

ANALYSIS OF TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS COMMITTED BY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NOVI SAD IN THEIR FIRST YEAR OF DRIVING

Miroslav Ćiraković¹

This paper explores the safety challenges, attitudes and habits of young drivers of high school age, with a particular focus on students who have recently obtained their driver's license or are preparing to take their driving test. Young people represent one of the riskiest groups in traffic due to lack of experience, tendency towards risky behavior, influence of peers and often insufficiently developed traffic culture. Through a survey conducted among high school students, the paper analyzes the frequency of risky behaviors (such as speeding, using a mobile phone while driving, and driving under the influence of alcohol), as well as the level of awareness of safety rules. The results show the need for additional educational programs in schools and campaigns aimed at raising awareness about responsible driving. The aim of the paper is to point out the importance of preventive action in the period when driving habits are just being formed.

Key words: traffic violations, young drivers, high school

1. INTRODUCTION

Traffic safety is one of the key factors of public health and social responsibility, and young drivers are a particularly vulnerable and risky group in traffic. According to numerous researches and statistical data, people between the ages of 17 and 24 are involved in traffic accidents much more often than older and more experienced drivers. The causes of this condition are multiple and include a lack of practical experience, an underdeveloped sense of danger, a tendency towards risky behavior, the influence of peers, as well as frequent disregard for traffic rules. [1]- [2]

A special challenge in this area is working with high school students who are just entering the world of driving. In the period of adolescence, young people are in a phase of intense emotional, social and identity development. This often leads to the need to prove it, which is often transferred to the steering wheel - through fast driving, using a mobile phone while driving, as well as non-observance of regulations. At the same time, most young drivers are not sufficiently informed about the dangers that such behavior entails, nor about the consequences that can be caused by even one wrong decision in traffic.

Main problems of high school students drivers or young drivers in general is 1. Impulsivity and tendency to risk -They are more likely to try speeding, overtaking or "playing" while driving. - Adrenaline and social pressure often outweigh common sense. 2. Driving under the influence of alcohol or psychoactive substances - Young drivers often ignore risks and rules, especially when going out at night. 3. Distractions (mobile phone, social networks, music, company in the car) -Focus is easily lost due to messages, calls, selfies, and loud friends. 4. Insufficient traffic culture and ignorance of the rules -Many study "to pass the exam", but do not fully understand why certain rules are important. 5. Peer influence - A young driver can feel

¹ MSc, Assistant, *Higher education technical school of professional studies in Novi Sad*, e-mail cirakovic@vtsns.edu.rs

"weak" if he doesn't drive fast or if he doesn't "prove" that he knows how to drive like someone else in society. [3] - [4] - [5]

The aim of this paper is to investigate how well high school students, as potential or new drivers, are aware of their role and responsibility in traffic. Through a survey conducted among third- and fourth-year high school students, their knowledge of traffic regulations, frequency of risky driving behaviors and attitudes towards road safety will be analyzed. Based on the obtained results.

2 DATA ANALYSIS

Traffic education for high school students was carried out in all secondary schools in Novi Sad in October 2024. It included presentation for two classes in each of the following schools: "Jovan Jovanović Zmaj" High School "Svetozar Marković" High School "Isidora Sekulić" High School "Laza Kostić" High School "Svetozar Miletić" High School "7. april" Medical School "Futog" Agricultural School with a Dormitory (Futog) "Mihajlo Pupin" High School for Electrical Engineering "Pavle Savić" Technical School "Mileva Marić-Einštajn" Technical School "Pinki" Traffic School "Isidor Bajić" Music School "Ballet School" "Bogdan Šuput" School for Design "Milan Petrović" School for Primary and Secondary Education. The topic was the safety of young people in traffic and the most common forms of risky behavior among young people in traffic, which include: Exceeding the speed limit Not wearing a seat belt Using a mobile phone while driving Driving under the influence of alcohol or psychoactive substances Insufficient attention to pedestrians and cyclists Emotional driving (anger, euphoria)

The education aimed to inform high school students about the reasons why they are considered a special category, especially those in their first year of driving, as well as to conduct research on participation in traffic violations in the first year of driving.

The total number of students who attended the education was 938 students in all 16 schools. The number of students that had driving licence is 283 of which 70 are female drivers.

In the part of the survey that covered a wide range of research into the behavior of young drivers in traffic, we included the following question: "Have you been controlled by the traffic police and have you been notified of a traffic violation by the traffic police (regardless of whether you have been fined for the same) and what was the violation?" and we get interesting results.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

3.1 Analysis of traffic violations by high school students

As we mentioned, 938 students participated in the study, of which 283 (30,2%) students have a driver's license, and 655 (69,8%) have not passed the driving test. The focus of the analysis was placed on the group of students who have a driver's license, given that they actively participate in traffic as drivers. Of the 283 students who have a driver's license, 172 (60,8%) of them stated that they were stopped by the traffic police and that they were checked. This data indicates a relatively high rate of police checks among the younger driver population, which may be a result of increased surveillance of young and inexperienced drivers. 172 students who were checked by the traffic police stated that only 23 (13,4%) of them were fined or warned by the traffic police for a traffic violation. Which indicates that most of the stops did not result in an identified violation, but were routine checks. Of the 23 checked students, 18 were fined for a traffic violation and 5 of them get a warning. This may indicate that the traffic police, in some situations, use a pedagogical approach with younger drivers, especially when it comes to minor violations. Of the 283 students who have a driver's license, 70 are female students and 30 of them stated that they were stopped by the traffic police and that they were not fined, but rather that it was a routine check. This may indicate a somewhat more cautious behavior of female students in traffic, but also different approaches by the police in communication with them.

The violations committed were:

- Not wearing a seat belt (5 students),
- Exceeding the speed limit (10 students),
- Driving under the influence of alcohol (2 students), and
- Driving without a driver's license (1 student).

Violations for which they were warned by the police are:

- Not wearing seat belt (2 students),
- Driving without daytime running lights (2 students) and
- Defective signaling devices (1 student).

Of the 18 students who were fined, the most common offense was speeding, with 10 cases (55.6%). This is a worrying figure, given that inappropriate speed is one of the main risk factors for traffic accidents. The second most common offense was not wearing a seat belt (5 students), which indicates a lack of habit of respecting basic passive safety rules. This is followed by driving under the influence of alcohol (2 students) and driving without a driver's license (1 student), which are serious offenses that carry a high level of risk. For the 5 students who received a warning, the most common causes were not wearing a seat belt and driving without daytime running lights (2 cases each), as well as faulty signaling

devices (1 case). These offenses are mainly of a technical nature and may be the result of carelessness or insufficient experience.

4. CONCLUSION

The study, which included 938 students, provided important insights into the behavior of young drivers, their exposure to police checks, and the types of traffic violations they most frequently commit. The fact that 283 students have a driver's license indicates a relatively high level of youth participation in active traffic, which further emphasizes the importance of this study in the context of prevention and traffic safety. One of the key findings is that more than 60% of students with a driver's license were stopped by the traffic police. Although only a small number of these stops resulted in fines or warnings (8.1% in total, of which only 6.3% were fined), this data supports the idea that young drivers represent an important target group for traffic control. This phenomenon can be interpreted as part of a broader prevention strategy, given that young drivers, due to their lack of experience, make more mistakes and often underestimate the risks of driving. The most common offense in this population is speeding, which is worrying because speed is one of the leading risk factors in traffic accidents, especially among young people. It is followed by failure to use a seat belt and driving under the influence of alcohol — two forms of behavior that can be directly linked to poor traffic outcomes and increased mortality. These findings indicate the need for additional educational programs, campaigns and training that will not only provide young drivers with knowledge, but also develop responsibility and awareness of the consequences of irresponsible driving. It is particularly significant that none of the 70 female students with a driving license were fined, although 30 of them were stopped by the police. This may indicate different patterns of traffic behavior between the sexes, which opens up space for further research. At the same time, this finding should be seen as a potential resource in promoting safe traffic behavior, through positive examples. In conclusion, the results of this research provide a useful basis for formulating preventive measures aimed at young drivers. It is recommended that educational institutions, in cooperation with the traffic police and traffic safety experts, develop targeted workshops, simulations and educational campaigns that will be adapted to age, experience and the most common risky behaviors observed in this research. This approach can significantly influence the reduction of risky behavior among young drivers and raise the general level of traffic culture in society.

5. REFERENCES

- [1] Von Below, A. (2016). Verkehrssicherheit von Radfahrern – Analyse sicherheitsrelevanter Motive, Einstellungen und Verhaltensweisen. Berichte der Bundesanstalt für Straßenwesen, Heft M 264, Bremerhaven: Wirtschaftsverlag NW.
- [2] The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (2015). Traffic accidents. Retrieved March 27th, 2018 from: .
- [3] Traffic safety agency - <https://www.abs.gov.rs> – under statistics and analysis.
- [4] The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (2015). Traffic accidents. Retrieved March 27th, 2018 from: .
World Health Organization - <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/road-traffic-injuries-children>