

Traffic Incidents in Myanmar: Final Reflection

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This semester I worked on a project to identify the behaviors of drivers in Myanmar as well as their knowledge and perception of traffic safety laws and practices. I planned to interpret data from observations and a survey. During the course of this semester my mentor helped me improve my skills for each step of the research process.

For the first part of the project, I conducted a literature review. I compiled sources about driving-related studies globally, as well as data regarding yearly numbers of drivers and fatalities across the world. I noted a gap in up-to-date data besides a government census for Myanmar, my country of interest. This gave me the idea to create a survey that would collect data on self-reported driving habits of motorists in Myanmar, so knowledge would be gained about country-specific driving habits: wearing helmets, driving under the influence, or cell phone use.

Then I created a survey using Kobotoolbox.org, an online data collection site that allows you to create a survey and then collect data either online or offline. I chose this service because it is free, easy to share the survey by sending a link, and able to be opened on any web browser on almost all mobile devices and computers. An added benefit is the offline data collection, which allows one person to download the survey onto a device, travel into an area with no internet, ask multiple participants to fill out the survey using the device, and then submit all the responses once the device returns to a place with internet. My mentor helped me take the information from my literature review and turn it into evidence-based questions to put on the survey. During this semester I did not complete the last part of the survey, which is to translate it into Burmese so it is easier to read in Myanmar, so data was not collected from this product.

The second type of data I worked with was observational data, collected when I visited the city of Mandalay, Myanmar in summer 2019. This was essentially a needs assessment, which is often a first step in public health research and planning. I organized 151 observations of driver and passenger behavior into numerical data, and my mentor helped me run some basic statistics tests, which was the step I needed the most help with. We did not find any statistically significant connections on these tests, but I think if the experiment was repeated with a larger sample size and different sample locations, we might gain a dataset that is more representative of the population than the pilot sample.

Overall I learned very important public health research skills, including conducting a literature review, making an abstract and problem statement, writing a survey, and interpreting observational data. These are valuable skills that can help me in future research, as well as collaboration outside the field of public health, as practicing transferable skills such as critical thinking, writing and presenting is an important part of career development.



Driver and passenger wearing appropriate helmets.



No helmet use and the passenger is seated side-saddle.