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Stakeholder Participation as an Innovation for Uplifting the Standard of Public Sector Organization in Nigeria: A Case Study of Federal Road Safety Corps Sokoto State Command

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Abstract

Road safety remains a critical governance challenge in Nigeria, requiring effective collaboration among relevant stakeholders. This study examines stakeholder participation as an innovative approach to enhancing the operational standards of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Sokoto State Command. It specifically explores how the involvement of government agencies, local communities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) contributes to improved road safety outcomes. The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining interviews with FRSC officials and stakeholders with analysis of relevant road safety data. Findings indicate that stakeholder participation enhances collaborative problem-solving, resource mobilization, information sharing, and public awareness, thereby strengthening the effectiveness of road safety interventions. The study concludes that sustained stakeholder engagement and innovation are important for improving operational standards and institutional effectiveness within the FRSC Sokoto State Command. It further suggests that this collaborative approach offers lessons for strengthening road safety governance in other Nigerian contexts.

Keywords: *Stakeholder participation; Innovation; Road safety; FRSC; Institutional effectiveness*

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Background of the Study

Stakeholder participation has been crucial for the success and survival of the Federal Road Safety Corps as a lead agency in road safety management and administration in Nigeria. This is because Stakeholder has a significant role to play in achieving a significant reduction in road traffic crashes by half, as globally agreed. However, critics have noted the inadequacies of the Federal Road Safety Corps to rise to the demands of these objectives, which previous studies have also established. The design and implementation of initiatives to bring FRSC up to speed should, especially, be the role of internal stakeholders. However, the existing situation in the FRSC Road Management Organization (RMO) has not significantly transformed into the promotion of gender-sensitive equality, performance, excellence, technological advancements, effective management, and empowerment. The current challenges, problems, and performance inadequacies of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) organization and governance in Sokoto state are posing constraints and blocking the delivery of better and high-level service to the people of Sokoto state. What do we mean when we use terms like innovation, stakeholders, and participation in the context of the Federal Road Safety Corps? This chapter seeks to clarify the meaning and the role of stakeholder participation as it relates to uplifting the standard of the Federal Road Safety Corps in road management activities in Sokoto State Command.

Conceptual Clarification

Stakeholder

Conceptually, Stakeholder refer to deeply interested people in legal aspect of an issue. This group includes those who want to ensure that all relevant policies and procedures are observed in reaching a decision. They should be involved because of their attention to procedural detail and their ability to derail a process or litigate final decision. (Maffe, 2002). Operationally, Stakeholder refer to those categories of people who have nearness to the grassroot in terms of safeguarding their life's and also ensuring the efficient and effective functioning of the FRSC Sokoto Command.

Stakeholder Participation

Stakeholder participation can make an important contribution to strengthening organizational design, implementation and assessment of policies. It entails processes that enable stakeholders to understand and influence decisions and processes that may interest or affect them. Other terms for participation include involvement and engagement. (Maffe 2002). Operationally, Stakeholders participation as defined according to its usage in this study is concerned with allowing people to be involved in decision that affect their lives. Through participation people can identify opportunities and strategies for action and build solidarity to affect change. Participation matters as a core value in open democratic societies, and increasingly is recognized as right through global human resource document

Innovation

A conceptual understanding of innovation can be related to being a necessary condition for the modernization of government in order to meet new societal challenges. One of the

founding fathers of modern innovation theory, Joseph Schumpeter (1942), defined innovation as a process of creative destruction in which 'new combinations of existing resources' are achieved. However, in his view, innovation cannot be separated from entrepreneurship he viewed them as two sides of the same coin. An innovation itself has been mostly defined as 'an idea, practice or object that is perceived as new by an individual or unit of adoption' (Rogers, 2003; Fagerberg et al., 2005). Operationally, discussion on innovation, has witnessed a considerable change on the scholarly perspective that we used to understand these processes. In the 1960s, innovation was seen as a systematic approach that could be organized and programmed: if you had the necessary resources (people, budget and knowledge) at one location, innovation could happen. Organizations, therefore, set up specific research and development units (Drucker, 1985). More recently and for the purpose of this study, innovation is viewed base on the emergence of so-called 'milieux of innovation' (Bekkers et'al 2006 and Castells, 1996). This approach stresses the importance of the fact that innovation does not only take place in specific organizations. Organizations should be willing to share vital resources (like ideas, knowledge, funds and people) across organizational boundaries. Innovation in these 'milieux' is seen as a process of collaboration and co- creation between stakeholders in order to address societal challenges (Voorberg et al., 2015).

Research Questions

The major question that essentially forms the basis of this research is: what are the various innovative ideas and practices introduced by the Stakeholder in FRSC in Sokoto State Sector Command that transformed it and made its operation more beneficial to grassroots and citizens at large?

Reflecting from the aforementioned, the following questions emerged and guided the research:

i. How has stakeholder participation impacted the overall performance and effectiveness of the Federal Road Safety Corps in Sokoto State?
ii. What are the key challenges faced by the Federal Road Safety Corps in implementing stakeholder participation in Sokoto State?
iii. How do we understand the strategies that could be implemented to increase stakeholder participation in the Federal Road Safety Corps in Sokoto State?
iv. How has stakeholder participation in the Federal Road Safety Corps contribute to improving road safety in Sokoto State?
v. What are the attitudes and perceptions of stakeholders towards the Federal Road Safety Corps in Sokoto State?

Research objectives

The research is aimed at examining the involvement of Stakeholder participation as an innovation for uplifting the standard of Federal Road Safety Corps Sokoto command which made its operation more effective and efficient. However, the specific objectives are:

i. To analyze how stakeholder participation impacted the overall performance and effectiveness of the Federal Road Safety Corps in Sokoto State.
ii. To examine the key challenges faced by the Federal Road Safety Corps in

implementing stakeholder participation in Sokoto State.

iii. To understand the strategies that could be implemented to increase stakeholder participation in the Federal Road Safety Corps in Sokoto State.
iv. To describe how stakeholder participation in the Federal Road Safety Corps contribute to improving road safety in Sokoto State
v. To analyze the attitudes and perceptions of stakeholders towards the Federal Road Safety Corps in Sokoto State.

Literature Review

Stakeholder Participation on Innovation

Stakeholder theory is an approach to recognizing and dealing with relationships among stakeholders of a project. There is more literature on stakeholder theory in business, and environmental studies which can be used in innovation studies as well since the underlining principles and theoretical underpinnings are transferable and can, therefore, be adopted. In most of the literature, the stakeholder theory is linked to firms and organizations. Stakeholder theory can be traced back to the seminal work of Freeman (2010), who articulated a new conceptual model of the firm [the project] that must address the interests of its stakeholders, both groups and individuals who can affect or are affected by the firm's purpose (Sikiru, 2019). There is a variance on what defines a stakeholder and the definition of a stakeholder spans across many disciplines and industries. Taking into consideration the definition adopted for this paper, from the public sector perception, stakeholders may include researchers, funders, local authorities, civil society organizations and industry players. These are all critical for the studies survival and success in that they significantly affect how the project is directed and controlled (Freeman, 2010; Lozano, 2005). Because of the variations in defining stakeholders, there are issues and ambiguities when defining roles that are assigned to these stakeholders.

These ambiguities are related to two viewpoints; one that a stakeholder could be defined with regards to the legitimate interest of the prospective agent (person or a group) in the project. However, legitimate interest is subjective and can cause further problems with regards to stakeholder definition. The other viewpoint is that a stakeholder could be defined in terms of a categorization of a group of members of the society (Carney, Whitmarsh, Nicholson-Cole, & Shackley, 2009). Despite that these perspectives are fundamental to the ambiguity resulting from the variation in defining stakeholders, they present a reference point in determining who is a stakeholder in an ICT research project. The conceptualization of a stakeholder is quite broad therefore it can be troublesome when it comes to defining a stakeholder, leading to confusion and misconception of who is a stakeholder and what role do they assume. To avoid this misconception, in this study, a stakeholder will among others include public servants who are concerned in service delivery to the public. One reason for this proposition is that public servants should arguably be considered as stakeholders since they can affect or be affected by the outcomes of the study.

Stakeholders may be identified using a stakeholder analysis approach which involves categorising stakeholders in relation to their level of interest, influence and relevance to the project (Leventon, Fleskens, Claringbould, Schwilch, and Hessel, 2016). This approach has the potential to enhance the effectiveness of the stakeholder identification process in Innovation projects. For instance, regarding influence, stakeholders could be identified to contribute based on their knowledge and expertise. Another approach suggested by Stringer (2009) distinguish between different mechanisms of stakeholder identification through a typology specifically focusing on stakeholder engagement in research. The typology highlights the notion that different types of stakeholders may be engaged subject to the perceived technical competence, awareness and influence on outcomes at different phases of the study. Using a typology when inviting stakeholders to contribute to public sector innovation aids the clarification of the level of contribution that is expected from those who are assigned certain roles. If the identification of stakeholders and their roles is wrong, the expected contribution will not be very effective to the project (Durham, Baker, Smith, Moore, & Morgan, 2014).

Theoretical Framework

In understanding the Stakeholder Participation as an Innovation for Uplifting the Standard of the Federal Road Safety Corps Sokoto State Command the Stakeholder theory was considered as the theoretical framework that serve as a guide for understanding on how open government innovation through change of behavior of stakeholders and acceptance of rules and regulation to transform the Federal Road Safety Corp in Sokoto State is achieved.

The Stakeholder theory

Stakeholder theory is a theory of organizational management and business ethics, that was profunded in 1971 by Hein Kroos and Klaus Schwab.

Thrust of the Theory

The theory explains how organizations consider the interest of individuals or group affected by their actions. It describes the different stakeholders, including those with direct stake, intermediaries who protect stakeholders' interest and external regulators who impose controls on the organization. The theory emphasizes the importance of stakeholder relation and the creation of value for them.

Weakness of the theory

The stakeholder theory is critiqued by many scholars for assuming that the interest of the various stakeholders can be at best, compromised or balanced against each other. The theory is also weak in its inability to put patriotic conception in ensuring dialogue in conflict management.

Relevance of Stakeholder theory to the study

The theory is relevant to this study because it is concerned with the attribute of power and the relationships between stakeholders and organizations by introducing

compatible/incompatible interests and necessary/contingent connections as additional attributes with which to examine the configuration on these relationships.

Methodology

Research Approach

The approach used for this study is the mixed methodology. Mixed methodology is an approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative research depends on information, in the form of figures, numbers and percentages while qualitative research is based on information mainly, essays, audio-visual, pictorial, and narratives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The purpose and rationale behind triangulating data is based on an attempt to reduce chances of any bias inherent within any data source, investigation and method. The adoption of mixed methodology for this research is very useful in understanding the contradiction between quantitative results and qualitative findings that reflect participants point of view. Qualitative research gives a chance to study participants and ensures that findings are grounded in participant's experience or reality. Therefore, by employing mixed methodology, data can improve evaluation by ensuring that the limitation of one type of data is balanced by the strength of another. By and large, it would ensure that understanding in improved through integrating varied ways of analyzing and diffusing knowledge

Research Design

The research design is based on descriptive and expository design. The descriptive research design helped in explaining the quantitative statistical data that were presented in frequency and percentage table. As such it is characterized by research hypotheses that specify the nature and direction of the relationships between or among variables being studied. While the expository design on the other hand is adopted for the qualitative aspects of the study and to explain why phenomena occur and also predicted future occurrence.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised 520 personnel of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) deployed across the Local Government Areas and operational formations of Sokoto State. The personnel were drawn from the State Sector Command and operational units covering areas including Illela, Tambuwal, and Isa. The study also included relevant road-transport stakeholders, namely the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), National Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO), and Amalgamated Commercial Motorcycle Riders of Nigeria (ACOMORON), operating within the state. These categories were selected because of their direct involvement in road transportation and their relevance to stakeholder participation and road safety management. The population provided the basis for determining the study sample and examining the contribution of stakeholder participation and innovation to the operational effectiveness of the FRSC in Sokoto State. Field Survey, (2022).

Sampling Technique
Stratified sampling technique was used for the quantitative/Survey part. Stratified sampling allows for systematic selection of respondents through categorizing of respondents drawn from larger samples as maintained by Krejcee and Morgan (1970). As for the qualitative data, the purposive sample technique was used to select respondents for key informant interview. Purposive sampling involves the choice of subjects who are in the best position to enable having information from audience that have better understanding of the phenomena.

Sample Size
The sample size is drawn from a 520 (five hundred and twenty) population of the study. This included officers that are men and women of Federal Road Safety Corps, Sokoto Command. The stratified sampling technique was used and the sample of 200 people was drawn from, Tambuwal, FRSC State Sector Command, Illela and Isa respectively. See Table 1.1 for detailed breakdown of this distribution

Table 1: Number of Questionnaires Distributed.

Local Governments	Questionnaire Distributed
Tambuwal	27
State Sector Command	117
Illela	31
Issa	25
Total	200

Source: Field Survey 2022.

For the qualitative data eleven (11) respondents were interviewed using key informant interview (KII). These are three (3) respondents from the people of FRSC, three (3) respondents from the, members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), two (2) respondents from the National Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO) and three (3) respondents from Association of Tricycle and Okada Riders.

Table 2: List of Respondents for in-Depth Interviews

Respondents	Number
FRSC	3
NURTW	3
NATO	2
ACOMORON	3
Total	11

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Instruments of Data Collection
Data for this study were collected through the use of primary and Secondary instruments. The primary instruments used include structured questionnaires and In-depth interviews while the secondary sources include documentary evidence.

Questionnaire
Two Hundred (200) copies of the questionnaire were distributed for the study in which 10% was added to the sample size to cover incidence of margin error. One hundred and fifty-eight (158) questionnaires were retrieved. Therefore, the questionnaire was drafted with questions that are close ended following the Likert scale (1932) of 1-5, which ranges between strongly disagree, to strongly agree. The questionnaire was formulated in line with the research questions and research variables as conceptualized and operationalized

In-depth Interview
In-depth interviews are useful for this research and can be justified for the fact that, the study is concerned with organization with formal rules and procedures with personnel that may not have time to give access to quantitative information/ data but may consent to researcher's effort to obtain detailed information about a person's thoughts and behaviors or want to explore new issues in depth. In this regard, interviews are often used to provide context to other data (such as outcome data), offering a more complete picture of what happened in the program and why. In-depth interview as an instrument of data collection is the most appropriate for this study, because an in-depth interview is a one-on-one conversation, you get enough opportunities to get to the root causes of likes/dislikes, perceptions, or beliefs through analyzing responses from questions that are open-ended and can be customized as per the particular situation. The interviewer gets an opportunity to develop a rapport with the participant, thereby making them feel comfortable. Thus, they can bring out honest feedback and also note their expressions and body language. Such cues can amount to rich qualitative data.

Consequently, this study was conducted through the use of interviews with 11 (eleven) respondents which include; Three (3) respondents from the People of FRSC, three (3) respondents from the, Members of National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), two (2) respondents from National Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO) and three (3) respondents from Amalgamated Commercial Motorcycle Riders of Nigeria (ACOMORON) were Interviewed in accordance with the idea of (Crasswell, 2009). In-depth interview is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation. For example, we might ask participants, staff, and others associated with a program about their experiences and expectations related to the program, the thoughts they have concerning program operations, processes, and outcomes, and about any changes they perceive in themselves as a result of their involvement in the program.

Documentary Sources

This research would consult official documents and other or personal documents as a complementary source of information. These documents include the, FRSC Corporate strategic goals report (2011-2020), Nigeria Road Safety Strategy Reports, Corp Marshal Speeches/Presentation, FRSC presentations and activities (Syndicate A to F), Statutes Books, Annual Reports, Corp Staff (Lecture/Presentation), Newspapers, Handbills, Directories and Government statistical publications. The above documents would be useful as additional sources of rich data for this study,

Method of Data Analysis

The Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics, frequency and percentage as well as regression analysis were used to test the relationship between stakeholder and innovation. SPSS version 25 was also used. However, for the qualitative aspect, thematic analysis was used with the aid of Atlas TI9 software which developed themes as well as sub-themes. Data analysis is essential for this study because it helps analyze the quantitative and qualitative data collected through having better insights in explaining stakeholder participation and efficiency of FRSC Sokoto command and also to provide better problem-solving strategies through applying statistical analysis and technology.

Findings

The findings of the study were explained in both quantitative and qualitative method, through statistical tables and thematic analysis of data obtained from the in-depth interviews.

Table 3: Effective Communication Between Federal Road Safety and Other Agencies

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	9	5.7
	2	11	7.0
	3	20	12.7
	4	93	58.9
	5	25	15.8
	Total	158	100.0

Source: Survey Data (2022)

Table 3, above shows data, obtained from question raised on effective communication between Federal Roads Safety Corps and other agencies. 5.7% obtained from nine (9) respondents strongly disagree that there is effective communication between FRSC and other agencies, eleven (11) respondents representing 7.0% disagree with the existence of effective communication between the FRSC and other agencies, 12.7% responses obtained from twenty (20) respondents were neutral on the existence of effective communication while 58.9% agree that there is effective communication between FRSC and other agencies and 15.8% agree to the existence of effective communication.

The result indicated that, there is effective communication between Sokoto Command and other agencies in the State. This communication gap was bridged as a result of the Commands ability to put in place communication channels that would enable them have direct access to the grassroots. This channel of communication includes the use of inter-agency consultative forum in the state, the use of State Security Committee as well as channels that are opened to all organizations in support of enforcement of road safety regulations in the State.

Table 4: Effective Coordination between Road Safety and Community

		Frequency	**Percent**
Valid	1	15	9.5
	2	16	10.1
	3	24	15.2
	4	85	53.8
	5	18	11.4
	Total	158	100.0

Source: Survey Data (2022)

Table 4, above represents, data obtained from question raised on effective coordination between Federal Road Safety Corps and Community. 9.5% representing fifteen (15) respondents strongly disagree that there is effective coordination between FRSC and the community, sixteen (16) respondents equivalent to 10.1% disagree on the existence of coordination between FRSC and the community. Twenty-four (24) respondents representing 15.2% were neutral to the claim while 53.8% responses obtained from 85 respondents agreed while eighteen (18) people amounting to 11.4% strongly disagree.

Table 5: Organizations Attempt to Introduce New Services

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	10	6.3
	2	16	10.1
	3	25	15.9
	4	83	52.5
	5	24	15.2
	Total	158	100.0
Total		158	100.0

Source: Survey Data (2022)

The following data was obtained from question raised on organizations attempt to introduce new services. Ten (10) representing (6.3%) strongly disagreed that organization introduce

new services, sixteen (16) representing (10.1%) disagreed to the claim, twenty-five (25) respondents representing 15.9% were neutral in answering the question while eighty-three (83) representing (52.5%) agreed and twenty-four (24) representing (15.2%) strongly agreed. High percentage of the respondents agreed that, the command introduce new services. These new services were introduced having in mind the caliber of the people of the state and also to ensure acceptance of the services delivered using the best way that suits the public in which they are working for.

Table 6: Encouraging Employee to Think Outside the Box as a Result of Customs and Tradition

		Frequency	**Percentage**
Valid	1	12	7.6
	2	8	5.1
	3	28	17.7
	4	92	58.2
	5	18	11.4
	Total	158	100.0
Total		158	100.0

Source: Survey Data (2022).

The following data was obtained from question raised on how customs and tradition encourage employee to think outside the box. Twelve (12) representing (7.6%) strongly disagreed that customs encourage employee to think outside the box, eight (8) representing (5.1%) disagreed to the claim, twenty-eight (28) respondents representing 17.7% were neutral in answering the question while ninety-two (92) representing (58.2%) agreed and eighteen (18) representing (11.4%) strongly agreed.

The outcome from the above table show that majority of the respondents agree that, customs and tradition encourage employees to think outside the box in other to foster innovation in the command. This ability has made it possible for the employees to use their various customs and tradition to bring about something positive that would be condoned in the command and also bring about positive impact to the generality of the people.

Discussion of Findings

From the study conducted, findings have shown that there is effective coordination between FRSC Sokoto Command and stakeholders. This made it possible for putting in place adequate mechanism to monitor activities of road users. Equally, the FRSC Sokoto Command have already put in place initiatives to support innovation culture among stakeholders, which influenced adoption of a policy for Stakeholders' Forum, where meetings are organized to discuss issues that would come with truly innovative results. However, this made it possible

for enablers for innovation to be effective, which has presently recorded success story, as a result of introduction of new processes to foster innovation in the Command. The involvement of stakeholders as shown in the empirical data also made it possible for exploitation of diversity of stakeholders to develop new ideas or businesses geared towards improving the FRSC Sokoto Command, thereby, ensuring that new ideas and innovation are celebrated in order to ensure commitment towards proficiency. Similarly, the findings deducted through the qualitative data and explained under the sub-themes of stakeholder participation were presented as follows;

Stakeholder Participation in the Activities of FRSC Sokoto Command

Participation provides people the opportunity to be involved in decision that affect their lives. All organizations, particularly public sector organizations operate within the context of certain stakeholders. The FRSC is thus no exception. Through participation people can identify opportunities and strategies for action and build collaboration to affect change. Participation matters as a core value in open democratic societies, and is increasingly recognized as right through global human resource document as maintained by a respondent:

> Contribution of Stakeholders is expected to be instrumental and meaningful towards the attainment of goals and objectives Stakeholders are in the best position to bring ideas on some strategies that can help and give clue to FRSC for better operation, but limited stakeholder's involvement is witnessed in the activities of FRSC in Sokoto state. This is despite all attempts to keep them informed of whatever is happening. This is contrary to what is obtainable in other states where Stakeholders partakes in activities that complement the FRSC. (R1)

However, stakeholders especially at the urban centers like Sokoto main town as well as Local Governments such as Illela, Tambuwal and Isa have been relatively active in the activities of the FRSC as observed by a respondent:

> Participation of stakeholders is enhanced through the efforts of special Marshall who serve as volunteer staff that strive to increase the pace of activities that Road Safety. With this effort of the Special Marshal, both regular Staff, and Road Safety Club also help in achieving the purpose of strategizing contact among the Stakeholders and the FRSC. In order to enhance the involvement of the stakeholders in the activities of FRSC, the organization partner with the media for effective mobilization. This strategy is adopted to enable the FRSC have wider coverage and broad stakeholders' participation. In this regard, FRSC hold programmes that involve Radio calls, where an official would be in attendance at the Radio Station for a phone in program to answer the questions asked by citizens and also clarify some pressing issues that is bothering the citizens and need to adhere to specific regulations that guides FRSC. (R1)

Another respondent posited that, "Administration Department also ensure all agencies participate in the activities, they are expected to work with stakeholders i.e. the military, para Military, Police and the society at large" (R2). "The participation of the stakeholders led to the creation of the State Marshall's, who wear blue regalia and work side by side with the regular Marshall. Special Marshalls and the NYSC Cadets are thus part of the FRSC strategies to engage the stakeholders" (R3). However a respondent argued that:

> The FRSC, coordinates with the public after every two months in parks, to review and verify the conduct and behavior of drivers. Some of the issues include whether they use drugs, driver's licenses and also the standard and viability of the vehicles. Yes, it does strategize our relationship with the FRSC, because they involve the public into numerous workshops and enlighten them on how they are supposed to function. (R4)

Stakeholders' participation increases the potential for the success of the FRSC and its operations in the state. The issue of traffic management is considered complex and strategic that requires not only the deployment of personnel and equipment but more importantly the support and the cooperation of the diverse stakeholders. The stakeholders, which are diverse that include regular road users, transport owners and other agencies involved in the enforcement of various regulations. This is buttressed by a respondent:

> NARTO contributes through ensuring that traffic laws are obeyed. For example, the issues of over speeding, over loading and stacking are all curtailed by NARTO. Stakeholders' participation is generally an effective strategy, which need to be strengthened because of their nearness to the public (R5&R6).

In a very significant way, every organization requires such support in order to succeed. Stakeholders helps in complementing the efforts of the FRSC because they are closer to the public and know what exactly the problem that the public are facing. A respondent expands thus:

> There are no much challenges, as far as, I can see. But the little that can be noticeable include; the issue of failure to participate in the functions of the FRSC and also failure to cooperate with the FRSC to work hand in hand to bring about lasting solutions to traffic challenges (R7& R8).

Therefore, such participation supports FRSC in the performance of its duties. The stakeholders work hand in hand with FRSC, particularly on issues of safety operations and training programs. Some respondents added that:

> As an Association we are totally engaged and participate in all activities of FRSC whenever we are called upon, because FRSC is a Public Organization that is always concerned with safety of the citizens. Our total support and participatory engagements are very important for the transformation of the FRSC as a public organization (R8 &R9).

In some instances, FRSC provide updated information on its activities but not as frequent as necessary. The FRSC though regard its key stakeholders as part of its profession and partners in its drive to enforce regulations and implement its strategies, there is still the need for improved relations with stakeholders. One of the respondents stated that:

> Participation also, need to be an involvement by all citizens should take the issues of road safety with all seriousness, bearing in mind that ensuring safety should be shared responsibility which patriotic citizens must actively engaged in. There is need for public participation in programs and activities which to enhance collaboration (R11)

The significance of the activities organized by FRSC Sokoto Command influences the participation of stakeholders as a show of commitment and support to the transformation drive of the organization. One of the rightly put it thus:

> Yes, all citizens should take the issues of road safety with all the seriousness it deserves. This is bearing in mind that ensuring safety is a shared responsibility which patriotic citizens must actively be engage. There is need for public participation in programs and activities which will enhances collaboration (R11)

Information Dissemination in FRSC Sokoto Command

Information dissemination is an important aspect of stakeholders' by FRSC Sokoto Command. Information stimulates the thought process of the users. This can be understood as maintained by some respondents thus:

> Using Sokoto State as an example, the rescue operation has not been very effective, because there is difficulty in obtaining information when there is occurrence of accidents in some areas due to the issue of proximity. Presently, the Corps has deployed officers at all the Local Government Areas where information can be disseminated on accidents or insecurity. The officers attached to such issues would attend to the issues immediately they are informed (R1).

In another development, a respondent further observed that:

> FRSC and other agencies are mostly informed on the issues concerning accidents. The FRSC try to gather certified outreach crashes in Sokoto, this effort has been the collective efforts of stakeholders in the State. Thus, involving; Usmanu Danfodiyo University Teaching Hospital (UDUTH), Specialist Hospital, Orthopedic Hospital, Wamako, Bureau of Statistics and Sokoto Health Management services has been one of the most effective engagements of the FRSC in Sokoto state. All information gathered from the above offices are collated at the end of the month and reported to the research department of FRSC. The statistics allow us

> to have comprehensive data. It enables FRSC to identify how it would engage with stakeholders on the way forward." (R1)

Looking at the prevalence of traffic accidents, it always requires massive enlightenment on how to reduce the occurrence of crashes. In the case of Tambuwal and Bodinga, a dedicated line is shared to the public to communicate to the FRSC directly when accidents occur within the Local Government Areas. Another respondent stated that:

> Presently, the Sokoto Command rely solely on two (2) telephone lines, one in the headquarters and the other one here in the command where people can call and lodge complain or report on occurrence of any accidents. Communication between the FRSC and other Agencies is solely the responsibility of the protocol department. This is achieved through various channels, largely disseminated through workshops to inform stakeholders on new ideas and innovation (R2).

To curtail numerous challenges faced by FRSC Sokoto Command, a respondent is quoted as follows:

> FRSC seeks to achieve effectiveness and efficiency as does every other organization. Despite numerous challenges faced by FRSC staff, the weekly in-house lectures regularly held empower staff on how to respond to emergency situations and other situations that may arise in the cause of their assignment on the road. (R3)

Another respondent added that "Yes, they do respond to us, particularly on new formal rules. Whenever a review of existing rules is made, it becomes a rule that everybody adheres to it" (R4). Also "FRSC, always keep us updated on pressing issues at the end of every month, so as to carry us along with up to date information" (R5). Some of the mechanisms for engagements of the stakeholders include meetings, sensitization and advocacy visits. These mechanisms are ideas that are meant to ensure smooth operation of the FRSC, which are disseminated as added by a respondent: -"We have no problem getting such information from FRSC once we inquire they provide us with the information, particularly on issues that would be beneficial to our members on safety measures." (R7). Getting information from FRSC has become more effective and easier through the adoption of Technological and digital tools by the FRSC. A respondent argues that "To ensure information flow between the stakeholders and the FRSC, the agency has provided contacts and portal for easy access to information and also in times of distress and emergency." (R11)

On the contrary, a respondent f reveled that: - "Complaints don't often come to us, because we receive them only when disputes cannot be settled at the point of arrest." (R8). Another informant added that "The challenges are mostly on issues of plate numbers and sometimes we are charged for small offences we don't even know we committed." (R9). Additionally, "complains received in our association are mostly on very rare occasion, where members are not able to settle the issues with themselves and the FRSC officials (R11).

Synergy Between FRSC Sokoto and Other Institutions

Synergy is a concept that reiterate the need for combined and streamlined efforts of two or more entities. This is necessary in order to harmonize strategies and coordinate actions necessary for achieving desired results. This is aptly captured by a respondent:

> There is synergy between FRSC and other agencies, most times, the FRSC try to gather certified outreach crashes in Sokoto, this effort has been a collective effort of stakeholders in the State. Thus, involving; UDUTH, Specialist Hospital, Wamako, Bureau of Statistics and Sokoto Health Management services. All information gathered from the above offices are collated at the end of the month and reported to the research department of FRSC to avoid duplication of data and information. After cross data cleaning, the verified data is produced for official documentation and for easier identification of number of accidents, deaths and injured people within Sokoto state in a specified month and period. (R1)

The statistics enable FRSC to analyze the frequency, dimensions, fatalities as well as factors responsible for the prevalence of crashes in the state. The data provides the basis upon which interactions with stakeholders on the way forward are based. Looking at the prevalence, it allows for massive enlightenment on how to reduce the occurrence of crashes. A respondent buttressed that:

> Looking at Illela as an example, when there is accident, apart from the command that is vested with the responsibility to take care of it, the station Marshalls work hand in hand with the local government to normally get information from the LGA's and pass it down to the FRSC (R1).

Stakeholders are expected to contribute a lot because, they can bring ideas about some strategies that can help FRSC to operate even seamlessly. However, there appears to be limited stakeholder's involvement in Sokoto. Stakeholders in some States partake in activities that complement the FRSC. In another development, a respondent posits that: -

> Yes, it will improve synergy, because it would enable our members know clearly what is expected by the FRSC and also help us adhere to the rules without being caught wanting for any offence unknowingly. Having synergy between our Association and FRSC would help in creating mutual understanding among us and also make the involvement of stakeholders necessary whenever there is failure to adhere to rules and regulations. (R6 &R9).

Providing and maintaining safety on roads and also protection of lives and property is not only the responsibility vested to the FRSC as an agency but rather it a collective responsibility with the community leaders and members of the community.

An informant suggests that:

> There is lack of stakeholder's collaboration, synergy and support with the agency of FRSC which sometimes hinder the performance of FRSC in Sokoto Command. There is need for strong collaboration, synergy, support and understanding of government organization, religious bodies, traditional and academic institutions to sensitize and interact with motorists and members on the need to ensure safety and accident-free roads. I still maintain that there is inadequate synergy between stakeholders and FRSC as an agency in Sokoto state (R11).

Sensitization of Stakeholders

Sensitization is an important aspect of stakeholders' engagement in the activities of organizations. It makes people sensitive to the issues at hand. However, sensitization in this context refer to the series of activities carried out to stimulate and instigate the interest of people, particularly key stakeholders in the activities of organizations such as the FRSC. A respondent opined that "Yes, sensitization does make impacts especially among drivers, their leadership and the general public. These programs enlighten people on the proper use of the roads, first aid measures and also the consequences of overloading" (R6). Similarly, another respondent argued that "Some of the mechanisms include meetings, advocacy visits, rallies etc. through which, ideas that would ensure smooth operation of the FRSC are disseminated." (R7).

This is buttressed by another respondent:

> The mechanisms of engagement between the Stakeholders and FRSC include; Stakeholder meetings, public enlightenment program, Radio talks, etc. through which issues concerning FRSC are discussed and the major stakeholders scale it down to the grassroots. Communication between the FRSC and other Agencies is solely the responsibility of the protocol department (R8 &R10).

The roles of Association in Public Safety

There are many associations that plays vital role in public safety. These include platforms such as NURTW, NATO, Association of Okada Riders. Associations are integral part of any society because it enables people to come together for a shared purpose and establish connection with other organizations as rightly described by a respondent: "FRSC, is really trying in the conduct of their activities as they are very supportive of our association, as such we always commend their efforts." (R5)

Another respondent emphasized that:

> Associations are doing their best towards ensuring that the issue of overloading has come to an end in the State. Overloading is generally not condoned in Sokoto State because; First, an overloaded vehicle is less able to respond to emergency conditions. This factor alone can

> cause an accident. Second, too much weight drastically reduces braking ability and some vehicles, particularly trucks take longer to stop. In many cases, drivers misjudge their stopping distance and end up being in or causing accidents. Third, overloading contributes to truck rollovers because of load shifting during sudden turns and even lane changes. Federal Road Safety Sokoto Command have long established this as a huge challenge that causes rampant accidents, which explain the rationale for enforcing rule on overloading (R1).

Similarly, another respondent added that; "The FRSC Sokoto Command have established numerous associations that help in enhancing synergy, cooperation and collaboration towards common goals in virtually all aspects of safety and innovation. (R9). Another respondent added that, "The FRSC Sokoto Command has given our association the opportunity to express our views, through interactions and we highly enlightened by several point of views shared. This has helped greatly in increasing our knowledge and awareness. (R11)

Community role in Public Safety

Community is important in the study of public sector because it allows for social connection and sense of belonging.

This understanding shows how community is central in to our study as quoted below:

> Community role in ensuring safety goes beyond accident prevention and disobedience to traffic regulations in Sokoto State. it is about building strong, cohesive, vibrant and participatory communities. This effort has been yielding results through effective intervention to both promote safety and reduce the prevalence rate through coordinated enforcement by the FRSC Sokoto Command (R2).

Another respondent posited that;

> The issue of providing and maintaining safety on roads and also protection of lives and property is not only entrusted to the FRSC agency but also in the hands of community leaders and members of the community. These meetings make them knowledgeable about how FRSC operate, because they are closer to the public/ grassroots and know the best way to approach issues, which in turn bring about success and efficiency of the FRSC. (R3)

Similarly, a respondent further buttressed that "The issue of providing and maintaining safety on roads and also protection of lives and property should be a joint effort among FRSC, the community leaders and members of the community. As such, every individual has a duty to perform in that regard, without necessarily depending on the FRSC alone." (R11)

Enlightenment of stakeholders by the FRSC

Enlightenment is a significant component of organizational transformation. It enables individuals and groups, as stakeholders to understand what is happening within his/ her organization, which enable them improve their own standard and condition.

Some of the respondents vividly captured the value of enlightenment in the context of the FRSC and its activities as follows:

> The FRSC as an organization embarks on public enlightenment on proper usage of the roads for both motorists and pedestrians. Enlightenment programmes are organized for the public especially during festivities, FRSC personnel visit the Motor parks and enlighten the citizens because of the increased number of travels across parts of the country. (R1& R8).

Similarly, a respondent added that:

> The Public Enlightenment Department engages in enlightenment campaign for offenders on the degree and consequences of their offences after settling the fine attached to their offences at the bank. The Public Enlightenment Department also visits NGO's, tertiary institutions to give them training on first aid and other safety measures that are a concern of the FRSC. Enlightenment campaigns in the media help greatly in having access to larger audience for compliance to rules and regulations of the FRSC. These programmes are normally conducted through the last quarter of the year precisely in September. Thorough public enlightenment is conducted to the public, through rallies and outdoor events (R2).

Another respondent said that:

> Public enlightenment is also among the functions of the FRSC, through sensitization campaigns to the people on the rules and regulations governing the use of roads and general safety rules of engagement. It also focuses on drivers and the need for them have at least the knowledge of basic traffic rules and regulations as well as the necessary documents required such as driving license and other documents for the ownership, maintenance and safety of the vehicle (R3).

FRSC is a data-based organization, because most of its activities are centralized. Looking at the issue of driver's license as an example, it has now reached the stage of having correct data base after series of changing and upgrade of the driver's license.

Interviews further revealed:

> This enlightenment is sometimes done by resource person from other

> agencies, where they give lectures on how to act on numerous challenges faced on issues and engage the public on the activities of FRSC. The mechanisms of engagement between the Stakeholders and FRSC include; Stakeholders' meetings, public enlightenment program, Radio talks, e.t.c. through the sessions, issues concerning FRSC are discussed and the major stakeholders take it back to the grassroots (R3).

The enlightenment programs are sometimes anchored by resource persons from other agencies, where they give lectures on how to act on numerous challenges faced on issues and also engage the public on the activities of FRSC. FRSC also organize rallies in order to enlighten the public through catching attention and also sharing tracks.

One of the respondent's states thus:

> NARTO, ensure that the issue of overloading is brought to an end in Sokoto State, as well as the viability of the vehicles on the road in terms of the quality of its tires and also the conduct of the drivers. NARTO have emergency lines to contact the headquarters directly in situations of accidents or anything that may cause danger to the people. NARTO does conduct enlightenment campaigns across the State through visits to markets and motor parks to make announcement on relevant issues(R4).

Most of the respondents from the NARTO argue that interaction between the Association and FRSC has been largely about the need to abide by the existing traffic rules and regulations as well as safety measures necessary to avoid crashes and minimize fatalities during crashes.

This is attested by one of the respondents thus:

> Yes, we do participate often in such programmes particularly during festivities like Sallah and end of the year when people mostly travel out of the state. The programmes are expected to make our members prepared on how to travel without causing accident while limiting speed (R7).

The mechanisms of engagement between the Stakeholders and FRSC include: Stakeholders' meetings, public enlightenment programs, Radio talks, rallies and visits to stakeholders' environment such as motor parks, market places, institutions and public lectures. These activities are organized periodically by the FRSC as its strategy of stakeholders' engagement. These series of activities, which are recurring and regular on the calendar of events of the FRSC has brought the organization closer to its stakeholders, which translated into improved trust and confidence on the FRSC and its activities.

Discussions

Stakeholders' involvement in FRSC has been unprecedented, because the involvement of the Stakeholders has gained cognizance due to their nearness to the grassroots. The critical Stakeholders of the Federal Road Safety Corps include National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), National Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO) and Association of Tricycle and Okada Riders. The complementary includes roles of these organizations include coordination, enlightenment, mobilization, education collaboration, emergency management and so on (Sikiru, 2019). However, the contribution of Stakeholders in the Sokoto Command has been adequate, because they are in the best position to bring ideas on some strategies that gives clue to FRSC for effective rescue operations and enforcement of traffic regulations in Sokoto State. Similarly, stakeholder's involvement in the command helps keep the command informed of whatever is happening as they partake in activities that complements the command. This also resulted in the creation of strong and active stakeholders' involvement through stakeholders' forum, which has helped greatly in the creation and active participation by the special Marshall who serve as voluntary staff striving to increase the pace of activities that helps in improving Road Safety awareness and response.

Accordingly, Lewis et al (2007) attributes the success of innovation in public sector organizations to the ways in which actors are able to link to one another and able to become engaged in meaningful interactions, The linking of people, resources and ideas takes place in free, new and informational spaces; spaces that transform themselves in local cultures that facilitate and stimulate interactions for innovation among the various actors from the government, the market and society. However, this claim can be acknowledged to be in existence in the command base on Stakeholders involvement which has been very forthcoming, with all major stakeholders living up to expectations towards reducing auto accidents and building capacity of citizens to own safer road campaigns. However, the complementary efforts of the stakeholders in the State has made it very strong, to the extent that the Command work with almost seventy (70) groups (Fieldwork, 2022). In an attempt to strengthen the involvement of stakeholders in enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the command, the command partner with the media. This strategy is adopted to enable the FRSC have wider coverage of audience. In this regard, FRSC hold programme that involve Radio calls, where an official would be in attendance at the Radio Station for a phone in program to answer the questions raised by citizens and also clarify some pressing issues that are bothering the citizens and the need to adhere to specific rules set by the Command (R1).

Conclusion

This study examined stakeholder participation as an innovative approach to enhancing the operational standards of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Sokoto State Command. The findings demonstrate that meaningful stakeholder participation strengthens road safety management by facilitating collaboration in decision-making, traffic regulation enforcement, rescue operations, public enlightenment, and access to essential FRSC services. Stakeholders also complement the efforts of the Command by mobilizing and educating diverse categories of road users. The study contributes to knowledge by demonstrating that structured

stakeholder participation can enhance institutional effectiveness and provide a collaborative framework for addressing road safety challenges at the subnational level. Its practical implication is that FRSC should institutionalize stakeholder engagement rather than rely mainly on periodic or informal interactions. Stronger collaboration can improve information sharing, community responsiveness, public compliance, and coordination of road safety interventions. However, the study's focus on Sokoto State may limit the generalizability of its findings to other Nigerian contexts. Future research should therefore undertake comparative studies across states and geopolitical zones and examine how institutional, socio-economic, and regional factors influence stakeholder participation in road safety management. Longitudinal studies could also assess the sustainability of stakeholder-driven interventions and their relationship with road safety outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

i. FRSC should institutionalize stakeholder engagement by establishing quarterly consultation forums involving NURTW, NARTO, ACOMORON, local government authorities, community leaders, NGOs, and other relevant stakeholders.
ii. Joint road safety programmes should be strengthened through coordinated driver education, public enlightenment, traffic-awareness campaigns, and community-based interventions, particularly in areas experiencing persistent road safety challenges.
iii. FRSC should establish effective information-sharing mechanisms through which transport unions, communities, and other stakeholders can promptly report road hazards, traffic violations, accident-prone locations, and emerging safety concerns.
iv. Regular capacity-building programmes should be provided for transport operators and stakeholder representatives on traffic regulations, defensive driving, emergency response, and responsible road-use practices.
v. Stakeholder participation should be incorporated into local road safety planning, enabling interventions to reflect the transportation patterns and safety challenges of different Local Government Areas.
vi. FRSC should establish a monitoring and evaluation framework with measurable indicators for assessing stakeholder participation, joint activities, public awareness coverage, response to reported hazards, and changes in road safety outcomes.
vii. Stakeholders should strengthen accountability and role clarity by clearly defining the responsibilities of FRSC personnel, transport unions, community organizations, local authorities, and other participating actors in joint road safety initiatives.

Overall, the study demonstrates that institutionalized stakeholder participation can serve as an important mechanism for strengthening FRSC operations, improving collaborative road safety governance, and promoting sustainable road safety outcomes in Nigeria.

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