

THE PRACTICE OF 'NEMBAK SIM' AND ITS IMPACT ON DRIVING SAFETY AMONG STUDENTS IN SURABAYA



Jurnal Analisa Sosiologi

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Received: 17 April 2025

Revised: 27 April 2025

Accepted: 29 April 2025

Edition:

April 2025, 14 (2): 375 - 394

Abstract

The phenomenon of "nembak SIM," which refers to obtaining a Driver's License (SIM) without going through the official examination process, has become an issue that poses a potential risk to road safety, especially among students. This study aims to analyze the impact of this practice on the road safety of students at the State University of Surabaya (UNESA) using a descriptive qualitative approach through in-depth interviews. The results indicate that students who obtained their SIM through illegal means have a lower understanding of traffic rules, are more likely to violate regulations, and are more prone to being involved in accidents. Theoretically, this research contributes to understanding the impact of administrative social deviance on road safety behavior, as well as highlighting the importance of comprehensive traffic awareness and education. Methodologically, this study offers a qualitative interview approach as an effective tool to explore individuals' perceptions and experiences regarding the "nembak SIM" practice, which can serve as a foundation for further research on social behavior in the context of traffic safety. The results showed that students who obtained their driver's license through illegal channels tend to have a lower understanding of traffic rules and break the rules more often than those who took the official exam. In addition, this group also had more accidents due to a lack of preparedness in dealing with situations on the road. In conclusion, the practice of "SIM shooting" contributes to the low driving safety of UNESA students. Therefore, there is a need for more intensive education on the importance of obtaining a driver's license officially as well as increased awareness of the risks of driving on the road without adequate skills.

Keywords: Illegal Driver's License, Driving, Students.

INTRODUCTION

Road safety is a crucial aspect of traffic regulation, where a Driver's License (SIM) serves as the primary instrument to ensure that an individual meets the necessary qualifications and is capable of driving safely and responsibly. A SIM provides proof that the holder has passed a process that screens and tests driving skills, as well as knowledge of traffic regulations. However, despite its importance, the phenomenon of "nembak SIM," where someone obtains a SIM without undergoing the official exam, remains prevalent in society, especially among students. This practice is seen as a more practical and faster alternative, given that the SIM testing process is often considered complicated, time-consuming, and costly.

According to a study by Handayani et al. (2017), there is a significant relationship between possessing a Driver's License (SIM) and traffic accidents. Drivers without a SIM are 3.78 times more likely to be involved in an accident compared to those who have a SIM. This indicates that a SIM not only serves as official authorization but also as a form of protection for the safety of the driver and other road users. However, on the other hand, the practice of "nembak SIM" can affect a driver's understanding of traffic rules, which increases the risk of traffic accidents, especially for drivers who lack adequate driving skills.

The phenomenon of "nembak SIM" is not new, but in recent years, this practice has become more common among students. Many choose this route because it seems easier and faster, even though the cost of obtaining a SIM through unofficial means is quite high around 800 thousand rupiahs for a SIM C and 1.4 million rupiahs for a SIM A. This presents a paradox, considering many students do not have a steady income or sufficient driving skills. Furthermore, they prefer the convenience and speed of obtaining a SIM rather than going through the lengthy official exam process.

This phenomenon raises questions about the underlying motivations for students to choose the 'hitchhiking' route, as well as its impact on their understanding of traffic rules and driving safety. This study aims to explore the factors that drive students to choose the unofficial route to obtain a driver's license, and its impact on their ability to understand and comply with traffic regulations. It will also examine the relationship between the practice of 'SIM shoot' and the rate of traffic accidents among drivers who do not have an official license.

The uniqueness of this research lies in its more in-depth approach to the phenomenon of 'SIM shooting' in the context of university students, a group that may not

have been studied much in previous literature. Unlike previous studies that have focused on aspects of traffic accidents or social impact analysis in general, this study will use a qualitative approach to explore the motivations, behaviors, and social impacts of this practice, especially on university students. With this approach, it is hoped that a more holistic understanding of the relationship between the behavior of taking a SIM through unofficial channels and driving safety can be obtained.

Several previous studies have provided various perspectives on this phenomenon, both in terms of its impact on traffic safety and the behavioral patterns that emerge in society. On the other hand, a study by Fish (2020) explored the consequences of such practices. Additionally, the police, as a state institution, bear the primary responsibility for serving the public and formulating policies that prioritize public interests. In accordance with the Republic of Indonesia Law No. 2 of 2002, the police's duties include maintaining order, enforcing the law, and providing protection, guidance, and service while upholding human rights and involving community participation (Rezki et al., 2023). Traffic violations are often committed by underage drivers who operate various types of motor vehicles, even though they do not possess a valid Driver's License (SIM) (Suryawan, 2018).

Additionally, a study by Wijaya et al. (2020), published in the *Journal of Drivers and Road Safety*, found that drivers who did not go through the official licensing examination process tended to have lower knowledge of traffic signs and road safety procedures. Furthermore, research conducted by Santoso (2021) in the *Journal of Traffic Policy* stated that the practice of obtaining a driver's license through unofficial means ("nembak SIM") has the potential to increase the number of untrained drivers who are at a higher risk of being involved in accidents.

A Driver's License (SIM) is a legal document that signifies an individual has met the requirements for knowledge, skills, and driving ability in accordance with the provisions of the Traffic and Road Transportation Law. It also serves as a control tool and forensic data for the police (Dimas Sulistiyo & Shihab, 2023). The advancement of technology in motor vehicles has made it easier for children to operate them, even though they may not have adequate driving knowledge or skills. Additionally, the role of parents is crucial, both in terms of supervision and granting permission for their children to use motor vehicles without fulfilling the required legal conditions (Nasution et al., 2023).

Although students are aware of the importance of road safety, its implementation on the ground remains low. Therefore, education and socialization of traffic rules need to

be enhanced to promote compliance and reduce accidents (Amanda et al., 2024). This study shows that one factor influencing the low compliance with traffic rules is the bureaucratic process in obtaining a Driver's License (SIM). About 35% of participants who tried to obtain a SIM through formal channels failed the first test and were forced to retake it or use an agent's services. Interestingly, this failure was not related to the participants' driving skills, but remained consistent across all groups that participated in the lessons, bonuses, and comparisons. One interpretation of this finding is that bureaucratic employees arbitrarily failed the test to force participants to use agents. This aligns with the "red tape endogen" theory, which suggests that bureaucratic barriers may result from rent-seeking activities by bureaucrats. Therefore, to improve the effectiveness of the licensing system and road safety, reform in the SIM issuance process and enhanced public education are essential (Becker et al., 2007).

In democratic South African media, almost daily reports highlight cases of power abuse for personal gain. A recent example involves recruitment processes used by law enforcement agencies, with corruption allegations emerging. These abuses range from bribery, where law enforcement officials are paid to provide access to certain individuals who do not meet the required criteria, while those who have properly followed the recruitment process are sidelined. This undermines the efforts of applicants who genuinely wish to join the traffic department and serve road users effectively. This article aims to delve deeper into the corruption within the traffic law enforcement environment and identify the challenges and potential solutions to eliminate such corruption (Mmakwena et al., 2023).

Corruption in the recruitment and driving competency testing process, which occurs in South Africa, is also seen in Zimbabwe. Prior to August 31, 2007, the novice driver testing in Zimbabwe was conducted by the Vehicle Inspection Department (VID), allowing self-trained individuals to take the exam, which opened opportunities for corruption. On July 7, 2007, the Transport Minister announced new procedures, effective from September 1, 2007, involving testing agents as intermediaries between driving schools and VID. Similar to South Africa, abuses in this bureaucracy can undermine the integrity of the system and the efforts of well-intentioned applicants. Therefore, it is crucial to eradicate corruption in this process so that only individuals who meet the criteria are able to work in traffic and law enforcement sectors (Thesis, 2004).

As explained in routine activity theory, there is a convergence between motivated offenders, suitable targets (in this case, prospective drivers wanting to obtain a SIM), and

a lack of sufficient surveillance, such as weak oversight or control in the licensing process. Offenders involved in the "nembak" SIM practice may feel that the risks associated with engaging in this illegal act are relatively low, especially if they believe they can avoid detection or punishment (Holt & Lee, 2022).

Amid increasing global competition, governments are expected to provide optimal services to the public, focusing on meeting their needs. The quality of public service has become an important measure of the success of government officials. However, the quality of service is relative, as the dimensions and indicators used to assess it may vary between individuals or parties involved in the service. This is also reflected in the "nembak" SIM practice, where the quality of service provided by law enforcement officers or licensing officials can significantly depend on whether procedures are carried out transparently or through unofficial channels. This practice highlights the inconsistency in service, which leads to dissatisfaction and perceived unfairness for those who follow the legal process (Ellitan, 2009).

Corruption practices in obtaining a SIM are similar to the "nembak SIM" phenomenon, where individuals pay more to obtain a SIM through illegal means. As the research reveals, this practice allows those who do not meet the criteria, including incompetent drivers, to obtain a SIM. Those who pay more quickly acquire the SIM, despite lacking sufficient driving skills. This phenomenon demonstrates how a system prioritising safety and driver competence can be abused, resulting in unskilled drivers who pose potential risks to road safety. In the context of "nembak SIM," a similar situation occurs when loopholes in the system are exploited to issue SIMs to those who do not meet the established standards (Bertrand et al., 2006).

The uniqueness or novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on students as a group often involved in the "nembak SIM" practice. This group has rarely been the subject of research on this phenomenon, even though they constitute a large portion of drivers who choose the unofficial route. Additionally, this study differs from previous research that primarily focused on analysing accident impacts or the technical aspects of SIM testing. This study seeks to delve deeper into the social motivations and behaviours of students, as well as the long-term impacts on road safety and their understanding of traffic regulations (Rahman & Ambrie, 2020).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research method as its primary approach, in line with Sugiyono (2022), who defines qualitative descriptive research as based on post-positivist philosophy. This method was chosen because it is well-suited for examining natural settings, with the researcher as the key instrument. In this context, the researcher is directly involved in data collection through observation and interviews (Khoiriah, 2022).

This research aims to describe the phenomenon experienced by the research subjects, specifically university students' understanding of traffic discipline. Through a qualitative descriptive approach, the researcher aims to explore students' motivations, attitudes, and behaviours related to the illegal practice of obtaining a driver's license through unofficial means ("nembak SIM"), which represents a serious issue in traffic safety management. This approach allows for in-depth and comprehensive data collection in the form of words, written texts, and observed behaviours, providing a clearer understanding of how students perceive and manage traffic discipline in their daily lives.

This study's observation takes place on the roads around the Ketintang campus of the State University of Surabaya. This location was selected due to the continued prevalence of student traffic violations, such as riding motorcycles to campus without wearing helmets. In Indonesia, motorcyclists are legally required to wear helmets as a protective measure to reduce the risk of serious head injuries in the event of a road accident.

The planned duration for this study is from February 2025, following the approval of the research title, until March 2025. In qualitative research, the term "informants" is used instead of "respondents," as the focus is on exploring the experiences, perspectives, and meanings associated with the phenomenon under study.

The researcher interviewed four university students. The informants were selected through purposive sampling, considering their relevant experience with the topic. Six informants obtained their driver's licenses legally by completing the full testing process, while the other six acquired their licenses through unofficial means, commonly referred to as "nembak SIM". The selected informants were university students aged between 18 and 25 years, each with firsthand experience obtaining a driver's license legally or illegally. They were also chosen based on their willingness to share their experiences openly and honestly during in-depth interviews.

The decision to involve only four informants is based on the qualitative approach, prioritising the depth of information rather than the number of participants. The primary focus is on exploring the experiences and perspectives of both groups in depth. Four informants were considered sufficient as the collected data already reflected a diversity of viewpoints and began to reach data saturation, where additional interviews were unlikely to yield new or significant information.

No.	Informant's Initials	Sex	Age	Work
1	KA	Female	19 years old	College student
2	AD	Female	20 years old	College student
3	FP	Female	20 years old	College student
4	AA	Male	19 years old	College student
5	FA	Male	20 years old	College student
6	AB	Male	21 years old	College student
7	WB	Female	19 years old	College student
8	EL	Male	19 years old	College student
9	DH	Female	19 years old	College student
10	SR	Male	19 years old	College student
11	RK	Male	19 years old	College student
12	EJ	Male	20 years old	College student

Table 1. Informant Data

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Reasons for Choosing the Official or Unofficial ("Nembak") Route

No.	Informant Name	SIM Type	Occupation	Reason for Choosing the Unofficial Route
1.	KA	A & C	College student	Did not want to be burdened with the complex official procedures or risk having to retake the test if failed.

2.	AD	C	College student	Has a health condition and needed the fastest and easiest way through an agent.
3.	FP	C	College student	Avoided the long and tiring official process.
4.	AA	C	College student	Found the theory and practical exams difficult.
5.	FA	C	College student	Unaware that using unofficial means was illegal and considered bribery.
6.	AB	C	College student	Had connections with law enforcement that facilitated the process.

Table: Reasons for Choosing the Official vs. Unofficial Route for Obtaining a Driver's License (SIM).

Unofficial Route – Respondent Insights

SIM A & C Holder (Student)

KA chose the illegal route because he felt frustrated with the administrative procedures, which he considered too complicated. He felt that the official process took too much time and effort, especially if he had to retake the practical exam. KA preferred a faster and more practical approach. KA said: "I don't want to be burdened with complicated procedures and the risk of having to retake the exam if I fail. The faster route is much more practical for me." It is important to further explore the costs incurred by KA and whether there are any other formal procedures, such as an interview or simulation exam. Uncovering the actual costs involved in the illegal route can provide a clearer picture of KA's motivations for choosing this path and how much benefit the parties exploiting the process gain. Additionally, considering the presence of other formal procedures, such as an interview or simulation exam, can provide further context regarding the challenges KA faces in following the official route.

SIM C Holder (Student)

AD chose the illegal route because his health condition hindered his ability to follow the official procedure, which he found too exhausting. AD stated: "Due to my health condition, I need a quick and hassle-free way, so I chose to use an agent." Further clarification is needed regarding the costs paid by AD and whether any official steps are still followed in the process. Exploring the exact amount AD paid and understanding whether any part of the formal procedure was still involved could provide a clearer picture

of the motivations behind his choice and the extent of the shortcuts taken in this illegal route.

Considering his busy academic schedule, FP chose the illegal route to avoid the long and exhausting official process. FP revealed: "The official process takes too long and is exhausting, I prefer using an agent because it's more efficient with my limited time." Further interviews are needed to explore how much FP spent and whether he still attended part of the official process, such as just submitting documents and payment. This additional information would help to understand the extent to which FP engaged with the official procedure, even while opting for shortcuts.

AA chose the illegal route because he found the theory and practical exams difficult. AA stated: "The theory and practical exams are too difficult for me, so I chose the more practical route to avoid the difficulties." Further investigation is needed regarding the amount of money paid and whether any symbolic formalities were still present. This could help provide a clearer understanding of how much of the official process was bypassed and what if any, official steps remained in the illegal route.

FA did not realize that using an agent to obtain a SIM was illegal or considered bribery. FA said: "I didn't know that using this route was illegal or considered bribery. I thought it was just an easier way." Investigating how FA became aware of this method and whether he realized he paid more than the official fees is important. This could help clarify FA's understanding of the process and the potential consequences of using such an illegal route.

AB chose the illegal route because he had connections with law enforcement officers, which made the process easier and less intimidating. AB shared: "Because I know the police, the process became easier and faster." It is important to inquire about how much AB paid and whether any part of the official process was still followed in this method. This could help determine the extent to which the official procedures were bypassed and the role of connections in facilitating the process.

Reasons for Taking the Official Test Route

No.	Informant Name	SIM Type	Occupation	Reason for Taking the Official Route
1.	WB	C	College student	Affordable cost and personal growth through facing the actual test.

2.	EL	C	College student	Law-abiding attitude and valuable learning experience..
3.	DH	C	College student	Aware that using unofficial means constitutes corruption.
4.	SR	C	College student	Believes only those who pass the official test understand traffic rules.
5.	RK	C	College student	Opposes corruption and supports institutional integrity.
6.	EJ	C	College student	Recognizes the risk posed by untrained drivers.

Official Route – Respondent Insights

SIM C Holder (Student)

WB chose to follow the official procedure because he considered the cost reasonable and valued the experience of building confidence during the exam. He said, "The cost is not as expensive as people think, and I also wanted to train my courage during the actual field test." This shows that for WB, the official route has an educational value and provides real-life experience that cannot be obtained through the shortcut route.

EL emphasized the importance of abiding by the law and avoiding ethically harmful shortcuts. He believes that taking the SIM exam is part of the learning process that has long-term benefits. He said, "I want everything to be legal, and taking the official exam helps me understand how to drive safely and according to the rules." This statement reflects that choosing the official route is closely related to moral principles and legal awareness.

For DH, "nembak SIM" is a clear form of corruption. He chose the official route because he did not want to contribute to a culture that undermined the legal system. He said, "I know that 'nembak SIM' is part of corruption. If we participate, it means we're also contributing to damaging the system." This awareness highlights the ethical and sociopolitical dimensions of the decision to follow the legal procedure.

SR rejected the illegal route because he believed that the official exam process guarantees an understanding of traffic rules, whereas the shortcut does not provide such assurance. He said, "If you don't take the exam, how can you know the traffic rules? So, I chose the official route to really understand what is allowed and what isn't on the road."

This demonstrates a pragmatic and logical perspective that the exam is an essential learning tool.

RK sees the practice of "nembak SIM" as part of a corrupt system that undermines public trust in state institutions, especially the police. He said, "If people keep using the backdoor route, eventually, the police will be less trusted. I choose the official route because I want to help change that." RK's response reflects a collective awareness of the need to restore legal legitimacy and public trust.

EJ believes that without proper training, many drivers lack sufficient skills and tend to endanger other road users. He said, "If you've never taken a practical test, how can you be disciplined on the road? I chose the official route because I want to know the right way to drive." This statement emphasizes the importance of education in the process of obtaining a driver's license, not just as an administrative formality.

Sociological Analysis of Student Behavior

This study analyzes the behaviour of university students in choosing either the official or unofficial route for obtaining a driver's license (SIM). Their decisions can be examined through several sociological theories:

Robert K. Merton's Strain Theory. Merton's theory suggests that individuals who face structural obstacles, such as difficulties in taking the exam or navigating bureaucratic processes, may feel pressured to achieve specific societal goals, such as obtaining a driver's license. In this context, "nembak SIM" can be seen as an innovative adaptation, where individuals choose an illegal route as a substitute for the legitimate method. Merton explains, "According to Merton's strain theory, obtaining a SIM through illegal means can be interpreted as an innovation, where the means are substituted due to structural limitations and cultural pressures for fast mobility."

Albert Cohen's Subculture Theory. Cohen's subculture theory explains the behaviour of students who practice "nembak SIM." These students may form a subculture that deviates from the dominant societal values, particularly those that emphasize legality and adherence to regulations. In this case, the subculture creates its norms where obtaining a SIM illegally is seen as an acceptable and legitimate method within the group, even though it contradicts the laws that govern society.

Tyler and Huo's Legal Compliance Theory. Thirdly, Tyler and Huo's (2002) Legal Compliance Theory offers insight into why some students choose to follow the official procedure despite the availability of quicker and easier options. This theory

emphasizes the importance of procedural justice, where individuals who perceive a process as fair and transparent are more likely to comply with the rules. Students who believe that the official SIM exam process is fair and provides equal opportunities for everyone, even if it is more complicated or time-consuming, are more likely to choose to follow the official procedure.

Structural Functionalism (Émile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons). This theory sees society as a system of interrelated parts working together for social stability. Students who took the official route (e.g., WB, EL, DH, SR, RK, EJ) reflect adherence to social norms and structures. They view official licensing as a contribution to order and public safety. Meanwhile, those who used the unofficial route (e.g., KA, AD, FP, AA, FA, AB) represent dysfunctions in the system. Complex bureaucracy, long wait times, and high failure rates lead individuals to seek alternatives, even if they deviate from norms.

Conflict Theory (Karl Marx, C. Wright Mills). This perspective highlights inequality and power dynamics. Respondents like AB, who had privileged access through police connections, illustrate how power enables shortcuts. Others, like RK and DH, express awareness of systemic corruption and choose legal routes to challenge injustice. Disparities in access to resources shape decisions and reveal unequal power dynamics.

Symbolic Interactionism (George H. Mead, Herbert Blumer). This theory emphasizes how meanings are constructed through social interactions. FA's ignorance about the illegality of "nembak SIM" shows how corruption may be normalized in some social contexts. In contrast, SR and EL have internalized the symbols of law, discipline, and responsibility as part of a socially desirable identity. The debate over "nembak SIM" is not just legal—it reflects how individuals interpret norms, ethics, and legality in their everyday lives.

Discussion

Sociological Interpretation

In analyzing the phenomenon of "nembak SIM" (illegal acquisition of driver's licenses) among students of Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA), it is crucial to compare the two groups involved in this practice: those who obtain their driver's licenses officially and those who acquire them through illegal channels. This discussion will be examined through three main sociological perspectives: norm construction, legal legitimacy, and deviant behaviour.

Legal Legitimacy and Its Role in the "Nembak SIM" Practice

Legal legitimacy refers to the extent to which individuals or groups believe the law is valid and should be followed. Students who obtain their driver's licenses through official procedures tend to have a favourable view of legal legitimacy because they follow legitimate safety procedures and understand traffic regulations. On the other hand, students who choose illegal routes often question the legitimacy of the law, perceiving official procedures as slow and unfair, and they seek quicker methods, even if they involve breaking the rules.

The basis for issuing a driver's license refers to regulations such as Police Regulation No. 9 of 2012, Law No. 22 of 2009 on Traffic and Road Transportation, and Government Regulation No. 50 of 2010. Although Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been established to prevent malpractice, the costs of obtaining a driver's license in the field often exceed the official fees (Mendrofa, 2019).

Deviant Behavior and Its Role in the "Nembak SIM" Practice

Deviant behaviour refers to actions that violate societal norms. Students who choose the illegal route to obtain a driver's license are considered to be engaging in deviant behaviour because they are breaking official procedures recognized by the state. The practice of "nembak SIM" is often driven by dissatisfaction with bureaucracy, the desire to obtain a license quickly, and a lack of awareness of the potential dangers. On the other hand, students who obtain their driver's licenses legally are not considered deviant because they comply with the prevailing social and legal norms, even though they are aware that the existing system is not always perfect. However, this deviant behaviour can also be seen as a response to social injustice, where students view the illegal route as a form of protest against a bureaucratic system they perceive as unfair.

Regulations on the Issuance of Driving Licenses (SIM)

In Indonesia, the ownership of a driving license (Surat Izin Mengemudi or SIM) is governed by Law Number 22 of 2009 concerning Road Traffic and Transportation. Article 77 paragraph (1) of the law states that every person driving a motor vehicle on public roads is required to possess a valid SIM that corresponds to the type of vehicle being driven. Furthermore, Article 81 paragraph (1) stipulates that to obtain a SIM, one must meet specific age requirements, fulfill administrative and health conditions, and successfully pass both theoretical and practical driving tests (Argawati, 2023).

Obtaining a SIM through unofficial means commonly referred to as “nembak SIM” violates these legal provisions, as individuals bypass the mandated examination process. Such actions may subject the driver to legal consequences, as driving without a valid SIM or acquiring one through illegal methods is punishable under existing laws.

The official procedure to obtain a SIM involves several stages. A health and psychological examination generally takes around 5 to 10 minutes. The registration process requires about 3 minutes, including filling out the application form, followed by biometric data collection such as fingerprinting, digital signature, and photograph, which takes an additional 5 minutes. The licensing process also includes a theoretical test, a practical driving test, and, in specific categories, simulator training. Each test typically lasts approximately 30 minutes. The associated fees are standardized, with Rp35,000 for the medical examination, Rp100,000 for the psychological test (per license type), and Rp50,000 for simulator training (specifically for specific license categories such as SIM A Umum, B1, B2, B1 Umum, and B2 Umum). The official issuance fee (PNBP) for a new SIM is Rp120,000. Once all requirements are completed, the payment and printing process takes about 5 minutes (Integritas & Penerbitan, 2024).

Perception of Road Safety

Respondents who obtained their SIMs through the official route generally exhibited a greater awareness and sense of responsibility regarding road safety. They reported a more comprehensive understanding of traffic rules, developed through studying the theoretical materials and undergoing practical tests as part of the licensing process. These respondents emphasized the importance of adhering to road regulations, including wearing helmets, obeying traffic signs, and maintaining appropriate driving speeds. Both formal education, such as traffic law courses, and non-formal education, such as public safety campaigns, play a significant role in shaping these attitudes (Amanda et al., 2024).

Conversely, respondents who obtained their SIMs through unofficial means admitted having limited knowledge of traffic regulations. Some could not correctly interpret certain road signs or understand right-of-way rules, which increased their likelihood of committing traffic violations such as running red lights or ignoring pedestrian crossings. This lack of awareness poses significant risks to both themselves and other road users.

Relationship with Accident Risk

Some respondents who acquired their licenses illegally shared personal experiences of traffic-related incidents, including near collisions and difficulties handling vehicles in certain situations. These challenges were often linked to their lack of formal training or testing, which would otherwise prepare them to respond appropriately under pressure.

Interestingly, respondents who obtained their SIMs legally also reported occasional road incidents. However, these were usually the result of other drivers' negligence, not their lack of driving competency. One legal SIM holder mentioned falling due to an unmarked pothole, raising the issue of road maintenance and infrastructure safety.

According to Article 273 paragraph (1) of the same traffic law, if a government agency responsible for road maintenance fails to repair a damaged road and it leads to an accident resulting in injury or property damage, the agency may be subject to a maximum sentence of six months imprisonment or a fine of up to Rp12 million. Should the accident result in serious injury, the punishment can increase to one year of imprisonment or a fine of Rp24 million. If it causes death, the responsible party may face up to five years in prison or a fine of Rp120 million. In addition, authorities who fail to place warning signs around hazardous road conditions may face a penalty of up to six months imprisonment or a fine of Rp1.5 million (Hukumonline, 2021).

Attitudes toward Regulation and Law Enforcement

Respondents who followed the legal process to obtain a SIM expressed general support for the licensing system, although some areas of improvement were noted, particularly in transparency and administrative efficiency. They regarded the licensing procedure as an important mechanism to ensure that drivers are competent and accountable, and they expressed pride in contributing to road safety through lawful means.

On the other hand, those who acquired their SIMs illegally often cited frustrations with the system, describing it as too rigid or unnecessarily complicated. They believed that many individuals who are perfectly capable of driving safely fail the test due to technicalities or bureaucratic hurdles. Nonetheless, these respondents acknowledged the risks of using unofficial channels from a legal and safety standpoint. They were aware

that acquiring a SIM without proper training undermines road safety and can endanger themselves and other road users.

Implications for Traffic Safety

Based on the interviews and regulatory framework analysis, it can be concluded that the practice of “nembak SIM” poses a serious threat to traffic safety. Drivers who obtain their licenses through such methods tend to be less skilled and have a weaker grasp of road regulations. While the existing licensing system is essential for public safety, it requires ongoing reform to ensure that it is accessible, efficient, and equitable—thus minimizing the incentive to bypass legal procedures.

More vigorous law enforcement is also necessary to prevent illegal practices in issuing SIMs. This includes monitoring the conduct of officials involved in the licensing process and ensuring that those who engage in corrupt practices are held accountable. According to Article 281 of Law No. 22 of 2009, anyone found driving without a SIM may be sentenced to a maximum of four months in prison or fined up to Rp1,000,000. This underlines the importance of possessing a legally obtained SIM, not only as protection against legal sanctions but also as a means of fostering safer roads for all users (Hukum et al., 2024).

One of the main challenges in enforcing these laws is the large number of underage students who drive motor vehicles. Although they are legally ineligible to obtain a SIM, many still commute to school using private transportation for convenience. From the perspective of students and their parents, this practice is seen as more efficient than relying on public transport, even though it conflicts with existing regulations. This situation presents a dilemma between legal enforcement and practical necessity (Lalu, 2018).

Law No. 22 of 2009 also outlines the multifaceted role of the Indonesian National Police in managing road traffic. Their responsibilities include educating the public about traffic safety (education), designing and managing traffic flow (engineering), enforcing traffic laws (law enforcement), and conducting driver and vehicle registration and identification. Additionally, the police serve as the central authority in traffic management through the K3I system (Command, Control, Coordination, and Information) (Kuswandini et al., 2019).

CONCLUSION

This study reveals a significant difference between university students who obtain their driving license (SIM) through the official process and those who opt for the unofficial route, commonly referred to as "nembak SIM" (illegally purchasing a driving license). Students who acquire their SIM illegally generally demonstrate a lower level of understanding regarding traffic regulations, show less proficiency in driving, and are more prone to violations and accidents on the road. These findings reinforce that the formal licensing process—including theoretical and practical examinations—plays an important role in shaping responsible, law-abiding, and road-safe drivers.

From a sociological perspective, this phenomenon can be explained using Max Weber's theory of social action, in which individuals act based on goals and values they perceive as important. A desire for speed, convenience, and the avoidance of complex bureaucratic procedures often drives students to choose illegal means. Moreover, Robert K. Merton's theory of deviance is also relevant, as many students deviate from established norms due to a perceived inefficiency in the official system that fails to meet their practical needs. Social factors such as peer influence, environmental pressures, and prevailing norms also contribute to this behavior, as illegal practices like "nembak SIM" may become normalized or no longer perceived as serious violations within certain communities.

This research contributes to understanding the social impacts of illegal SIM acquisition, particularly among university students. In addition to enriching the literature on legal compliance and traffic behavior, the study highlights the importance of fostering legal awareness from an early age and improving the fairness and educational quality of the official licensing system. Nonetheless, this study has limitations—primarily in the small number of respondents involved (only four students), which means the findings cannot be generalized to represent a broader population. This research is, therefore, best viewed as a preliminary or exploratory study.

Future research is recommended to involve a larger and more diverse group of respondents from various social, economic, and geographical backgrounds. Additional factors, such as family influence, social environment, and government policy, should also be considered. Longitudinal studies may also be beneficial in examining the long-term impact of illegal license acquisition on road safety and driver competence in Indonesia.

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