



Paradox of the Motorist as a Biological Organism in a Developing Country's Traffic Safety

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Background

The motorist is confronted with elements in the traffic environment to which the motorist responds, to enhance and accomplish the driving task. Traffic law enforcement is in place to rigidly regulate excesses of the motorist, unmindful of inexactitudes inherent in the stimuli the motorist responds to. This situation is especially prevalent in third world countries. Stimuli-response is hardly a governable course of action for any biological organism. The motorist is no exception. However, the motorist is rarely seen as biological specie and treated only as human and therefore, errors of the motorist widely referred to as human error. This study categorized human error into two, primary human error and secondary human error. Primary human error (a non-motorist action), elicits secondary human error (motorist action). There are identified inaccuracies in the traffic environment. The motorist goes through the plight of enduring the effects of such exigencies.

Aim

The study aims at making an exposition on underlying precipitous biological reflexes of the motorist, as a relatively subsumed complement of the engineering traffic environment in which the motorist operates.

Methodology

The study used the qualitative phenomenological approach to describe and investigate the state in which road signs exist and motorists' relative reaction to them. There were cases of visibility, optical illusion in road signs, ground and road sign data inconformity, non-conventional colours and content of signage. The study observed motorist reaction to traffic elements and subsequent variations in motorist movement.

Road signs studied were from work zone, corporate environment (institutions) and major roads in Kumasi, Ghana.

Results

It was found that traffic law enforcement was strictly focused on motorists' infringement irrespective of the neural processes that occur in the motorist, making the motorist only an indirect victim of traffic infringement. Besides engineering, the traffic environment contains traffic communication elements expected to aid motorist smooth maneuverability, a significant portion of these communication elements were obscure in function causing motorist response



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to them rather leading to infringements. The study counted two cardinal cases, statistically insignificant though, had exponential effect on other motorists.

Conclusions

Conclusions established that administrators responsible for road signs and other safety elements allude their inadequacies to limited or no funds. Impliedly, there is justification for the existence of non-standard safety material on the roads. The motorist is unduly punished for traffic offences directly committed by the motorist but indirectly created by another. The “another”, the indirect party, is hardly of concern to safety administrators in Africa. There is hardly analogous distribution of penalty at either ends of the abuse; manufacturers of safety materials, safety auditors and traffic administrators who do not ensure standards are met, are free from the law.

Keywords: motorist, optical illusion, road signs, stimuli, traffic environment