Driver Licensing Experience of Korean Australians

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Multicultural environment

• Over ¼ of Australians were born overseas & 20% more had at least one parent born overseas.

• 52,760 were born in Korea (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2008).

• Drivers from various nationalities with different knowledge of regulations are driving on Australian roads.
Road safety implications of multicultural society

- Driving style is influenced by driver’s personality, sense of themselves and driving experience. Lajunen, et al. (1998)
- Socio-economic status and differences between culture & ethnicity also contribute to mortality & morbidity rates
- Drivers born overseas had equal or lower rates of death/hospitalisation compared to Australian drivers. Dobson et al. (2004)
- Other studies show higher risk for driving on other side of the road
Graduated licensing system & foreign born drivers

- GDL provides experience in less risky driving situations
- Introduction of GDL in QLD (2007) fatalities were lowered by 31.5% (Department of Transport and Main Roads, 2012).
- However, foreign residents in QLD have learnt to drive in various different jurisdictions
- It is likely they will experience difficulties due to different regulations, language barrier and from different socio-economic backgrounds

Korean driving track examination
Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model (1979)
Research methodology

• **Aim:** To understand the factors influencing the driver licensing experience of Korean Australians (KA)
• Focus group sessions of approximately 90 minutes
• **Group 1:**
  – young KA novice drivers with a minimum of Learner’s licence
  – 8 females and 6 males, mean age 21.4 years (range 17-25 yrs)
• **Group 2:**
  – parents of young KA drivers
  – 5 females and 3 males, mean age 49.8 years (range 48-53 yrs)
Research outcome

**Obtaining the learner’s licence**
- Both parents and young drivers reported poor public transportation was the main reason for licensure
- Younger drivers also reported it was a social obligation to be licensed
  - “It’s a social obligation. My friends drive around so I don’t want to fall behind.” (Long term resident, female, Open driver)

**Logbook entries**
- Many young drivers reported falsifying logbook entries
- They believed 100 hours were too long to fulfill
- However, parents all believed 100 hours were necessary and some even reported the longer the better
Research outcome

Practical driving

• Overseas students reported difficulty in receiving supervision and participants with busy parents also reported the same issue
  • “It was a problem for me to have supervision…the cost is too high and having to live here by myself, it was hard to get the hours up.” (Long term resident, male, Open driver)

Perceptions of GDL system

• Both parents and young novice drivers reported positive features of Australian GDL system.
  • They reported the system was structured and comprehensive
  • The gradual process was a method to provide enough supervision to increase confidence and skills to the newly licensed drivers
Research outcome

Differences between AU and KA drivers and road conditions

- Some reported AU drivers may have greater driving skills when faced with unexpected situation due to the GDL system
- The majority believed on average KA drivers were safer
- This may be due to the Korean culture being interdependent and high compliance to parents and rules of the society
- However, minority of KA drivers (for those on working holiday visa) do have potential to drive in a risky manner.
Perceptions of KA drivers

- There was lack of understanding in the importance of supervised driving from the participants
- The perception of GDL system may differ between KA an AU parental group of young drivers
  - The view towards the necessity of supervision driving is different
- Discrepancies present between young KA drivers and parents in regards to the view to 100 hours of supervision
- However, majority reported the advantages of the Australian system and had a positive view towards the system
- Furthermore, there is a need to increase compliance to the requirements for overseas-born drivers
Future research

- Methods need to be developed to assist in young drivers that lack access to vehicles and supervision
- Applying the ecological model
- Limitations were present as it was a focus group discussion with only KA participants
- Future studies would need to study reasons behind low compliance
- The association between social and cultural status needs to be studied to understand the experience of the GDL system
Any questions?

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