



# Youths' Perception of Road Safety Behaviors in Two African Countries

Divya Naidugari  
Mentor: Dr. Grace Lartey



## Abstract

Road traffic injury is the seventh leading cause of death in low-income countries and the tenth leading cause of death in low-middle-income and upper-middle-income countries; however, it is the leading cause of death for the 5–29-year-olds in Gambia and Tanzania. Globally, about 1.35 million people die from road traffic crashes each year, and between 20-50 million sustain various forms of non-fatal injuries. This study seeks to provide information on youth's perception about risky road traffic safety behaviors.

## Background

The Gambia is a small country located in West Africa, with a population of around 2.4 million people. The country's road network is primarily made up of unpaved roads, which can be dangerous for drivers and passengers alike. According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO), road traffic injuries are a leading cause of death in The Gambia. In 2018, there were 18.3 road traffic deaths per 100,000 people in the country. This is higher than the global average of 8.3 deaths per 100,000 people.

Characteristics	The Gambia	Tanzania	WHO Africa Region
Total Population (000, 2020) <sup>a</sup>	2,417	59,734	1,340,588
Population Density (Per Sq. km) <sup>a</sup>	238.8	67.4	45.2
Life expectancy at birth, both sexes (2020) <sup>b</sup>	63	65	61.2
Population between 15-65 years (in millions) <sup>b</sup>	1.3	31.1	34.1
Urban Population (%) <sup>b</sup>	61.9	34.5	34.1
Quality of Roads (1=low; 7=high)	3.70	4.10	N/A
Total expenditure on health as % of GDP (2014) <sup>c</sup>	7.34	5.58	N/A
Domestic general health expenditure as percent of general government expenditure (%) (2017) <sup>d</sup>	3.1	9.5	7.2
Total net official development assistance to medical research and basic health sectors per capita (US\$) by recipient country (2018) <sup>e</sup>	20.92	4.24	4.42
Density of medical doctors (per 10,000) (2010-2018) <sup>f</sup>	1.0	0.1	3.0
Density of nursing and midwifery personnel (per 10,000 population) (2010-2018) <sup>f</sup>	15.4	5.8	10.1
Total alcohol per capita (≥15yrs of age) consumption (liters of pure alcohol) (2018) <sup>g</sup>	3.6	11.3	N/A
Road Traffic Mortality Rate (per 100,000, 2016) <sup>h</sup>	29.7	29.2	N/A

Table 1: The Gambia and Tanzania Profiles

## Method

Students between 19 and 34 years of age were given a survey to answer road safety questions. In Gambia, the survey was given to students at the University of Gambia, the Gambia College, and the Rural Development Institute. In Tanzania, the same survey was administered to students in the Schools of Medicine, Pharmacy, Public Health, and Allied Health Sciences at the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS).

The survey included a broad range of questions on issues from multitasking while driving to being under the influence while driving. The respondents were asked to place each risk as *never* or *sometimes*. The dependent variable in this study is the occurrence or involvement of the repugnant in a road traffic crash which is dichotomized as *never* or *sometimes*. The independent variables are the behavioral risk factors and risk perceptions that can increase the chances of occurrence of road traffic crashes. Bivariate analysis was performed to find the trend between the two variables.

## Findings

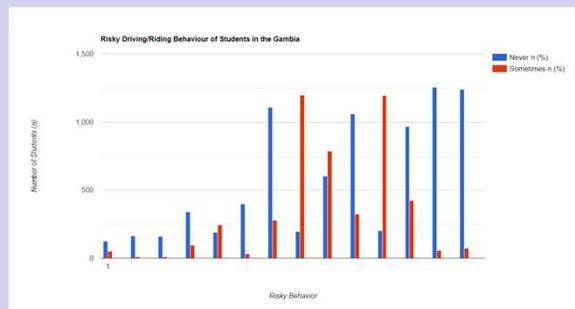


Figure 1: Risky Behavior in the Gambia

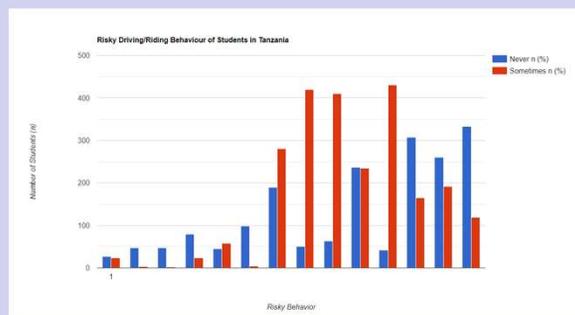


Figure 2: Risky Behavior in Tanzania

Self-administered surveys were distributed to students at six universities and colleges in two African countries - The Gambia and Tanzania. **Driver impairment and distraction** were identified as the two road safety risk behaviors among the youth. Driver distractions are a major component of safety culture on the roads in The Gambia and Tanzania. Cellphone use is seemingly a particularly a great concern.



## Future Work

Study results showed that driver impairment and distraction were the main distress for road safety. The study provided essential information that governments in the Gambia and Tanzania and their collaborators can use to implement road safety programs and policies.

These policies would help combat these issues youth road safety behavior issues. Governments should take into consideration country-specific circumstances for policies to be developed at different levels to have the potential to use these factors in the study for meaningful changes in road behaviors and consequences.

## Contact Information

Western Kentucky University  
Department of Public Health  
The Gatton Academy of Science and Mathematics

divya.naidugari316@topper.wku.edu  
grace.lartey@wku.edu

Department of Public Health  
Drs. Grace Lartey, Edrisa Sanyang, William Mkanta & Ritchie Taylor

## Acknowledgements:

Department of Public Health School of Medicine  
Allied Health Sciences at the University of the Gambia  
MUHAS in Tanzania  
CHHS  
University of Iowa Injury Prevention Center