

Effects of Alcohol Abuse and Bad Road on Road Traffic Accidents: A Study of Commercial Bus Drivers on East/West Road in South/South Region, Nigeria

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of alcohol abuse and bad road on road traffic accidents: a study of commercial bus drivers (CBD) on East/West road in South/South region of Nigeria. Two research questions are generated to guide the study. The population adopted for the study covers all male CBDs who ply East/West road in the region. Simple random sampling technique and purposive sampling technique are used to select a sample of 200 respondents for the study. The questionnaire is the instrument used for data collection. The instrument is face validated by professionals in the Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt. The reliability test score of 0.68 is established for the study. Statistics used for the study are percentage and frequency table, as well bar graph. Percentage and bar graph are used to analyse results for the study. Thus, the results of the two research questions reveal that effects of alcohol abuse and bad road on CBDs lead to sudden traffic accidents on East/West road in South/South region of Nigeria. Based on these findings, the study recommends, among others that the federal government through its National Orientation Agency (NOA) carry out enlightenment campaigns and organize sensitization workshops and conferences, in order to inform and educate the CBDs on the dangers of alcohol abuse as well as bad roads on road traffic accidents in the study area, and indeed in Nigeria.

Keywords: Effects, Alcohol Abuse, Bad Road, Road Traffic Accidents, CBDs, East/West Road, South/South Region, Nigeria

1.1 Introduction

Alcohol is a drink that is fermented from trees and grains and/or brewed through processes of production for human consumption (Oriji, 2012). It comes in various forms and concentrations, and is given different names by different cultures according to types:

The local gin called kai kai, Ekpeteshi, Ogororo, Ijaw water and Akamiri, while the Ibos call the palm wine Ngwo from raffia palm and Nkwuenu from the palm tree. A special brew in the North of Nigeria is called Burukutu. It is consumed by old and young, educated and uneducated, in places, motorparks, local huts called 'bush bars' or 'joints', Officers' mess, University Staff clubs, be it in the mornings and at nights. Most times some delicacies go with it either as 'pepper soup' of goat, meat, fish (either fresh or dried), goat head or cow tail, depending on the appetite of the consumer (Ihekwaba, 2011:22-23).

Aside one's consumption of alcohol, it is associated with crashes of motor vehicles, as well as deaths, the world over. In 2004, an estimated 16,654 people were killed in alcohol-related crashes, according to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in the United States of America (Wikipedia, 2012). Furthermore, Wikipedia (2012) adumbrates that in Canada 33.8% of motor vehicle deaths were associated with alcohol use. Adewale (2011) also explains that alcohol is a major factor that directly or indirectly contributes to the cause of high percentage road accident in both developed and developing countries. Beyond this, Adewale (2011) further explains that;

Alcohol impairs cognitive functions which include planning, vision, perception and decision-making when drunk. It affects judgment of speed, distance and ability to evaluate risks on road. It makes simple task more difficult and reduces your ability to do more than one thing at a time. It reduces ability to react and concentration on the wheel. Sometimes, it relaxes you and increases your chances of falling asleep on the wheel. Apart from this, a drunk-driver tends to be less prudent, aggressive and with this disposition, traffic offences are more likely to be committed with ease thereby increasing the risk of accident.

Besides the above views on the effects of alcohol on road traffic accidents the world over; Lum and Reagan (1995) explain that the road or environmental factor either makes a significant contribution to the circumstances of the crash, or does not allow room for recovery. In view of this, Oman (2005) explains that

owing to the global and massive scale of road traffic accidents, United Nations (UN) predicts that by 2020 road traffic deaths and injuries will exceed HIV/AIDS as a burden of death and disability. Also, World Health Organization (WHO) (2004) a specialized agency of the United Nations Organization (UNO), in its Global Status report on Road Safety 2009, states that over 90% of the world's fatalities on the roads occur in low-income and middle-income countries, which have only 48% of the world's registered vehicles, and predicts that road traffic injuries will rise to become the fifth leading cause of death by 2030. This seems a grim reality because road accidents are killing and maiming hundreds of Nigerians monthly due to bad roads, deplorable habits in the use of roads and inefficient law enforcement (Punch, 2012).

In the circumstance of this carnage on the Nigerian roads, WHO (2009) estimates' report that Nigeria recorded over 32,000 deaths every year through road accidents which is over three times the number officially reported. Recently too, in its 2011 road safety survey, the UN ranked the country as second worst in the world in road accidents – 191 out of 192 countries surveyed - a record some experts predict will worsen in future rankings unless remedial actions are taken (Punch, 2012).

Today, apart from the federal and state governments' laws to prohibit alcohol sales and drinking of same by drivers of commercial buses, as well their remedial efforts to rehabilitate bad roads, worn road signs, and to build new roads; there is still a high toll of road traffic accidents in Nigeria, especially on the East/West road in the country. However, despite the work done by Julius Berger Nigeria Limited and most recently by SETRACO Nigeria Limited, there are incessant motor vehicle accidents as well as deaths on the East/West road, which have become worrisome to the South/South people, and indeed Nigerians. It is this parlous state of the East/West road and the attendant loss of lives and property arising from commercial bus accidents on it that spurred the researcher to investigate the *effects of alcohol abuse and bad road on road traffic accidents: a study of CBDs on East/West road in South/South Region, Nigeria*.

2.1 Research Questions

The following research questions are answered in this study:

1. Do the effects of alcohol abuse on CBDs while driving lead to sudden traffic accidents on the East/West road?
2. Do the bad situations of East/West road have effects on CBDs in sudden road traffic accidents?

3.1 Research Methodology

Descriptive survey design is used for the study. The population for the study is South/South region of Nigeria. It covers all male CBDs who ply the East/West road in the region. A sample of 200 respondents is randomly selected for the study. The selection is done by the use of simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Simple random sampling technique is first applied on the population using 'lucky dip' selection procedure. Thus, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers States are written on papers and wrapped by the researcher. The wrapped papers are put in basket A in order to pick two states for the study. In this situation, a research assistant is called to mix-up the wrapped papers in the basket and to pick two states. In this circumstance, the research assistant picked Rivers and Delta States.

In the same vein, simple random sampling technique is also used to select the parks in Port Harcourt and Warri metropolises of Rivers and Delta States. In doing so, all the parks in the two metropolises are written on papers and wrapped by the researcher and put in basket B for picking. Again, the research assistant who is called to pick two states earlier, is called to pick two parks; and thus he picked Mile 3 park in Port Harcourt metropolis in Rivers State and Effurun park in Warri metropolis in Delta State, using the procedures of simple random sampling technique used during the selection of Rivers and Delta states. Furthermore, the researcher used purposive sampling technique through which he independently selected 200 respondents for the study.

The instrument for data collection is the questionnaire. It is divided into sections: Section A is structured in the scale of multiple choice questions (items), and it deals with biographic data of respondents like their age group, marital status, educational status and religion; while Section B is structured in the modified Likert scale of Agreed (A) and Disagreed (D) items. The face validity of the instrument is established by professionals in the Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt. The reliability-test score of 0.68 is established for the study. The researcher administered the copies of the questionnaire with the help of 4 research assistants; and they collected same immediately the responses were completed by respondents. Statistics used for the study are percentage and frequency table, as well as bar graph. Percentage and bar graph are used to analyse results for the study.

4.1 Results

The results of the study are presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3. Table 1 results deal with biographic data of respondents while Tables 2 and 3 results alongside their bar graph results deal with the two research questions' data for the study.

Table 2: Biographic data of respondents

Biographic characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
Age group		
20 – 29 years	20	10
30 – 39 years	90	45
40 – 49 years	60	30
50 – 59 years	20	10
60 – 69 years	10	5
Marital status		
Married	120	60
Single	80	40
Educational status		
First School Leaving Certificates (FSLC)	140	70
West African Senior School Certificates (WASSC)	40	20
Degree Certificates	20	10
Religion		
Christianity	90	45
Islam	10	5
Traditional religion	80	40
Other religions	20	10

Source: Field survey, 2015

The results of age group of CBDs in Table 1 show that 20 respondents, representing (10%) were from age group 20 - 29 years, 90 (45%) were from age group 30 - 39 years, 60 (30%) were from age group 40 - 49 years, 20 (10%) were from age group 50-59years, while 10(5%) were from age group 60 - 69years. For marital status, the results show that 120 respondents, representing (60%) were married drivers, while 80 (40%) were drivers who were yet to be married.

Furthermore, the results of educational status indicate that 140 respondents, representing (70%) were holders of FSLCs, 40 (20%) were holders of WASSCs, while 20 (10%) were holders of degree certificates. Also, for religion, the results depict that 90 respondents, representing (45%) were Christians, 10 (5%) were Muslims, 80 (40%) were members of traditional religion, while 20 (10%) were members of other religions.

Table 2: Responses on effects of alcohol abuse on CBDs while driving that lead to sudden traffic accidents on East/West road

Effects of alcohol abuse on CBDs and sudden traffic accidents on East/West road	A	D	Total
Alcohol abuse by CBDs depresses them to sleep into sudden traffic accidents on East/West road	180 (90%)	20 (10%)	200 100
Alcohol abuse by CBDs depresses them and makes them unaware of road signs, leading to sudden traffic accidents on East/West road	160 (80%)	40 (20%)	200 100
Alcohol abuse by CBDs depresses them and makes them unaware of road pot-holes and broken bridges, leading to sudden traffic accidents on East/West road	160 (80%)	40 (20%)	200 100

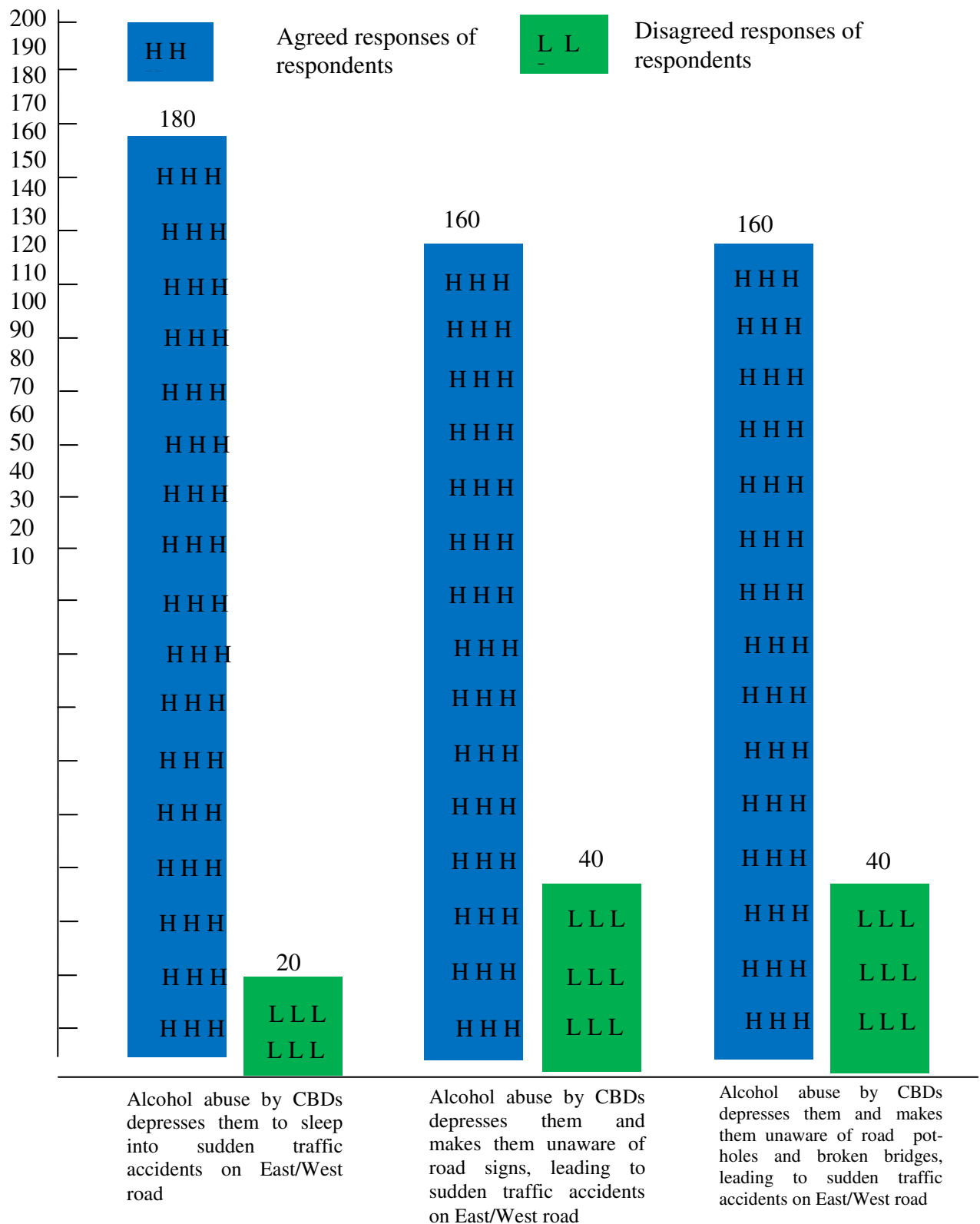


Figure 1: Bar graph showing respondents’ responses on effects of alcohol abuse on CBDs while driving that lead to sudden traffic accidents on East/West road.

The results in Table 2 alongside Figure 1 show that 180 respondents, representing (90%) of total respondents agreed that alcohol abuse by CBDs depresses them to sleep into sudden traffic accidents on the

East/West road, while 20 (10%) who are a minority of respondents disagreed on same. Furthermore, the results in the aforementioned table and figure also indicate that 160 respondents, representing (80%) agreed that alcohol abuse by CBDs depresses them and makes them unaware of road signs, leading to sudden traffic accidents on East/West road. This is a majority view; hence there are obvious incidences of traffic accidents on East/West road. On the contrary, 40 (20%) disagreed that alcohol abuse has effects on CBDs that makes them unaware of road signs, leading to sudden traffic accidents. This view by the minority is because they have not been involved in traffic accidents on East/West road.

Again, the results in the same table and figure above further reveal that 160 respondents, representing (80%) agreed in strong terms that alcohol abuse by CBDs depresses them and makes them unaware of pot-holes and broken bridges, leading to sudden traffic accidents on East/West road, while 40 (20%) were of the contrary view.

Table 3: Responses on effects of bad situations of East/West road on CBDs that lead to sudden road traffic accidents

Effects of bad situations of the East/West road on CBDs and sudden road traffic accidents	A	D	Total
Abandoned bridges and trenches on East/West road lead CBDs to sudden traffic accidents	190 (95%)	10 (5%)	200
Pot-holes on East/West road lead CBDs to sudden traffic accidents	180 (90%)	20 (10%)	200
Inadequate board signs on East/West road lead CBDs to sudden traffic accidents	160 (80%)	40 (20%)	200

The results in Table 3 and Figure 2 indicate that 190 respondents, representing (95%) were of the majority view, and they agreed that abandoned bridges and trenches on East/West road lead CBDs to sudden traffic accidents; because they have been involved in road traffic accidents and/or have rescued CBDs and passengers who were involved in same. But 10 (5%) respondents in the table and figure above, disagreed that abandoned bridges and trenches lead CBDs to road traffic accidents; hence for them, careful driving is the key to averting road accidents. Also, in the same table and figure above, 180 respondents, representing (90%) agreed that pot-holes are obvious on East/West road; hence they lead CBDs to serious sudden traffic accidents, while 20 (10%) were of the contrary view because they disagreed that pot-holes lead CBDs to sudden traffic accidents on East/West road, in spite of the obvious bad situations of same in the study area.

In the same vein, Table 3 and Figure 2 further reveal that 160 respondents, representing (80%) agreed that inadequate board signs on East/West road lead CBDs to sudden traffic accidents. In clear terms therefore, their view as aforementioned is effulgent; hence the incessant traffic accidents on East/West road. However, 40 (20%) in the same table and figure disagreed with the majority view that inadequate board signs lead CBDs to sudden traffic accidents, since they were careful to commute passengers in spite of the bad situations of the East/West road.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

The result of the first research question reveals that effects of alcohol abuse on CBDs while driving lead to sudden traffic accidents on East/West road. The finding of this result is in tandem with Adewale (2011) who explains that alcohol is a major factor that directly or indirectly contributes to the cause of high percentage of road accident in both developed and developing countries. Also, in line with the finding of the above result, Wikipedia (2012) adumbrates that in Canada 33.8% of motor vehicle deaths were associated with alcohol use.

Furthermore, the result of the second research question depicts that bad situations of East/West road have effects on CBDs for sudden road traffic accidents. Thus, the finding of this result is in consonance with the view of Oman (2005) who explains that owing to the global and massive scale of road traffic accidents, UN predicts that by 2020 road traffic accidents and injuries will exceed HIV/AIDS as a burden of death and disability. Again, in support of the finding of the result of the second research question is the WHO (2009) estimates report that Nigeria recorded over 32,000 deaths every year through road accidents, which is over three times the number officially reported. Expounding the WHO's (2009) report, as well as agreeing with the finding of the result of the second research question of the study, recently too, in its 2011 road safety survey, the UN ranked the country as second worst in the world in road accidents – 191 out of 192 countries surveyed - a record some experts predict will worsen in future rankings unless remedial actions are taken (Punch, 2012).

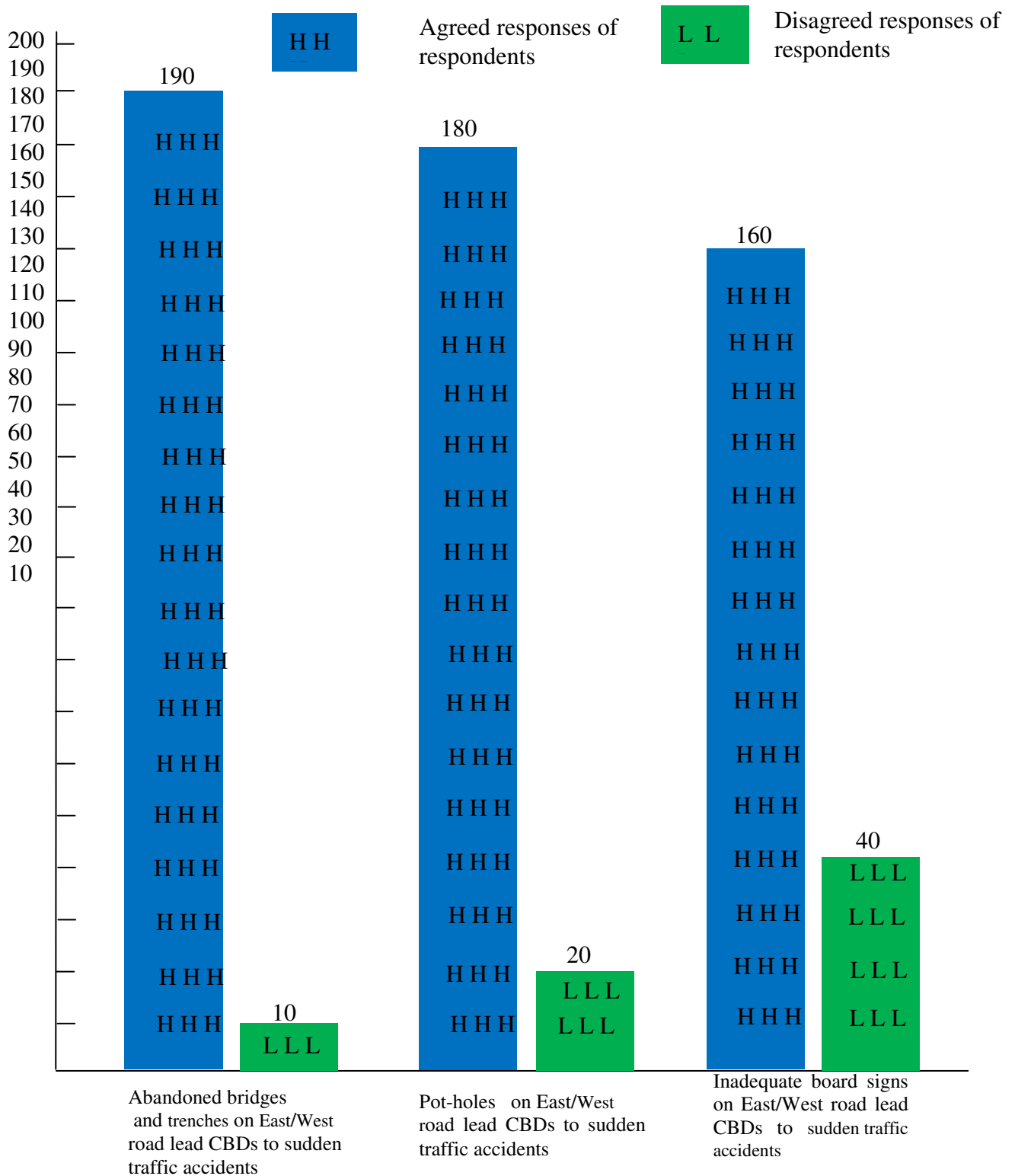


Figure 2: Bar graph showing respondents' responses on effects of bad situations of East/West road on CBDs that lead to sudden road traffic accidents.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

In the light of the research findings, it is lucidly evident that effects of alcohol abuse and bad road on CBDs lead to sudden road traffic accidents on East/West road in South/South region of Nigeria. These seem true, as most of the CBDs who abuse alcohol fall prey to sudden road traffic accidents, more so, as the East/West road is in a deplorable condition. In this regard, the study exposes some windows of research on effects of ill health of commercial automobile drivers on road traffic accidents; and effects of excessive speed by CBDs on road traffic accidents in the region, in so much that the findings of same will further spur the concerned authorities to build the East/West road faster and to provide necessary road gadgets on completion, to help reduce accidents, and thus save lives in the study area.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that the federal government through its National Orientation Agency (NOA) carry out enlightenment campaigns and organize sensitization workshops and conferences, in order to inform and educate the CBDs on the dangers of alcohol abuse as well as bad road on road traffic accidents. Again, it is recommended that local governments in the region make bye laws that will help stop the sale of alcohol and its consumption in parks, as well as enforce them, so that whoever is liable of same is punished through the court of law. Finally, it is recommended that CBDs and other automobile drivers who disobey road signs and the entire road traffic laws should be charged accordingly to the court of law for commensurate punishments either in fines or jail sentences.

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