

<論 文>

Intrim Report on the Use of Dispatch Application by Drivers in Jakarta 2021¹⁾

Yoshifumi Azuma*, Dian Wahyu Utami **

This article describes preliminary findings on research conducted with dispatch drivers in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia in 2021. At present, Jakarta does not have a sophisticated public transportation system, primarily due to poor financial resources and *ojek motor* (motorcycle taxis) play a significant role in public transportation for the urban poor. However, the rapid expansion of smartphones and 3G/4G internet communication have resulted in the rise of dispatch taxi services, such as Grab and Gojek. Steady Indonesian economic growth has contributed to this change. However, to date, the socio-economic conditions of drivers has not been the focus of empirical research. This study conducted online research in July 2021 through the use of Google forms and the application WhatsApp to question a number of respondents 50 drivers to the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic, fieldwork research was carried out remotely in cooperation with online survey experts. Survey results reveal preliminary findings on the drivers' socio-economic background and an increase in 'disguised' unemployment triggered by the Covid-19 economic crisis.

Keywords : Jakarta, Dispatch Applications, e-hailing Drivers, Urban transport, Grab

* Ritsumeikan University

** Lund University Sweden

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last two years, the global Covid-19 pandemic had a tremendous impact on almost all sectors, especially the economic sector. This has been particularly evident for the digital economy which has shown rapid development with the development and rise of various platforms. Grab, founded in 2012 in Singapore, is one digital platform that offers various services, including ride-hailing, ridesharing, food delivery and logistics services through its application. It has gradually wiped-out conventional motorcycle and automobile taxi services (Beh, Loo-see, 2019).

1.2. Grab drivers as essential workers

Since its inception, globally, Grab has grown substantially. It had 2.8 million active drivers in 2019 and has developed a growing base of consumers (Statista 2020). This study aims to present the socio-economic conditions of Grab drivers and determine what impact Covid-19 had on them. We keep in mind its significant influence on their operations that resulted in large-scale social restrictions or LSSR (in Indonesian *Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar* or PSBB) that were put in place to combat the spread of infections in Jakarta (Ministry of Health of Indonesia Regulation, 2020).

2. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

This study was conducted in the Greater Jakarta metropolitan area through a random selection of 50 Grab drivers in July 2021. A quantitative method was employed by asking them to fill out online Google-form questionnaires and forwarding online chats (via WhatsApp) to disseminate to participants. Given Jakarta's intensive PSBB restrictions, direct interview methods could not be employed. The data used in this proceeding are earlier samples and out 50, 47 were Grab taxi driver users with full-time status.

3. DISCUSSION

A previous study of Grab drivers in Indonesia by Anggraeni (2020) provides scant demographic analysis as such this study will provide a greater level of analysis. We present a preliminary analysis from 50 samples taken in July 2021. Among these, most drivers are male household heads with an average age of 41.2 years old from an age cohort of between

30-49 years old. This is almost in line with the most productive age group. In terms of gender, drivers are mostly male (94%), and 88% are married. There were no significant differences from a previous study carried out in Malaysia (Salim et al., 2020).

The majority of lower-income residents live in West Jakarta. Figure 1 shows the respondents' residential areas. 16 live in West Jakarta in West Jakarta and 11 in the surrounding region of Jakarta. This area is considered to be one where residents have lower educational attainments than others. Less than a quarter own their properties and the rest rent their accommodation paying between Rp 500,000-1000,000 (approx. US\$30-70) per month. Here it is clear that housing rent is relatively low.

Although education levels were not explicitly stated in Salim's study, as few as 10% of respondents were unaware of the various regulations of e-hailing applications. If we assume that this is due to low educational attainment, about 12% of respondents are primary and secondary school graduates, as shown in Table 1. Daily net income is also likely to be lower for those with less educational attainment, while university and postgraduate graduates are likely to earn more.

There were, however, concerns over the ownership of vehicles. More than half were financed by loans and are still being repaid. It is worth noting that 17 were rented, and only three were self-owned whose drivers work via Grab Bike. In other words, owning a vehicle is beneficial, but comes with the pressure of heavy debt or rent.

Working for money (*Cari Rejeki*) was the primary response of respondents, which is also reflected in their reasons for entering the newly developing Grab sector (Novianto et al, 2021). Out of 54 respondents, 18 said that income from Grab was high, while 17 said that they had no other job or had been laid off from their previous employment (responses were based on a multiple-choice questionnaire).

As Azuma (2019) has shown, essential urban workers possess a diverse work history. Most were privately employed (in areas such as sales, clerical, warehouse, and so forth), and many also worked as drivers or were self-employed. What should be noted here is that urban workers who entered the Grab sector are searching for more stable income. Such efforts for obtaining a better life were undermined by the drastic PSBB curfew imposed by the municipal government on February 22, 2021. ²⁾

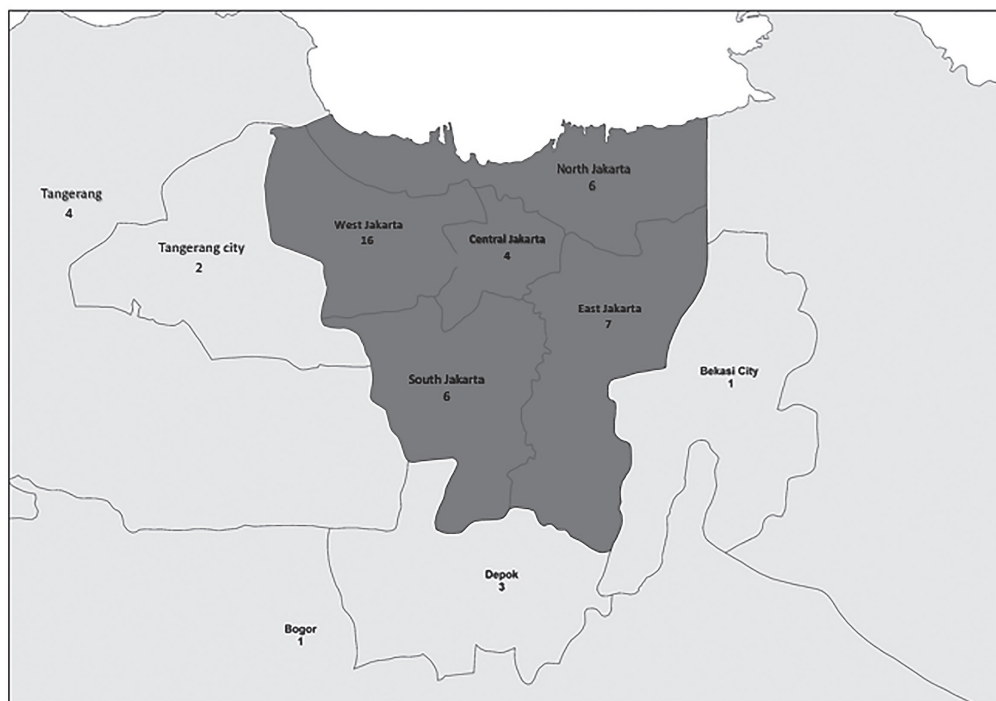


Figure 1. Regional distribution of the respondents

Source: Field Study in 2021

Table 1. Comparisons with Daily net Income Before Covid-19- under PSBB – as of September 2021

Daily net income/ time	Rp 0 - 49.999	Rp 50.000 - 99.999	Rp 100.000 - 149.999	Rp 150.000 - 199.999	Rp 200.000 - 249.999	> 250.000	Total
Before Covid-19	1	4	3	6	10	26	50
As of Feb. 2021, Under PSBB	5	24	15	5	1	0	50
As of Sep. 2021	7	20	13	6	2	2	50

Source: Field Study in 2021

Table 1 shows a comparison of daily income before Covid-19, during PSBB and then afterwards. A significant decline of more than half their income is evident. Before COVID-19, over 70% of the respondents earned a daily income of Rp200,000 (approx. US\$ 13) or more. However, during the implementation of PSBB, this dropped significantly, with approximately 90% earning less than Rp149,999 (approx. US\$ 10). More importantly, even after July 2021, it appears that their daily income did not increase much as evident from the Google Forms survey we conducted.

Ojek drivers were able to rely on home delivery and food services to cover fallen income. However, the daily income of taxi drivers was substantially reduced. As a result of this, the municipal government in Jakarta was forced to assist drivers. Less than half (46%) received assistance, mainly through *Sumbako* (*Sembilan Bahan Pokok*) groceries followed by cash transfers. Grab's head office package was much worse than that of the municipal governments, less than 30%, and mainly consisted of aid for groceries, followed by shopping vouchers, masks, and disinfectants (Hastuti, 2021).

To what extent were other taxi drivers' sources of income reduced due to their educational background? Table 2 shows net income per day by educational attainment prior to the pandemic. This is almost in line with one study (Anggraeni, 2020: Table 1) in Bogor, West Java, before the outbreak of Covid-19. Table 2 also implies that more well-educated drivers tended to earn higher incomes in normal times.

Table 2. Educational Attainment by Daily Net Income Prior to Covid-19

Educational attainment	Daily income prior to Covid-19						Total
	Rp 0 - 49.999	Rp 50.000 - 99.999	Rp 100.000 - 149.999	Rp 150.000 - 199.999	Rp 200.000 - 249.999	> 250.000	
Elementary School		1			1		2
Junior High School		1		2	1		4
Senior High School		2	1	3	5	19	30
Diploma degree			1			2	3
Bachelor/Master degree	1		1	1	3	5	11
Total	1	4	3	6	10	26	50

Source: Field Study in 2021

Table 3. Educational Attainment by Daily Net Income in Feb. 2021 under PSBB

Educational attainment	Daily Income in February 2021 under PSBB						Total
	Rp 0 - 49.999	Rp 50.000 - 99.999	Rp 100.000 - 149.999	Rp 150.000 - 199.999	Rp 200.000 - 249.999	> 250.000	
Elementary School		2					2
Junior High School		3	1				4
Senior High School	5	13	12				30
Diploma degree			1	1	1		3
Bachelor/Master degree		6	1	4			11
Total	5	24	15	5	1	0	50

Source: Field Study in 2021

However, the Indonesian situation, which was dominated by optimism and low numbers of infections in the first two months after the outbreak of Covid-19 in January 2020, changed dramatically in the second half of that year (Covid-19 Task Force of Indonesia, 2022). Table 3 reflects their net income per day by educational attainment under PSBB then later to Community Activities Restrictions Enforcement or CARE (in Indonesian: *Pemberlakuan Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat*, referred to as PPKM) (Indra Jaya 2021).

Using the e-hailing application to catch passengers as quickly and as close to their current location, and those who are travelling long distances, requires both computer literacy and a sense of geography to assure a high income. However, this practice only succeeds sometimes, and due to the enforcement of PSBB, drivers realized that no passengers were available. Even after PSBB was lifted, the earnings of both those who had higher and lesser education did not improve, falling far short of pre-Covid-19 earnings. Furthermore, there was little correlation between higher and lower education and income. What is clear here is that both groups experienced poverty during this period.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, based on an analysis of 50 initial respondents, the pandemic seems to have seriously affected Grab taxi drivers. As a group of workers prior to the pandemic they appeared to be relatively well off. Further investigation will be necessary to analyze and compare these to a remaining sample of around 400³⁾ in more detail and, where travel is possible, to directly interview drivers in the field to add narratives and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic conditions and nature of Grab drivers.

Table 4. Educational Attainment by Daily Net Income as of July 2021

Educational attainment	Current Daily Income						Total
	Rp 0 - 49.999	Rp 50.000 - 99.999	Rp 100.000 - 149.999	Rp 150.000 - 199.999	Rp 200.000 - 249.999	> 250.000	
Elementary School		2					2
Junior High School		2		2			4
Senior High School	5	14	8	1	1	1	30
Diploma degree			1	2			3
Bachelor/Master degree	2	2	4	1	1	1	11

Source: Field Study in 202

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research was funded by the Hitachi Foundation (2020) and conducted remotely in collaboration with Puji Hartana, a field researcher based at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (*Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia*) LIPI, National Research and Innovation Agency BRIN (*Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional*). We express our gratitude for his time and help with this research project.

Notes

- 1) Earlier draft of this paper is based on a presentation 'Preliminary Findings on the Dispatch Application Drivers in Jakarta 2021 -Resilience of Grab Drivers during Covid19-' given at The 12th Convension of Asian Scholars (ICAS 12), held 25 August 2021 at Kyoto Seika Univeisty.
- 2) See Keputusan Gubernur Daerah Khusus Ibu Kota Jakarta Nomor 172 Tahun 2021 https://jdih.jakarta.go.id/uploads/default/produkhukum/KEPGUB_No_172_Tahun_2021_tentang_Perpanjangan_PPKM_Berbasis_Mikro.pdf
- 3) From a pool of 450 drivers we interviewed 50 with the aim of researching the others at a later date once the pandemic subsides.

REFERENCES

- Azuma Y. (2019), Accessibility for All, Becak Drivers in Jakarta Since 1988, *Cultural and Religious Studies*, July 2019, Vol. 7, No. 7, 360-379. DOI: 10.17265/2328-2177/2019.07.003
- Anggraeni, F. N. (2020). Survey Motivasi Kerja Driver Ojek Online Grab (A survey on working motivation of Grab Bike drivers). *Scientific Journal of Reflection: Economic, Accounting, Management and Business*, 3(3), 251-260. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.3930682 <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3930682>
- Beh, Loo-See. (2019) Digital Economy: A Paradise or Threat in the New Norm? <http://eprints.um.edu.my/20770/1/Loo%20See%20Beh%20-%20Conference%20paper.pdf>
- Covid-19 Task Force Indonesia, 2022. Data Persebaran Perkembangan Covid-19 (Covid-19 cases distribution data). Accessed through www.covid19.go.id on 13 January 2022.
- Governmental Regulation on Jakarta, (2021). Keputusan Gubernur Daerah Khusus Ibukota Jakarta Nomor 172 Tahun 2021 Tentang Pemberlakuan Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat Berbasis Mikro. Government of Jakarta.
- Hastuti, 2021. Pelaksanaan program bantuan sosial di Masa Pandemi COVID-19 dan pemberlakuan Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat (PPKM) (Implementation of social assistance programs during the COVID-19 Pandemic and the implementation of Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM)). Forum Kajian Pembangunan, 29 October 2021.
- Jaya Indra. (2021). *Penguatan Sistem Kesehatan dalam Pengendalian COVID-19 (Enhancing Health System for combating with COVID-19)* <http://p2p.kemkes.go.id/penguatan-sistem-kesehatan-dalam-pengendalian-covid-19/>
- Ministry of Health of Republic of Indonesia Regulation (2020). *Keputusan Menteri Kesehatan Republik Indonesia Nomor HK.01.07/Menkes/248/2020 tentang Penetapan PSBB di Beberapa Wilayah Provinsi Jabar*. Ministry of Health Republic of Indonesia.
- Novianto, A., Wulansari, A. D., & Hernawan, A. (2021). "Riset: empat alasan kemitraan Gojek, Grab, hingga Maxim merugikan para Ojol". *The Conversation*, <https://theconversation.com/riset-empat->

alasan-kemitraan-gojek-grab-hingga-maximmerugikan-para-ojol-159832

Salim, Salman et al., 2020. *A Review on the Background of E-Hailing Drivers in Malaysia and Their Awareness with Regulations* 2nd International Conference on Green Environmental Engineering and Technology IOP Conf. Series: Earth and Environmental Science 616 (2020) 012046 IOP Publishing DOI:10.1088/1755-1315/616/1/012046

Statista (2020). Number of active drivers of Asia Pacific ride-sharing companies as of 2019 (in millions). Statista Research Department 2021.