Thus, it represents the level of relevance individuals attach to their attitudes, behaviours, roles, and attributes (Ylvisaker, 2006). Sense of self is composed of self-esteem, self-worth, identity, self-image, and how they feel about themselves. Perhaps,

how people understand themselves is critical in their response to their socio-world.

On the other hand, religious commitment entails a person's innermost quality that reflects self-righteousness and the extent to which a person is devoted to spirituality. The construct is viewed as the beliefs and attitudes reflecting spiritual values and explains the role of spirituality in man's social life (Ebrahim & Memish, 2020). Numerous studies have linked religious commitment with attitude (Gyasi-Gyamerah & Akotia, 2016; McPhetres & Zuckerman, 2018; Wesselmann et al., 2016). For instance, Graafland (2017) found that religiosity strengthens positive attitudes towards pro-social behaviour.

### **Hypothesis**

For the study's purpose, the following hypothesis was formulated:  
Sense of self will predict minibus driver's attitude towards traffic safety.

Religious commitment will predict minibus driver's attitude towards traffic safety

### **Method**

In this study, eighty-seven (n=87) minibus drivers from public bus terminals and bus repair sites in the Enugu State of Nigeria participated. Our choice of these locations is due to the study purpose. Participants include males who have driven a minibus for more than one year. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted.

### **Measures**

#### **Attitude to Traffic Safety**

Attitude towards road safety was measured with a modified version of the Attitude towards Safe Driving Scale (ASDS) initially developed by (Masuri et al., 2018). The 46-item scale was reduced to 22 items for the study. Items were

rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = Never, 5 = Always). A higher score on this scale indicates a positive attitude. The instrument was validated following a pilot study, and .87 Cronbach's alpha was obtained.

### **Sense of Self**

Sense of self was measured using a modified version of the Sense of Self Scale (SOSS) initially developed by (Flury & Ickes, 2007). The instrument was designed to assess a weak and robust sense of self. The reliability of the scale was determined from a trial study. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients indicated an acceptable level of internal consistency reliability of the instrument, which exceeded the cutoff rules-of-the thumb of .70.

### **Religious commitment**

The religious commitment was measured using the religious commitment inventory (RCI-10) developed by (Worthington et al., 2003).

### **Result**

One hundred and thirteen minibus drivers comprising interstate and intrastate bus drivers from different bus companies and general bus terminals, including bus repair workshops in the Enugu State of Nigeria, were approached and asked to participate in the survey. In all, 96 out of the 113 approached consented to take part in the study. Thus, the study instrument was given to them. Eighty-seven (87) copies of the scale administered were completed correctly and collected immediately. However, the remaining nine copies were rejected due to improper completion. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to ascertain the effect of sense of self and religious commitment on attitude towards traffic safety. The study revealed that the independent variables positively influenced the dependent variable.

Table showing the outcome of the multiple regression analysis conducted to determine the effect of SoS and RC on attitude towards traffic safety.

	B	95% CI for B		SEB	$\beta R^2$	t	Sig
		LL	UL				
SoS 2.839	2.785	1.923	.034			56.689	.000
RC -.749	-.836	-.662	.045	-.730	.547	-16.736	.000

Note. SoS = Sense of Self; RC= Religious Commitment; B = Unstandardized regression coefficient; CI = Confident Interval; LL = Lower Limit; UL = Upper Limit; SEB = Standardized error of the coefficient;  $\beta$  = Standardized coefficient;  $R^2$  = Coefficient of determination. \*P<.000.

## Discussion

The current study was aimed to investigate the predictive role of sense of self and religious commitment on minibus driver's attitudes towards traffic safety. The multiple regression analysis conducted on the data established a positive association between sense of self and driver's attitude towards traffic safety. Thus, the result affirms the first hypothesis that a sense of self will predict a driver's attitude towards traffic safety. The current finding indicates that how the minibus drivers perceive themselves contributes significantly to their attitudes towards traffic safety. Thus, the result suggests that drivers who scored high in the sense of self would probably pay attention to traffic rules and regulations. The finding corroborates the previous (Yang et al., 2010), who associated a sense of self-security with positive motivation for care. Understanding the self and having a positive view about the self is assumed to correlate driving style. Perhaps, previous research noted that a sense of self could increase self-control (Kim et al., 2019). Thus, suggesting that sense of self could improve healthy driving.

Furthermore, the present finding on the second hypothesis revealed that religious commitment as an essential component in people's way of life might contribute significantly to minibus driver's attitude towards traffic safety. Nonetheless, the analysis conducted on the data established this emerging discourse. Perhaps, in line with the study's assumption, the result indicates that drivers committed to their religion are more attentive to traffic safety. Consistent with a previous study, Achour et al. (2017) opined that religious commitment reveals people's favourable attitudes. Thus, this suggestion could be attributed to the love, empathy, kindness, and acceptance associated with more profound and committed knowledge of religion and spirituality. Although Iranmanesh et al. (2018) had indicated no significant association between religiosity and attitude, the current study provides a possible link between the construct of religiosity and driving attitude.

### **Conclusion**

This study investigated the effect of sense of self and religious commitment on attitude towards traffic safety. The finding revealed that a sense of self and religious commitment predicted attitude towards traffic safety among the minibus drivers. Therefore, it is concluded that a sense of self and religious commitment are essential in controlling traffic-related violations among drivers. Although, the mechanism through which the independent variables influenced the minibus driver's attitude towards traffic safety is unclear. However, to our understanding, the current study provided crucial data capable of enhancing the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) role and other transport regulators in alleviating the menace of traffic violation and accidents in Nigeria.



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