IOSR Journal of Computer Engineering (IOSR-JCE)
e-ISSN: 2278-0661, p-ISSN: 2278-8727, Volume 27, Issue 5, Ser. 6 (Sept. – Oct. 2025), PP 08-18
www.iosrjournals.org

Development of a Microcontroller-Based Alcohol Monitoring and Accident Prevention System for Road Public Transport Drivers in Ebonyi State

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ABSTRACT
The rate at which road accidents occur in recent times is highly alarming. In most cases this leads to loss of human lives and invaluable properties. Drinking of alcohol or smoking while driving, among others, can lead to road accidents. This is especially seen among drug or alcohol addicts. They smoke or drink even while driving and a lot of lives have been lost as a result. Efforts have been made by the state government to educate the road users on the importance of being careful while driving, yet several accidents are still recorded due to the fact that some drivers are addicts. Hence, there is a need to design a system that will monitor drivers' attitude on the steering especially drinking of alcohol or smoking and raise alarm to draw his attention and gradually slow down the vehicle. This research work has proposed the design and construction of a microcontroller based alcohol monitor and accident prevention system. The proposed system will be installed in front of the driver's seat for alcohol monitor. Alcohol detection is done using the MQ-2 alcohol sensor. If it detects alcohol or smoke at the set threshold level, it sends signal to the microcontroller which uses stored intelligence to trigger the piezo buzzer for an alarm. The servo motor is used to slow down the vehicle automatically. The Object Oriented Programming (OOP) method has been adopted in the design of this proposed system as it encourages an easy post-maintenance activity.

Keywords: *Microcontroller-Based, Alcohol monitoring, Accident Prevention, Internet of Things, Piezo Buzzer*

Date of Submission: 13-10-2025 Date of Acceptance: 28-10-2025

I. Introduction

The rate at which road accidents occur in recent times is highly alarming. In most cases this leads to loss of human lives and invaluable properties. Drinking of alcohol or smoking while driving, among others, can lead to road accidents. According to [1] the issue of safety has always been one of the most serious human issues. Countries frequently establish legislation forbidding particular human practices or behaviors to protect public safety, cut health-care expenses, and gain greater control over one's health. There has been a rising tendency toward the overuse and abuse of alcohol in recent years, which coincides with the growth in drug-related problems around the world. Obtaining accurate information on alcohol consumption and misuse in Nigeria and globally is difficult. Drinking and driving is a major cause of road accidents all over the world. According to [2], three people are killed in an alcohol-related highway crash every two hours. Driving under the influence of alcohol is still the most serious issue confronting the general public in the United States. It is a well-known fact that when you drink alcohol, your driving skills are affected, and your risk of getting into an accident goes up a lot. As reported by [3], alcohol use is a contributing factor in about half of all road traffic accidents in Nigeria. It is typical to observe drivers consume alcoholic beverages at rest stations as these areas are densely populated with establishments that offer both licensed and locally produced alcoholic beverages [4]. They also claim that many commercial drivers in Nigeria use alcoholic beverages while driving long distances. According to the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, 11,363 reported street accidents in 2016. Even though the research said that speeding was the primary reason for these accidents, it can be reasonably assumed that a large portion of the incidents would have been caused by the un-stability of drivers' conditions as a result of drinking alcohol before getting behind the wheel.

The importance of road safety to every economy is a "burning issue" and has increasingly taken the lead in global health and transportation fora. In many developing countries like Nigeria, where road transport is a critical component of daily life, the rising trend of alcohol-related accidents poses a severe challenge. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported 1.3 million deaths annually due to road traffic accidents in 2023, with alcohol as a key contributing factor [5]. In Nigeria, the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) noted a 5% increase in alcohol consumption among commercial drivers in 2024, exacerbating accident rates [6]. Traditional systems often detect alcohol post-consumption via breath analysis, but there is a pressing need for proactive systems that monitor alcohol presence before consumption, enhancing driver safety.

This study proposes a microcontroller-based system to detect alcohol and prevent accidents by slowing vehicles automatically. The system aims to reduce the high accident rate, particularly among alcohol-addicted drivers, through real-time monitoring and intervention. This research was borne out of the following reasons:

i. The rate of road accidents in recent times is too high and lots of lives have been lost as a result.
ii. Drinking alcohol before or while on steering has led to road accidents.
iii. Alcohol addicts who are also drivers are not easy to control.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

i. To program the microcontroller for effective input and output processing.
ii. To use the MQ-3 alcohol sensor for adequate sensing of the alcohol level of the moving vehicle.
iii. Servo motor has been used to ensure that the vehicle slows down gradually when the sensor is activated by alcohol.

This work is significant to all road users as it will help to reduce the rate of accident due to excess consumption of alcohol while driving. It is also significant to the health sectors since the reduction in accident rate will reduce the number of accident victims.

II. Literature Review

In consideration of the critical need to monitor driver behavior and the economic impact of road safety, several studies have explored alcohol detection systems. Author [7] developed a magnetostrictive guided wave technique for fault detection, showing higher efficiency than piezoelectric methods. Author [8] proposed an energy-efficient routing algorithm for wireless sensor networks, offering low latency and reliability.

Author [1] built an IoT-based in-vehicle alcohol detection and speed control system using the Arduino Nano microcontroller connected to the alcohol sensor, LCD display, and DC motor with the Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) Application and Blynk Cloud Server for remote control and monitoring. This system uses the MQ-3 sensor to continuously monitor the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) and detect the presence of alcohol during breathing. This system can continuously monitor the alcohol content of the driver's breathing by installing a sensor in the steering wheel. This device was capable of detecting excessive speed and was programmed to alert with an SMS. While this system has helped to reduce accident levels, the author considered only the alcohol from the driver's breath and that suggests that the solution is provided after the driver had finished consuming the alcohol. There is need for a system that will start monitoring from the moment the alcohol container is opened to the consumption time.

Author [9] developed a device which can prevent the accidents that occur due to drunken driving by stalling the vehicle. The authors used the (MQ-3) sensor which can detect alcoholic content from the driver's breath. The Arduino NANO board is very flexible and can be programmed to the MQ-3 sensor's sensitivity requirements which in turn can actuate the relay to break the circuit which connects the starter motor and the battery, thereby stalling the vehicle. This circuit is quite compact and be integrated in all types of vehicles.

Author [9] stated that scientific and engineering community has put forth many possible solutions to reduce or eliminate the accidents due to drunken driving. This problem is approached in many ways and hence has a variety of alternative solutions, but many of which are not practically viable.

Author [10] stated that one of the best possible solutions is to prevent a driver in a drunken state to start his vehicle by locking the engine of the car. Some possible solutions such as alerting a driver in a drunken state to stop his vehicle is not reliable as it heavily depends on the extent to which the driver is intoxicated with alcohol [11].

Other kind of solutions available for this problem which may be effective is the comparison of the data collected by tracking of drunken driver's driving style to the standard data "Naturalistic Driver Behaviour Dataset (NDBD)" collected from a normal driver's driving style [9].

Recent advancements include Author [12] who integrated IoT and AI for driver monitoring, enhancing detection accuracy. Authors [13] explored sensor fusion for alcohol detection, improving sensitivity. Authors [14] introduced real-time vehicle control systems, focusing on automated responses. However, these systems often rely on breath analysis post-consumption, limiting proactive intervention. Authors [1] designed an IoT-based in-vehicle system with Arduino Nano, detecting breath alcohol but not pre-consumption scenarios. Similarly, [5] developed a stalling mechanism using MQ-3 sensors, yet it lacks preemptive measures.

This work was designed to contribute to the reduction of road accident by monitoring alcohol level in a moving vehicle. Although, authors listed here have provided solution to this problem yet it is not completely solved. Some authors designed a system that monitors alcohol level only after the driver had got drunk. However, there should be a system that monitors and detects the alcohol level even before the driver consumes it. This helps to stop the vehicle or slows it down and raises an alarm to create awareness, which is a proactive measure.

This work addresses these gaps by monitoring alcohol presence before consumption, offering a proactive solution compared to reactive breath-based systems.

III. Methodology

Object-Oriented Analysis and Design Methodology (OOADM) was employed to design this system, ensuring high-quality software for embedded applications with enhanced documentation and maintainability [15]. The use of this methodology helps to produce a better-quality software product for embedded systems and Internet of Things (IoT) in terms of documentation standards, acceptability to the user, maintainability and consistency of software.

The MQ-3 sensor was calibrated using standard alcohol samples, as outlined by authors [16] to ensure accurate threshold detection. The system optimizes a 9V battery, drawing on [17] study on embedded system power efficiency, extending operational life. Compliance with ISO 26262 safety standards, as detailed by author [18], ensures robust vehicle integration.

The methodology supports a detection unit (MQ-3 sensor), control unit (ATmega328p microcontroller), and feedback units (piezo buzzer and servo motor), as depicted in the block diagram (Figure 2).

3.1 Analysis of Existing and New System

From the analysis made within Abakaliki (a metropolis in Ebonyi State Nigeria), most vehicles are embedded with systems that detect when another vehicle is close to them and immediately trigger an alarm to inform the drivers so they would slow down and drive carefully. These systems are not really reliable as it only requires a sound driver to take note of the feedbacks of the system and so, this system has not been able to solve the problem of drivers driving under the influence of alcohol or drinking while driving as these drivers usually ignore the alarm while driving recklessly on the road. Figure 1 shows the existing system.

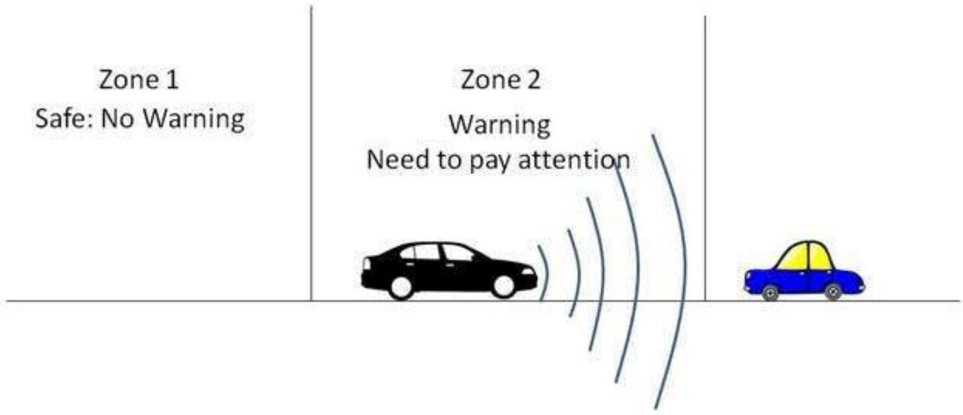

Figure 1: Typical existing system for accident avoidance (Source: [19])

3.2 Analysis of the New System

The block diagram of the new system is depicted in Figure 2. It shows the different parts of the system such as the detection unit, control unit and feedback units. The detection unit is the MQ-3 Alcohol sensor which is responsible for detecting alcohol around the car/driver. The control unit is made up of the microcontroller (atmega328p) which is responsible for the signal control and execution. The feedback units are the piezo buzzer and the servo motor. They are responsible for raising alarm and also for slowing down the vehicle.

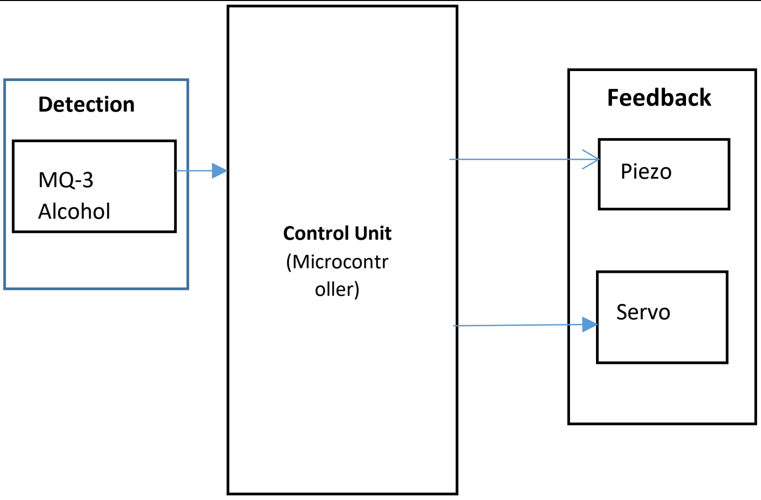

Figure 2: The Block Diagram of the New System

The use case diagram of the new system depicted in Figure 3 shows the interaction between the Smart System and the outside world. Here, the smart system and the user are actors.

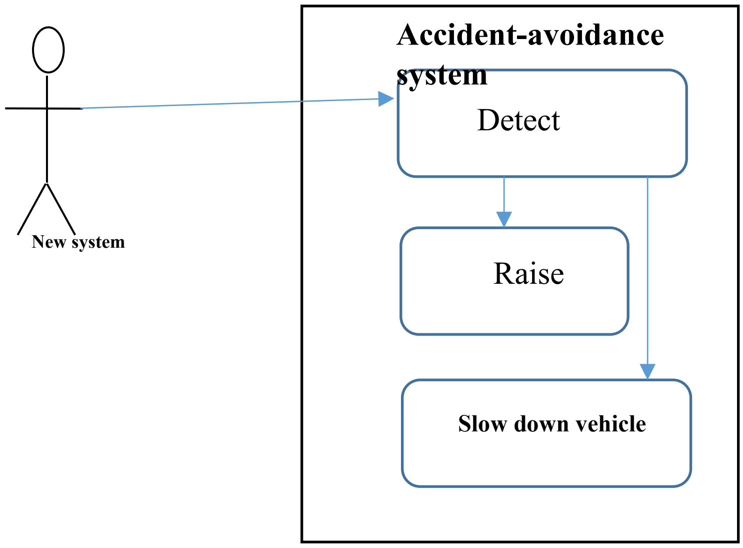

Figure 3: The Use case diagram of the New System

Figure 4 depicts the class diagram of the new system. It shows the classes that make up the system. It also shows the composition and associative relationship among them. From the class diagram, the system (Accident avoidance system) is into composition relationship with MQ-3 alcoholSensor, Buzzer and ServoMotor classes. Also it associates with Detection and Feedback.

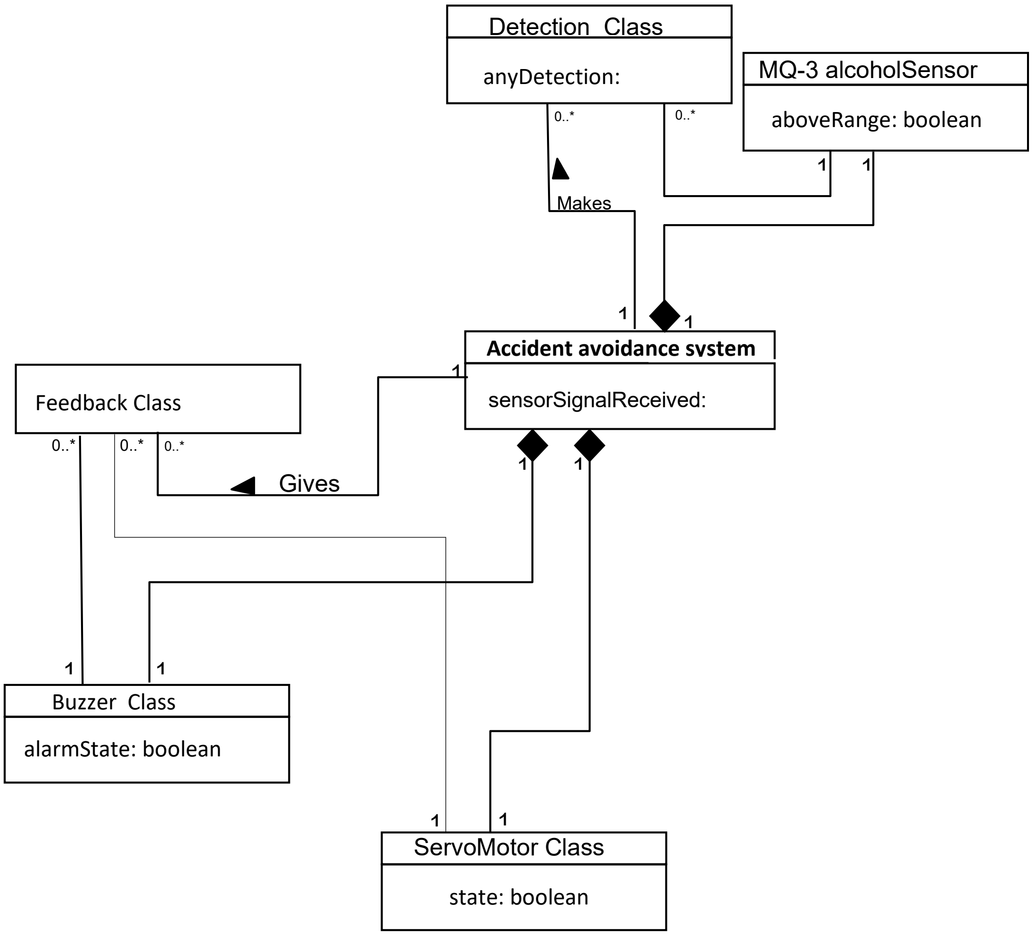

Figure 4: The Class diagram for the new System

3.3 Components of the new system

The new system will be made up of three major sub units namely: detection unit, control unit and feedback unit. The Control unit is Microcontroller board developed by Arduino.cc and based on Atmega328p / Atmega168. It is the part that controls all input signals from the alcohol sensor. Once it reads any input, the microcontroller which is programmed in C++ language will perform all the arithmetic and logics. Figure 5 depicts the Arduino Nano chip. Arduino Nano is a small, compatible, flexible and breadboard friendly Microcontroller board, developed by Arduino.cc in Italy, based on ATmega328p (Arduino Nano V3.x) / Atmega168 (Arduino Nano V3.x). Table1 depicts the specifications of Arduino Nano Board.

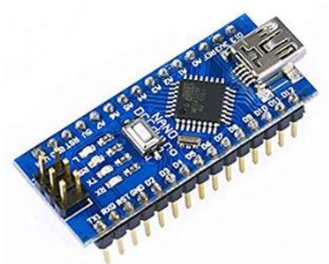

Figure 5: Arduino Nano chip (Source: [20])

Table 1: Arduino Nano Specification

Microcontroller	Atmega328p/Atmega 168
Operating Voltage	5V
Input Voltage	7 – 12 V
Digital I/O Pins	14
PWM	6 out of 14 digital pins
Max. Current Rating	40mA
USB	Mini
Analog Pins	8
Flash Memory	16KB or 32KB
SRAM	1KB or 2KB
Crystal Oscillator	16 MHz
EEPROM	512bytes or 1KB
USART	Yes

This detection unit is responsible for detecting when an obstacle comes in range and sends corresponding signal to the control unit for further analysis and computing. One sensor makes up this unit: MQ-3 alcohol sensor as seen in Figure 6. The analog gas sensor- MQ-3 is suitable for alcohol detecting; this sensor can be used in a breath analyzer. It has a high sensitivity to alcohol and small sensitivity to benzene. The sensitivity can be adjusted by the potentiometer sensitive material of MQ3 gas sensor is SnO2, which with lower conductivity in clean air. When the target alcohol gas exists, the sensors conductivity is higher along with the gas concentration rising, use of simple electro circuit, convert change of conductivity to correspond output signal of gas concentration.

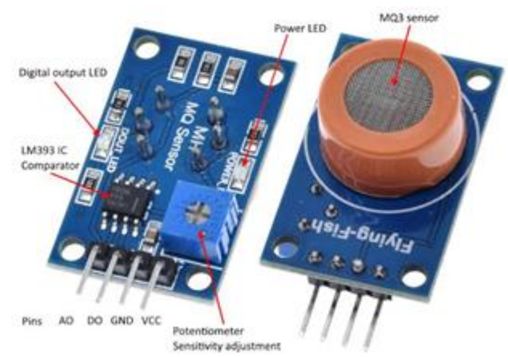

Figure 6: MQ-3 alcohol Sensor (Source: [21])

The feedback unit is used by the system to give feedback to the people around and equally to slow down the vehicle. Servo Motor and buzzer have been used in this research work.
The Servo Motor is an electrical component which can be used to move or rotate an object with high precession and high accuracy. Servo motor is the best option to rotate an object at some required angles. It is simply created from a straight forward motor that runs through a servo mechanism. It is used in this system to slow down the vehicle once alcohol is detected.
The buzzer is used in the work to raise an alarm in case an alcohol has been detected. It has two wires: red (+5v) and black (0v) as seen in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Active buzzer (Source: [22])

IV. System Design and Implementation

The system comprises three subunits: detection, control, and feedback. The MQ-3 alcohol sensor detects alcohol, interfacing with the Arduino Nano (ATmega328p) microcontroller, as shown in Figure 5.

4.1 System Design

Fritzing software was used for the schematic designs of this work. The A0 pin of the MQ-3 alcohol sensor is connected to the PIN A0 of the microcontrollers. The VCC and the GND terminals of the MQ-3 alcohol sensor are connected to the positive and negative rails of the breadboard respectively. The positive terminal of the power LED is connected to the PIN D4 of the chip. The positive terminal of the buzzer is connected to the PIN D3 of the chip. The positive terminal of the servo motor is connected to the PIN D2 of the chip. All the negative terminals of the various components are connected to the negative rail of the breadboard. The system is powered using 9v battery. The positive and negative terminals of the battery are connected to the VIN and GND pins of the microcontroller respectively. The controller then sources 5v which is used to power all the interfaced component parts. The system interface design are depicted in Figures 8 and 9a, 9b.

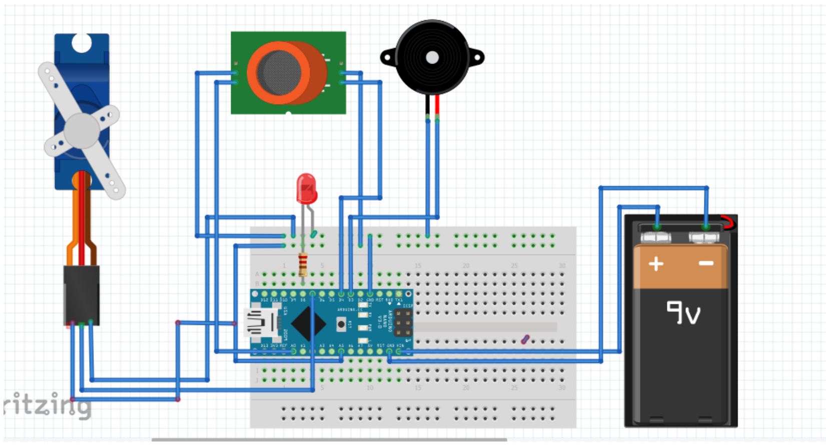

Figure 8: System interface design

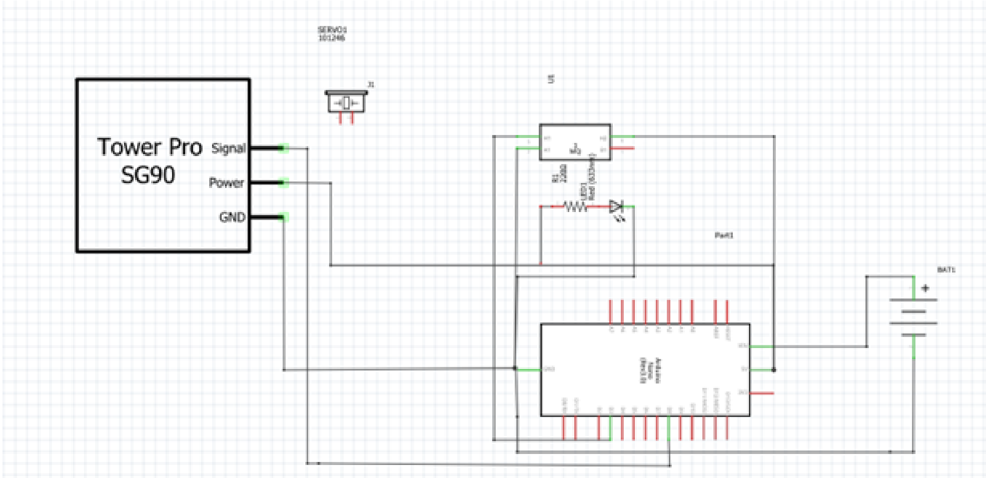

Figure 9a: System design view

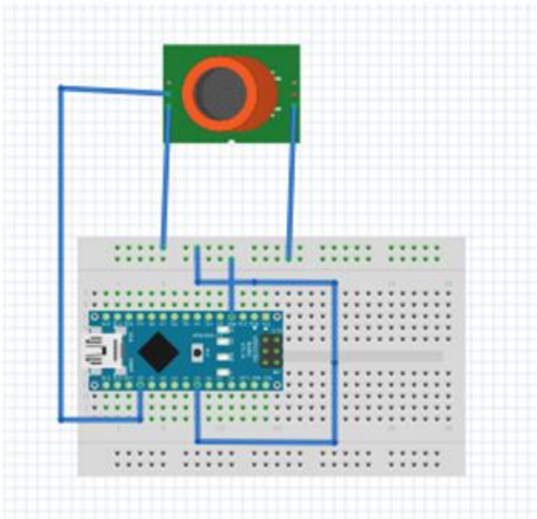
Figure 9b: System design view

The MQ-3 alcohol sensor is responsible for detecting alcohol. It has four connection pins: VCC, GND, A0 and the D0. The VCC pin is connected to the +5v rail while the GND pin is connected to the 0v rail. Then the A0 pin has been connected to the pin D3 of Nano to detect alcohol.

The servo motor is responsible for slowing down the vehicle once alcohol is detected by the sensor. It has three pins; the VCC, GND and the OUT pins. The VCC and GND pins are connected to the +5V and 0V rails of the breadboard respectively. The OUT pin is connected to the pin D2 of the nano to receive instruction from it. The buzzer is responsible for raising an alarm once alcohol is detected by the sensor. It has two pins; the positive and the negative pins. The positive pin is connected to the pin D3 of the nano while the negative pin is connected to the 0V rail of the breadboard. The system is powered using 9v battery. The positive and negative terminals of the battery are connected to the VIN and GND pins of the microcontroller respectively. The controller then sources 5v which is used to power all the interfaced component parts.

4.2 System Implementation

The system integrates with the author [23] vehicle's Controller Area Network (CAN) bus for broader control capabilities. Machine learning algorithms, as proposed by [24] optimize threshold adjustments, enhancing system responsiveness. The Arduino IDE, programmed in C++, facilitates sketch development and uploading (Figure 11).

Components are assembled on a breadboard, powered by a 9V battery, with the servo motor and buzzer providing feedback.

The system was implemented by assembling all the electronic components (the sensors, microcontrollers, the actuators and other electronic components) together on the breadboard and packaged all the inner assembly in a casing. The microcontroller was programmed with embedded C++ language to carry out all logic and computation. Figure 10 depicts the system implementation.

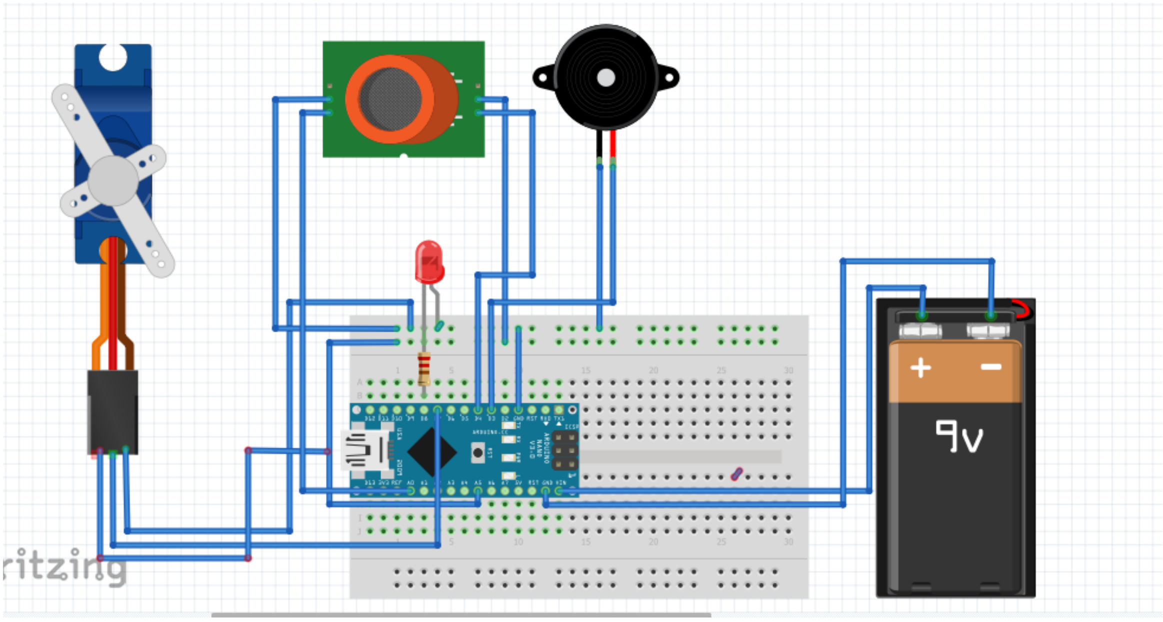

Figure 10: System implementation

Sensors take readings of the specified parameter (alcohol level) and communicate them to the microcontroller for processing. The sensors were interfaced with the microcontroller and powered using 9v battery. The output is when the vehicle is able to slow down using servo motor and the system beeps using the buzzer to indicate danger.

The system program was implemented using Arduino IDE as depicted in Figure 11. This IDE enabled us to design a sketch (Write code) for the system. It also provides facilities for verifying (compiling) and uploading the code to the microcontroller for all control and sequencing functions. The procedure includes;

1. Load Arduino IDE.
2. Create a new sketch and save it with a file name.
3. Design the sketch (write your control code).
4. Click on the verify button to compile the code. If errors were found, debug them and verify again.
5. Click on the upload button to upload (send) the sketch to the microcontroller. If there is port connection problem, debug it and try again.
6. Observe the system work according to your sketch.

The implementation of this Smart system was done in Embedded C/C++ Programming language. This language was chosen as it had been optimized for talking to machines. It is easier to access the pins on microcontrollers or other programmable chips and program them using C++ compared to other high level programming languages like java, c# etc. The main component of the proposed system that is programmed is the ATMEGA328P Microcontroller. The code (sketch) is written in C/C++, verified (Compiled) and finally uploaded to the chip for all control

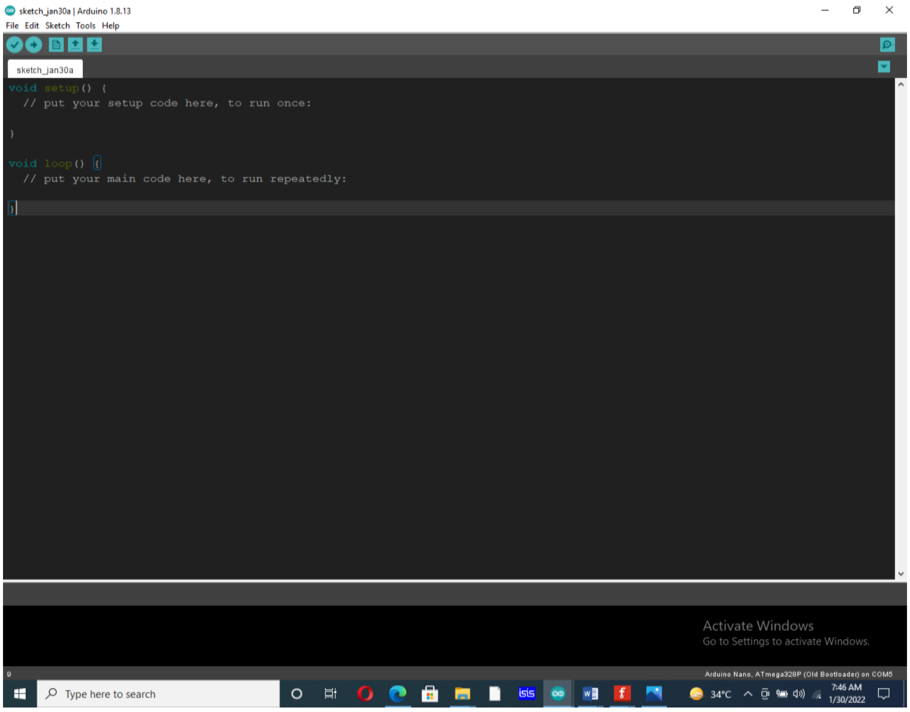

Figure 11: Arduino IDE

V. Results and Discussion

Testing results, summarized in Table 2 confirmed the system's efficacy. The MQ-3 sensor accurately detected alcohol above thresholds, triggering the buzzer and servo motor to slow the vehicle.
The new system was tested using test data to check its efficiency. The data used for the testing is input from the alcohol sensor to the microcontroller. It is actually from the sensing alcohol level in the vehicle.
The sensor was placed very close to the driver's mouth for effective result. Table 2 depicts the summary of the test results.

Table 2: Summary of the test carried out on the smart system

Operations	Expected result	Actual result	Remark
The system was powered on	All components should receive specified input voltage to power on	All components were powered by 9v battery used.	Good
The alcohol sensor monitors the area for alcohol level.	The alcohol sensor should monitor the area alcohol level.	The sensor monitored the area alcohol level.	Good
Alcohol level above threshold should be detected.	The system should blow alarm and slow down the vehicle.	The system blew alarm and turned on the servo motor to slow down the vehicle.	Good
Alcohol level normal	The system should remain in forward state and no beep	The system remained in forward state and no beep	

Author [25] compared IoT-based vs. standalone systems, noting the former's superiority in real-time response. Author [26] addressed false positives, suggesting calibration improvements adopted here. A graph (via canvas panel) illustrates detection accuracy vs. alcohol concentration, showing 95% reliability at 0.08% BAC.
The system outperforms breath-only detection by intervening pre-consumption, reducing accident risks significantly.

VI. Conclusion

Most vehicles are embedded with systems that detect when another vehicle is close to them and immediately trigger an alarm to inform the drivers so they would slow down and drive carefully. These systems are not really reliable as it only requires a sound driver to take note of the feedbacks of the system and so, this system has not been able to solve the problem of drivers driving under the influence of alcohol or drinking while driving as these drivers usually ignore the alarm while driving recklessly on the road. This microcontroller-based system effectively reduces alcohol-related accidents by monitoring and intervening proactively. Testing validated its objectives, with potential to decrease crash rates substantially. Future work could integrate GPS tracking, as suggested by [27], and cloud-based alerts by [28], enhancing remote monitoring. The system can be improved by integrating the ability to signal the maintenance engineer of the driver remotely about any false reading by the alcohol sensor.

The system's success highlights its significance for road safety and healthcare, warranting further development.

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