ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to analyze the main causes of road traffic accidents in Eastland area of Nairobi County. The study sought to answer the following questions: What are the main causes of road traffic accidents in Nairobi Eastland area? What are the major traffic offences that PSVs drivers have been charged with? How many deaths and injuries occasioned by RTAs occurred in Nairobi Eastland area between the year 2009 and 2011? What are the attitudes of drivers and traffic police towards road safety?

The study was undertaken in Eastland area of Nairobi County, which has three divisions Kayole, Buru Buru and Embakasi. The study adopted a descriptive research design which utilized both probability (Simple random) and non probability (Purposive and Quota) sampling methods. Simple random sampling of 30 traffic police officers deployed at Kayole, Buru Buru and Embakasi police stations was randomly selected. The existing sampling frame (the nominal roll of the officers at the traffic police department) was used to select the 30 police officers. Quota sampling was finally employed to sample 105 PSVs drivers plying Eastland routes.

Data was collected using questionnaires for both traffic police officers and PSVs drivers. Key informants who were traffic base commanders were interviewed in order to gain more insight on the phenomenon. Data collected were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

The study found that the main causes of road traffic accidents were as a result of human error factors. The top five main causes being: obstruction, dangerous or careless driving, over speeding, unroadworthy vehicle and driving under the influence of alcohol.

The study also established the major traffic offences which PSVs have been charged with. These traffic offences includes driving motor vehicle in violation of the rules of the road by: (overtaking in a manner causing obstruction of oncoming vehicles, failing to allow passage to other overtaking vehicles, overtaking without a clear view, driving on to one road from another and causing obstruction), dangerous or careless driving, driving defective vehicle (unroadworthy vehicle), driving under the influence of alcohol and exceeding the prescribed speed limit (over speeding).

The study also found that 27.5 percent of the total annual accidents were reported as fatal, 36.2 percent as serious injuries and 36.3 percent as slight injuries. This accounted for 100 percent of the accidents, thus implying that none of the accidents reported was non -injury, a situation that is not probable, casting doubts on the credibility of the data and lead to other questions as to whether the issue of under reporting is ever addressed by the authorities charged with accidents data reporting.

In addition, the study established that both traffic police officers and PSVs drivers have a positive attitude towards road safety. Respondents were in agreement that RTAs can be reduced if there is vehicle inspection and maintenance of PSVs, training and retraining of traffic police officers, adhering of speed limit, using of vehicle seatbelts and vehicle safety standards and compliance.
Further, study findings concluded that both traffic police officers and PSVs drivers have positive attitude towards road safety. Respondents were in agreement that RTAs can be reduced if there is vehicle inspection and maintenance of PSVs, training and retraining of traffic police officers, adhering of speed limit, using of vehicle seatbelts and vehicle safety standards and compliance.

The research recommends that intensified road safety awareness should be enhanced in order to educate all members of the public on road safety measures, traffic law enforcers should enhance proper and regular inspection of Public service vehicles to ensure that they are road worthy, serious disciplinary actions should be taken to all traffic police officers who are found taking bribes at the expense of non-compliance of traffic rules and regulations among others.

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