Cultural Differences and Traffic Accidents

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Let’s go back to school
The Swiss Story
By Yvonne Achermann
125/100000
67/100000
87/100000
1. Are there cultural differences responsible for accidents?
1. Are there cultural differences responsible for traffic accidents?

2. Are there cultural differences which influence the effectiveness of accident prevention interventions?
The Israeli Experience
Secular Jewish

Arab and Bedouin

Orthodox Jewish
The non Jewish part of Israel’s population comprised 12% in 2003 but they were involved in 26% of the severe or fatal crashes (Mehalel et.al.(2010))

Arab drivers admit to totally disregarding traffic laws and regulations in their home towns (Ben Ari (2008))

Arabs tended to exaggerate the amount of drinks allowed to be consumed before driving according to the law. (Weiss (2008))

...in the Jewish sector in Israel the use of seat belts and child restraints is generally quite high (90% and more) only 17% of the Arab drivers reported that they buckle up [compared to over 90% amongst Jewish drivers] and only 25% use proper child restraints. (RSA (2010)

The researchers actually analyzed the types of violations which are typical for the Arab population and found “a disproportionate number of running red lights, driving on forbidden lanes (usually of opposing traffic) , not giving other vehicles the right of way, dangerous tailgating and speeding. “ (Gittelman et.al.(2004))

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Ultraorthodox pedestrians commit three times more red light offenses than secular ones do (Rosenblum (2004))

ultra orthodox children between the ages of five and fourteen are 7% of the urban population but 22% of those severely hurt in crashes. (Rosenblum (2008))

From a publication of the Israel Road Safety Association one can see, that ultra-orthodox children are especially vulnerable. Three percent of the Israeli population are children younger than four from ultra-orthodox families. They do, however, compose six percent of those injured in urban traffic accidents (RSA (2008))
“Since culture differs from society to society and from group to group, it may be assumed that people from different cultures and groups will behave in a different manner in a similar situation, because different cultures lead to different interpretations of the environment and, in the end, perhaps also to different behaviours.” (Mehalel and Yair (2007))

“cultural characteristics may cause drivers in different groups to interpret a given situation” [or a given danger] “differently; therefore, they will make conflicting decisions that may possibly lead to road accidents” (Faktor et.al.(2010))

“...traffic culture is the sum total of factors influencing the skills, attitudes, and behaviour of the driver.” (Leviakangas (1998))
Some General Facts

The danger of being killed or severely wounded in a traffic accident is larger if......

You live in a poor country
You have a low level of education
You are young and / or male
You are Arab, Catholic or an orthodox Jew
You are an African American or Hispanic male in the United States
You live in a country without a “good” government
Your leadership does not take traffic safety seriously
But aren’t we....;
Logical, rational, safety oriented,
Clever, considerate, defensive,
Wise, able, and mature ?

NO

NO

NO

NO
To speed or not to speed, that is the question
Be punctual
Make a good impression
Guarantee a positive self esteem
Social Pressure
Speeding is really fun
Influence of Cultural Factor(s)
Being punctual

Making a good impression

Guarantee a positive self-esteem

Social Pressure

Fun

Influence of cultural factors
|   |   | X |   |   |   |   |   | X |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |   | + |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |=

**Sum total of positive expectancies from dangerous behavior**
Receiving a Citation or being punished
Experiencing unpleasant risk
You might be injured or even killed
If you are caught and have your license evoked, you will definitely look like an idiot.
If you are caught and have your license evoked you will definitely look like an idiot
Influence of Cultural Characteristic
Possible punishment

Risk of injury or fatality

Unpleasant risk experience

Social punishment

Influence of cultural factors
Sum total of negative expectancies from dangerous behavior
Values and Needs
D = \sum \left[ (P \, \therefore \, V \, \therefore ) - \sum (P \, \therefore \, V \, \therefore ) \right]
Let’s go back to school
"I HAVE TO HANG UP NOW. I'M CRASHING!"
Cultural Differences and Traffic Accidents

...let’s make them an offer they can’t refuse...

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