

COMPLIANCE OF NIGERIAN UNION OF ROAD TRANSPORT WORKERS (NURTW) WITH BAN ON ALCOHOL SALES IN MOTOR PARKS: IMPLICATIONS FOR ACCIDENT REDUCTION AMONG COMMERCIAL DRIVERS IN OSUN STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined compliance of Nigeria Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) with ban on sale of alcohol in motor parks and its implications for accident reduction among commercial drivers in Osun State. This study used a descriptive survey design. Sixteen major NURTW units in Osun State were selected by stratification, based on locations (urban and rural). From each group, 2 locations were sampled by convenience. All the 16 major units in the four locations and their Chairmen were sampled intact. Controlled observation and validated questionnaire were used to gather data for the study. The former was used to ascertain the compliance status of NURTW with the ban on alcohol sales, while the latter examined the number of accidents involving commercial drivers in each NURTW unit since the ban. Data were analysed using percentage and t-test. Results indicated that the compliance score for NURTW units in the rural locations was 19 (Mean = 4.75), while the compliance score for those in the urban was 21 (Mean = 1.75). No significant difference was found between the numbers of accidents involving

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drivers from compliant and non-compliant units. It was concluded that NURTW units in the urban locations do not comply with ban on sales of alcohol, while their rural counterparts complied and that the ban does not reduce the commercial drivers' involvement in road accidents. Review of existing regulations, enforcement and safety education of drivers were recommended.

Key Words

Ban, alcoholic drinks, motor parks, commercial drivers, accidents, compliance

Introduction

In 1988, Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) was established through Decree No. 45 of 1988 as amended by Decree 35 of 1992, and referred to in the Statute books as the FRSC Act cap 141 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (LFN) and passed by the National Assembly as the FRSC (establishment) Act in 2007. The commission was charged with the responsibilities of regulating and coordinating all activities of motorists on all public roads across Nigeria with the mission of reducing road crash deaths and injuries by 50 percent by 2020. This development was prompted in order to combat the rising trends of road accidents in the country. In their review, Ekikhamenor and Agwubike (2004) found that the Nigeria Traffic Laws confer wide powers on the FRSC, which by Decree 45 was not only given the power to arrest and prosecute traffic offenders, but also make regulations concerning road safety matters.

As part of the strategies to accomplish safety on the roads, the issue of drunk-driving as a major cause of traffic accidents was focused. This prompted the FRSC to institute a ban on alcohol sales in all motor parks in Nigeria. Adekoya, Adekoya, Adepoju and Owoye (2011) attested to the ban. The ban on alcohol sales in motor parks in Nigeria became very necessary at that point for several reasons which include the fact that the rate of accidents and especially those involving commercial drivers in the country soared and became not only alarming but catastrophic (Ekikhamenor & Agwubike, 2004; Atubi, 2012; Alani, 2012); the medical, legal and economic implications of road crashes for the individual as well as the nation became enormous (FRSC, 2007; Atubi, 2012) and there was a confirmed relationship between human errors and especially drunk-driving and high accident rate (Aworemi & Alawode, 2009;

Adeyeye, 2010; Ekenedo, 2010). It was estimated that 50 percent of crashes on Nigeria roads are related to alcohol use by the drivers. The International Council on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety –ICADTS (2012) reported that out of 1,490 accident cases in their study, impairment from alcohol was a major contributing factor to crash causation in 274 (18.4%) cases and that more than 40 percent of the drivers who were alcohol impaired have incurred at least one previous road infringement.

In addition to these reasons, it was found that commercial drivers in Nigeria access alcoholic drinks through the sales outlets in their motor parks and that excessive drinking was attributable to proximity of the outlets. Abiona, Aloba and Fatoye (2006) attested to this fact and was later confirmed by Adekoya, et. al. (2013) and Olokesusi (2011). In line with this, Oluwadiya & Akinola (2012) revealed that 'Paraga' (traditional herbal mixture prepared with distilled liquor) outlets are located either in or near motor parks in their Osogbo study location, where commercial drivers and cyclists have easy access to them, while Adekoya, et. al. (2011) personally observed that drinks in forms of beer, gin and palm wine are available in some motor parks.

Confirming the high prevalence of alcohol

use among commercial drivers in Nigeria, Abiona, et. al. (2006) in a study conducted in both PortHarcourt and Ile-Ife found that the prevalence rate of drinking by commercial drivers was 67.2 percent and out of the drinking drivers, as many as 47 percent were heavy users. This result was supported by Gureje, Degenhardt, Olley, Uwakwe, Udofia, Wakil, Adeyemi, Bohnert, and Anthony (2007). Alcohol drinks sold in motor parks include all the three main kinds of alcoholic beverages, which are; beers (3% - 8% ale.); wines (8% - 12% ale.) and distilled spirits such as whisky, gin, vodka (40 - 50%). Others are traditional beverages, like palm wine, paraga, shepe (Kehinde & Adegoke, 2012); burukutu, pito (3.6% ale.), ogogoro (native gin), kai-kai (Korieh, 2003) also known as sapele water.

As stated by Oluwadiya and Akinola (2012), the drivers' beliefs in the curative effects of these alcoholic beverages and especially paraga, aloma etc. on an extra-ordinary range of ailments might have been the reason for taking them, but Adekoya, et. al. (2011) submitted that long distance drivers who are usually under more stress use alcohol to reduce such stress. Additionally, Abiona, et. al. (2006) found that frustration that is associated with driving, tops the list of reasons adduced for drinking and that age bore relevance to current drinking. In actual

sense, drinking and driving habits were linked to the persuasive perception and general notion that alcohol helps them to 'shine their eyes' meaning to be alert while driving.

On the effects of alcohol, Oluwadiya and Akinola (2012) said that it has an important effect on drivers' behaviours and performance and that these effects increase as the Breath Alcohol Concentration (BAG) level increases. The authors said that cognitive and sensory functions, which are necessary for skillful driving could be impaired with alcohol use and that alcohol impairment comes much earlier before drunkenness or intoxication become evident. In their submissions, Adekoya, et. al. (2011).reiterated that alcohol is a central nervous system depressant and it is capable of causing impairment of mental and motor functions, both of which are critical to the performance of the driver. The authors further stated that alcohol affects judgment of speed, distance and risk, diplopia and blurred vision. Dumbili (2012) found that alcohol impairs the ability to be sober, which is a pre-requisite to driving and tantamount to safe journey. In line with these assertions, Ehikhamenor and Agwubike (2004) submitted that alcohol intoxication stages manifest in both psychological and physiological dimensions depicting the degree to which the CNS function is impaired and that as blood alcohol increases

markedly, speech becomes slurred and the driver becomes unsteady. The author further found that alcohol decreases accuracy, balance, strength and power and slows visual tracking and information processing. All these conditions could make the driver misbehave while driving.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration - NHTSA (2012) outlined common mis-behaviours upon, which an intoxicated driver can be suspected and accosted as including; weaving, almost striking objects/vehicle, turning with wide radius, swerving, too slow speed, stopping without a cause, drifting, following too closely, braking erratically, tyres on center or land marker, driving into opposing/crossing traffic, signaling inconsistent with driving actions, turning abruptly or illegally, accelerating or decelerating rapidly, driving with head light off, appearing to be drunk, straddling center or lane marker and driving on other than designated roadway. Suffice to say that all these misbehaviours by drivers on wheel may result in preventable accidents.

Despite the effects of alcohol, 'drunk-driving (i.e. the act of operating or driving a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs to the degree that mental and motor skill is impaired) has been confirmed among commercial drivers in Nigeria. ICADTS (2012) estimated that between 60 and 70 percent of

commercial drivers engage in drinking and driving. Adekoya, et. al. (2011) had reasons to conclude that drivers in Nigeria drive under influence, because they revealed that the blood alcohol level of drivers involved in road accidents was found to be high. In Lagos State, out of 2,500 commercial drivers tested for drugs and drunkenness, 441 (17.64%) were positive to drugs and alcohol and drunk-driving was found to positively correlate with drivers' involvement in fatal accidents (WHO, 2002; Anderson, Chisholm & Fuhr., 2009; Adekoya, et. al. 2011; NHTSA, 2012). NHTSA (2012) revealed that drivers with BAG of 0.10 percent are six to twelve times more likely to get into a fatal crash or injury than those with no alcohol. A major question arising from the ban of alcohol sales in motor parks which requires attention and investigation is how effective is the ban? Ordinarily, when a ban on something is instituted as the issue addressed in this paper, (ban on alcohol sales in motor parks), one will expect that such ban is immediately followed by three major steps sequentially to ensure compliance: The steps are:

- (a) **Re-Education//sensitization:** to make the affected persons see reasons for such ban.
- (b) **Enforcement;** to drive, compel and ensure that the people concerned

comply with the ban, even when it does not meet their approval.

- (c) **Evaluation:** to confirm whether or not the ban is complied with and whether it yielded positive result (in this case) in reducing road accidents as this will point to areas of the ban that need to be improved or scrapped if need be.

However, from this researchers' observation in some motor parks in urban centers in Osun State, it seems as though the ban on alcohol sales in and around their premises is ineffective, because alcohol sales' business still thrives in the few urban motor parks visited, there is. need to examine the compliance status of NURTW units not only in the urban, but in rural areas of Osun State. Also, there is the need to carry out an evaluative study to determine the workability of the ban in reducing traffic accidents among commercial drivers in the State, since the researcher is not aware of such study being conducted since the ban was instituted. It is hoped that the result of this study will provide basis for enacting new laws or reviewing existing policies on alcohol sales and use by drivers. It will provide useful information to health education curriculum planners on the need for the inclusion of drivers' education in its curriculum and stress the roles of health

educators in creating public awareness in road safety.

2.1 Research Questions

These research questions guided the conduct of this study:

- (a) Do NURTW units in urban and rural locations in Osun State comply with the ban on sales of alcoholic drinks in motor parks?
- (b) In which location (urban/rural) is accident occurrence highest?

2.2 Hypothesis

The only hypothesis generated for this study is that there is no significant difference in the number of accidents involving drivers from alcohol-ban compliant and non-compliant NURTW units.

3. Methodology

This study used a descriptive survey design. Sixteen major NURTW units in Osun State were selected by stratification, based on locations (urban and rural). From each group, 2 locations were sampled by convenience. The locations are: Ile-Ife, Ilesa, Garage Olode and Ipetumodu. All the 16 NURTW units in the four locations (i.e. 12 Urban units and 4 rural units) and their Chairmen were drawn

intact. Vehicles in the units include; buses, cars, and trucks.

Two instruments; controlled observation and questionnaire were used to gather data for this study. The former was used to ascertain the compliance or otherwise of NURTW units with the ban on alcohol sales, while the latter examined the number of accidents that involved commercial drivers in each unit since the ban.

Scoring of Observations: Researchers' observations on each of the five variables investigated were recorded as either 'Yes' or 'No', where No = 1 point and Yes = 0 point. Any NURTW unit that scored above 40 percent was considered Alcohol-Sales-Ban Compliant (ASBC), while those that scored between 1 and 40 percent were considered as Alcohol-Sales-Ban Non-Compliant (ASBN-C). The Maximum Obtainable compliant score is 5 (100%)

Collection of accident data from NURTW units was delimited to the use of questionnaire because, there was no official document on accidents that occurred in any of the units, but respondents were able to remember precisely accidents that occurred in their units and the drivers involved. Both observation guide and

questionnaire were tested for reliability using Pearson Product moment Correlation Coefficient with r being 0.89 and 0.92 respectively at 0.05 significance level. Four research assistants who were already trained on what to do were engaged to administer the instruments. Observers disguised as customers and passengers in order not to arouse suspicion of alcohol sellers. Period of observation in each

NURTW unit was between 6am and 3pm for two successive days. Data collection was completed in four weeks. Data were analysed descriptively using percentage and t-test and presented in five tables (1 - 5). Data in tables 1 and 2 were generated from researchers' observations, while tables 3 and 4 show data gathered with the use of questionnaire.

4.1 Results

Table 1: Alcohol sales-Ban Compliance Scores for Individual NURTW Units in the Urban Locations

| Compliance variables | NURTW units (Urban) N = 12 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| Is there alcohol sales' shop/ outlets in motor park? | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Are alcohol drinks displayed on counters, tables, shelves, chillers in motor park? | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Is there open hawking of alcoholic drinks in motor park? | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Do alcoholic drink sellers engage in disguised hawking in motor park? | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Is there alcohol sales shop/ outlets near (100m) around motor park? | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Compliance Points Scored | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| Compliance Percentage | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 40 | 60 | 40 | 0 | 80 |
| Compliance Status | NC | NC | NC | NC | NC | NC | NC | NC | NC | NC | NC | NC |

Mean compliance Points Scored = 1.75

Data on table 1 indicate that out of 12 NURTW units in the Urban locations, only units 9 (Ife) and 12 (Ilesa) had high compliance scores of 3 (60%) and 4 (80%) respectively while NURTW units 5, 6 and 7 had compliance score of 1 (20%) each. However, unit 10 (Ife) had the lowest compliant score of 0 (0.0%). Only unit 12 (Ilesa) displayed alcoholic drinks, while the remaining 11 units did not. Open hawking was observed in all the 12 urban units, but some hawkers used the disguise hawking system.

Table 2: Alcohol Sales- Ban Compliance Scores for Individual NURTW Units in the Rural Locations

NURTW units (Urban) N = 4

| Compliance variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|--|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Is there alcohol sales' shop/ outlets in motor park? | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Are alcohol drinks displayed on counters, tables, shelves, chillers in motor park? | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Is there open hawking of alcoholic drinks in motor park? | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Do alcoholic drink sellers engage in disguised hawking in motor park? | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Is there alcohol sales shop/ outlets near (100m) around motor park? | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Compliance Points Scored | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| Compliance Percentage | 100 | 100 | 100 | 80 |
| Compliance Status | C | C | C | C |

Mean compliance Points Scored = 4.76%

Data on table 2 indicate that 3 (75%) out of 4 NURTW units in the rural locations were 100% ban-on-alcohol-sales compliant, while the remaining 1 unit was 80% compliant. This means that all the 4 (100%) units in the rural locations do not have alcohol sales' outlets either in or around them, display alcoholic drinks and allow open hawking of alcoholic drinks. It was only in unit 4 (Olode) that alcoholic drink sellers disguised in the course of hawking.

Table 3: Accidents Data in Compliant Motor Parks (Urban and Rural)

Since the Ban on Alcohol Sales

| Total Accident Cases (%) N = 20 | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| | NURTW Units | No of cases (%) |
| Urban | Unit 9 | 5 (20.83) |
| | Unit 12 | 4 (16.67) |
| Rural | Unit 1 | 4 (16.67) |
| | Unit 2 | 0 (0.0) |
| | Unit 3 | 2 (8.33) |
| | Unit 4 | 5 (20.83) |
| | Total | 20 (100) |

Data on table 3 show that out of 20 accidents in alcohol-ban compliant NURTW units, as many as 5 (20.83%) drivers from each of Units 9 (urban) and 4 (rural) involved in accidents, while no driver in unit 2 (rural) involved in accident case since the ban.

Table 4: Accident Data in Non-Compliant Motor Parks (Rural and Urban) Since the Ban

| Accident Cases (%) N = 24 | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| | NURTW Units | No (%) |
| Urban | Unit 1 | 0 (0.0) |
| | Unit 2 | 1 (4.17) |
| | Unit 3 | 3 (12.5) |
| | Unit 4 | 1 (4.17) |
| | Unit 5 | 5 (20.83) |
| | Unit 6 | 4 (16.67) |
| | Unit 7 | 3 (12.5) |
| | Unit 8 | 0 (0.0) |
| | Unit 10 | 2 (8.33) |
| | Unit 11 | 3 (12.5) |
| | Total | 24 (100) |

Data on table 4 show that out of 24 accident cases in alcohol-ban non-compliant NURTW units,

as many as 5 (20.83%) occurred in Unit 5 (Ife) while only 1 (4.17%) case involved driver in each of Units 2 and 4. However, drivers in unit 1 and 8 did not involve in any accident since the ban on alcohol sales in motor parks.

Table 5: t-test Analysis Comparing Accident Data in Compliant and Non-Compliant NURTW Units

| Groups | N | X | df | SD | Cal.t Value | Crit. Value | Sig. Level | Decision |
|---------------------|----|-----|----|-------|-------------|-------------|------------|----------|
| Compliant units | 6 | 3.3 | 14 | 1.97 | 0.94 | 0.99 | 0.05 | NS |
| Non-compliant units | 10 | 2.4 | | 1.651 | | | | |

Data comparing the number of accident cases in compliant and non-compliant NURTW units indicate that the Cal.t value of 0.94 is < Crit. value of 0.99; df 14 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the number of accidents involving drivers from alcohol-ban compliant and non-compliant NURTW units is withheld. This means that ban on sales of alcoholic drinks in motor parks does not reduce road accidents in Osun State on the involvement of commercial drivers in road accidents,

Discussion of Findings

That NURTW units in rural locations in this study greatly complied with the ban on alcohol sales than their urban counterpart was not expected. One will expect that the units in rural locations will easily flout rules and regulations, because they are in secluded areas, where enforcement agents may not target while carrying out their duties. The results of this study, which showed that NURTW units in rural locations neither have alcohol sales' outlets nor allow hawking of alcohol in their premises, ran contrary to those of Abiona, et. al. (2006), Adekoya, et.al. (2007) and Oluwadiya & Akinola (2010) who stated that drivers in motor parks access alcohol drinks right in their premises. It could be said however, that alcohol sales is

limited to the NURTW units in urban locations alone.

In this study, it is interesting to find out that none of the NURTW units in either the urban or rural locations allowed alcoholic drinks sellers to display their wares on tables, shelves and chillers, but observations are that some of the alcohol sales' outlets in the urban units use the 'Disguise' style in their trade. For instance, some real alcohol sales' outlets display food stuff, provisions, etc. but sell alcohol drinks to customers who go to their inner shops or backyards to purchase their drinks. Also, alcohol hawkers' disguise styles include; sandwiching sachets of alcoholic drinks like gin, squadron, chelsea, regal, aperito etc. (which are called 'pelebe' in the Yoruba language) with pure water in coolers, baskets or bags.

The reasons why many units in the urban locations had low compliance scores may be speculated. Most of these motor parks are sandwiched between hotels, bars and restaurants who combine alcohol sales with food selling, a condition that is not present in the rural locations. It is also speculated that since the number of drivers and passengers in rural areas are limited, compared to urban population of drivers and passengers, there is the possibility of low patronage in the rural locations, making it difficult for such trade to

thrive.

The results of this study which indicated that drivers in alcohol-ban compliant and non-compliant NURTW, units do not differ in their involvement in road accidents since the ban, is an indication that the ban on alcohol sales in motor parks does not have any effect on accident reduction, meaning that the ban is not effective. This finding was supported by Samson (2004) who observed that though alcohol drinks had been banned in motor parks, but this has not yielded results and blamed NURTW units for complicity. To this researcher, the ineffectiveness of laws in Nigeria could be blamed on poor enforcement because, an average Nigerian expects to be forced before obeying rules.

Conclusions

Based on the results of this study, it is concluded that NURTW units in urban locations in Osun State do not comply with ban on sales of alcohol in motor parks. Ban on alcohol sales in motor parks does not reduce accidents among commercial drivers.

Recommendations:

- Existing laws/regulations on alcohol sales and use by drivers to accommodate modifications in contents and implementations should be reviewed.

- Enforcement strategies which should be preceded by sensitization and re-sensitization of the people affected (to make them see reasons why such ban is necessary) needs to be put in place.
- Education of drivers on the general road safety is also recommended.
- Since it is possible for drivers to drink and get drunk from alcohol selling outlets anywhere apart from the motor parks and its premises, it is advisable for policy makers to emphasize on BAG tests for drivers at points of traveling, and along the all routes.

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