



Evaluating the effectiveness of law enforcement in promoting road safety in South Africa

Modipa Mmakwena¹  & Khangala Tshilidzi² 

¹ Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa.

ABSTRACT

The inability of road traffic authorities to enforce the law consistently is a major problem in the road traffic environment. The prevalence of this problem contributes to a high rate of road traffic accidents. Road traffic authorities are critical for maintaining road safety by actively deterring dangerous driving and ensuring compliance with traffic regulations. If they are not up to standard, the country will continue to experience a high rate of road traffic accidents. The aim of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of law enforcement in promoting road safety in South Africa. The study adopted a qualitative research approach and utilised a non-empirical research design. The research draws upon secondary data as its only basis. Key findings included poor adherence to road rules as well as inconsistent traffic law enforcement. The Results also indicated that road users are disregarding traffic regulations, leading to a higher incidence of vehicular collisions and lawlessness. Based on the findings of the study, the following were recommended: enforcement interventions should increase road users' compliance with traffic laws, such as managing driver behaviour and monitoring pedestrian behaviour. Road traffic authorities are encouraged to apply the law uniformly, and enforcement models should include technological devices to increase compliance. This article contributes to the existing literature and synthesises prior findings to reveal blind spots, resolve contradictions, and apply existing frameworks to new contexts. It will also assist road traffic authorities and policymakers in managing and reducing the high rate of road traffic accidents in South Africa.

Keywords: Road safety, Law enforcement, Road users, Road traffic authorities, Resources.

INTRODUCTION

Approximately 1.19 million individuals perish annually due to road traffic collisions, while 20 to 50 million others get non-fatal injuries, with numerous others left with a disability and road traffic injuries place a substantial economic burden on individuals, their families, and their countries.¹ Moreover, losses are accounted for by the expense of treatment and lost labour for the dead or disabled due to their injuries, and for families requiring absence from employment or educational institutions to attend to the injured. Road traffic crashes represent a serious, but under-reported worldwide public health problem. To address this problem, effective and intensive interventions, as well as sustained prevention efforts, are required.

¹ World Health Organisation, "Road Traffic Injuries," 2023, https://www.who.int/health-topics/road-safety#tab=tab_1.

Road transport is the most intricate and perilous of all the systems individuals must navigate daily. Road traffic accidents in South Africa are just not acceptable at all, and indeed they burden society as well as families in addition to the economy quite massively, because the skills as well as capacity needed to produce things are lost, while survivors suffer such pain, and even next of kin, along with loved ones, get left without any breadwinners. Too many road users, regrettably, have an appalling attitude toward safe road use, and absolutely no amount of education or enforcement will ever stop those determined to play by their own rules.

If road users do not change their attitude and, importantly, respect the law, attempts to reduce road accidents and deaths will be futile. Successful traffic law enforcement is essential for road safety, with the primary objective of traffic police being the safe and efficient flow of vehicles through persuasion, prevention, and punishment.² In addition, safe driving behaviour does not naturally exist in most individuals, but with appropriate laws and enforcement systems, behaviour can be positively altered.

Effective, evidence-based road safety laws are vital.³ However, effective road traffic laws are on their own insufficient to deal with the carnage. It is essential to supplement them with sustainable, adequately funded law enforcement to shape road users' behaviours and ensure adherence to road traffic statutes. Moreover, adherence to traffic regulations will occur only if the populace perceives that noncompliance will be detected and lead to undesirable consequences, such as penalties or licence revocation. The traffic officers responsible for enforcing traffic laws should be trained and equipped (with devices such as speed-measuring and breathalyser equipment) to effectively perform their duties. In addition, a system to restrict avenues for corrupt practices should be implemented (e.g., ensuring that fines are not pocketed by traffic officers for personal use).

For road traffic crashes in South Africa to be countered, it is vital that police officers behave according to the code of conduct and in a professional manner whenever they are executing their roles, and they are required to use the law in an even-handed manner; in doing this, they will be able to assist the Department of Transport and its agencies to counter road traffic crashes. This article aimed to elucidate the role of law enforcement in promoting road safety in South Africa and to propose practical solutions aligned with international standards and procedures.

The function of traffic police in ensuring road safety is to enforce road laws and eliminate road traffic accidents fairly. Arguably, the essence of the enforcement of traffic law is to ensure order and law in traffic flow and ultimately ensure road safety.⁴ Secondly, the presence of traffic officers does not deter bad-attitude driving, and the effectiveness of traffic policing depends on officers' ability to enforce the law. The high incidence of road traffic accidents is due to law enforcement officers' inability to enforce the law effectively. Even if road traffic authorities have the strictest road rules, the country shall still witness a rise in fatal road accidents. This will be the case unless the rules are enforced both efficiently and effectively. Disregard for traffic regulations renders the roads unsafe.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative methodology. The data were collected from relevant sources and evaluated contextually without employing quantitative methods. In addition, the researcher examined relevant literature to evaluate the effectiveness of law enforcement in promoting road safety. The information presented mainly used secondary data sources. Documented facts were retrieved from individual publications, magazines, the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC), scholarly books and so on during that process. Information obtained from these sources was condensed and analysed in terms of both content and context. Deductive synthesis was thus employed in this approach. Drawing on the declared purposes of the discourse, the study synthesises analysis findings.

² Global Transport Knowledge Partnership, "Legislation and Enforcement," 2023, <https://www.gtkp.com/themepage/gtkp-archives/road-safety/safer-people/legislation-and-enforcement/>.

³ Road Safety Toolkit, "Enforcement," 2022, <https://toolkit.irap.org/safer-people-treatments/enforcement/>.

⁴ Enos Mwakondange, *A Critical Role of Law Enforcement in the Road Traffic Environment* (Pretoria: Road Traffic Management Corporation, South Africa, 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Application of road safety law

The effective application of traffic laws is key for compliance among road users and for reducing road accidents. To minimise accidents, road safety laws are designed to regulate driver behaviour, vehicle standards, and road infrastructure. Key legislative measures do include speed limits, drunk-driving prohibitions, and seatbelt and helmet mandates. Rules regarding pedestrian right-of-way also constitute key measures. Yet, as this research emphasises, the mere existence of laws is not enough. Consistent enforcement is required. Sweden and the Netherlands have reputations for road safety. Those countries also integrate strict legal penalties along with high-visibility policing and automated enforcement technologies.⁵ For instance, Sweden's Vision Zero policy combines stringent laws with infrastructural redesigns, reducing fatalities by over 50 per cent since its implementation.⁶ South Africa faces a challenge of closing the divide between legislation and enforcement. Furthermore, South Africa must curb corruption and impose penalties equitably.

Modern enforcers do rely quite heavily on technology to overcome the limited human resources and reduce the risk of corruption. Impartiality is ensured, with violations deterred by automated systems such as speed cameras, red-light cameras, and e-ticketing. In Johannesburg, incidents of speeding decreased by 60 per cent within a year on major highways owing to the roll-out of average speed-over-distance cameras.⁷ Breathalyser checkpoints coupled with real-time data analytics are likewise targeting drunk-driving hotspots. Such technological investments may foster transparency and the public's trust in law enforcement. For this goal, training officers to use the technologies is also key.

The application of law includes behavioural nudges and awareness campaigns, in addition to punitive measures. South Africa's Arrive Alive campaigns, for example, discourage reckless driving by leveraging psychological principles such as fear appeals and social norms.⁸ International research indicates that combining enforcement with education increases compliance more effectively than fines alone, as in Australia's "Don't Rush" campaign.⁹

Furthermore, the adoption of similar models is needed to reduce road traffic accidents and stresses community engagement and school-based road safety programmes to foster long-term behavioural change. Road safety laws rely upon strong legislation and technology-driven enforcement. Community engagement also strongly influences the application of these laws. As the study reveals, South Africa must ensure that institutions act with integrity, allocate resources, and enforce strategies inventively to align with global benchmarks such as the United Nations' Decade of Action for Road Safety (2021–2030). In addition, the country can transform its legal framework from theory into practice. This action shall yield quantifiable decreases in deaths and injuries on the road.

Driving licence test centre corruption

South African crime research revealed that corruption was perceived most keenly when people dealt with traffic officials, then police officers, and finally officials handling employment prospects.¹⁰ Moreover, this aligns with the notion that corruption pervades local government traffic departments, municipal police units, and the South African Police Service (SAPS). It also indicates some latitude on the officers' side. Traffic officers, for example, are encountered by the public. These encounters mostly occur on the road. Thus, actions by corrupt officers are difficult to observe. This is likewise common in instances where incompetent drivers are produced by driving licence testers, who seem extremely corrupt within the testing centre, and consequently contribute substantially to the prevalence of road traffic accidents due to their inability to comprehend or interpret traffic regulations. Corruption at the

⁵ World Health Organisation, "Road Traffic Injuries."

⁶ Claes Tingvall and Narelle Haworth, "Vision Zero-An Ethical Approach to Safety and Mobility," in *6th ITE International Conference Road Safety & Traffic Enforcement: Beyond 2000*, 1999.

⁷ RTMC, "Road Traffic Management Corporation on Sentencing of Officials for Corruption," 2022.

⁸ Department of Transport, "Statement from the Transport Minister on the Release of the 2019–2020: Arrive Alive Festive Season Road Safety Campaign Data" (Arrive Alive, 2020).

⁹ Australian Transport Council, "National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020," 2011, http://roadsafety.gov.au/nrss/files/NRSS_2011_2020.pdf.

¹⁰ Department of Transport, *Speeding, Safe Driving and Road Crashes* (Arrive Alive, 2015), <https://www.arrivealive.co.za/Speeding-Road-Safety-and-Accidents>.

Driver Learner Testing Centres (DLTCs) obstructs South African road traffic authorities from ensuring road safety. Mitchley reports that 15 individuals were apprehended in the Free State. Five traffic officers were among those apprehended for fraud, including corruption schemes at the Harrismith and Bethlehem DLTCs.¹¹ The Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) collaborated with the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI) (also known as the Hawks), the Criminal Intelligence Division of the SAPS, and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA). Consequently, the authorities arrested five traffic officers, four jockeys, three administrative clerks, two examiners, and a driving school instructor.

This indicates that DLTC facilities throughout South Africa urgently require law enforcers with integrity who act ethically, upholding their code of ethics. Driving examiners get caught because of the role they play, since they are in the payroll of driving school owners. Students benefit from fraudulent means, so they possess driving documents but lack road rules and driving knowledge. Driving schools do typically collude in such actions. The actions do involve corrupt DLTC officials. They then exploit this relationship by guaranteeing their customers pass the first time. During their learner's test, applicants can receive some "assistance" if they pay bribes. The giving of bribes through their driving school to bribe the DLTC officials allows for this to occur. The officer quietly places the materials in the test room to avoid public scrutiny, then observes the applicant's exam before submitting it for answer verification. Once satisfied, the candidate submits the test and then receives their learner's licence.¹²

In the subsequent phase of this ongoing fraudulent practice, both the driving test and the examination official may disregard defects because they know that a bribe has already been paid, and the driving school official eases this in order to conceal the nature of all of the corruption involved. Instructors charge a premium fee over that quoted within their packages for applicants who want a totally hassle-free experience, and some driving schools factor a bribe into the cost, so the learner becomes clear, and this package entices any indecisive candidate who engages in corrupt practice. The candidate never involves examiners or test centre officials in corrupt practices like this. Instead, the candidate ensures that the school driving instructor and the examiner work together to obtain a driver's licence without proper testing. Most young drivers, who often engage in road traffic accidents, lack a comprehensive understanding of traffic regulations and are perceived negatively. They frequently fail to satisfy all driving criteria yet insist on obtaining a driving licence to secure employment in both the private and public sectors. Mr Bheki Ntuli, the then MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison in KwaZulu-Natal, commended his department's internal investigative unit for its superb work. The unit discovered a syndicate involving learners and driver's licences that were accessed fraudulently.¹³

The Department's protracted campaign against corruption, which involved a comprehensive investigation that took several months, culminated in the blacklisting of 80 drivers on the National Traffic Information System (NaTIS). This was after the tracking and tracing efforts of what is colloquially known as "jockeys" by the authorities. The "jockeys" were accused of writing learner driver tests for applicants, using the applicants' information, and being compensated as part of the syndicate. Road traffic authorities were prejudiced by this common attitude in South African Driving Licence Testing Centres, which prevented road traffic accidents.

Disregard of traffic rules

During the 2019/2020 festive season in South Africa, road traffic accidents resulted in 1,617 fatalities, with environmental factors and vehicle issues accounting for a smaller share, primarily due to noncompliance with traffic regulations.¹⁴ Data from 2019/2020 indicates that most road fatalities

¹¹ Alex. Mitchley, *Festive Season Road Deaths: Over 600 Pedestrians Killed* (Making Up Majority of Fatalities, 2020), <https://www.news24.com/news24/SouthAfrica/News/festive-season-road-deaths-over-600-pedestrians-killed-making-up-majority-of-fatalities-20200123>.

¹² Corruption Watch, "Anarchy Called Out, But It's Not Enough to Address Driving School Corruption," 2022.

¹³ Berea Mail, "Department of Transport Cracks Down on Drivers' Licence Fraud and Corruption," 2022.

¹⁴ Mitchley, *Festive Season Road Deaths: Over 600 Pedestrians Killed*.

involved pedestrians (40%), followed by passengers (34%), cars (25%), and cyclists (1%).¹⁵ In South Africa, roads were first designed to enable speed in the transport of goods and in responding to crime.¹⁶

The fundamental problem is consequently rooted in that initial design. Motorists exploit that fact, enabling cars to become deadly machines. Involving oneself in a road traffic accident puts other road users, such as pedestrians, at risk. Numerous cities worldwide are reducing speed limits in the busiest areas.¹⁷ Several pedestrians are dying on the road because drivers, even in their own localities, are travelling at a great speed, so South Africa must do likewise. Some even drive at high speeds and race in unguarded surroundings. Most drivers operate their vehicles at excessive speeds in residential zones. Speeding is, in fact, a contributory factor in accidents. It is among the key issues. They do not observe road rules. Road signs that ignore road traffic regulations inform drivers of a safe speed limit within housing estates.

Department of Transport asserts that speeding while under the influence of alcohol causes road traffic crashes related to alcohol and even crashes in which speeding is indeed a contributory factor, particularly for those that involve pedestrians.¹⁸ This behaviour affects pedestrians the most, yet it could be changed through action strategies on relevant matters, as the problem involves all road users. Regarding road safety, everyone has a part to play. The government, the industry, as well as the broader community must, in partnership, bring about continued change for road safety. This sustained alteration is a necessity. The government, as well as other agencies, will need to drastically improve the way they ensure safety within the roadway transportation framework.¹⁹ Road safety does require a great deal of caution from absolutely everyone, and various traffic signs are properly posted on roads or with markings for regulating road users. However, road users who disobey all the rules of the road often fail to notice these traffic signs, which are intended to keep them safe.²⁰

Inadequate law enforcement

Law enforcement has a significant impact on road safety, as it deters risky behaviours, enforces traffic laws, and focuses on areas with high crash risk. Reckless driving can also be reduced, and traffic regulation compliance improved through increased traffic police presence, especially visible patrols. Traffic policing is put in peril by corruption and crime; Modipa & Olutola noted that, knowing its nature and fighting this evil is vital.²¹ The National Traffic Anti-Corruption Unit (NTACU) was inaugurated in November 2012. It was a reaction against the moral conduct issues faced by the road traffic fraternity, as its primary mandate is to eliminate corruption and fraud from the national, provincial and local road traffic fraternity while promoting safety for all motorists, vehicles and road users plying the nation's roads.²²

The NTACU investigates allegations of corruption within the road traffic fraternity across many locations. These include Driving Licence Testing Centres (DLTCs), Vehicle Testing Centres (VTCs), and Vehicle Registration Centres (VRCs), as well as corruption among traffic officials. Those who enforce traffic law seriously battle corruption within their ranks, since most traffic officers are arrested for demanding bribes from motorists.

Drivers cease to obey traffic regulations and are confident they can bribe their way out if stopped by traffic officers. This behaviour sullies the reputation of traffic officers. Corruption affects the transport network, including roads, increasing the risk of dangerous conditions and, on a larger scale, diverting funds intended to improve or supply amenities, or to provide and maintain roads, for personal

¹⁵ Department of Transport, "Statement from the Transport Minister on the Release of the 2019–2020: Arrive Alive Festive Season Road Safety Campaign Data."

¹⁶ Department of Transport, "Scholar Petrol and Road Safety (Arrive Alive, 2014), <https://www.arrivealive.co.za/pages.aspx?i=2690>.

¹⁷ Alissa. Walker, *How Bad Street Design Kills Pedestrians* (Gizmodo, 2014).

¹⁸ Department of Transport, "Scholar Petrol and Road Safety."

¹⁹ Australian Transport Council, "National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020."

²⁰ Brenhard Mangatur Tampubolon, "Ignoring Safety Aspects That Could Reduce Traffic Accidents," *KnE Social Sciences*, 2021, 363–74.

²¹ Modipa Mmakwena and Adewale Olutola, "Negligent Driving as a Causative Factor towards Road Traffic Accidents in South Africa," *2023 GBATA READINGS BOOK THEME EMBRACING THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF DISRUPTION IN THE FIELD OF FUTURISM*, 2023, 359.

²² RTMC, "Road Traffic Management Corporation on Sentencing of Officials for Corruption."

profit.²³ Licenses are issued directly to unfit drivers. The same also applies to unroadworthy vehicles. This is obvious since the Road Accident Fund (RAF) found that fraud and corruption account for about R500 million annually that would otherwise have been utilised to pay claimants, and the RAF has invested millions of rands in measures to address and prevent these problems.

Corrupt traffic officers enable speeding drivers or drivers in unroadworthy vehicles to proceed, thereby causing state revenue to be lost. This has potentially disastrous implications for other road users.²⁴ That will probably occur when the public loses confidence in traffic officers' integrity. Road lawlessness will increase with more road users breaking the law. For example, three officials, including one licence examiner, one traffic officer, and one vehicle examiner, were handed penalties ranging from R600 to a two-year prison sentence.²⁵

The licensing examiner was apprehended in July 2025; the arrest took place inside the Temba Driving Licence Testing Centre in Gauteng Province. It came to light that they had written a learner licence test on behalf of an applicant. Furthermore, an applicant was arrested in Bloemfontein, Free State Province, for fraud. It can be argued that fraud corrupts law enforcement agencies, leading to an increase in incompetent drivers. It is rife with this, as driver licensing, vehicle registration, vehicle safety inspections, regulatory enforcement, and the public transportation licensing framework undermine road safety initiatives and tarnish the reputation of traffic enforcement.²⁶

Joint operations, if they work in conjunction with other law enforcement agencies and intervene at locations such as DLTC and VTS due to fraudulently issued licences should be central.²⁷ Until people show respect for the laws that govern the road, the road cannot be a truly safe place; therefore, it is vital that each road user recognises the potential for corruption and does not lend it support.²⁸

Furthermore, officials do not just behave corruptly when they ask for and receive a bribe or advantage, but also when they offer one. Such behaviour on the road undermines road safety, as it leads people to break the law. Unless drink-driving, seatbelt, speed, helmet, and child restraint laws are each and all enforced, the anticipated reduction in road traffic fatalities and injuries involving the targeted behaviours cannot be realised.²⁹ Thus, if authorities do not enforce traffic laws, or if people perceive that they are not enforcing them, people will not follow the laws, reducing the likelihood of influencing behaviour.

Moreover, for effective road traffic law enforcement, legislators should regularly enact and review the legislation to be enforced. Lawmakers in the three spheres of government must address the risk factors mentioned above. In addition, corresponding penalties should be specified. Nonetheless, most road users abide by road rules when they see traffic police officers. Road traffic authorities must, therefore, ensure visibility on the road. Traffic police enforce rules, and this improves road safety. Goldenbeld and Van Schagen provide substantial evidence of this efficacy.³⁰ Alcohol checks undertaken in traffic at random on a regular basis are effective for the reduction of alcohol-related crashes.

Lack of resources

Inadequacy of resources in traffic police implies a lack of tools, equipment, vehicles, and manpower essential for effective traffic policing, often leading to poor policing on the roads; for example, a lack of adequate ability to respond to calls, poor patrols, and reduced ability to apply traffic law appropriately because of limitations in manpower and operational capacities. Most traffic police units are underfunded and lack sufficient personnel, making it challenging to maintain a sustained presence on the roadways. The paucity of resources may lead to inadequate enforcement of traffic restrictions, especially in rural areas where traffic police presence is limited. Limited resources in road safety pose a serious challenge,

²³ Department of Transport, "Corruption, Traffic Enforcement and Road Safety," 2023.

²⁴ Department of Transport, *Speeding, Safe Driving and Road Crashes*.

²⁵ RTMC, "Road Traffic Management Corporation on Sentencing of Officials for Corruption."

²⁶ Mmakwena Modipa, "Analysing Factors Contributing to Road Traffic Accidents in South Africa," *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science* (2147-4478) 11, no. 4 (2022): 439–47.

²⁷ RTMC, "Road Traffic Management Corporation on Sentencing of Officials for Corruption."

²⁸ Department of Transport, "Corruption, Traffic Enforcement and Road Safety."

²⁹ World Health Organisation, "Road Traffic Injuries."

³⁰ Charles Schagen and Ingrid Goldenbeld, *Road Safety Traffic Law Enforcement* (European Commission, 2024).

leading to increased accidents and fatalities.³¹ Addressing these resource gaps requires a multi-sectoral approach by government departments, private sector organisations, and communities. By prioritising road infrastructure, law enforcement, education, emergency response, and public transport, road safety can be significantly improved, reducing injuries and fatalities on the roads. Lack of traffic officers on the road, as observed in some areas, can lead to a decline in law enforcement and potentially increase traffic accidents and deaths.³²

Law enforcement agencies must be well-equipped to combat road traffic accidents, and the Department of Transport, along with provinces and municipalities, should increase the presence of law enforcement officers on the roads to enhance visibility.³³ Traffic authorities lack traffic officials, but the government wants to implement 24/7 traffic policing in South Africa; this will adversely affect traffic officials and negatively affect the road. Merely implementing 24/7 traffic enforcement is inadequate to resolve the problems on the road. The government must expedite the recruitment initiative to enhance capacity and strengthen efforts to supply traffic police with essential tools, such as operational vehicles. Currently, traffic police are severely under-resourced, and the agency must avoid overloading them with excessive working hours.³⁴

It is of paramount significance that the government empower road traffic authorities and their traffic officials to enforce the law and mitigate the elevated incidence of road traffic accidents, as most road users adhere to traffic regulations in the presence of law enforcement officers. Therefore, the visibility of traffic officials is vital for law enforcement and must be prioritised by the government. Road design can be an important component of road safety. Ideally, roads would be designed from the outset with the safety of all road users in mind, including appropriate facilities for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists.³⁵ Also, initiatives such as footpaths, bicycle lanes, safe crossing locations, and various traffic-calming strategies can play a crucial role in reducing the risk of injury for these road users. The South African National Roads Agency SOC Limited (SANRAL), as well as provincial and local governments, must regularly maintain roads to prevent accidents caused by poor road conditions. Moreover, the lack of pedestrian facilities accounts for high pedestrian fatality figures. Therefore, road traffic authorities ought to ensure that roads are safe for at-risk road users, including pedestrians.

Discussion Summary

Enforcement of traffic laws

Road rules are poorly enforced and inconsistently applied. Findings suggested that robust, evidence-based road safety laws are essential. However, having a good law is not sufficient. Continuous, adequately resourced law enforcement is essential to influencing road user behaviour and promoting legal compliance. Compliance with traffic regulations will not occur unless individuals perceive that violations will be identified and lead to adverse consequences, such as penalties or licence revocation. Traffic authorities, who are also responsible for enforcing road rules, are undertrained and under-resourced (e.g., in speed detection and alcohol testing equipment) to conduct their work. The observations also revealed that traffic authorities are inconsistent in enforcing the law. Such a practice undermines road safety initiatives and contributes to anarchy on the road. The culture of impunity on the road results from poor law enforcement and a lack of accountability within road traffic authorities. Road traffic authorities may establish optimal regulations; yet, in the absence of effective and efficient enforcement, the nation will continue to experience a rise in fatal road accidents. In the absence of adherence to traffic regulations, the roadway transforms into a conflict zone. Lack of resources within the road traffic system.

³¹ Mmakwena Modipa, "Pedestrian Safety in South Africa: A Comprehensive Analysis," *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*, December 30, 2024, 3489–99, <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.202451664>.

³² Modipa, "Analysing Factors Contributing to Road Traffic Accidents in South Africa."

³³ Modipa, "Analysing Factors Contributing to Road Traffic Accidents in South Africa."

³⁴ Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU), "POPCRU Calls for Urgent Support as Traffic Officers Brace for Festive Season Rush," 2024, <https://www.polity.org.za/article/popcru-calls-for-urgent-support-as-traffic-officers-brace-for-festive-season-rush-2024-12-18>.

³⁵ World Health Organisation, "Road Traffic Injuries."

Resources

The findings indicated that national, provincial and local road traffic authorities lack the resources to be conspicuous on the roadway and uphold the law. Additionally, it is not possible to enforce speeding traffic laws without speed cameras (for detection) and drunken driving traffic laws without breathalyser equipment for testing. A lack of resources within traffic police equates to a lack of needed equipment, vehicles, and personnel necessary for effective traffic policing, which has the effect of leading to poor-quality policing on the roads, including poor response to accidents, lack of patrols, and reduced capacity to meaningfully enforce traffic laws due to limitations in manpower and operational effectiveness. Most traffic police units are understaffed and under-resourced. Maintaining a continuous and visible presence on the highways is challenging. The results indicated that road users are not adhering to traffic regulations, which results in loss of life on the road.

Disregard of traffic rules

Neglecting regulations endangers all road users and increases the likelihood of traffic accidents. Road traffic accidents in South Africa are intolerable since they impose a significant burden on families, society, and the economy due to missed productivity, diminished abilities, and the agony and suffering experienced by survivors and the bereaved, who are left without financial support. Regrettably, a significant number of road users exhibit a detrimental attitude towards safe road practices. Unless road users modify their attitudes towards legal compliance, efforts to prevent road traffic fatalities and collisions will be ineffective, regardless of educational efforts and enforcement measures. Furthermore, because road users commute to work during peak hours, noncompliance with rules may lead to risky behaviour.

In almost all cases, motorists now do not comply with all traffic regulations, especially taxi drivers. Other motorists do not follow them, and this interferes with emergency vehicles in such circumstances. For example, drivers speed, violate hours, or neglect to yield to vulnerable road users during rush hours, contributing to road traffic accidents that cause delays and congestion. In addition to helping ensure a safer road environment, a safe driving culture can be fostered by leading by example and being compliant as a driver.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department of Transport should prioritise road safety education and awareness campaigns at hotspot areas. The Department of Transport's strategic objective regarding road safety is to reduce the number of fatalities by half in 2030, and, through intelligence-led policing and resource capacitation within the road traffic authorities, this goal can be achieved. There should be enhanced enforcement of existing traffic laws, and it is essential that reckless drivers are brought to book. Speeding, drunk driving, and distracted driving should not be allowed to go unchecked. This would be achievable, though, with the facilities and support of the law enforcement authorities, making it a mission to ensure these laws are implemented.

In addition, the Department of Transport and its agencies need to embrace innovative solutions, since technology can be an ally to this fight. From smart traffic lights that adapt to prevailing conditions to apps that improve safe driving habits, there are choices available to enhance road safety. Implementing more stringent traffic restrictions, adhering to speed limits, and mitigating impaired driving are essential measures for accident prevention. Road safety can be improved by investing in superior road infrastructure, including safer intersections, pedestrian crossings, and bicycle lanes. Realising the objectives of the Department of Transportation necessitates a collaborative endeavour across sectors including transportation, infrastructure development, public health, law enforcement, and education. With collaborative effort and evidence-informed interventions, government, organisations, and society can contribute towards reducing road traffic accidents, ultimately feeding into overall sustainable development.

The effective application of road safety laws requires certain institutional reforms that thoroughly address systemic barriers. The study highlights that three critical interventions are required to improve enforcement efficacy. First, strong anti-corruption measures should be taken, including

strengthening specialist divisions such as the National Traffic Anti-Corruption Unit. These units should rigorously monitor Driving Licence Testing Centres and systematically penalise bribery and other fraudulent practices. Second, adequate resource allocation is necessary to equip traffic police with the tools they need (e.g., breathalysers, speed detection devices, and patrol vehicles). Adequate personnel must be available to maintain consistent visibility on roads 24/7 to increase deterrence. Thirdly, it is vital that agencies collaborate more, particularly by integrating Road Traffic Management Corporation data within law enforcement operations to identify and target high-risk zones effectively. Collectively, these reforms address the structural weaknesses of enforcement systems, as legislative frameworks are sure to translate into measurable improvements in road safety outcomes.

CONCLUSION

South Africa experiences an exceptionally high incidence of road traffic accidents, ranking among the highest globally. People use the roads, but they are all too aware of the risks involved, risks that result in heartbreak, loss, and great suffering. Many people die on South African roads annually, and families are left shattered and communities in mourning. This narrative must change because one life is too many. This cannot be the norm or made acceptable, as if South Africa were a country with no rule of law. Road users are not obeying road rules, and, on the other hand, traffic officials are not being equipped with sufficient tools to uphold the law and make themselves seen on the road. Road safety is everyone's responsibility. Therefore, all road users should be responsible and comply with the rules of the road without the need for traffic authorities to oversee them.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Australian Transport Council. "National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020," 2011.
http://roadsafety.gov.au/nrss/files/NRSS_2011_2020.pdf.
- Berea Mail. "Department of Transport Cracks Down on Drivers' Licence Fraud and Corruption," 2022.
- Corruption Watch. "Anarchy Called Out, But It's Not Enough to Address Driving School Corruption," 2022.
- Department of Transport. "*Scholar Petrol and Road Safety*. Arrive Alive, 2014.
<https://www.arrivealive.co.za/pages.aspx?i=2690>.
- . "Corruption, Traffic Enforcement and Road Safety," 2023.
- . *Speeding, Safe Driving and Road Crashes*. Arrive Alive, 2015.
<https://www.arrivealive.co.za/Speeding-Road-Safety-and-Accidents>.
- . "Statement from the Transport Minister on the Release of the 2019–2020: Arrive Alive Festive Season Road Safety Campaign Data." Arrive Alive, 2020.
- Global Transport Knowledge Partnership. "Legislation and Enforcement," 2023.
<https://www.gtkp.com/themepage/gtkp-archives/road-safety/safer-people/legislation-and-enforcement/>.
- Goldenbeld, Charles & Schagen, Ingrid. *Road Safety Traffic Law Enforcement*. European Commission, 2024.
- Mitchley, Alex. *Festive Season Road Deaths: Over 600 Pedestrians Killed*. Making Up Majority of Fatalities, 2020. <https://www.news24.com/news24/SouthAfrica/News/festive-season-road-deaths-over-600-pedestrians-killed-making-up-majority-of-fatalities-20200123>.
- Mmakwena, Modipa, and Adewale Olutola. "Negligent Driving as a Causative Factor towards Road Traffic Accidents in South Africa." *2023 GBATA Readings Book Theme Embracing The Positive Impact Of Disruption In The Field Of Futurism*, 2023, 359.
- Modipa, Mmakwena. "Analysing Factors Contributing to Road Traffic Accidents in South Africa." *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science* (2147-4478) 11, no. 4 (2022): 439–47.
- . "Pedestrian Safety in South Africa: A Comprehensive Analysis." *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*, December 30, 2024, 3489–99.
<https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.202451664>.
- Mwakondange, Enos. *A Critical Role of Law Enforcement in the Road Traffic Environment*. Pretoria:

- Road Traffic Management Corporation, South Africa, 2022.
- Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU). “POPCRU Calls for Urgent Support as Traffic Officers Brace for Festive Season Rush,” 2024. <https://www.polity.org.za/article/popcrucalls-for-urgent-support-as-traffic-officers-brace-for-festive-season-rush-2024-12-18>.
- Road Safety Toolkit. “Enforcement,” 2022. <https://toolkit.irap.org/safer-people-treatments/enforcement/>.
- RTMC. “Road Traffic Management Corporation on Sentencing of Officials for Corruption,” 2022.
- Tampubolon, Brenhard Mangatur. “Ignoring Safety Aspects That Could Reduce Traffic Accidents.” *KnE Social Sciences*, 2021, 363–74.
- Tingvall, Claes, and Narelle Haworth. “Vision Zero-An Ethical Approach to Safety and Mobility.” In *6th ITE International Conference Road Safety & Traffic Enforcement: Beyond 2000*, 1999.
- Walker, Alissa. *How Bad Street Design Kills Pedestrians*. Gizmodo, 2014.
- World Health Organisation. “Road Traffic Injuries,” 2023. https://www.who.int/health-topics/road-safety#tab=tab_1.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Author contributions: Conceptualization, M.M.& K.T; Methodology, M.M. & K.T; Data Collection, M.M. & K.T; Formal Analysis, M.M. & T.K; Writing—Original Draft Preparation, M.M. & T.K; Writing—Review and Editing, M.M. & T.K; Authors have read and agreed to the final version of the manuscript.

ABOUT AUTHORS

Dr. Mmakwena Modipa is a lecturer in the Department of Law, Safety and Security Management under the Faculty of Humanities at the Tshwane University of Technology. He holds a Doctoral degree in Policing from the Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa. His research interests focus on road safety and law enforcement.

Tshilidzi Knowles Khangala is a Lecturer and program coordinator at the Tshwane University of Technology, an admitted Advocate of the High Court of South Africa, a Mediator affiliated with Mediators in Motion (MiM), and a Supervisor at the TUT Law Clinic. He has more than 16 years of teaching experience at various institutions of higher learning. He previously served as a Deputy Director in the South African Government for six years. He holds an LLB and an LLM (Human Rights Law) from the University of Venda, a Postgraduate Diploma in Public Administration from the University of South Africa (UNISA), and a Doctor of Laws (LLD) in Comparative Constitutional Law from the University of the Western Cape. He has presented papers at national and international conferences and has published numerous articles in accredited academic journals and book chapters. He has also co-authored an academic textbook prescribed for the Criminal Procedural Law module at several South African universities.