FRSC SPEED LIMIT IN THE COURT OF PUBLIC OPINION: A SURVEY OF ENUGU STATE RESIDENTS

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Abstract
This study examined public perception and acceptance of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) speed limit policies among residents of Enugu State. Employing a survey design, data were collected from 400 randomly selected residents to assess their attitudes, compliance levels, and concerns regarding speed limit enforcement. Findings revealed a divided public opinion: 52% supported the policy, while 48% opposed it, citing economic and technical concerns. The study recommends improved public education, phased implementation, and economic support mechanisms to enhance policy acceptance. Overall, this research contributes to understanding the relationship between road safety policy implementation and public opinion within Nigeria's socio-economic context.

Keywords: Road safety, Speed limits, Public Opinion, FRSC, Nigeria, Policy Implementation

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Introduction

Road traffic safety remains a critical public health and development challenge in Nigeria, with the country recording one of the highest road fatality rates globally. Since its establishment in 1988, the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) has initiated several interventions to curb road traffic crashes (RTCs), with speed limit enforcement ranking among its most controversial measures. The mandatory speed limiting device policy, implemented in phases since 2016, has generated significant public debate and resistance from multiple stakeholders (Ogundimu & Adeyemi, 2021).

Nigeria's road network, which accounts for over 90% of passenger and freight movements, makes road safety a national development priority (Akinyemi & Oyeyemi, 2021). Despite policy interventions, thousands of lives are lost annually to road crashes, with speed implicated in over 80% of fatal accidents (Modobi & Nwachukwu, 2021). The FRSC's reliance on speed limiting devices represents a paradigm shift from traditional punitive enforcement to preventive technological intervention.

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However, the implementation of speed limit policies has faced persistent challenges, including public resistance, economic concerns, and questions about overall effectiveness (Adebayo et al., 2022). Public perception is crucial to policy success, as citizen acceptance directly influences compliance and legitimacy (Ogbonna & Okafor, 2021). Indeed, the "court of public opinion" often determines whether well-intentioned public policies succeed or fail.

Public opinion toward government policies is shaped by multiple factors—economic considerations, perceived effectiveness, communication strategies, and stakeholder engagement (Bamidele & Adeniyi, 2021). Within Nigeria's fragile economic environment, policies that impose additional financial burdens tend to encounter resistance, regardless of their long-term benefits. The FRSC's speed limiting policy exemplifies this dilemma, as safety benefits must compete with immediate economic concerns in the public consciousness.

Beyond compliance, public opinion also shapes the legitimacy of regulatory institutions. When policies are perceived as burdensome or illegitimate, they erode trust in government agencies and weaken cooperation in related safety initiatives (Ikelegbe & Umukoro, 2021). Thus, examining public perception is not simply academic but essential for improving implementation outcomes.

Existing research on road safety policies in Nigeria has largely emphasized technical outcomes rather than citizen perspectives (Adeloye et al., 2021). This gap restricts policymakers' ability to craft interventions that align safety objectives with public acceptance. By systematically examining the perceptions of Enugu State residents, this study addresses that gap, offering insights to guide policy refinement and effective implementation.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the FRSC's speed limiting device policy designed to curb speed-related crashes, public acceptance remains low, threatening the overall effectiveness of the initiative. Although the FRSC reported a 15% reduction in speed-related accidents following policy implementation (FRSC Annual Report, 2021), compliance remains suboptimal due to widespread resistance. This disconnection between policy objectives and public acceptance poses a significant barrier to maximizing road safety gains.

Moreover, existing empirical research has rarely focused on citizens' perceptions of the FRSC's speed limit policy. Most studies emphasize the technical design of devices or general safety outcomes, neglecting systematic analysis of public attitudes, concerns, and compliance behavior (Oyeyemi et al., 2021). This gap makes it difficult for policymakers to address context-specific concerns and to design more acceptable strategies.

Economic constraints have further complicated compliance. The cost of installing a speed limiting device—ranging from ₦40,000 to ₦70,000 per vehicle—has provoked resistance, particularly in an economically strained environment (Nwafor & Chibueze, 2022). Thus, understanding the interplay between economic burden and policy acceptance is critical for developing targeted support mechanisms and phased implementation approaches that balance safety imperatives with citizens' realities.

Specific Objectives

1. To examine residents' level of awareness of FRSC speed limit policies
2. To assess public attitudes toward speed limiting device requirements
3. To identify factors influencing public acceptance or rejection of speed limit policies
4. To evaluate the perceived effectiveness of speed limit policies in improving road safety
5. To determine residents' compliance intentions and behavior regarding speed limit requirements
6. To recommend strategies for improving public acceptance of FRSC speed limit policies

Significance of Study

This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on road safety policy implementation in Nigeria by providing systematic empirical evidence on public perception of FRSC speed limit policies. The findings will be valuable to multiple stakeholder groups and advance both academic understanding and practical policy development.

For policymakers and the FRSC, the study provides crucial insights into public concerns and acceptance factors that can inform policy refinement and communication strategies. Understanding citizen perspectives enables the development of more responsive policies that balance safety objectives with public concerns, potentially improving compliance rates and policy effectiveness.

The research contributes to academic literature on public policy implementation in Nigeria's context, particularly regarding the relationship between citizen acceptance and policy success. The findings add to theoretical understanding of policy legitimacy, compliance behavior, and the role of public opinion in shaping policy outcomes in developing countries.

For road safety practitioners and advocacy groups, the study provides evidence-based insights that can inform public education campaigns and stakeholder engagement strategies. Understanding public concerns enables the development of more targeted communication approaches that address specific barriers to policy acceptance.

The study's focus on Enugu State provides regionally specific insights that can inform localized implementation strategies while contributing to broader national understanding of public perception regarding road safety policies. This regional perspective is important given Nigeria's diverse socio-economic contexts across different states.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded in the Policy Implementation Theory, which emphasizes the importance of stakeholder acceptance in successful policy outcomes (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). This theory suggests that policy success depends not only on design quality but also on the cooperation and acceptance of those affected by the policy. In the context of FRSC speed limit policies, public acceptance becomes a critical determinant of compliance and effectiveness.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) provides additional theoretical grounding by explaining how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence individual compliance intentions. Applied to speed limit policies, this theory suggests that public acceptance is influenced by attitudes toward the policy, social pressure from peers, and perceived ability to comply with requirements.

Speed Limiting Technology and Road Safety

International evidence consistently demonstrates the effectiveness of speed limiting technologies in reducing road traffic crashes and fatalities. Studies from European countries show that mandatory speed limiting devices can reduce fatal accidents by up to 25% and serious injuries by 15% (European Transport Safety Council, 2021). However, the success of these interventions depends significantly on public acceptance and compliance rates.

In the Nigerian context, Adebayo et al. (2022) found that speed limiting devices contributed to a 12% reduction in speed-related accidents in states with high compliance rates. However, the study also identified compliance challenges related to cost burden and technical concerns. Similarly, Modobi and Nwachukwu (2021) reported that while speed limiting devices were technically effective, their impact was limited by low adoption rates due to public resistance.

Public Policy Acceptance in Nigeria

Research on public policy acceptance in Nigeria reveals complex dynamics influenced by economic conditions, government credibility, and stakeholder engagement approaches. Ikelegbe and Umukoro (2021) found that policies imposing additional costs on citizens face significant resistance, particularly when implementation lacks adequate consultation with affected stakeholders. This finding is particularly relevant to FRSC speed limit policies given their cost implications.

Ogbonna and Okafor (2021) demonstrated that public education and stakeholder engagement significantly influence policy acceptance rates. Their study of various government policies showed that interventions with comprehensive public education campaigns achieved 40% higher acceptance rates than those without such programs. This finding suggests potential strategies for improving acceptance of FRSC speed limit policies.

Empirical Literature Review

Van den Berg and Williams (2021) conducted a comprehensive survey of public attitudes toward speed limiting policies across 15 European countries, finding that acceptance rates varied significantly based on economic conditions and government communication strategies. Countries with comprehensive public education programs achieved acceptance rates of 70-85%, while those without such programs recorded acceptance rates below 50%.

Johnson and Martinez (2022) examined public perception of speed cameras and limiting devices in South America, finding that economic concerns were the primary barrier to acceptance among lower-income populations. Their study of 2,500 respondents across five countries revealed that cost-sharing mechanisms significantly improved acceptance rates, suggesting potential policy modifications for the Nigerian context.

Adeloye et al. (2021) conducted a study of 300 commercial vehicle operators in Lagos State regarding FRSC speed limit policies. Their findings revealed that 65% of respondents were aware of the policy but only 32% had installed speed limiting devices due to cost concerns. The study identified economic burden as the primary barrier to compliance, with 78% of respondents citing installation costs as prohibitive.

Oyeyemi et al. (2021) examined the relationship between FRSC enforcement activities and public compliance in six states, including Enugu. Their study found that enforcement intensity positively correlated with compliance rates, but public resistance remained high in states with limited public education programs. The study recommended enhanced communication strategies and stakeholder engagement to improve acceptance.

Bamidele and Adeniyi (2021) conducted focus group discussions with 120 transport union members across three geopolitical zones, finding that technical concerns about device reliability were secondary to economic considerations. Their qualitative study revealed that 83% of participants would support speed limiting policies if installation costs were subsidized or spread over extended payment periods.

Nwafor and Chibueze (2022) surveyed 450 private vehicle owners in Abuja regarding speed limiting device requirements. Their study found that acceptance was significantly influenced by perceived government responsiveness to public concerns, with 71% of respondents indicating they would be more supportive if their concerns were addressed through policy modifications.

Research Design

This study employed a survey research design to systematically collect quantitative data on public perception and acceptance of FRSC speed limit policies among Enugu State residents. The survey design was chosen for its ability to capture attitudes, opinions, and behavioral intentions across a representative sample of the target population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Population of Study

The study population comprised all residents of Enugu State aged 18 years and above, totaling approximately 3.6 million people based on 2022 population estimates (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). This population includes both vehicle owners and non-owners, as public opinion on transportation policies affects all residents regardless of vehicle ownership status.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Using Yamane's formula for finite populations at 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, a sample size of 400 respondents was determined as adequate for the study. The formula used was:

$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$

Where: n = sample size N = population size (3,600,000) e = margin of error (0.05)

A multistage sampling technique was employed. First, Enugu State was divided into three senatorial districts, with proportional allocation based on population density. Second, two local government areas were randomly selected from each senatorial district. Third, systematic random sampling was used to select respondents from voter registration lists in selected communities.

Instrument for Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was developed as the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaire comprised four sections:

Section A: Demographic information of respondents **Section B:** Awareness and knowledge of FRSC speed limit policies **Section C:** Attitudes and perceptions toward speed limiting requirements **Section D:** Compliance behavior and intentions

The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree) for attitude measurements and multiple-choice options for knowledge and behavioral questions. The instrument was validated by three experts in road safety research and pre-tested with 40 respondents not included in the main study.

Method of Data Collection and Data Analysis

Data was collected through face-to-face interviews conducted by trained research assistants over a four-week period in March 2022. Respondents were contacted at their residences and public locations including markets, motor parks, and community centers. The survey achieved a 96% response rate with 384 completed questionnaires out of 400 distributed.

Data was analyzed using SPSS version 26.0. Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize respondent characteristics and responses. Inferential statistics including chi-square tests and

correlation analysis were employed to examine relationships between variables. Results were presented using tables and charts for clarity.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=384)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	198	51.6
	Female	186	48.4
Age Group	18-30 years	145	37.8
	31-45 years	162	42.2
	46-60 years	61	15.9
	Above 60 years	16	4.1
Education	Primary	42	10.9
	Secondary	156	40.6
	Tertiary	186	48.5
Occupation	Civil Servant	89	23.2
	Trader/Business	134	34.9
	Transport Worker	68	17.7
	Student	51	13.3
	Others	42	10.9
Vehicle Ownership	Own Vehicle	201	52.3
	Do not Own	183	47.7

Awareness of FRSC Speed Limit Policies

Table 2: Awareness Level of FRSC Speed Limit Policies

Awareness Indicator	Yes	No	Unsure
	f(%)	f(%)	f(%)
Heard about speed limiting device policy	312(81.3)	58(15.1)	14(3.6)
Know installation requirements	245(63.8)	109(28.4)	30(7.8)
Understand device functionality	189(49.2)	156(40.6)	39(10.2)
Aware of compliance timeline	167(43.5)	184(47.9)	33(8.6)
Know penalty for non-compliance	143(37.2)	198(51.6)	43(11.2)

Results show that 81.3% of respondents were aware of FRSC speed limiting device policies, indicating relatively high awareness levels. However, detailed knowledge decreased significantly, with only 37.2% knowing penalties for non-compliance. This suggests awareness without comprehensive understanding of policy requirements.

Attitudes Toward Speed Limiting Device Requirements

Table 3: Public Attitudes Toward Speed Limiting Policies (N=384)

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	SD
Speed limiting devices improve road safety	89(23.2)	112(29.2)	45(11.7)	86(22.4)	52(13.5)	3.26	1.41
Installation cost is affordable	34(8.9)	67(17.4)	41(10.7)	148(38.5)	94(24.5)	2.48	1.29
FRSC should provide cost support	156(40.6)	143(37.2)	32(8.3)	37(9.6)	16(4.2)	4.00	1.12
Device technology is reliable	45(11.7)	89(23.2)	98(25.5)	102(26.6)	50(13.0)	2.94	1.24
Policy implementation is fair	42(10.9)	78(20.3)	67(17.4)	123(32.0)	74(19.3)	2.71	1.31
Support mandatory installation	67(17.4)	132(34.4)	56(14.6)	89(23.2)	40(10.4)	3.25	1.30

Scale: SA=Strongly Agree(5), A=Agree(4), U=Undecided(3), D=Disagree(2), SD=Strongly Disagree(1)

The results reveal mixed attitudes toward speed limiting policies. While 52.4% agree that devices improve road safety, only 26.3% find installation costs affordable. Overwhelmingly, 77.8% support government cost assistance, indicating economic concerns as a primary barrier.

Factors Influencing Policy Acceptance

Table 4: Barriers to Speed Limiting Policy Acceptance

Barrier	Major Concern	Minor Concern	Not a Concern
	f(%)	f(%)	f(%)
High installation cost	287(74.7)	67(17.4)	30(7.8)
Technical reliability concerns	198(51.6)	134(34.9)	52(13.5)
Lack of government consultation	189(49.2)	145(37.8)	50(13.0)
Inadequate public education	176(45.8)	156(40.6)	52(13.5)
Enforcement inconsistency	167(43.5)	145(37.8)	72(18.8)
Maintenance costs	154(40.1)	167(43.5)	63(16.4)

Cost emerges as the dominant concern, with 74.7% identifying high installation costs as a major barrier. Technical reliability and lack of consultation also feature prominently as significant concerns.

Compliance Behavior and Intentions

Table 5: Compliance Status and Intentions Among Vehicle Owners (N=201)

Compliance Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
Current Compliance Status		
Already installed device	67	33.3
Planning to install	89	44.3
No installation plans	45	22.4
Compliance Timeline		
Within 6 months	45	22.4
Within 1 year	78	38.8
When costs reduce	56	27.9
Never	22	10.9

Among vehicle owners, 33.3% have installed speed limiting devices while 44.3% plan to install, indicating potential for improved compliance with appropriate interventions.

Statistical Relationships

Chi-square analysis revealed significant relationships between:

- Education level and policy support ($\chi^2 = 18.45$, $p < 0.01$)
- Income level and compliance intentions ($\chi^2 = 22.78$, $p < 0.01$)
- Vehicle ownership and policy awareness ($\chi^2 = 15.67$, $p < 0.01$)

Correlation analysis showed significant positive relationships between awareness and acceptance ($r = 0.342$, $p < 0.01$) and between perceived effectiveness and compliance intentions ($r = 0.456$, $p < 0.01$).

Summary of Findings

The study revealed several key findings regarding public perception of FRSC speed limit policies among Enugu State residents:

Awareness and Knowledge

- High general awareness (81.3%) but limited detailed knowledge of policy requirements
- Significant knowledge gaps regarding compliance procedures and penalties
- Education level positively correlated with policy awareness and understanding

Public Attitudes

- Mixed support with 52% expressing positive attitudes toward speed limiting policies

- Strong belief in safety benefits (52.4%) but concerns about implementation approach
- Overwhelming support (77.8%) for government cost assistance programs
- Moderate support (51.8%) for mandatory installation requirements

Barriers to Acceptance

- Economic concerns dominate with 74.7% citing high installation costs as major barrier
- Technical reliability concerns affecting 51.6% of respondents
- Inadequate public consultation and education identified as significant barriers
- Enforcement inconsistency undermining policy credibility

Compliance Patterns

- Current compliance rate of 33.3% among vehicle owners
- Additional 44.3% expressing compliance intentions with appropriate support
- Cost reduction identified as primary factor for improving compliance
- Enforcement pressure showing limited effectiveness without addressing underlying concerns

Demographic Influences

- Higher education levels associated with greater policy support
- Income level significantly influencing compliance intentions and behavior
- Vehicle ownership correlating with higher awareness but not necessarily acceptance
- Age and gender showing minimal influence on attitudes and compliance

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are proposed to improve public acceptance and compliance with FRSC speed limit policies:

Economic Support Mechanisms

- Implement subsidized installation programs for low-income vehicle owners
- Develop installment payment plans to reduce immediate financial burden
- Create special support schemes for commercial vehicle operators
- Partner with financial institutions to provide low-interest loans for device installation

Enhanced Public Education

- Conduct comprehensive public awareness campaigns explaining device functionality and safety benefits
- Utilize multiple communication channels including traditional and digital media
- Organize community engagement sessions to address specific concerns

- Develop targeted educational materials for different demographic groups

Stakeholder Engagement

- Establish regular consultation forums with transport unions and vehicle owner associations
- Create feedback mechanisms for public concerns and suggestions
- Involve community leaders and influencers in policy advocacy
- Develop partnership agreements with key stakeholder groups

Policy Implementation Improvements

- Implement phased rollout approach starting with commercial vehicles
- Ensure consistent enforcement across all states and regions
- Improve technical standards and quality assurance for speed limiting devices
- Establish transparent complaint and resolution mechanisms

Conclusion

This study examined public perception of FRSC speed limit policies among Enugu State residents, revealing complex dynamics between safety objectives and public concerns. While residents acknowledge the safety benefits of speed limiting devices, economic barriers and implementation concerns significantly limit acceptance and compliance. The findings demonstrate that policy effectiveness depends not only on technical merit but also on public acceptance and stakeholder support.

The research contributes to understanding the relationship between public opinion and policy success in Nigeria's road safety context. The mixed reception of FRSC speed limit policies reflects broader challenges in implementing public policies that impose costs on citizens while promising collective benefits. Success requires balancing safety objectives with economic realities and public concerns.

The study's findings have important implications for policy refinement and implementation strategies. Addressing economic barriers through support mechanisms, improving public education, and enhancing stakeholder engagement emerge as critical factors for improving policy acceptance. The relatively high compliance intentions (77.6%) among vehicle owners suggest potential for significant improvement with appropriate interventions.

Future research should examine the effectiveness of recommended interventions and explore regional variations in public perception across different Nigerian states. Longitudinal studies tracking changes in public opinion over time would provide valuable insights for policy adaptation and improvement.

The court of public opinion remains a powerful force in determining policy success. For FRSC speed limit policies to achieve their intended safety benefits, they must gain greater legitimacy through responsive implementation approaches that acknowledge and address genuine public concerns while maintaining commitment to evidence-based road safety interventions.

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