

## HOW SUBJECTIVE WELL BEING TAXI DRIVERS DURING PANDEMIC

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**ABSTRACT:** The current pandemic has had many impacts on various aspects of life. One of the impacts is taxidrivers in Malang, who experience a drastic decrease in income from the decreasing number of passengers. So, the welfare of taxi drivers during the pandemic is the focus of the study. The purpose of the study was to determine the phenomena that occur in taxi driving related to subjective well-being during the pandemic in Malang, using a descriptive qualitative approach with the phenomena described to find out the events become experienced. The subjects in this study were taxi drivers operating in the Malang city area, especially at the Landungsari terminal. Data use was obtained through unstructured interviews. The study found that taxi drivers felt less prosperous due to the Covid-19 pandemic due to the decline in the number of passengers, which impacted income and difficulties in meeting family needs. In addition, they are trying to survive and adjust to the current situation.

**Keywords** – Subjective well being, taxi driver, covid-19

### I. INTRODUCTION

Since the announcement of an international public health emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO) on January 30, 2020, due to the new outbreak of COVID-19 [1]. The incident began with a group of cases of pneumonia with no known cause and was associated with a seafood market in Wuhan [2]. Since the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003, there has never been another global pandemic until the emergence of COVID-19, which became the largest pneumonia outbreak that poses a threat to the survival of individuals and communities [3].

The decision from the government is a policy stance taken during the pandemic crisis [4]. Therefore, the community needs to be tolerant in taking decisive action when fighting a pandemic, such as further increasing compliance in carrying out activities according to the rules so that it can play an essential role in overcoming various difficulties [5], [6]. In addition, mental health also plays an essential role in the well-being of everyone enjoying life in surviving pain, disappointment, sadness, and self-based beliefs [7].

A result of an unexpected crisis harms the well-being and mental health of people going through the pandemic [8]. Including the new government action to stop all activities except for emergency services, which were a force to stop routine activities for some time in the future, as a result, many people began to fear if state assistance was not provided [9]. In addition, more people experience job loss or reduced working hours, raising concerns about job continuity [10]. The impact of the pandemic did not escape being felt by workers, one of which is city transportation taxi drivers who work as drivers in various parts of Indonesia.

Based on this incident, taxi drivers have almost lost quite a drastic income during the pandemic [11]. In addition, they are resigning to government regulations that apply Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB). As a result, the number of passengers using taxis has drastically decreased [12].

It also affects the problem of income for taxi drivers, which continues to decline, but costs for taxi passengers also increase. One of the taxi drivers met by the researchers said that before the pandemic, one-way taxi passengers were charged a fee of 4,000 rupiahs per person. However, due to the current pandemic, taxi passengers are charged 5000 rupiah per person. As a result of the pandemic, passengers are quiet and declining. However, expenses such as fuel and deposits keep going. In addition, competition between conventional and online transportation is a challenge faced by taxi drivers [13]. Many people choose practical transportation

methods such as online motorcycle taxis that do not have to wait long like taxis, so it will also affect their income for their lives and welfare in their daily needs.

Difficulty in getting deposit money and competition in the field will adversely affect the income of taxi drivers. This condition also affects the welfare of taxi drivers. There is a finding that there is a slight decrease in emotional well-being in people affected by the pandemic, but they experience an increase in job satisfaction which is related to high trust and gratitude[9]. In addition, welfare has decreased due to low job security due to the pandemic in marginalized workers such as women, migrants, and people experiencing financial difficulties [14].

The perspective of each person assessing the welfare of his life will be different because the nature of welfare is subjective in life experience [15]. Furthermore, Kansky and Diener (2017) call it subjective well-being, considered a cognitive evaluation and an individual affective evaluation of his life as a whole[16]. Cognitive evaluation includes satisfaction and fulfillment of life in oneself, while affective evaluation includes the individual's emotional reactions to the events they experience. For example, the job of a taxi driver is to have many pleasant and unpleasant experiences, such as demands and obstacles. In addition, taxi drivers have a pleasant experience because of the family's support to earn an income. Therefore, support from family or others can increase subjective well-being [17], [18].

Having subjective well-being will create good social relationships, make individuals feel happy, and positively impact their lives. In addition, people with subjective well-being obtained from social support can create higher self-esteem, success in coping with stress, better health, and experience fewer psychological problems [19]. In addition, someone with work control, optimism, and self-esteem provide resources to overcome everyday life pressures that will also affect subjective well-being[20].

Based on the explanation of this phenomenon, it can conclude that the research focuses on finding out the perceptions and experiences of taxi drivers related to subjective well-being during the pandemic in Malang. The formulation for the problem is how the perception of taxi drivers related to subjective well-being during the pandemic, the experience of taxi drivers during the pandemic, and the obstacles faced during another pandemic.

## II. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach. The study is background was conducted to determine taxi drivers' subjective well-being during a pandemic in Malang City. The research around Landungsari Terminal in Malang City. At first, the researcher will make observations to find out the dynamics around the location, select and determine the subject, and conduct interviews to extract research data. The researcher uses a descriptive qualitative approach. Besides that, the researcher intends to understand the social situation in depth and find patterns, hypotheses, and theories from the field data. The type of method used in this research is phenomenology. The phenomenon described is related to the subjective well-being of taxi drivers during a pandemic in Malang City.

The subjects in this study were ten taxi drivers who continued their profession during the Covid-19 pandemic. The data collection method in this study used unstructured interviews. The goal is to find a more open problem, where informants ask to give their opinion regarding the questions. The researcher also conducted probing if it felt that the informant's answer was still unclear. At the same time, the instrument in this qualitative research is the researcher himself.

## III. RESULT

### Experience and Obstacles As Taxi Drivers During a Pandemic

The interviews show that most subjects felt that during the pandemic, they did not get as much income as before the pandemic. It is because many people do not leave the house due to restrictions on social activities. In addition, people who often use city transportation, such as students and college students, during the pandemic are doing more online learning activities. So that it affects the decrease in the number of passengers using city transportation, it is by the statements of several subjects, one of which is from MS, namely:

"During the pandemic, I didn't earn much. Sometimes you can only get 30 to 50 thousand rupiahs a day. If deposits have dropped drastically since the pandemic, initially 70, when school children were on holiday it became 40, now it is 25 thousand rupiah. Since there was a pandemic in March until now, the deposit is still 25 thousand rupiah. By going back and forth 3 times a day, at least I got that much (30 thousand rupiah)."

In addition, several subjects said that because the deposit kept going, it resulted in many changes that were reduced entirely, such as:

#### SubjectJT:

"There are changes, such as fewer passengers because now many don't use taxis and more use online motorcycle taxis. The transportation is reduced because it is also limited by the skipper so that you can still get money and chase deposits, even though sometimes when you withdraw it takes turns. With reduced income, it is sometimes difficult to cover deposits."

**SubjectAI:**

"Well, if I'm waiting for a taxi, I just have to leave. That's good. But there is still income, if not, what do you eat? If it's made enough, it's enough, but if it's not made enough, it's not enough. But let's just be grateful, because the nature is right now, there is a corona so people are afraid to go out."

**The Impact of the Pandemic on Lives**

Some subjects stated almost the same answer on the impact of being a taxi driver during the pandemic, namely because it was difficult to meet daily needs such as money for house needs, money for shopping for children, and other living expenses. In addition, the perceived impact is that the cost of eating a day is sometimes less, so the cost of living is also borne by other family members, such as working wives and children.

**SubjectSL:**

"As for the needs of the house, for now, I almost never give anymore. I can at least give my child some pocket money, though not every day. But when it comes to household needs, since March 3 (March) 2020 all of my wife is shopping. Wife's children are aware of the situation now."

**SubjectTG:**

"Oh, if it's a day, it's not enough. A day can be 20 to 25, not the same deposit. But during this pandemic, the deposit went smoothly, because the first deposit was only the rest of the money was brought home, and even it was a little."

**SubjectBP:**

"Everyone works, but for themselves. Have 9 children. The remaining 3 but not in school. For the wife, there is income because she works in a factory, if it is from the children sometime gives it sometimes not."

**The Meaning of Life During a Pandemic**

In terms of the meaning of life related to welfare, most of the taxi drivers stated that life is now more difficult than usual so that they are far from satisfied. However, it should be more grateful to be able to continue to earn a living for the family. In addition, related to online motorcycle taxi transportation, it is returned to passengers to use transportation services. According to them, there is already a part of this related to fortune, especially during the current pandemic because many people are also experiencing difficulties, especially the economy.

**SubjectNM:**

"Thankfully, that's just being grateful. If you are not grateful, your life will be messy. At least you can still pay for water and electricity. For me it has made me happy. If a child at least pays school fees, they can still pay for it, and the remaining 1 child is still in school, grade 5 elementary school, if the older siblings are all married."

**SubjectED:**

"Yes, satisfied not satisfied, because there are many shortcomings. sometimes you get 60 thousand sometimes 70 thousand, not deducted by the deposit. Sometimes I eat with egg and tempeh, sometimes it's just the same sauce."

**SubjectTR:**

"I'm not satisfied, because it's hard to even think about daily needs, sometimes even not getting anything at all. What's more, now it's the same as a deposit. Before the pandemic, the deposit was between 70 thousand to 80 thousand, now it is 25 to 30 thousand."

**SubjectMP:**

"Before the existence of online motorcycle taxis, this transportation was really good with lots of passengers. With their existence, it has begun to decrease, plus the pandemic situation. Now it doesn't matter, if at first there were objections to the existence of online motorcycle taxis, the name is also already sustenance, someone has arranged it. Especially if the house is in a residential area, you will definitely choose to take an online motorcycle taxi instead of a taxi."

**Solution**

In the solution section, taxi drivers hope that passengers who often use taxis such as students, school students and workers can return to their activities as before the pandemic. However, in reality even though it is not like it used to be, at least there are activities that can make taxi drivers able to run their taxis and to support their families better. The impact of the current pandemic has made it difficult for taxi drivers to find passengers, so the impact is that they often run taxis while looking for passengers on the side of the road, unlike before, where many passengers had come from the terminal to use their taxis.

**SubjectNM:**

"Hopefully school children enter, college children enter with people who work also come in so that they can be more normal as usual."

**SubjectAI:**

"In the past, before the pandemic, there were many people waiting at the terminal, now while walking while looking for passengers, sometimes when traveling, only 1 or 2 are stuck. So, hopefully, we can get back to normal."

#### IV. DISCUSSION

Based on the results of interviews that have been conducted show that taxi drivers feel less prosperous with the current pandemic situation. It is due to changes in the number of passengers, which decreases their income significantly. In addition, they are still lacking in meeting their daily needs, but they can still be grateful even though their income is very much different from the situation before the pandemic. Furthermore, the existence of online motorcycle taxi transportation is also one of the declines in passengers, but for them, this is not too much of a problem because it is handed back to the passengers to choose their transportation services.

Taxi drivers in the city of Malang as one of the factors that facilitate people's mobility. Taxis are official city transportation, so their existence is very much needed. Taxi driver jobs before 2016 are considered one of the best jobs in society. So vital is the presence of taxi drivers in the city of Malang. Specific routes are highly valued because they pass through education, shopping centers, and strategic locations that are the center of passenger taxi transportation[13].

Due to the declining income of taxi drivers during the pandemic, they are less prosperous in meeting their daily needs. However, it can lead to life satisfaction related to personal well-being because life satisfaction is a subjective assessment of a person's life as a whole [16]. The taxi drivers, the backbone of the family, are responsible for their household needs. The current pandemic directly impacts their standard of life satisfaction from the last time. Thus, changing views regarding the needs must be prioritized so they can still meet their daily needs. Although it is unlikely that they will be able to meet all their needs, they can fulfill basic things such as food and mandatory costs such as electricity and water.

Based on the occurrence of a pandemic, because conditions like this can be said to be the first time that happened, many people are trying to adjust to the situation[21]. This also applies to taxi drivers who make them feel new experiences during their work. However, of course, they cannot be separated from feelings of joy and sadness because of the life events they live [22]. The experience of life during the pandemic made them experience many changes in their outlook on life. One of them is the decline in the number of passengers who were previously due to online motorcycle taxis and now, because of the pandemic, making them more open-minded that life, such as the distribution of fortune, must have been arranged as well possible by God. So, they train themselves to be more able to accept the situation with gratitude and keep the spirit of living their lives now.

The phenomenon during the pandemic brought many changes because it impacted the economy, which made people have to survive during change and affected mental health [23]. In addition, most of the taxi drivers come from the Javanese tribe, who hold fast to their philosophy of accepting the situation during the difficulties they face [24].

Regarding the right solution to overcome the pandemic condition so that it can return to normal as before, this is the answer for everyone. However, in reality, various solutions are still ineffective in overcoming the current pandemic conditions. The solution or way to overcome what taxi drivers expect from the current pandemic condition is to return to activities for loyal taxi passengers such as students, students, and people who work together to improve the situation. However, in his statement, there are still restrictions on social activities that rarely cause people to leave the house. So, the taxi drivers usually get passengers from the initial terminal, but now they have to drive to the next terminal while looking for passengers. It often happens that only a few people take taxis. As a result of this incident impacts their income and meets the deposit target, which, of course, continues every day.

#### V. CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation above, the subjective well-being of taxi drivers feels less prosperous because of the current Covid-19 pandemic. It also impacts their subjective well-being in terms of cognitive evaluations of life satisfaction and affective evaluations of life events such as joy and sadness. Although it is subjective, the welfare they convey is felt lacking because it impacts life in meeting daily needs. The advantages of this study are that it focuses on taxi drivers in Malang, East Java. The limitation of this research is that the place used as the research sample is only located as one of the terminals of several terminals in the city of Malang.

Further researchers can suggest using various kinds of taxi drivers for various transportation purposes. In addition, more in-depth questions related to the driver's daily life or other activities carried out by them. Also, the environment or the scope of the relationship between drivers can be a supporting factor affecting their welfare.

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