

ENHANCING DRIVERS' LITERACY THROUGH THEATRICAL INTERACTION: ROAD SAFETY MANAGEMENT

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Abstract:

Road safety research has traditionally focused on the development of laws governing safe road practices, as well as the creation of innovative road safety equipment and guidelines. Theatre has also emerged as a powerful medium for informing, educating, and contributing to national progress. Numerous studies underscore the pivotal role of drivers' literacy in mitigating road misdemeanours and accidents. This study employs applied theatre theories and road safety management principles to analyse the road safety landscape in Nigeria. The analysis reveals that theatre holds the potential to serve as an effective educational tool. One of theatre's most instructive features is its participatory nature, enabling learners to engage in dynamic, real-world simulations that facilitate comprehension. This shift towards a practice-based approach marks a departure from conventional theory-centric approaches to driver's literacy. The research introduces innovative methods that leverage theatre's inherent informality to impart Road Safety Literacy to Nigerian drivers, with a particular emphasis on commercial drivers who constitute a significant majority and are already inclined towards informal driver education. These methods offer distinct ways to enhance the efficacy of drivers' literacy. A key recommendation arising from this study is the collaboration between road safety educators and theatre practitioners, fostering the creation of 'theatre for the road.' In the end, the research highlights the inadequacy of imparting road literacy through traditional classroom methods thereby advocating for the adoption of more engaging and participatory approaches like theatre. By employing theatre, essential road safety knowledge can be effectively conveyed in an enjoyable manner, leaving a lasting impact on the audience's consciousness.

Introduction – Literature Review

Transportation forms the cornerstone of any economy, with the movement of people and goods being a pivotal element regardless of the chosen mode. In Nigeria, road transportation stands as the predominant mode, bearing the weight of approximately 70% of the nation's transportation demands (Ubogu, 2011, 92). A study conducted by the United States Department of Transportation (2000) revealed inadequate driver training to be a significant issue affecting Road Safety Management in Sub-Saharan African countries (Jacobs

and Aeron, 2000, 27). Additionally, the study pointed out a higher impact of road accidents on pedestrian road users and limited resources available to road safety organisations across Africa. These challenges collectively create formidable obstacles to effective road safety management.

Small and Runji (2014, xii) define an effective road safety management practice as one that treats Road Safety as a production process comprising institutional management functions that generate interventions leading to results. These management functions constitute the essential

aspects of a country's road safety management system, offering guidance on the identification, prioritisation, funding, targeting, and implementation of cost-effective interventions. They also contribute to building support for sustained road safety enhancements, cultivating the capacity required to foster continuous improvement and translate it into enhanced safety outcomes within communities (Small and Runji 2014, xii).

Several issues related to road safety in the African continent are mirrored in Nigeria. Among the myriad problems affecting Nigeria's Road Transportation, the most pressing is the alarming road fatality rate. Nigeria holds the highest road fatality rate in Africa, second only to South Africa. According to the WHO Global Status Reports on Road Safety (2013), Nigeria recorded an estimated 33.7 deaths per 100,000 individuals annually. The Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported over 36,000 road traffic injuries and fatalities between January and December 2021, with over 6,000 of these incidents resulting in fatalities (NBS, 2022, 27). Speed limit violations contributed to 55% of these accidents, followed by Sign Light Violation at 9%, and wrongful overtaking at 7%. A lack of laws, instructions, or guides is unlikely to be the problem as there is a plethora of preventive measures like road signs on Nigerian roads. Many scholars attribute this high fatality rate to poor road literacy. The Federal Road Safety Corp's annual report for 2016 disclosed that approximately 90% of accidents on Nigerian roads stemmed from illiteracy in understanding Road Signs (FRSC, 2016).

Akinyosoye (2015) embarked on an investigation into the purported relationship between low levels of literacy in interpreting road signs and the elevated rate of road accidents in Nigeria. This research revealed that

insufficient literacy was the primary cause of accidents on Nigerian roads. Employing an anthropological approach involving ethnographic data collection, Akinyosoye (2015, 50) confirmed this assertion, reporting that "the lack of safety witnessed on Nigerian roads can be attributed to inadequate literacy concerning traffic signs and laws among road users."

In an exploration of the learning process among truck drivers in Nigeria, Dosunmu et al. (2016, 9) discovered that these drivers rarely attend formal driving schools. Instead, they begin learning as apprentices, picking up driving skills from the adult drivers who mentor them. The study recommended an innovative training approach where experienced drivers instruct fellow drivers, capitalising on the existing mentorship culture. This intriguing perspective will be further examined in the subsequent sections of this research.

Nigerian legislator, Senator Umar Ibrahim Kurfi, representing Katsina Central Senatorial District, raised concerns about the inadequate literacy levels among Nigerian drivers in the legislative chambers. He attributed poor comprehension of road signs to drivers' limited attainment of Western education (Musa, 2018). Kurfi argued that their inability to read and write English significantly impacted their ability to interpret road signs. While English remains Nigeria's official language, a majority of Nigerians are more proficient in their native languages than in English. Dosunmu et al. (2016, 9) offer an alternative perspective, suggesting that traffic laws and manuals should be available in all major Nigerian languages. Akinyosoye (2015, 47), on the other hand, emphasises that the importance of the symbols on the road transcends the language used to label them. This viewpoint is echoed by Uwen and Ebam

(2019, 164), who assert that a fundamental understanding of symbols is essential for literacy in Road Traffic Signs.

From the existing literature, it becomes evident that scholars have delved into various aspects of driver education, ranging from the type of education received to the level of formal education possessed by drivers. Furthermore, some studies explore the significance of signs and their interpretation, while Dosunmu et al. (2016) present an interesting proposition by suggesting that the training of Nigerian drivers should mirror their existing informal learning practices. Nevertheless, their proposal lacks a concrete implementation process, revealing a gap in knowledge. By venturing into non-traditional methods of enhancing drivers' literacy, specifically through the use of applied theatre for road literacy training, this research aims to contribute to this essential yet underexplored domain.

Against this backdrop, this research seeks to address the following questions: What constitutes drivers' literacy? How does drivers' literacy correlate with road safety? In what ways can theatre be harnessed to augment drivers' literacy? What is the present state of drivers' literacy in Nigeria? Can theatre effectively elevate literacy levels? How can theatre be effectively applied to enhance drivers' literacy levels? These questions serve as the foundation of this study, stimulating the curiosity that transforms this research into a compelling journey for all participating researchers.

The Concept of Literacy in Road Safety

The understanding of literacy has undergone extensive examination over the years, leading to the emergence of various schools of

thought. A predominant and conventional view defines literacy as the acquisition of reading and/or writing skills. While this perspective holds popularity and acceptance, an alternative viewpoint advocated by Street (1985) proposes that literacy is more of a social practice than a mere skill acquisition. Further exploration within the framework of New Literacy Studies challenges the traditional perspective, suggesting that literacy varies across contexts and cultures, thus influencing the effects of different literacies (Street, 2003, p. 77). Street asserts that the conventional concept of literacy, often referred to as the autonomous concept of literacy, carries undertones of colonial or Western superiority as it imposes a particular language on cultures with distinct backgrounds.

However, New Literacy Studies establishes that literacy encompasses a range of diverse social practices (Street, 2003, p. 78). Similarly, the realm of media has redefined its understanding of literacy, as evidenced by the concept of media literacy. While traditional literacy referred solely to the ability to read, newer forms of mass communication such as print, photography, film, radio, television, and digital media have expanded the definition. The National Telemedia Council's definition of media literacy includes the ability to choose, understand, evaluate, question, create, produce, and respond thoughtfully to consume media. Media literacy entails mindful viewing and reflective judgement (Siverblatt et al., 2014, 6). In the same vein, driving constitutes a distinct social practice with its own reality, methodologies, and techniques. In the context of road safety, literacy then pertains to understanding the codes and signs used to instruct road users and guide road usage to ensure safety.

In today's world, driving is an essential activity, playing a critical role in transporting goods and services across Nigeria. Air and rail travellers, upon arrival, are typically transported by road drivers, highlighting the significance of road transportation. Consequently, road safety not only safeguards a substantial portion of the population but also has the potential to drive economic progress. Given the continuous technological advancements in automobile technology, road safety research has become essential. The knowledge applied during a time when horses and carts traversed roads cannot remain static in an era when electric vehicles also populate the streets. In a diverse country like Nigeria, with over three hundred languages spoken, road safety research must incorporate diverse perspectives to cater to the varied road users. Proficiency in road safety literacy, which includes understanding road signs and codes, is vital for all road users.

The Concept of Functional Literacy

Given its interdisciplinary nature, defining literacy proves challenging, with no one-size-fits-all approach. As discussed earlier, literacy has evolved beyond mere reading and writing skills, taking on various forms. For example, media literacy involves understanding and evaluating media content, while computer literacy implies the ability to effectively use computers for different tasks. Altun (2015, 63) expands this understanding, suggesting that literacy should encompass more than reading and writing; it should enable individuals to comprehend and make sense of their world. The OECD (1995, 45) introduces the idea that literacy goes beyond skills acquisition to encompass lifelong learning and the acquisition of new

skills for effective learning. This perspective is echoed by Agee (2015, 246), who defines literacy as a process forming the foundation of lifelong learning. Ozenc (2020, 209) adds that literacy involves high-level interpretation skills. Mayo (2017, 532) offers an all-encompassing definition, stating that literacy empowers individuals to comprehend, analyse, and critique their social context.

From these viewpoints, it is evident that literacy should be regarded as a means rather than an end. Scholars categorise literacy into two types: Basic Literacy and Functional Literacy. Basic literacy entails the ability to read and write, while functional literacy involves using reading, writing, and numerical skills to complete daily tasks and actively engage in everyday life. Basic literacy focuses on knowing, while functional literacy emphasises doing. Being able to read and write is one aspect; using these skills to express oneself is another. Someone who can read and write but struggles to effectively communicate using these skills is functionally illiterate.

Functional literacy denotes the level of literacy required for full participation in society, encompassing the ability to use technology and various life tools. Gorman (2013, 24) defines functional literacy as a skill that allows individuals to function at a normal level within society. Gunes (2014) delves deeper, describing functional literacy as an advanced form of literacy that empowers individuals to develop their roles as citizens within sociocultural contexts. Consequently, functional literacy benefits both individuals and society as a whole. Functionally literate individuals possess the skills to solve problems not only on a personal level but also within the broader social context. This extended literacy requirement also applies to driving. In the context of

driving, functional literacy refers to the ability to interpret road codes and signs, ensuring safe driving and overall road safety. Drivers who are functionally literate can decipher and understand road signs, leading to safer and more efficient driving practices. This aligns with UNESCO's (2018) definition of a functionally literate person as one who can engage in activities requiring literacy for effective participation within their community and group. Therefore, functional literacy transcends reading, writing, and numeracy, contributing to individuals' preparation for social, civic, and economic roles. This study will now delve into the concept of applied theatre.

Drama and Theatre in Education and Literacy

Over the years, drama and theatre have proven their effectiveness as valuable learning tools. Theatre serves as a pedagogic instrument, engaging participants in meaningful and impactful ways. Theatre is often defined as "the imagined, embodied, and active semiotic representation of social relations located in time and place" (Franks, 2010, p. 242). Every form of theatre involves people, even in cases like puppetry theatre, which involves inanimate puppets manipulated by humans. Theatre featuring animals, such as the Ram Fights in Ibadan, Nigeria, or the Balinese Cockfight in Bali, Indonesia, similarly involves human participants who train, support, and direct the animals. People remain a constant element in all forms of theatre, coordinating activities on stage that are experienced and observed by an audience. Theatre's participatory nature allows individuals to engage directly rather than passively, offering a more immersive experience. Unlike virtual reality technology that projects

images on screens, theatre requires active involvement and offers the closest approximation of reality possible. Nicholson (2005, 66) suggests that theatre provides opportunities to view life from different perspectives, allowing fictional narratives to illuminate lived experiences. Additionally, theatre allows participants to immerse themselves in a created reality, involving their imagination, intellect, emotions, and entire beings.

Learning is an inherent aspect of theatre. As participants engage in role-playing and representation, they learn. Actors in drama study the lives of the characters they portray, and dancers learn dance steps, rhythm, balance, beats, and other dance elements. Regardless of the type of theatre, the need for learning remains constant. Frank (2010, p. 244) categorises drama's roles into developmental theories that link play, drama, and learning; semiotic approaches that emphasise the production of signs and meanings in drama and theatre; and theories that view drama and theatre as aesthetic and artistic endeavours.

Psychological and developmental theories proposed by Vygotsky and Piaget offer valuable insights into the relationship between theatre, language, and literacy. Their theories highlight the connections between play, drama, and learning. For instance, Vygotsky (1978) suggests that children's imaginative play leads to learning. Even though immediate growth might not result from imitating adults, the play activities inspired by social and cultural roles contribute to learning and development. Similarly, Piaget (1962, 48) asserts that play, as a symbolic activity, is intertwined with language development and the conscious understanding of social structures and rules. Through play,

participants explore and learn about life in an engaging manner.

Vygotsky's work further investigates how drama and theatre foster the development of imagination and creativity across childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. He explores the ways in which theatre represents social relations, realities, and ideologies of specific time periods. Additionally, Vygotsky delves into the fusion of emotion with intellect in theatrical and artistic activities, suggesting that art is founded upon the combination of feeling and imagination (Vygotsky, 1997, 215). This indicates that theatre can foster emotional awareness among participants and educate them about pertinent norms, values, and ideologies.

Apart from verbal language, semiotic approaches emphasise gesture, movement, action, dramatic space, and time. These approaches have significantly impacted drama education. Scholars like Bakhtin (1986) and Halliday (1978) advocate for social theories of language that emphasise the contextual cues, audience, response, and purpose when producing signs. Dance education, for instance, teaches participants to understand dance poetics, theatre codes, and contextual cues. Indian Classical dance, with its extensive use of gestural signs, narrates stories, emotions, and relationships without the use of spoken words. The Yoruba Bata drum is another example of codes being sent and interpreted due to a shared background between sender and receiver. Someone familiar with Yoruba and the rhythms of the talking drum can decipher its message.

This study affirms that theatre offers participants the ability to create and interpret codes. It demonstrates that through imitation and representation, theatre provides an experiential learning method for literacy skills. This research then aims

to illustrate how these potential aspects of theatre can be effectively applied to cultivate functional drivers' literacy.

Furthermore, Brazilian theatre theorist and activist Augusto Boal's ideas emphasise that theatre holds tools for literacy and social transformation. Boal's applied drama approach has facilitated projects that promote societal change within informal educational settings (Nicholson 2000, 2005; Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz, 1994).

The Concept of Applied Theatre

The concept of applied theatre is not novel; it manifests in various forms based on the interpretations of scholars and practitioners. Coined in the 1990s, applied theatre refers to theatre practices that deviate from the conventional model of gathering individuals within enclosed auditoriums to silently watch performances (Nicholson, 2005, 2). Although the term emerged during that decade, a unanimous, central definition of "applied theatre" remains elusive. Nevertheless, this study aims to elucidate applied theatre's diverse interpretations by examining higher education courses and journals.

For instance, the Central School of Speech and Drama in London characterises applied theatre as encompassing "intervention, communication, development, empowerment, and expression when working with individuals or specific communities." On the other hand, the Drama Department at the University of Manchester takes a more specific stance, referring to applied theatre as performances staged in "non-traditional spaces and marginalised communities." The New Zealand Ministry of Education aligns applied theatre with Drama in Education, involving activities in business, corporate, and community settings.

The Australian international online journal “Applied Theatre Researcher” defines applied theatre as encompassing theatre and drama within non-traditional contexts, ranging from community and business settings to political debate and lifelong education. Despite variations, all these definitions share the common thread of applied theatre being unconventional and aimed at utilising theatre to enhance society’s conditions and individuals’ lives. Notably, the Australian description employs the term “lifelong education and learning,” which resonates with the language used to describe functional literacy. This suggests that applied theatre can indeed contribute to achieving functional literacy.

The Intersection of Applied Theatre and Functional Literacy

The inherent nature of applied theatre to engage participants actively and experientially makes it a potential tool for promoting functional literacy. Just as applied theatre seeks to create transformative experiences within diverse social contexts, functional literacy aims to equip individuals with the skills necessary to navigate and contribute effectively to society. When applied theatre techniques are employed to address functional literacy, it creates a dynamic learning environment that surpasses traditional methods.

Applied theatre’s participatory and immersive qualities align with functional literacy’s emphasis on practical skill application. Through interactive activities and role-playing, participants of applied theatre engage directly with content, thereby fostering a deep understanding of road codes, signs, and driving practices. As individuals enact scenarios related to road safety, they develop the ability to interpret and respond to road signs,

potentially leading to safer driving behaviours.

Additionally, applied theatre’s versatility in adapting to diverse settings and communities corresponds to functional literacy’s need to cater to individuals from various backgrounds. Whether engaging with urban or rural populations, different age groups, or linguistic communities, applied theatre can be tailored to accommodate specific literacy challenges. This customisation ensures that functional literacy programmes resonate with the unique needs and experiences of each target audience.

Collaborative learning, a hallmark of applied theatre, mirrors the shared responsibility of society in promoting road safety and functional literacy. Participants actively collaborate to explore scenarios, share insights, and collectively enhance their understanding of road signs and safety measures. This collaborative approach fosters a sense of community responsibility, aligning with the broader societal goal of reducing accidents and promoting responsible driving.

Towards a ‘Theatre for the Road’: Applying Theatre to Road Safety Literacy Management

The term ‘Theatre for the Road’ encapsulates the strategies this paper devises to enhance road safety in Nigeria. These strategies are founded on the principles of applied theatre and are crafted with the objective of achieving functional literacy in road safety. The following outlines the strategies employed:

Strategy 1 - Prank-Participatory Method

This strategy draws inspiration from Augusto Boal’s concept of ‘Invisible Theatre,’ which involves

unconventional theatrical practices in unique spaces. In the context of this study, the strategy incorporates an element known as ‘pranking.’ Pranking entails a performer engaging individuals in an orchestrated act without their awareness of the scripted nature of the situation, allowing for genuine and unscripted reactions. Subsequently, participants learn that the scenario was part of a performance. This strategy, named the Prank-Participatory Method, revives theatre’s primordial form, eliminating the separation between performers and non-performers.

This method thrives on active participation rather than a rigid structure, mirroring the participatory nature of ancient rituals, one of theatre’s points of origin. The following techniques can be used to achieve it:

1. **Deep Observation of Intended Involuntary Co-performers:** The method requires the conversion of spectators into co-performers. Thoroughly observing the behaviours of these individuals helps anticipate reactions and tailor scenarios accordingly.
2. **Imaginative Scene Creation:** Creators must envision potential scenarios, extending beyond observed behaviours. This imaginative exercise ensures scenarios are compelling and align with intended outcomes such as awareness, education, or entertainment.
3. **Multiple Scripts:** While prioritising naturalness, the performance still relies on scripts and rehearsals. Multiple scripts account for various plausible scenarios and include appropriate dialogue for each situation, guiding the performance toward its intended goal.
4. **Controlled/Familiar Environment:** The strategy is

most effective when executed within a well-understood environment. Familiarity with the setting minimises the likelihood of adverse reactions from involuntary performers.

5. **Voluntary Performers:** Team members from the educators’ group act as voluntary performers, actively guiding the process in real-time. These performers may initiate provocations to stimulate reactions, following the script to direct involuntary performers.

Dubbed the Prank-Participatory Method, this approach mirrors pranks but with a more serious purpose. Spectators unwittingly become participants in a dramatic scenario. In this study, a known park serves as the controlled environment to ensure safety and authenticity. Informing park authorities beforehand prevents undue interference without sacrificing the intended naturalness of reactions. A scenario unfolds when a voluntary performer, playing the role of a passenger, points out a speed limit violation to the driver. This prompts an involuntary performer to intervene, sparking a larger conversation. As the situation escalates, another involuntary performer, dressed as a Road Safety Officer, joins and simulates a fake arrest or fine. This heightened scenario underscores the danger of exceeding speed limits and underscores the instructive nature of road signs. Involving road transport workers in the performance, even inadvertently, ensures longer retention of lessons compared to traditional classroom lectures.

In essence, the Prank-Participatory Method leverages theatre’s interactive power to convey critical road safety messages. By engaging participants directly, this strategy promotes functional literacy in

road safety and contributes to a culture of responsible driving.

Strategy 2 - Draw-From-Experience Method

Applied theatre transcends traditional theatrical boundaries, extending its impact into the spaces frequented by road users. The Draw-From-Experience Method involves theatre practitioners convening road users in shared spaces to recount their real-life road experiences. These narratives serve as the foundation for creating theatrical pieces that illustrate mistakes made and offer alternatives for safer road behaviour.

Techniques to Implement the Draw-From-Experience Method:

1. Get Multiple Stories: The essence of this method lies in involving the participants. Encouraging them to share their personal experiences fosters a sense of connection and ownership. Collecting a variety of stories from different individuals enriches the production by incorporating diverse perspectives and relatable scenarios. The selection process should consider stories that best highlight key road safety issues.

2. Theatricalise Selected Stories: While participants' stories might lack traditional dramatic elements, the theatre team can transform them into compelling theatrical pieces. Enhancing narratives with elements like suspense, conflict, and climax makes the experience more engaging. This transformation not only educates participants about road safety but also introduces them to theatrical techniques.

3. Get Them To Act It Out: Humans naturally engage in narration and description in daily interactions. Encouraging participants to act out their own stories helps them relive the experience, emphasising the corrected

version of events. Participants do not need professional acting skills; the process itself serves as the end goal. This active involvement deepens their understanding of road safety concepts.

4. Meet Them In Their Own Space: To create a comfortable environment, it is essential to meet participants on their own turf. Although this may not be the typical setting for theatre practitioners, it ensures participants feel at ease sharing their stories. This approach helps participants open up and express themselves more naturally, leading to more authentic performances.

By applying the Draw-From-Experience Method, the theatre team harnesses the power of personal narratives to educate participants about road safety. This interactive approach empowers individuals to reflect on their actions and make safer choices on the road. The resulting theatrical pieces provide valuable insights into common road safety mistakes and showcase effective alternatives thereby promoting functional literacy in road safety.

Strategy 3: Ayinla Omowura Sensitising Music for Road Safety Education

While the previous two strategies involve direct engagement through physical presence, Strategy 3 takes a different approach. This strategy taps into the emotive and educational power of music, harnessing its ability to resonate with people on a deep level and guide their behaviours. In this approach, music becomes a vehicle for delivering road safety messages and instructions to the target community, constantly reinforcing these messages through the act of replaying songs. This innovative strategy qualifies as applied theatre, as it utilises a non-traditional medium to address a real-world problem beyond

the confines of traditional theatre structures.

Nigerian music has demonstrated a substantial influence on the thoughts and actions of the population. Music reflects cultural norms and values and can either endorse or criticise certain behaviours. Since 2007, Nigeria saw an increase in songs glorifying crime and hedonism, quite notable are songs like ‘Yahooze’, Nkem Owoh’s ‘Chop Your Dollar’, 9ce’s ‘Living Things’, etc. This influence of music, whether positive or negative, indicates its potential to shape behaviour. In this context, this study sees an opportunity to use applied theatre principles to leverage music’s instructive power to improve drivers’ literacy.

This strategy also draws inspiration from the influence of religious songs, which promote moral values. Its goal is to utilise the potency of music to educate individuals about safe road practices. As drivers often listen to the radio while driving, sensitising music serves as an unobtrusive yet consistent reminder of road safety instructions, delivered through the voices of admired musicians. As these musicians become endeared to the public, they could inadvertently serve as undercover Road Safety ambassadors. The audience, including passengers, shares in this sensitisation process when the music plays during car journeys.

A tangible example of this approach is observed in Folarin Falana’s “Moral Instruction” album, which not only gained popularity but also became very instrumental during a nationwide protest against police brutality. This album’s success contradicts the notion that only sensationalised music is profitable. This example underscores the potential of using music as a tool for social change.

Collaborating with musicians and music labels presents an effective approach to implement this strategy. By integrating road safety messages into songs, these messages are seamlessly woven into the fabric of popular music culture. This covert approach ensures that the messages are accepted without scepticism, as they come from respected artists rather than governmental sources. The strategy also suggests involving high-profile offenders, like musicians, in crafting these educational songs as a form of restorative justice.

For successful implementation, the songs must align with the style and production process of mainstream music. These songs should be composed by professionals, potentially by collaborating with the Road Safety Corp’s communicators and distributed through established music channels. Collaborating with musicians and music labels to make road safety songs part of their corporate social responsibility further integrates the messages into the musical landscape.

Conclusion

The concept of applied theatre has emerged as a powerful tool to address societal challenges, transcending traditional notions of theatre by engaging communities and individuals in meaningful ways. This paper explored the innovative application of applied theatre principles to road safety literacy management, proposing three distinct strategies collectively referred to as the ‘Theatre of the Road’. These strategies—Prank-Participatory Method, Draw-From-Experience Method, and Ayinla Omowura Sensitising Music—harness the principles of immersive participation, experiential learning, and cultural influence to enhance drivers’ literacy and road safety awareness.

The Prank-Participatory Method draws inspiration from Augusto Boal's 'Invisible Theatre', using playful pranks to actively involve participants and provoke natural responses. By transforming bystanders into involuntary performers, this strategy creates an environment for genuine engagement and meaningful dialogues around road safety issues. Similarly, the Draw-From-Experience Method brings road users together to share personal stories and experiences related to road safety. By translating these real-life narratives into theatrical representations, this method amplifies the impact of relatable stories and fosters a collective sense of responsibility for safer road behaviour.

The Ayinla Omowura Sensitising Music strategy, on the other hand, leverages the influential power of music in Nigerian culture to deliver road safety messages. Music has demonstrated its ability to shape behaviour and convey messages effectively, making it an ideal medium for subtly imparting road safety lessons. By collaborating with renowned musicians and integrating road safety messages into their music, this approach leverages on the musicians' popularity to educate and influence a wide audience.

Collectively, these strategies bridge the gap between theatre and functional literacy, harnessing theatre's immersive nature and literacy's transformative potential. They engage individuals beyond conventional educational methods, offering experiential learning that remains ingrained in memory. The Theatre of the Road strategies are not limited to educational settings; they can be adapted to various environments, catering to different communities and contexts. In a world where road safety remains a critical concern, these strategies provide road safety

organisations with innovative tools to create lasting behaviour change. By challenging traditional approaches to education and embracing the principles of applied theatre, road safety organisations can address drivers' literacy with creativity, empathy, and cultural relevance. The Theatre of the Road research presents a dynamic framework that opens new avenues for collaboration, engagement, and education, ultimately contributing to safer roads and communities worldwide.

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