

Drive Smart Edu

Traffic psychological program for young drivers

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Background

Young novice drivers represent a high-risk group in road traffic safety statistics. Traditional driver education programs often emphasize technical competencies while neglecting psychological and reflective skills critical for safe driving. This study presents the development and evaluation of Drive Smart Edu, an educational program grounded in the Goals for Driver Education (GDE) model, focusing on psychological preparedness and risk perception.

Methodology

Participants: 60 drivers aged 18–24, licensed within the past 24 months.

Design: Pre-test/post-test comparison using a custom questionnaire.

Analysis: Wilcoxon tests, effect sizes via rank biserial correlation.

Program Overview

Structure: Three structured group sessions (4 hours each) conducted over a 3–8 week period.

Facilitators: Each session was led by two trained instructors, including at least one with a psychology background.

Methods: Interactive techniques including discussions, brainstorming, role-playing, quizzes, and guided reflection.

Program Content:

- Risk awareness
- Distracted driving
- Influence of passengers
- Impaired driving
- Emotion regulation
- Journey planning
- Fatigue management

Key Findings

- Significant increase in perceived mileage required to be considered an experienced driver ($p < 0.001$)
- Significant reduction in acceptable speed excess in both urban and non-urban settings ($p < 0.001$)
- Improved perception of risk associated with residual alcohol while driving ($p = 0.042$)
- Reduced engagement in distracting behaviors such as eating ($p = 0.007$), drinking ($p = 0.048$), and adjusting navigation ($p = 0.018$)
- Enhanced recognition of emotions as driving risk factors: joy ($p = 0.002$), sadness ($p = 0.037$)
- Increased attention to planning elements such as weather conditions ($p = 0.028$), passenger influence ($p < 0.001$), and suitable clothing ($p = 0.026$)



Conclusion

Drive Smart Edu demonstrates efficacy in enhancing young drivers' awareness, attitudes, and behaviors related to road safety. Its integration of psychological training into driver education represents a promising direction for reducing risk-taking and improving traffic outcomes among novice drivers.



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