AN EVALUATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN ROAD SAFETY PROMOTION STRATEGIES

WITH A SELECTED SOCIAL MARKETING MODEL

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND TO SOCIAL MARKETING

CHAPTER 4
ROAD SAFETY PROMOTION STRATEGIES

CHAPTER 5

NATURE OF ROAD SAFETY PROMOTION

CHAPTER 6
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER SEVEN

FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to evaluate, within the context of a selected Social Marketing Model, the strategies that South Africa has been using in the past 10 years in promoting Road Safety in the country. The underpinning aim of the study was to determine whether or not these strategies have been adequately addressing the essence of Road Safety Promotion in South Africa in the light of the many changes communities have experienced over the past decade. Another key reason for the quest to evaluate these strategies is the fact that even in spite of their partial implementation, the rate of road accidents in the country continues to increase. Effectively, South Africa is busy losing the Road Safety battle. The study argued that it is vital that South Africa embarks on effective strategies of Road Safety promotion in order to drastically reduce road accidents and mortalities to levels, at least, of between one to nine persons per year. All governmental strategies currently in use for promoting Road Safety in South Africa are more than four years old, and no in-depth study has been done to evaluate their effectiveness and the reasons for failure of those well-planned campaigns coming out of the strategies, where the mortality rates from accidents continue to increase. This study evaluated the strategies and the impact of the campaign messages emanating from them. Qualitative research methodology using group interviews was conducted in three of the nine provinces namely North West, Gauteng, and Free State Province, the presumption being that the three South African provinces, like the rest, contain characteristics that are generally prevalent in the country. The findings of the study revealed that Road Safety officers were neither fully conversant with the strategies for promotion of Road Safety in the country, nor adequately equipped to confidently and effectively manage their obligatory mandate to endorse the Road Safety Promotion programmes. The limited and often absent engagement of communities in the design and implementation of Road Safety Promotion Strategies has not boded well for the country. Among the recommendations made were, adequate orientation and training of Road Safety practitioners in the area of Road Safety Strategies and promotion, which would result in the strengthening of community engagement in Road Safety Promotion Strategies, the need to conduct, at short intervals, the impact analyses of the promotional strategies being used, in order, where necessary, to design fresh promotional messages with impact, using the Social Marketing Framework for Road Safety promotion campaigns.