An assessment of the effectiveness of road safety advocacy messages in Durban Metropole

Ria Chetty (a) Nozipho Nkosikhona Simelane (b) Jacob Tseko Mofokeng (c)* Dee Khosa (d)

(a) PhD Candidate, Faculty of Humanities, Department of Safety and Security Management, Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria, South Africa
(b) Postgraduate Coordinator, Safety, Faculty of Humanities, Department of Safety and Security Management, Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria, South Africa
(c) Professor, African Research Chair for the Campus and School Public Safety, Faculty of Humanities, Department of Safety and Security Management, Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria, South Africa
(d) Lecturer, Faculty of Humanities, Department of Safety and Security Management, Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria, South Africa

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 13 July 2023
Received in rev. form 22 Aug. 2023
Accepted 12 September 2023

Keywords:
Advocacy messages, campaigns, road fatalities, strategies, traffic safety

JEL Classification:
K14

ABSTRACT

Despite the implementation of existing preventive measures, road traffic crashes (RTCs) and fatalities continue to be a significant challenge in South Africa. The objective of this study is to assess the efficacy of road advocacy messaging implemented by the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) within the Durban Metropole region of South Africa. The research design employed in this study was an exploratory qualitative approach, utilizing semi-structured in-depth interviews. The participants were selected through purposive sampling. The researcher employed a basic random sampling technique to conduct interviews with a sample of 30 participants. This sample consisted of 15 individuals who were Metro Police officials and an additional 15 individuals who were members of the general public. This research identified two primary themes: (1) the efficacy of road safety advocacy messaging and (2) obstacles encountered in the distribution of road safety advocacy messages. Based on the identified themes, the findings of this study suggest that the messages conveyed were unambiguous and suitable. The dissemination of advocacy messages effectively reached all participants within the designated area of study. Nevertheless, it was perceived that additional channels of communication, such as printed posters and radio broadcasts, have to be employed in order to effectively engage road users who may not own access to television media. One specific issue that arose was the matter of terminology. The commercials were predominantly presented in the English language, with isiZulu being the prevailing vernacular language employed. There are several potential avenues for enhancing the effectiveness of the messaging, such as diversifying the media platforms utilized, expanding the linguistic reach, and emphasizing the desired behavioral modifications. Enhancing concurrent law enforcement efforts pertaining to speed and alcohol-impaired driving will bolster the efficacy of road safety initiatives as a whole. To the best of the authors’ knowledge, this study represents the inaugural comprehensive assessment of a road safety social marketing initiative in the Durban Metropole region. This study aims to provide valuable insights that might support the province and other provincial governments in enhancing their efforts towards road safety.

**Corresponding author. ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5123-0234**

© 2023 by the authors. Licensee SSBFNET, Istanbul, Turkey. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Introduction

The present state of road traffic is fundamentally perilous. Contrary to other forms of transportation, such as trains and air travel, the road traffic system was not initially conceived with safety as a primary consideration (Modipa, 2022a, 2022b; Raffo, Bliss, Shotten, Sleet & Blanchard, 2013; Wegman & Aarts, 2006). Therefore, within the context of road traffic, it is the actions of individuals that determine the distinction between potential dangers and the state of being secure, thereby safeguarding us from potential harm in the event of an error. In contrast to other transportation modes that possess established protocols, safety measures, and regulations to...
mitigate the occurrence and consequences of human error, road traffic places a greater reliance on its users to prevent accidents. The study of human behavior has significant interest for road safety specialists due to the inherent tendency of individuals to make errors and engage in violations. Road safety programs play a crucial role in addressing the issue at hand. In conjunction with other behavioral interventions such as law enforcement, education, training, and to a certain extent, infrastructure, road safety campaigns are employed as a strategy to encourage the public to adopt safer behaviors when navigating roadways. Road safety campaigns can be described as deliberate efforts to educate, convince, and inspire a population (or a subset of a population) to modify their attitudes and/or actions in order to enhance road safety. These campaigns employ structured communication strategies through designated media platforms over a specified timeframe (Delhomme, De Dobbeleer, Forward, & Simoes, 2009). The document can serve several objectives, including disseminating information on novel or lesser-known traffic regulations, enhancing awareness of issues, or persuading individuals to abstain from risky behaviors and embrace safer alternatives.

Road safety promotion methods have been implemented in South Africa for an extended period of time. However, there has been a lack of assessment on their effectiveness and a dearth of scientific investigation into their role in mitigating road accidents (Thebe, 2011). Numerous initiatives have been undertaken with the primary objective of mitigating the occurrence of fatalities and severe injuries on roadways. Nevertheless, there has been a noticeable upward trajectory in fatalities and casualties, particularly during the peak periods of Christmas and Easter, characterized by heightened traffic flow on both national and provincial road networks. The Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) holds the primary responsibility for road safety in South Africa and maintains its affiliation with the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration. The Road Traffic Management Corporation Act (No. 2 of 1999) was enacted to facilitate cooperation and coordinated strategic planning, regulation, facilitation, and law enforcement in relation to road traffic concerns across the national, provincial, and local levels of government. This legislation was established under Section 3 of the aforementioned Act.

A literature review of the road safety and public health mass media literature has been conducted, which provides a summary of the key elements found to enhance the persuasiveness of mass media campaigns. Information from the two most recent reviews is provided below (Delaney, Lough, Whelan, & Cameron, 2004; Delhomme et al., 2009; Haworth, 2005; Noar, 2006; Randolph & Viswanath, 2004; Rodriguez & Anderson-Wilk, 2002). Based on public health literature, Noar (2006) posits that in the last decade, health mass media campaign designers have increasingly adhered to principles of effective campaign design rather than discovering new principles, and this has resulted in increased campaign success. Some of the major principles of effective campaign design applied to health mass media campaigns include:

i. Conduct formative research with the target audience to clearly understand the problem or behavior (i.e., pre-test messages with the target audience);
ii. Use theory as a conceptual basis for the campaign (e.g., to develop messages);
iii. Segment the audience into meaningful subgroups based on important demographics (e.g., age, gender, socio-economic, risk, and personality);
iv. Use a message design approach directed at the targeted audience segment. Develop novel and creative messages that start interpersonal discussions and persuade people pertinent to the target audience;
v. Use channels widely viewed by a target audience and strategically position campaign messages within the channel;
x. Conduct a process evaluation that includes the monitoring and collection of data on implementation of campaign activities; and
xi. Use a sensitive outcome evaluation design that reduces threats to internal validity and allows causal conclusions about the influence on attitudes and behavior.

Safety encompasses various aspects such as the maintenance of secure roads, the presence of responsible drivers, the utilization of safe vehicles and engines, the construction of secure buildings and infrastructure, the establishment of safe environments, the cultivation of sound mental states, the promotion of healthy eyes, bodies, and senses, and a multitude of other factors that collectively contribute to mitigating the alarming rates of road accidents and fatalities observed in South Africa. The five elements denoted by the letter “E” in this context encompass engineering, environment, ergonomics, enforcement, and education. These factors have considerable importance in ensuring an efficient transport ministry and the effective functioning of the Chief Communications Directorate. Nevertheless, it is evident that education has a significant role in driving behavioral change among all individuals involved in road usage (Thebe, 2011). Despite the prevalence of persuasive communication strategies employed in the domain of road safety, such as the utilization of linear road safety messages like "Speed Kills" and "Arrive Alive" in various campaigns, it is not guaranteed that these messages are universally comprehended, adhered to, or even noticed by all categories of road users. These road users encompass a diverse range of individuals, including drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, joggers, road constructors, road repairers, and individuals utilizing alternative modes of transportation such as donkey carts, wheelchairs, wheelbarrows, and other similar devices. In recent years, numerous road safety communication initiatives have been developed and executed. Nevertheless, the extent to which these campaigns have directly influenced driving behavior and thus impacted road accident rates has been assessed to be very limited. This study aims to address the challenge of assessing the efficacy of various components within road safety mass media campaigns. The aim of the study was to assess the efficacy of road safety advocacy messaging in the city of Durban.
Literature Review

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Well-researched psychological and social theories of behavioural change can provide a solid foundation to develop an effective road safety campaign. Indeed, research shows that campaigns that are based on well-developed theoretical foundations are more effective than those that are not (Elliott, 1993; Elliott & Shanahan Research, 1997). Not only does a strong theoretical foundation provide much-needed guidance to inform knowledge and understanding of behaviours and attitudes, but it can also guide the development of a campaign. This means it is possible to better target the intended audience in ways that are most likely to result in the desired change. The following section briefly describes several common theories that generally form the foundation for road safety campaigns including behaviour change theories, theories of social persuasion, and fear-based campaigns. It also provides some general guidance to inform the selection of appropriate theoretical models that can inform strategies to develop and implement campaigns to ensure that they reach their fullest potential.

Behaviour change theories

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) was developed by Icek Ajzen (1985, 1991) as a general model to predict and explain behaviour across a wide range of different types of behaviours. A key assumption in the TRA is that behaviours are under one’s volitional control. However, this assumption is likely to be unrealistic in some contexts, as one can imagine that the volitional control of behaviours may vary across different situations. This theory predicts that personal decisions, that is, intentions to carry out certain behaviours are based on a combination of:

i. attitudes toward the behaviour;
ii. subjective norms; and,
iii. perceived behavioural control.

The TPB started as the Theory of Reasoned Action in 1980 to predict an individual's intention to engage in a behaviour at a specific time and place. The theory was intended to explain all behaviours over which people could exert self-control. The key component to this model is behavioural intent; behavioural intentions are influenced by the attitude about the likelihood that the behaviour will have the expected outcome and the subjective evaluation of the risks and benefits of that outcome. The TPB has been used successfully to predict and explain a wide range of health behaviours and intentions including smoking, drinking, health services utilisation, breastfeeding, and substance use, among others. The TPB states that behavioural achievement depends on both motivation (intention) and ability (behavioural control). It distinguishes between three types of beliefs - behavioural, normative, and control. The TPB is comprised of six constructs that collectively represent a person's actual control over the behaviour (Boston University School of Public Health, 2016). These are:

i. Attitudes - This refers to the degree to which a person has a favourable or unfavourable evaluation of the behaviour of interest. It entails a consideration of the outcomes of performing the behaviour.
ii. Behavioural intention - This refers to the motivational factors that influence a given behaviour where the stronger the intention to perform the behaviour, the more likely the behaviour will be performed.
iii. Subjective norms - This refers to the belief about whether most people approve or disapprove of the behaviour. It relates to a person's beliefs about whether peers and people of importance to the person think he or she should engage in the behaviour.
iv. Social norms - This refers to the customary codes of behaviour in a group or people or larger cultural context. Social norms are considered normative, or standard, in a group of people.
v. Perceived power - This refers to the perceived presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of a behaviour. Perceived power contributes to a person's perceived behavioural control over each of those factors.
vi. Perceived behavioural control - This refers to a person's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour of interest. Perceived behavioural control varies across situations and actions, which results in a person having varying perceptions of behavioural control depending on the situation. This construct of the theory was added later and created the shift from the Theory of Reasoned Action to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Boston University School of Public Health, 2016).
Figure 1: Model; Source: Boston University School of Public Health (2016)

These factors are briefly described below (Delhomme et al., 2009: 45). Attitudes toward behaviour can be thought of as personal beliefs, or the estimated outcomes of the behaviour that an individual believes will occur. For example, an individual may perceive that engaging in speeding behaviours is either scary or fun. Subjective norms deal with the social factors surrounding an issue, such as how an individual believes that others view the behaviour. Subjective norms among teens, for instance, might be the perception that most teens use their cell phone while driving, and therefore they believe that it is a typical behaviour of other teens that are like themselves. Subjective norms are often greatly influenced by internal and external motivational factors that can either prevent or encourage individuals to engage in the behaviour. Perceived behaviour control is comparable to an individual’s view of how easy or difficult it will be to perform or accomplish certain goals or behaviours (the degree of self-efficacy). According to this theory, these three major factors influence a person to either engage in a specific behaviour, or to choose not to do so. Using the first example, individuals who believe that speeding is a fun activity that most people engage in, and can do it easily without endangering others, are more likely to make decisions to engage in speeding behaviour, compared to individuals with a different set of beliefs. One example of a campaign based on the TPB philosophy is the Foolspeed campaign implemented in Scotland. Foolspeed was a five-year road safety campaign conducted by Road Safety Scotland. It aimed to reduce the instances of inappropriate and excessive speeding on Scottish roadways. TPB was used to develop several television advertisements, each of which addressed a different component of the theory, that is, attitudes, norms, and behavioural control. An evaluation of the programme concluded that, while some ads based on the TPB components were less effective and more difficult to apply to advertisements than others, the outcomes of the campaign demonstrated that it was possible to design convincing and effective campaign materials using this theoretical model (Stead & Eadie, 2007).

Health Belief Model (HBM): Another approach that has been widely adopted to explain human behaviour, is the Health Belief Model which was originally developed to predict the uptake (or usage) of specific health services and behaviour. The underlying premise of this approach is that the main motivator for people to preserve or protect their health, is to avoid negative health behaviour. Although other motivational factors might contribute to the adoption of the specific health behaviour, HBM proposes that avoiding a negative health outcome is the most influential factor (Delhomme, et al., 2009). The HBM includes several theoretical constructs that are said to contribute to an individual’s behaviour. Variations of this model exist and have been adapted over time, but generally behavioural outcomes are thought to be influenced by the following concepts:

i. susceptibility to the consequences of action (e.g., how does an individual perceive the likelihood of crashing when speeding?);
ii. perceived seriousness of the consequences of action (e.g., do the consequences of a certain behaviour involve something less substantial, such as a small fine or a more substantial outcome such as a criminal conviction or a jail sentence?);
iii. perceived barriers that decrease the likelihood of action;
iv. perceived benefits that increase the likelihood of action;
v. confidence in the ability to take action, that is, self-efficacy; and,
vi. internal and external cues/motivators to affect the likelihood of action.

The perceived susceptibility and seriousness of an action are combined to form the concept of the “perceived threat” that is then associated with a behaviour. Furthermore, the barriers and benefits of engaging in the behaviour counteract each other, much like pros and cons, to further influence an individual’s decision. A meta-analysis of 18 studies of health communication campaigns, conducted by Carpenter (2010), found that the perceived benefits and barriers to action were the greatest predictor of behavioural outcomes. All of these factors are combined to determine whether or not an individual will feel that the negative consequences of
engaging in a behaviour, for example, being injured while drinking and driving) are too risky to warrant taking action to avoid the negative consequences (Delhomme, et al., 2009). Road safety campaigns based on this model seek to shift the perceptions of the target audience to the point where individuals feel that the negative consequences of a specific action are enough to warrant avoiding the behaviour. To summarise, the objective of these campaigns is to raise awareness of the risks and consequences of the targeted issue.

**Protective Motivation Theory (PMT):** This theory is like HBM in that it targets an individual’s motivation to avoid actions that would be detrimental to their health. However, this theory more closely highlights the possible threats and vulnerability a person may feel from the idea of engaging in negative behaviour. The concept of protection motivation stems from one’s desire to protect or defend themselves against negative consequences of behaviour based on fear and coping appraisal. According to Rogers (1983), protection motivation is maximised when:

i. the threat to health is severe (high perceived severity);
ii. the person feels vulnerable (high perceived vulnerability);
iii. the behaviour to avoid or avert the threat (adaptive response) is believed to be effective (high response efficacy);
iv. the costs associated with the adaptive response are small (low costs); and,

v. the person is confident in his or her abilities to successfully complete the adaptive response (high self-efficacy).

Research has demonstrated that the perceived vulnerability to, and the perceived severity of the consequences of actions are powerful enough to change behaviour. Moreover, behavioural change may not occur if a minimum level of threat to one’s health is not present (Cismaru et al., 2009). In other words, PMT predicts that change is more likely to occur if the factors described by Rogers are targeted to produce protection motivation. In this model, self-efficacy also plays a very significant role in a person’s decision to adopt the behaviour; it is the determining factor that results in change or resistance to change. PMT has been effectively used in social marketing campaigns in the past within a variety of health contexts (Adamos, Ausserer, Brijs, Brijs, Daniels, et al., 2009; Cismaru et al., 2009). Examples of this approach include campaigns to influence lifestyle changes (e.g., smoking cessation or adopting safe sex practices), or changes in healthcare practices (e.g., receiving a flu shot), as well as road safety campaigns such as the Tie One On For Safety campaign targeting drinking and driving. The development of campaigns based on this philosophy involves designing messages that show people that they are susceptible to the negative consequences of the road safety issue and to demonstrate that there are easy and effective ways to adopt safer practices.

**Transtheoretical Model of Change (TMC):** This is the theory that was adopted to guide this study. The reason for adopting this theory for the purposes of this study are that behavioural modification is a process that does not occur instantaneously. This process must be accounted for during the development of any campaign that aims to alter road user behaviour. As described in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, road safety campaigns have been shown to influence behaviour in different ways depending on the individual’s beliefs and characteristics. Thus, local governments and community partners must consider the possibility that certain audiences or individuals may be more ready to accept change than others (Adamos et al., 2009; Cismaru et al., 2009). The TMC, developed by James Prochaska in the 1970s, addresses these differences and suggests that people may be in different stages of change. In particular, the five stages of change include:

i. pre-contemplation (awareness or acceptance of the need to change has not occurred; individual may not be aware of the need or benefits of change);
ii. contemplation (recognition of a problem);
iii. preparation (decision to change has been made);
iv. action (taking steps to change behaviour); and
v. maintenance (change has become permanent and efforts are needed to avoid relapse and sustain the new behaviour).

According to this theory, before permanent behaviour change can occur, individuals must pass through each of the prior stages successfully and completely. It should also be noted that the stages in these models are fluid. That is, it is possible for an individual to move forward and backwards between the stages (Adamos et al., 2009; Cismaru et al., 2009). Designing a campaign based on the TMC means campaign messages and advertising approaches should acknowledge and target these different stages to ensure that the full adoption of the behaviour occurs. Pre-testing messages prior to campaign development would be useful to allow local governments and community partners to better understand the stage of change that is appropriate to most of the target audience. For example, if a pre-campaign survey demonstrates that individuals are aware of the dangers associated with speeding but continue to drive over the speed limit despite their awareness of the issue, campaign development could directly address the contemplation stage by encouraging self-reflection among individuals about speeding in relation to their own behaviour. From there, other campaign elements could be developed to guide individuals along the path to full acceptance and maintenance of the behaviour. It is essential that campaigns based on this model address every stage in some way to prevent relapse or regression to previous stages (Adamos et al., 2009; Cismaru et al., 2009).

**Challenges in the design of road safety advocacy messages**

According to Gladys (2006), strong road safety policies that are coupled with effective enforcement and appropriate penalties are critical to ensure that road users are safe from road accident injuries and deaths. The realistic fact is, that in many developing countries,
there are many gaps in their road safety policies and advocacy messages, with South Africa being guilty of the same. The gaps in the legislation and policies create barriers and is a stagnant obstacle in the effectiveness of advocacy messages, and the results have a negative impact on people globally. Persuasion communication involves the use of verbal and non-verbal messages to influence attitudes and behaviour. Although the context of persuasion must necessarily be considered, the relevant and impactful message, designed to sway the hearts and minds of the recipients, is at the core of persuasive communication. Peden (2010), believes in creating these messages that the National Transport and Safety Authority has encountered in several challenges. To start with, there is a lack of enough funds to design appealing messages. To be able to design attractive messages that can attract the attention of many people money is needed, which the authorities do not have. This has limited the quality of images and messages put across the billboards. For this reason, few drivers and road users get to spot the messages. Language barriers are one of the challenges when it comes to the designing road safety advocacy messages (Chitere & Kibua, 2012). The official languages of the Republic are Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu. In Durban, the dominant language that is widely spoken is isiZulu (63%), and English (30%). This gives reason to serious challenges, especially for people who are not well-versed in English and/or Zulu to read and more especially comprehend what is being said.

**Challenges in the dissemination of road safety advocacy information to the public**

The National Transport and Safety Authority experience several problems that interfere in the effectiveness of message delivery in the disseminating of road safety advocacy information to the public. Road safety advocacy messages targets an audience which includes all road users in South Africa. Road safety advocacy messages are commonly disseminated through roadside billboards. Other challenges that hinder the dissemination of road safety messages include cost and luggage (Gladys, 2006). There are two main factors to be considered when developing an advertisement: (a) determining the message content to motivate appropriate action, and (b) executing the message in a way that the target audience understands and accepts, while retaining its motivational potential (Donovan, Jalleh & Henley, 1999). Several message-related and individual-based characteristics have been identified as influencing the effectiveness of advertising messages. Message-related characteristics represent aspects of actual message design and content; while individual characteristics include factors particular to individuals (or groups of individuals), such as sociodemographic factors (Lewis, Watson and White, 2009). The “effectiveness” of advertising messages is typically defined by the degree of “message acceptance” or “persuasiveness” (its ability to achieve attitudinal, intentional and/or behavioural change) (Horvath, Lewis & Watson, 2012: 334–341). Just as in South Africa, traffic injuries remain a leading health concern in most low and middle-income countries (LMICs). However, most LMICs have not established institutions that have the legislative mandate and financial resources necessary to coordinate large-scale interventions. Argentina provides a counter-example. This is the reason that this study opted to have a look at Argentina, as one of the case studies discussed below. Apart from the obvious political, economic, and social problems, there will also be communication problems to cope with when preparing road safety programmes to persuade people to adjust to safe behaviour.

**Some of these problems are as follows:**

**Basic Values:** Village folk basically have their identities centred on certain values that may conflict with messages of change. However, success stories in the development arena have been told, where, especially in health programmes, people have positively embraced habits of health and discarded their traditional beliefs. Change happens over time, but benefits are derived as soon as change is made. South African rural communities still cling to values that militate against change of values, making it difficult to persuade them in the direction of embracing the moral values of road safety (Thebe, 2005, 2011).

**Exact target groups:** Targeting problem groups has been seen as the way to go at present in South Africa. Initially, it was difficult to concentrate on an exact target group. The National Department of Transport, ‘Arrive Alive Campaign Report’, (2003), cites the problem with targeting specific groups in its report. They were “until now, morally obliged to reach the South African population as a whole and not the problem target groups in particular”. It is advisable that behavioural change be targeted among problem groups, as these people are the most vulnerable on the roads, e.g., as pedestrians, as passengers and as drivers of vehicles (Thebe, 2005, 2011).

**Message formulation difficulties:** South Africa has 11 official languages, and in addition, the Khoi and San languages, that are emerging and are beginning to put pressure on the system to recognise them in their programmes. Most people who need the programmes in their language, and relevant to their culture for purposes of understanding are the very people from the remote backgrounds of rural villages and very small towns in the poorer areas of South Africa (Thebe, 2005, 2011). In the Eastern Cape, Xhosa rural folks who use public transport need programme. In the remote Limpopo villages there are similar problems, as well as in Kwa-Zulu Natal, Mpumalanga, the Free State, the Northwest, the Northern and Western Cape. People in these areas who speak different languages, have different cultures, live rural lives, either in villages or on white farms, are mostly illiterate and may be visually illiterate too, with the tendency to interpret the symbols of Road Safety wrongly. It therefore becomes extremely difficult to formulate the idea of transport planning or traffic control strategically, also bearing in mind the limited number of traffic officials who get deployed on provincial and local roads (Thebe, 2005, 2011). It is argued that while, in most cases, communication message marketers or advertisers sell ideas and products that people want. Behavioural change, as a product demands, in this case, that the communication programmeme persuades the South African population to control their road behaviour and plan their transport, which they might view as unpleasant rather than pleasant, because of several bottlenecks of planning that must be overcome (Thebe, 2005, 2011).
Message content: The content of any message is communicated in the language, the symbol, the text, and idiom of the culture of the recipient audience. It is difficult to plan and formulate actual message content because not all the identified target groups are affected in the same manner by the messages, or the approaches used in the messages. What works for one target group in a message, might be taboo for others (Thebe, 2005, 2011).

Evaluation difficulties: The outcome of a road safety programme is often difficult to evaluate, because its success can only be measured over time and results therefore are not available immediately. The National Department of Transport, Arrive Alive Campaign Report, (2003) (cited in Thebe, 2011). However, evaluation being a function of time, it is possible to use partners to observe regional problems and to report them to the central office from time to time. In this study, evaluation is central to the Social Marketing Promotional strategic model being sought, and it was clear that huge gaps in the system needed to be bridged when they were found. These gaps were the problem, but a solution had to be found. Partnerships are of the essence in any model that needs collaborative efforts, collaborative funding, collaborative system monitoring and development, and engagement of communities. The Department of Transport alone could never change behaviour and attitudes of the broad and culturally diverse road user family of South Africa (Thebe, 2005, 2011).

Rural areas are less informed: In some provinces, poorer rural families are not exposed, daily, to the daily messages of road safety. The radio messages about traffic, report on the density of traffic in the urban complexes of a few selected cities in the country. All of this has no meaning for people who would encounter the main road once now and then. What is relevant for the urban communities may be irrelevant for rural areas, and therefore rural people who visit town once a month or occasionally, encounter serious problems in the cities, be they pedestrians, passengers or drivers. These are normally the most highly disadvantaged members of the less informed, less enlightened group of poor rural dwellers. Urban dwellers are often more informed about road safety programmes than are rural communities. The immediacy, frequency, and impact of the road advocacy messages make them more effective in urban areas (National Department of Transport, Arrive Alive Campaign Report, 2003, cited in (Thebe, 2005, 2011).

Mass communication media not as effective: The Arrive Alive Report (2003) (cited in Thebe, 2005, 2011), observed that the media of mass communication are not as effective as has been assumed. They reported that television programming reaches a very small percentage of the population, and that printed media have the lowest reach because of low literacy levels in the rural areas especially. Radio, the one media that has more penetration and reach, is the only hope for the disadvantaged masses.

Research and Methodology

A qualitative approach was chosen as the research method for this study. A qualitative approach was considered more relevant to undertake this research as it allowed greater capacity to gain more depth and meaning based on an individual’s experiences of road safety advocacy messages along with their beliefs and feelings opposed to a quantitative approach which is more structured, broader in scale and more numerically based. Semi-structured interviews were selected to carry out this research study. They allowed the participants to elaborate and with that provided more flexibility, range and therefore the capacity to elicit more information from the participant. Semi-structured interviews permit scope for individuals to answer questions more on their own terms than the standardised interview permits, yet still provides a good structure for comparability over that of the focused interview (May, 2011; Knott, Rao, Summers, K. et al. (2022). An exploratory qualitative study using semi-structured in-depth interviews was adopted, following purposive sampling. Using simple random technique, the researcher interviewed a sample of 30 participants, of which 15 were Metro Police officials and the other 15 from the public. Data collection took place in July 2020. A Dictaphone was used to record the interviews and all interviews were fully transcribed verbatim. All participants were contacted through email containing details of the research and by telephone with the interview particulars. All participants’ chose to have the interviews carried out in their at the public places or their homes, where they felt more at ease in their surroundings and thus allowed them to speak more freely and openly on the research topic. An interview schedule was prepared in advance to aid the first author with the structure and flow of the interview. Each participant was presented with a similar set of questions relating to their overall experiences of effectiveness of road safety advocacy messages the impact which it had on their lives. The researcher sought to use language that was comprehensible and relevant to each of the participants being interviewed (Bryman, 2012).

Findings

Responses to questions – Emerged Themes

Theme 1: The effectiveness of road safety advocacy messages

When asked how effective road safety advocacy messages in the pursuit of curbing the number of road accident fatalities were, many participants concurred that Enforcement as a campaign support is associated with effectiveness but the presence of legislation by itself is not. In most cases (about two thirds) legislation was present. It is the combinations of enforcement plus publicity and legislation and enforcement that are most effective.

Some of the responses were as follows:
A persuasive campaign where motorists were handed over marketing and/or advocacy tracks appeared to have a positive impact although campaigns requesting a change or modification in behaviour rather than being educative or information oriented, appeared generally more successful (Participant 1).

They are very effective as we still have a high number of road accidents which are on the increase and fatalities almost daily on our roads. The carnage on our roads is gaining momentum and mass media campaigns and legislation do work but, not as effective as enforcement. There is an urgent need for combination of legislation, media campaigns and effective enforcement to curb this familiar occurrence on our roads (Participant 4).

The type of media campaigns currently used does not clearly show the power of television, although as noted earlier the correlation between television usage and effect size, as for multiple ads, may be more a measure of the reach of the campaign (Participant 7).

These campaigns are effective, although this alone is not enough. It looks like they are focusing on people driving cars on the road and they are less focused on pedestrians. E.g., People crossing the freeways (Participant 8).

The messages show and indicate clear, basic instructions. The only flaw I seem to have noted are the insufficient places these messages are placed around some roads (Participant 10).

Judging by the road accident fatalities statistics road safety advocacy messages have little impact on the behaviours of road users (Participant 14).

Unfortunately, they are not very effective. The advocacy messages are only promoted during December as it is the busiest time of the year (Participant 17).

It can be very effective if the public takes campaigns such as ‘Drive Alive’ seriously. Road safety advocacy messages is a form of educating the public of the risks involved, consequences associated with the violation of road safety rules. It also creates awareness of real-life scenarios of statistics of road fatalities and will instil fear in other road users (motorists and pedestrians) to refrain from dangerous driving, jaywalking thus educating the public and ultimately curbing the number of road accident fatalities (Participant 19).

Sub-Theme 1: Channels of sharing road safety advocacy message dissemination

When asked which platforms participants were aware of that were used to disseminate road safety advocacy messages, most of the participants concurred that campaigns consisted of a mix of campaign materials including TV adverts, posters, bumper stickers, websites, leaflets, billboards on roadways, and television programmes. Some of the responses were summarised below.

Radio stations, social media platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook. Print media… Road safety sign messages along major roads (Participant 7).


Community events. Printed and electronic media… School road safety programmes. Road safety advocacy message brochures and billboards (Participant 13).

Billboards, SMS’s, as well as law enforcement talking with motorists (Participant 14).

Road signs, tv, road safety commercials, public social media awareness, newspapers and pamphlets (Participant 21).

When asked their opinion to what extent were these platforms influential in increasing road safety awareness to the public, it emerged that some of the participants concurred that these platforms were not as effective as anticipated, whereas others had different opinions on this question. Below are some of the responses.

No, they are not influential. This is since we have the most road traffic accidents on our roads. We have the most fatalities, and we also have the highest number of drunk drivers who contribute to the accident and fatality rates. If there were influences, we would see a decline (Participant 9).

In my view, they have a limited influence because after viewing, I believe people forget when driving in ‘real-life’ traffic that they are under pressure and time restraints (Participant 10).

Yes. If there isn’t any effort made to deal with road accident fatalities, then there would be one-two many fatalities happening too often. By government and other stakeholders in public transport making efforts to curb road accident fatalities it creates awareness to the community that fatalities on the road is a crisis and road users should adhere more to road safety and the rules of the road (Participant 11).

These channels or platforms bring awareness to the public. It is through these platforms that we are informed about road accident statistics, and to a certain extent change our behaviour (Participant 13).
Yes certainly, these platforms give all road users the opportunity of knowing the laws of the road, the expected conduct required by them and the consequences of transgressing against these laws (Participant 15).

When asked whether road safety advocacy messages were well-advertised in the pursuit of creating a well-informed society and to highlight the serious consequences of the public disregarding the road rules, the responses were conflicting as well. Some of the participants said:

Yes, they are well advertised but this seems to be romanticised in that it’s intended for a ‘well-informed society’. When presented with a reality check we find that we are far from a ‘well-informed society’. Again, socioeconomics plays an essential part where the public will disregard road rules just to survive on a day-to-day basis (Participant 4).

Yes, they are. The messages are hard hitting and explicit but are not advertised frequently enough (Participant 5).

No, I believe that it is mostly highlighted just before Easter and just before the Christmas periods. There is no consistency in advocating road safety throughout the years. It’s more likely you’ll see the continuous and upgraded advertising of popular alcohol beverages which are amongst the major existing contributing factors of road fatalities (Participant 5).

No, it’s mostly advertised only during the festive period. This should be a continuous fight by the Government and stakeholders involved (Participant 18).

I think that without traffic legislation been made much stricter and advertised in road safety messages, these messages will be received but never well acknowledged (Participant 28).

Yes. These messages are always advertised in a manner which creates a certain mindset in ‘drivers’ heads. Whereby when seeing such adverts, road users start to think about how disregarding the road rules would impact the lives of the driver himself, his family, and the lives of other innocent road users (Participant 29).

Though I mentioned that it is effective, road safety advocacy messages are inconsistent and therefore the desired goal is not obtained. It is necessary for Government to be consistent in their objective with road safety advocacy messages throughout the year and not just intensify these road safety strategies only during Easter and Christmas holidays. These messages must be carried out throughout the year (Participant 29).

Sub-Theme 2: Current practices of sharing road safety advocacy message dissemination

When asked what current practices were in place within the realm of road safety campaigns, the majority concurred that majority of road advocacy campaigns revolved mostly around drunken driving, speed, seatbelts, texting, and fatigue. It also emerged from the findings that, the majority of the participants stated that we are also of the view that the advocating of road safety in road safety advocacy messages necessitated measurement, so as to assist the government and all stakeholders in public transport, in their attempt to curb the number of road accident fatalities. Some of the responses were as follows:

Yes, they are a necessary to be measured. It is my view that, based on the high accidents on our roads, the measures in place in the form of safety advocacy messages are not having the desired effect. To curb the number of fatalities, government and the public transport stakeholders need to re-examine their strategies and not only focus on warning messages but rather seek a change in driver behaviour (Participant 9).

Another participant was of the view that road safety advocacy messages promote a positive role for the community to develop a community safe culture.

Yes, they do on grass-roots level, however in the South African scenario we need to consider that we are a developing nation where socio-economic conditions have set majority of the population in “survival mode”. Surviving on a day-to-day basis takes precedence over road safety messages (Participant 13).

When asked whether advocating of road safety in road safety advocacy messages were viewed as necessary measures, taken by the government and all stakeholders in public transport, with an effort to curb the number of road accident fatalities, it emerged that most of the participants concurred that also, offering conflicting responses. Some said:

Yes, they are a necessary measure, however, the messages are not having the desired effect. To curb the number of fatalities government and the public transport stakeholders need to re-examine their messages of road safety and not only focus on warning messages but rather seek a change in driver behaviour (Participant 8).

Yes. Given the high percentage of road accident fatalities, they are necessary. They are educational (Participant 9).

They are a necessary measure, I think most accidents that happen are because of human error and ignorance errors, like drinking and driving and crossing where people are not supposed to be crossing such as jaywalking (Participant 9).

Yes, I do, the government is on the right track in terms of road safety advocacy messages and how they appeal to road users, especially with regards to public transport, because these messages are clear. They have played and will continue to play a positive role in curbing the number of road accident fatalities (Participant 11).
When asked whether road safety advocacy messages promote a positive role for the community to develop a community-safe culture, again many of the participants concurred. Some said:

*Yes, they do on grass-roots level, however in the South African scenario we need to consider that we are a developing nation where socio-economic conditions have set majority of the population in “survival mode”. Surviving on a day-to-day basis takes precedence over road safety messages* (Participant 17).

*They do develop a community road safety awareness culture* (Participant 18).

*Yes, they do* (Participant 21).

*Yes, it makes the community socially aware of road rules and how they apply, they aid in community safety because they prevent any accidents on roads* (Participant 23).

*Yes, it makes the community socially aware of road rules and how they apply, they aid in community safety because they prevent any accidents on roads.* (Participant 23).

*Yes I do, it is a step in the right direction in combating the issue of accidents on the road. I do however feel that advocating road safety should work together with law enforcement. This would make a major difference* (Participant 25).

**Theme 2: Challenges In Dissemination Of Road Safety Advocacy Messages**

When asked what the common challenges in dissemination of road safety advocacy messages were, it emerged that most participants highlighted the use of campaign language, as well as the design of road safety advocacy messages as challenges. These are discussed or categorised as sub-themes below for the purposes of detailed interpretation and discussions:

**Sub-Theme 1: Language**

It emerged from the findings that the majority of participants were of the view, that among the many, something is amiss as regards the language that campaigners use in the area of this study. South Africa has eleven official languages. That was no surprise for this issue to be raised by the participants, as the target group, could not necessarily all understand English as a medium of instruction. Relating this to the road education and road safety promotion model, there is a high likelihood and/or a good chance of misinterpretation of several road safety messages. Some said:

*The languages more prevalent in the targeted community should be used to effectively get the message across* (Participant 1).

*Language is a challenge especially to road users who don’t understand isiZulu or English of which most of these messages are limited for translation. The variety of official languages in South Africa may be a major challenge* (Participant 3).

*Language is not a problem. What I can say is most people don’t want to read. Messages must be short and straight to the point* (Participant 5).

*The language used in road safety advocacy messages must be a language that all road users are familiar with, so they can understand and act on it* (Participant 6).

*The language that should be used must be easily understood by everyone. The young and old. It should also be easily understandable to everyone* (Participant 12).

*English, being the universal language, should be used in campaigns. However, an additional language could be used in the campaigns based on the demographics of the area* (Participant 13).

*I believe that the campaign language should be easily understood and persuasive or emotional in order to get the effective desire of road safety messages. This is the best practice in the field of road safety mass messages. I believe these are more effective than rational or informational style campaigns* (Participant 15).

*There should be ongoing evaluation of campaign language with the aim of always improving road safety. New methods of behaviour modification in the use of language is often ignored. The methods of campaign language should provide new insights into road user behaviour* (Participant 16).

When asked whether the use of both translations of English and isiZulu is appropriate in achieving success in the dissemination of road safety advocacy messages, participants said:

*If the two languages are the most prevalent ones in the community, then, yes, their use on road safety advocacy messages is appropriate. The aim is to get the message across unambiguously* (Participant 17).

*Yes. Because not everyone speaks only English and only isiZulu, so using both languages in KZN will reach and be understood by everyone* (Participant 18).

*Yes. The message will reach everybody* (Participant 19).

*Yes. If it is based on the demographics* (Participant 20).
Yes. Both English and isiZulu translations used in road safety advocacy messages is an “absolute must”, as these two languages are the two most spoken first and second languages in Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal (Participant 21).

The responses above highlighted those various hindrances to the success of advocacy campaigns existed. It emerged that most participants highlighted the use of a campaign language, as well as the design of road safety advocacy messages as challenges. Greater and longer-term investment by the government, as well as the relevant role-players will be required to bring improvements in the use of language for the target group.

Sub-Theme 2: Challenges in the design of road safety advocacy messages

It also emerged from the findings, that most participants concurred that there were many gaps in the road safety policies and advocacy messages. The challenge, as highlighted in Theme 1, has its roots in the legislation and enforcement. This is something that has barred the effectiveness of road safety advocacy messages. Some participants said:

I feel that it would be. With the huge budget allocated, the messages are not taken seriously enough. Without changed legislation e.g., Mandatory driver’s license suspensions or cancellations to be incorporated into road safety advocacy messages they will fail (Participant 21).

Another participant said:

The messages are bit boring, they use the same slogans and inform us of the same things (Participant 23).

Some of the participants were of the view that the use of colourful design of road safety advocacy messages were both appealing and distracting at the same time to get the road safety advocacy message across to the public. Some said:

I feel it’s both an attraction and a distraction. The colours lunge at you and grab your attention, but on the other hand, instead on focusing on driving, your attention is on the road safety signs and messages (Participant 23).

The use of creative ideas in the design of road safety advocacy messages is a design style that draws more attention because of colours and pictures. People are drawn to bright and colourful products (Participant 24).

Colours like red, black and neon colours are more appropriate, especially considering if you want road users to see road safety advocacy messages at night (Participant 26).

A creative design in the road safety advocacy message continues to have an educational impact on me long after I was introduced to it (Participant 27).

No more sign boards need to be erected (Participant 28).

It is more of an attraction than of a distraction. Commonly the design depicts pictures that are relevant and gives a warning on consequences of ignoring road safety messages (Participant 29).

Discussion

Regarding theme 1, the responses indicated that the likelihood of success is substantially increased by the application of multiple interventions. Such interventions ensure that campaigns supported by publicity and enforcement all appeared influential. The combination of publicity and enforcement appeared to have a particularly definite effect. The responses also indicated that, if television is used, a higher impact is likely, but this may be a defacto measure of campaign reach. Concurrent availability of, and access to the public with adequate communication strategies and products, are crucial to persuade individuals motivated by media messages supported by legislation, as well as effective enforcement to act on them. The creation of policies that support opportunities to change provides additional motivation for change, whereas policy enforcement can discourage unhealthy or unsafe behaviour. The responses above are consistent with the findings of previous studies. Surprisingly, even more so given the sheer number of road safety campaigns, only a fraction of such campaigns are formally and thoroughly evaluated (Boulanger, Divjak, Orozova-Bekkevold & Zabukovec, 2007: 23). Despite this dearth of evaluation results, there are several reports on the subject that indicate the potential effects of road safety campaigns. For example, in 2004 the World Health Organisation (WHO), concluded that road safety campaigns were able to influence behaviour when used in conjunction with legislation and law enforcement. However, the report also states that “… when used in isolation education, information and publicity generally do not deliver tangible and sustained reductions in deaths and serious injuries” (Peden, Scurfield, Sleet, Mohan, Hyder, Jarawan & Mathers, 2004: 4).

Likewise, a meta-analysis showed that the effects of mass media campaigns alone are small, especially when compared to the effects of campaigns that were combined with other measures (Elvik, 2010; Elvik, Vaa, Hoye, Erke & Sorensen, 2009a, 2009b). Without enforcement and/or education a mass media campaign has virtually no effect in terms of reducing the number of road accidents, while adding either of both those measures ensures a reduction of over ten percent. It is the local, personally directed campaigns that show by far the biggest effect on road accidents. However, it should be noted that the confidence interval for this result is quite large, meaning that there is a large uncertainty about the true value of this parameter. More importantly, however, is that the meta-analysis only contained a few studies on this type of campaign, and as such this result is based on rather few studies (Vaa, Assum, Ulleberg & Veisten, 2004: 11), which provide another alternative explanation for the fact that local individualised campaigns seem so much
more effective than other types of campaigns. Furthermore, the responses also highlighted that the participants were of the view that, as also highlighted in the main theme, not only do the individual characteristics of a publicity campaign have different implications on different types of outcome behaviour, but the combination of publicity with other measures (such as enforcement, education, and personal communication), also has differing effects depending on the type of targeted behaviour. In a study on both the individual and combined effects of publicity campaigns and enforcement aimed at drinking and driving on the one hand, and/or speeding on the other, it was shown that the combination of publicity campaigns with enforcement did indeed have a different effect depending on the type of target behaviour. With drunk driving campaigns, both enforcement and publicity campaigns had significant independent effects, but no combined reinforcing effect. The reverse was true for speeding campaigns, where only the combined effect of enforcement and publicity campaigns was significant and not the two measures independently (Tay, 2005: 922–929).

The findings also highlighted that a mixture of platforms that were utilised and these responses, offered conflicting views regarding whether these platforms change the behaviour of road users. In terms of the responses, some of the participants focused particularly on road safety as part of the broader issue of awareness and education whereas, others, as highlighted earlier, were more concerned on the capacity of the government and relevant stakeholders not being consistent with the campaigns. Given their disparate nature, capacities vary greatly in terms of human and financial resources and technical road safety knowledge. Regardless of their conflicting view, all the responses serve as a call for adequate response by the government as well as relevant stakeholders in terms of putting measures in one way or another, and suggestions for ways in which they might do this as strategically as possible can benefit the road safety cause. Research indicates that public relations or media advocacy campaigns that shape the treatment of a public behavioural practice by news and entertainment media also represent a promising complementary strategy to conventional media campaigns (Naugle & Hornik, 2014; Wallack & Dorfman, 1996: 293–317). Multiple advertisements may similarly reflect the extent of media usage rather than impact. Research also indicates that “mass media campaigns are widely used to expose high proportions of large populations to messages through routine uses of existing media, such as television, radio, and newspapers. Exposure to such messages is, therefore, generally passive. Such campaigns are frequently competing with factors, such as pervasive product marketing, powerful social norms, and behaviour driven by addiction or habit” (Horvath, Lewis & Watson, 2012: 334).

Horvath et al., (2012: 334), further argue that the great promise of mass media campaigns lies in their ability to disseminate well defined behaviourally focused messages to large audiences repeatedly, over time, in an incidental manner, and at a low cost per head. However, that promise has been inconsistently realised, as campaign messages can fall short and even backfire; exposure of audiences to the message might not meet expectations, hindered by inadequate funding, the increasingly fractured and cluttered media environment, use of inappropriate or poorly researched format (such as but not limited to, boring factual messages or age-inappropriate content), or a combination of these features; homogeneous messages might not be persuasive to heterogeneous audiences; and campaigns might address behaviour that audiences lack the resources to change. Mass media campaigns can work through direct and indirect pathways to change the behaviour of whole populations (Hornik & Yanovitzky, 2003: 204–240). Many campaigns aim to directly affect individual recipients by invoking cognitive or emotional responses. Such programmes are intended to affect decision-making processes at the individual level. Anticipated outcomes include the removal or lowering of obstacles to change, helping people to adopt healthy or recognise unhealthy social norms, and to associate valued emotions with achieving change. These changes strengthen intentions to alter and increase the likelihood of achieving new behaviours (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010: 13).

Furthermore, the findings may also have something to do with the finding mentioned below, that speeding is not easily dissuaded through enforcement. The fact that, despite the lack of individual effects of either enforcement or publicity, is somewhat more of a surprise that a combined effect was still obtained. The author suggests that since the focus of a publicity campaign was on the severe consequences of the crashes, this may have counteracted some of the prevalent cynicism concerning the actual motives of the government to enforce the laws on speeding (Tay, 2005: 922–929). Research also indicates that one of the things that is reflected by the meta-analyses into road safety campaigns over the years, is that the effectiveness of such campaigns varies considerably depending on the type of behaviour that is targeted (Elvik et al., 2009; Tay, 2005). As was stated before, all aspects of the target behaviour itself should be considered in determining the best approach. That is, what works for a campaign aimed at drunk driving may not work for speeding, and vice versa. There are several examples of research illustrating this very phenomenon. The effectiveness of road safety advertising aimed both at fatigue (Tay & Watson, 2002: 55–68) and drunk driving (Tay, 2005: 922–929), for example, was mostly determined by whether suitable alternatives were provided (i.e., having a designated driver, and alternative forms of transportation).

However, providing people with alternatives for their behaviour is not effective in influencing all traffic-related behaviour. In the case of speeding behaviour, for example, such alternative behaviour is not readily available. That is, it is not possible to suggest alternative ways to deal with the dangers that speeding presents, other than to just not engage in this particular behaviour (Tay, 2005: 922–929). It is worth noting that speeding in general is a notoriously difficult behaviour to influence through campaigning. Not only is it difficult to provide people with viable alternatives for this behaviour, but it also seems that even enforcement does little to sway people in their propensity for speeding. Indeed, many young drivers hold the belief that speeding is socially acceptable and that avoiding detection by law enforcement is a breeze. More importantly, however, is that reportedly not even increases in the chance of getting caught would sway these youngsters from speeding (Tay, Watson & Hart, 2002). The lack of effect garnered by enforcement, in relation to speeding, may be owed in part to the public’s conviction that enforcement is in place, not because the behaviour is truly dangerous, but because the government sees it as an expedient way to rake in cash (Tay, 2005: 922–929). Thus, in contrast to drunk
Distracted driving involves sharing attention between the primary task (driving), and a non-driving related secondary task. The non-driving related secondary task can be in-vehicle, for example mobile phones conversations, in-vehicle infotainment interactions, or external such as reading roadside advertising signs, looking at non-related landscape elements. According to Otsyendo (2011: 33–35), the purpose of road safety advocacy messages is to increase awareness of road safety. These are strong messages that are meant to persuade and send information regarding the observation of caution to ensure reduced accidents on the roads. Gladys (2006: 56) asserts that strong road safety policies, that are coupled with effective enforcement and appropriate penalties, are critical to ensuring that road users are safe from road crash injuries and deaths. However, in many developing countries, South Africa included, there are many gaps in the road safety policies and advocacy messages. This is something that has barred the effectiveness of road safety advocacy messages. This is something that has had a huge impact on the daily lives of many people, globally. Chitere and Kibu (2006: 78), are of the opinion that advocacy is a set of tools which can be used to achieve improved road safety. Its main aim is to influence and inform with the aim of changing policies, structures, and legislation through targeting decision-makers, who have the authority to make changes. Based on the responses above, it is not possible to indicate that there is a direct relationship between the driving behavioural changes that can be attributed to roadside advertising and subsequent road crashes. However, there was an emerging trend in the responses from participants, which are supported by previous studies, suggesting that the use of advocacy messages, particularly those signs with changeable messages, can increase crash risk (Cairney & Gunatillake, 2000; Schieber, Limrick, McCall & Beck, 2014).

Conclusions

In summary, this research examined the efficacy of road safety advocacy messaging in the Durban Metropole and identified two primary themes. First and foremost, Theme 1 elucidates the importance of integrating enforcement, publicity, and law in order to enhance the efficacy of road safety programs. It was apparent that legislation alone, although commonly observed, was insufficient. However, it was the combined effect of enforcement and exposure, supported by legislative measures, that produced the most encouraging outcomes. The research emphasized the indisputable significance of employing various interventions, specifically the combination of publicity and enforcement, which had a clear and notable effect. Furthermore, the utilization of television as a communication channel appeared to amplify the campaign's scope, suggesting its potential influence. Nevertheless, it is important to consider this as an indicator of the campaign's overall reach rather than its exclusive effectiveness. The importance of both concurrent accessibility and purposeful communication in encouraging individuals to take meaningful action became apparent. This motivation was facilitated by media messages that were reinforced by legislation and effectively enforced. The development of rules that effectively promote change and are consistently implemented has emerged as a significant catalyst for modifying habits and discouraging actions that are detrimental to health and safety. The aforementioned findings align with prior research and emphasize the complex characteristics of successful road safety advocacy efforts.

Additionally, Theme 2 explores the difficulties faced in the dissemination of road safety advocacy messaging. The findings of the study indicate that a significant number of participants encountered challenges in relation to campaign language and the design of road safety advocacy messages. These problems underscore the importance of meticulously considering linguistic subtleties and the aesthetic appeal of advocacy communications in order to optimize their effectiveness.

The outcomes of this study highlight the significance of adopting a complete approach to road safety advocacy. In order to bring about significant changes in road safety practices, it is imperative for policymakers and campaign planners to direct their attention not alone towards legislation, but also towards the strategic integration of enforcement and publicity. Furthermore, the results of the study underscore the importance of employing unambiguous and culturally considerate campaign rhetoric, with visually captivating message composition, in order to effectively engage a heterogeneous target audience with road safety communications. Additionally, the research emphasizes the crucial significance of television and other forms of mass media in efficiently conveying advocacy messages.
In future endeavors, it is imperative for policymakers and advocacy groups to duly consider these findings throughout the formulation and execution of road safety programs. By implementing a comprehensive strategy and effectively tackling the highlighted obstacles, stakeholders can augment the effectiveness of their road safety advocacy initiatives and make significant contributions towards promoting safer road conditions not only within the Durban Metropole but also in other areas.

Acknowledgement

All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.


Funding: This research was funded by the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) and Transport Education Training Authority (TETA).

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to restrictions.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References


Hancock, B. (2002). An Introduction to Qualitative Research. Nottingham, UK: Trent Focus Group.


*Publisher’s Note:* SSBFNET stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.