A Sociological Analysis of Risk Factors for Male Teen and Young Adult Drivers in Benin Metropolis

by

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Abstract

The phenomenon of male teen and young adult drivers and the predisposing factors in their driving behaviour in Benin Metropolis was discussed in this paper. The study adopted the survey and a cross-sectional design. A total of 430 respondents were sampled. A descriptive analysis of the quantitative data collected was undertaken using frequency distribution. Findings from this investigation showed that speeding, distractions, night time driving, drinking and eating while driving, texting, making or receiving phone calls, tailgating, aggressive driving were some of the risk behaviour teen and young adult engage in. Based on the findings, recommendations were made that the parents, media, church and other credible agents of socialization should engage in enlightenment campaign programmes to create awareness on the negative consequences of teens and young adult driving. In addition, the law enforcement agents should be alive to their responsibility by ensuring that only those duly licensed are allowed to ply the roads.

Key words: Teen, Young adult, Car crashes, Distraction

1. Introduction

One complex task that requires full attention is driving. This is because driving requires the controlling of the car driven as well as responding positively to events on the road. The mind and body must be well coordinated when driving. However, it has been found that many teens and young adults engage in various non-driving related activities while driving. These activities range from making or receiving phone calls, eating/drinking, adjusting or listening to music and they are most times responsible for car crashes on the roads (Stutts, 2001).
Driving is dangerous, and especially so for new drivers, teens and young adults. Motor vehicle crashes have been reported to be the leading cause of mortality and serious morbidity for all teens and young adults. Every year, nearly 1.3 million people die and 50 million are injured as a result of road traffic crashes (World Health Organization, 2011). These deaths and injuries have immeasurable impacts on families and communities as they tragically and irrevocably change people’s lives. In addition to the huge emotional tolls these injuries exert, they also cause considerable economic loss to the casualties, their families and nations as a whole.

Road traffic injuries affect all age groups but its impact is particularly striking among teens and young adults - they are the leading cause of death worldwide among those aged 15-29 years. Trends suggest that between now and 2030; road traffic injuries involving teens and young adults will rise from being the 9th leading cause of death to become the 5th. This rise is particularly driven by the dramatic increase in the motorization in a number of low and medium income countries (Nigeria inclusive) an increase that now demands improved road safety strategies and land use planning (World Health Organization, 2011).

A number of factors have been identified as affecting the likelihood of car crashes among teens and young adults. There is now a large body of scientific research showing the increased risk of road traffic fatalities and injuries resulting from excessive or inappropriate speed, drink-driving, and non-use of seat belts (World Health Organization, 2011). The driving behaviour of teens and young adults are greatly influenced by many factors including their personal levels of knowledge, awareness, skills and experiences; characteristics of and conditions found in the motor vehicle, and the various conditions of the community in which the teens live (Braver, 2014).

Distraction in traffic is another risk for teens and young adults and is increasingly becoming a concern among policy makers. Most researches and attention in this area relate to driver-distraction, largely because of drivers’ increasing use of mobile phones and other technologies. However, the extent of the problem of teens and young adults’ distraction – including that created by mobile phones- and its contribution to risky driver behaviour and road traffic crashes is not very well known, even in countries with good road safety records (Ali, Badaway and Shawaly, 2014).

2. Statement of the problem

Teens driving cars along major roads in Benin metropolis is a common sight to behold. More worrisome is the fact that some of the commercial bus (“tuketuke”) drivers are relatively young, having just graduated from being bus conductors. Equally, a common occurrence is the involvement of teens in accidents, some of which are fatal. Although the Federal Road Safety Commission and the Nigerian police are supposed to have official records of accidents- teen drivers inclusive, it is sad to note that the scanty records kept by these government bodies are to put it mildly, unreliable as they are not all embracing.

Teens generally believe that driving is very easy so long as they can start the engine and move it around but driving a car goes beyond just starting the engine and
moving it around as there are other things involved in it. A research study concluded that
the brain does not mature until the age of 25 years that is where the studies have shown
that the frontal lobes which control emotion, risk-taking and decision-making are not fully
developed until young people reach the age of 25 (Notice Driver, 2009). The study
concludes that this is the same time the age disappears as a risk factor for crashes after
that the experience has been gained.

For the most part, teens and young adults do not realize the responsibility that
comes with driving. They feel it is something to play around with and do not take it
seriously. For instance, immaturity is a cause of being irresponsible; because of this, there
are many accidents that happen which could have been prevented. Car crashes remain a
source of death for teenagers and young adults as they tend to overrate their driving skills
and undertake risks on the road, and have trouble multitasking- talking to friends,
listening to the radio, texting and watching films on the screen in the car while driving. In
Nigeria, the minimum age to qualify for a driver’s license is 18 years. So for most teens
and young adults, turning 18 is an exciting event as it allows them get a driver’s license
and with this comes the freedom and control over something (driving) they have never
experienced before.

3. **Aim and Objectives**

Without doubt, there are risk factors for being drivers and these have not been
given much attention by scholars. Besides, when a teen causes serious vehicle crash, the
outcome can be devastating for the family or everyone involved, particularly if injuries in
teen car accidents are fatal. These are issues that the study sought to examine.

The study was designed to undertake a sociological analysis on the risk factors for
male teens and young adult drivers in the Benin metropolis.

3. **Review of Related Literature**

A teen is a young person whose age falls within the range of 13-19 years. They
are called teenagers because their age number ends with ‘teen’. Adolescence is the name
of this transition from teens to adulthood. There is however no generally acceptable
definition of who a young adult is. Erikson (1975) in his stages of human development
suggests that young adults are from 20-29. However, for the purposes of this study, a
young adult is taken to be one from 21-26. Turning into 18 or a young adult is usually an
exciting experience and more exciting is the thought of sitting behind the steering wheels.
Unfortunately, most teens and young adults do not realize that driving goes beyond
merely being able to move the car. Statistics reveal that car crashes involving teens and
young adults where they are either killed or seriously injured, is on the increase (National
highway traffic safety administration fatality analysis reporting system, 2006).
Crashes are among the top three causes of death throughout a person’s lifetime (National
Safety Corps, 2010). In most developing countries, Nigeria inclusive, road crashes are
known to consume more human and material resources than most diseases put together.
According to official figures from Federal Road Safety Commission (2007), 9,946 people
were killed in 20,530 road accidents in 2001, representing an increase of 1,473 in
comparison with the death toll of 8,473 recorded accident cases in 2000, more than 28,000 people died in about 61,000 road accidents in Nigeria, Federal Road Safety Commission (2007). Also, between 2007-2011, about 24,000 people died in 38,237 road accidents across Nigeria according to official statistics released by the Federal Road Safety Commission (2012). More than 92,000 were injured in these accidents during the period under review. In 2011, WHO ranked Nigeria 191 out of 192 countries in the world with unsafe roads, with 162 death rates per 100,000 populations from Road Traffic Accidents. In other words, Nigeria was ranked second in Road Traffic Accidents in the world. This statistic includes people that are inside and outside the vehicle, motorcyclists, bicyclists and pedestrians who were probably going about their business before they were struck by vehicles. In addition to this, people suffer life changing injuries from road traffic accidents. A number of factors have been identified as affecting the likelihood of road traffic injuries and eliminating the exposure to the risk factors is critical to the success of efforts to reduce road traffic injuries. Distraction while driving is one of such risk factors and is becoming an issue of concern among policy makers. 

There is a growing recognition that teens and young adults do engage in risk driving behaviour. Behavioural choices as it relates to driving are influenced not only by personal beliefs and histories, but also by family and peer expectations. Family expectations, parental conditions on driving by teens, and level of communication between parents and young adult drivers may affect their risk taking behaviour. Similarly, peer expectations about driving safely, wearing seat belts and risk taking also may influence the likelihood of teen drivers engaging in risky driving practices (Chiman, Hannah and Wandersman, 2015).

4. Risk factors in driving

Drivers’ inexperience: Teens and young adults with less than two years driving experience are not equipped to recognize and react to dangerous situations. Studies in advanced democracy revealed that crash risk is particularly high during the first months after earning a license because teens are eager to hit the road without inhibition (AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, 2012).

The situation is slightly different in Nigeria as most teens and young adults do not even wait to be licensed before hitting the roads. Good driving techniques are developed through experience and most teens and young drivers will inevitably make mistakes. In teenage car accidents, the teen drivers simply lack experience and have not gone through driving in bad weather conditions, night time driving and road rage and when confronted with these circumstances, teens and young adult drivers are less prepared. As a result, they are not able to react and recover quickly (Federal Road Safety Commission, 2010).

Speeding: Looking at teen car crashes, male teens are especially at risk for being involved in high-speed fatal crashes. Other reckless driving practices include: making illegal turns or lane changes, tail-gating and street racing. Some young adult drivers are impatient and are always in a hurry especially commercial bus drivers, while others seek thrill (FRSC, 2010). Some say they only speed when late for a class, or coming home late from a party.
Whatever the reason, speeding is a dangerous habit among teen and young adult drivers and significantly increases their risk of being in an accident (FRSC, 2010).

**Distraction** is the diversion of attention away from activities critical for safe driving towards competing activity (NHTSA, WHO 2011). When drivers are distracted, their attention is temporarily divided between what is often referred to as the ‘primary task’ of driving and the secondary tasks not related to driving. This secondary task not related to driving puts extra pressure or demands on the driver which may reduce his or her driving standards. Paying attention to a second activity while driving is not safe, especially, if that second activity is time consuming or complex. There has been much attention about driver distraction due to the use of mobile phones in vehicles, but increasingly research is revealing other forms of driver multi-tasking and its contribution to road accidents.

Drivers experience different types of distraction on a daily basis. Drivers are going to have conversations, read maps and directions and listen to music while driving. The most complete and most recent research shows that any activity that draws a driver’s eyes away from the road for an extended period while driving such as text messaging, substantially increases the risk of accidents (NHTSA, WHO 2011). According to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety (2012), if you’re driving your vehicle, you are already multi-tasking. at a minute you are: operating a piece of heavy machinery at high speed, navigating across changing terrain; calculating speeds and distances, and responding to all the other drivers and obstacles around you. Putting one or more activity in the mix—even talking to your passenger or changing a radio station can be enough to make you lose control of your vehicle or fail to respond in an emergency. Almost everybody reaches for something, adjusts a control or gets distracted at some point while driving, the important thing is that our level of distraction must be reduced for our own and other people's safety.

According to NTHSA, WHO (2011), the sources of driver distraction can be internal or external. In vehicle (Internal) distraction: this includes eating, smoking, talking, grooming as well as using in-built entertainment system (use of radio, Cds/DVD player) and talking with passengers (Horberry, 2006) also systems not integrated into the car like mobile phones, laptops, portable music or information devices e.g. iPods and blackberry. Some other internal sources of driver distraction are adjusting temperature control, adjusting radio or cd, dialing or texting on a mobile phone, eating or drinking, moving an object in the vehicle, talking to other vehicle occupants, smoking, talking on mobile phone, using a device or object integrated to the vehicle (e.g. speed adaptation system), using a device or object brought into the vehicle e.g. blackberry, ipod, laptop computer etc. (Stutts, 2001).

In Nigeria, the number of road accidents caused by THE use of mobile phone while driving is on the increase. Summary report of the traffic offences obtained from the FRSC policy, research and statistics division (2012) revealed that the figures have almost doubled in the past 4 years. The data can be summarized thus 2006-3346; 2007-3651; 2008-4769; 2009-4204; 2010-7243. It is worse in the Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria where it was reported that about 8,000 road users were arrested in 2011 for mobile phone based distracted driving. Motorists receiving and making calls, reading and sending text messages has led to an increase in traffic accidents and its consequences. Driving while
talking on cell phones-hand held and hands-free- increases risk of injury and property
damage crashes four fold (Redelmeier and Tibshirani, 1997). It is not as if cell phone use
while driving is the most dangerous or risky thing people can do but because of the
prevalence of its use, it causes distraction usually involved in most crashes. Drivers using
phones have slowed reaction times and difficulty controlling speed and lane position. It
has become so popular that these days; teens and young adults do not realize when, where
and how often they are utilizing their "cellular phones".

Distracted driving includes engaging in any form of activity that takes the mind
and eyes off the road, such as using a phone, eating, changing cds, turning on the radio
and chatting with passengers. Since driving requires cognitive, manual and mental
concentration, the tiniest distraction can lead to disaster. Distracted driving becomes even
more dangerous at night time when visibility becomes more difficult (National Highway

Adjusting radio or cassette control, CD or cassette player was found to be one of
the major causes of distraction related crashes in Nigeria. This is common among teenage
drivers in Nigeria and it results in considerable physical and cognitive distraction and
reduced driving performance. Some people get so carried away with their radio and
cassette controls that they find it difficult to react quickly to some situations on the road.
These things should be done before any driver goes into the road.

Eating/Drinking: It is very common to see drivers eating and drinking while driving.
Distractions like eating/drinking can become a problem for drivers who cannot react
quickly to a sharp curve. Driving and eating is very dangerous. Eating while operating a
vehicle has become a norm in Nigeria, it can make steering a car impossible. The dangers
are there but drivers ignore them. You are safer when you stop to eat/drink. When you eat,
you are chewing, swallowing, opening packages, unwrapping and re-wrapping food and
cleaning yourself and the vehicle. This is truly multitasking and is too dangerous.

Wearing seat belt: It has been proven that seat belts significantly reduce the risk of fatal
and serious car accident injuries, and teenagers can endanger themselves and others by
ignoring precautionary measures (Ali, Badaway and Shawaly, 2014). There is something
about wearing a seatbelt that is just not appealing to teenagers. This can be due to many
things: misinformed about how seat belts save lives, rebelling against parents who enforce
this rule, sense of immortality. Some teenagers intend to put on the seatbelts as they pull
out of the driveway but simply forget it once they are on the road. They think it is no big
deal; ‘I am a good driver. Unfortunately, being a good driver does not protect you against
other reckless drivers. Teenage drivers get in bad accidents even when it is not their fault.
They still end up with car injuries and thousands lose their lives.
According to data compiled by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
(2011), more than 5, 341 people at the age of 15-20 were killed or seriously injured in
traffic crashes in 2001, two-third of them were not wearing seatbelts.

Driving time and reaction when being pestered by another driver: A study in Finland
showed that 26% of the young drivers’ accidents occurred at night. Less visibility, less
ability to accurately estimate distances, increase from the average speed because of the
low traffic volume at night, and the wrong use of high beam light, all of these factors increase the likelihood of accidents at night.

**Driving with teen and young adult passengers:** Passengers pose a significant risk to young drivers, especially when they are at the same age. Research conducted in the United States demonstrated that carrying one peer passenger increases young drivers’ fatality risk three-fold. Another study explored that, the crash rate for those at ages 16-19 approximately doubled with the presence of passengers, but this was not true for drivers aged 20-24 or 25-59.

5. **Theoretical Framework**

This study employed situated rationality theory to explain the social phenomenon under study.

Situated rationality theory makes the argument that it is erroneous to presume that safe behaviours are inherently rational and high-risk behaviours are inherently irrational. In other words, there is likely a rational justification for why people choose to take risks that is more explanatory than assuming that a risk-taker is simply “crazy” or thrill-seeking. For instance, individuals choose to sunbathe outdoors or use tanning salons despite the risk of skin cancer to enhance their body image (Cafri, Hompson, Jackson and Hillhouse, 2008). Individuals may also engage in unprotected sex with people they know to be drug users or HIV-positive to show trust in their partner and demonstrate “real love” (Rhodes, 1997). Additionally, even the so-called “thrill seekers” tend to know more about the consequences of their actions and the safeguards in place, so a risk that looks unacceptable to the uninformed is actually being well managed.

If the reward of risk taking is too great, it’s often considered “rational” to take risks. A teen may drive unsafely to maintain status among peers, or a person could decide that being on time to an appointment outweighs the risk of unsafe driving (Keating and Halpern-Felsher, 2008). In occupational safety, workers may not wear personal protective equipment because it is more comfortable or convenient (Hambach, Maiaux, Francis, Braeckman, Balasat, Van Hal, Vandoone, Royen and Sprundel, 2011; Vernero and Montanari, 2007) and may not adhere to safe work procedures in order to complete work more efficiently (Slappendal, Laird, Kawachi, Marshall and Cryer, 1993). As Finucane, Alhakami, Slovic and Johnson (2000) noted, the greater the perceived benefit of an activity, the lower the perceived risk.

Certain aspects of situated rationality theory are connected to the concept of peer and community pressure. Taking risks in the workplace is often justified by workers who are trying to “save face” in front of coworkers or who want to impress supervisors. Also, business structures and embedded production systems tend to reward unsafe behaviour because of the potential gains in compensation, output, and recognition. Choudry and Fang (2008) found that Chinese workers often took more risks in hopes that their gains in efficiency would get noticed by supervisors. These workers also noted that being paid bonuses for productivity encouraged them to work less safely, and that taking risks made them appear “tough.” Mullen (2004) also found that workers routinely operated without protective gloves in order to be seen as “macho.” Some female workers lifted more
weight than the job required to be viewed as competent or strong in the eyes of male coworkers. Overall, workers of both genders were concerned that appearing less tough, strong or competent jeopardized their good position in the company. It is thus glaring that teen and young adult drivers would engage in risky behaviour while driving depending on the benefit perceived by them as derivable from taking such risk.

6. Materials and Methods

The research design adopted for this study was exploratory. The design was chosen because it is suitable for investigation that seeks familiarity or new insight on phenomenon. The choice of this design was informed by the fact that the subject matter teen driving is highly understudied in Nigeria.

A Driver Behaviour Questionnaire (DBQ) was designed to collect all important information needed to achieve the objective of this study. 20 different questions were included in the questionnaire and arranged in two sections as follows:

i. The first section refers to the demographic characteristics of respondents including age, marital status, educational level, possession of driver’s license, location and religion.

ii. The second section consists of 13 questions measuring risk factors for the participants such as not wearing seat belts, speed racing, engaging in distracting activities while driving (making or receiving a cell phone call, reading or sending messages, watching film on screen) and so on.

Respondents were selected to contain all age categories but majority were teens and young adults found at major motor parks and students at two higher institutions viz: University of Benin and Benson Idahosa University.

A total of 450 copies of the questionnaire were administered, out of which 435 were returned with five excluded from the analysis for failing to answer several questions in the instrument.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Benin</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benson Idahosa University</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor parks</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>430</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARITAL STATUS</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>430</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSSESSION OF DRIVER’S LICENSE</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>430</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RELIGION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Traditional Religion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>430</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University undergraduates</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University graduates</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>430</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-25</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 and above</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>430</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field work, December, 2016- February, 2017

Table 1 summarized the results of the demographic characteristics of the respondents. It shows that among the 430 drivers who participated in the study, 150 participants each (35%) of them were University of Benin and Benson Idahosa University students respectively. While 130 (30%) were from the various motor parks within the Benin metropolis. 380 (88%) of them were single, 50 (12) married and none was divorced. Only 25 (6%) possessed drivers’ license while 404 (94%) did not. 419 of the respondents (97%) were Christians while 8 (2%) were Muslims and only 3 (1%) were African Traditionalists. On the educational level, 30 of the respondents (7%) had primary education, 61 (14%) had secondary education while 330 (77%) were university undergraduates and 9 (2%) were university graduates. 210 (49%) were within the age range of 16-20 years, 120 (28%) within the 21-25 age range, 25 (6%) within the 26-30 years age range and 75 respondents (17%) were from 30 years and above.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of risk factors for teenage and young adult drivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Factor</th>
<th>FREQUENCY (DRIVER’S AGE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speeding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not wearing seatbelt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 summarizes the frequency distribution of risk factors for teens and young drivers. The table indicates that teen and young adult between the ages of 16 and 25 speed when driving. This was in sharp contrast with older persons from 26 years and above who are not in the habit of speeding when driving. This finding was given credence to by the report of FRSC (2010).

The table further showed that not wearing seatbelts when driving was a common occurrence amongst teens and young adults between the ages of 16 and 25. In contrast, older persons between the ages of 26 years and above commonly wore seatbelts. The study also found that teens and young adults between the ages of 16 and 25 were in the habit of either eating or drinking when driving while the reverse was the case for older persons from 26 years and above who seldom ate or drank when driving. The study also found that persons between the ages of 16 and 25 were in the habit of driving cars with their contemporaries (teens and young adults) as passengers while the exact opposite was the case with older persons from 26 years and above.

It was further revealed that texting (sending sms), making/receiving phone calls and adjusting or watching screen display T.V were common features amongst teens and young adults between the ages of 16 and 25. Older persons from 26 and above seldom engaged in such acts.

![Table 2](image-url)
The study also showed that teens and young adults between the ages of 16 and 25, when being pestered by another driver, react by aggressive driving and insulting or shouting at the other driver, whereas, little or no reaction was observed amongst older persons from 26 and above. The findings of this study was further given credence to by the work of Ali, Badaway and Shawaly (2014), Doherty, Andrey and MacGregor (1998) and Laapotti et al (2001).

7. Conclusion and recommendations
From the findings of this study, there appeared to be an increasing rate of car crashes involving teens and young adult drivers. This study investigated the various risk factors in their driving that more often than not predisposes them to road traffic accidents often times leading to death or serious injuries. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made.

i. There should be a National campaign on think before you drive, to educate teens and young adults on the consequences of risky driving behaviour. In addition, the media, church and other credible agents of socialization should engage in enlightenment campaign programmes to create awareness on the negative consequences of teen and young adult driving.

ii. In order to implement effective prevention strategies, it is imperative that educators, parents, law enforcement, and legislators understand the motivations surrounding teen and young adult driving behaviors. Further, they must be comprehensively educated regarding the multitude of consequences that can arise from risky driving behaviour including death, injuries, emotional and psychological trauma, financial burden on parents and or guardians.

iii. Teen and young drivers should be advised that they are safer when they stop to eat or drink, and that eating or drinking while driving is risky.

iv. Teen and young drivers should be told that if they want to make a call, send a text message or email, they should pull over to a very safe place.

v. Talking while driving will always make teen and young drivers take their mind off the task of driving, and even their hands and eyes. It's always better to pull off the road before using the cell phone.

vi. No driver should multi-task while driving. Driving is complicated enough, doing other things while driving will be distracting. Do not try to read, write or do your personal grooming while you're behind the wheels, just drive.

vii. Making campaigns for raising driver awareness classes on driving behaviour and road safety at schools.

viii. Speeding is one of the main contributory causes that increases young drivers’ crash involvement. Hence, speed management cameras and the use of in-vehicle technology such as intelligent speed adaption in vehicle will be beneficial to prevent driving too fast.

ix. Distraction is also a main contributory cause for young drivers. This includes non-technology based activities such as eating, drinking, smoking and talking with passengers, as well as technology-based activities. Thus, enforcing the laws...
such as prohibiting mobile phone use while driving and the use of visual displays would be beneficial, particularly for young drivers.

References


