

Support mounts for ride-hailing apps: Surveys

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The ride-hailing industry seems to be getting new energy as drivers and users throw their support behind it amid ongoing brouhaha over legal issues, two separate surveys reveal.

Thirty-six-year-old Syarifudin said he now spent more time with his family after becoming a Go-Jek (motorcycle taxi) driver, also called a partner.

"As a Go-Jek driver, I have more flexible working hours. If I feel tired, I can just close the app, go home and spend time with my family," said the former shop owner, who lives in Cempaka Putih, Central Jakarta, with his wife and two children.

He earns an average Rp 4 million (US\$300) per month working as a Go-Jek driver, 30 percent more than his previous income.

Syarifudin is one among many motorcycle taxi drivers that have expressed their satisfaction about partnering with ride-hailing app Go-Jek, as claimed by the Center for Communication Studies University of Indonesia (Puskakom UI) and Go-Jek Indonesia.

The two recently published a joint survey based on a random sample of Go-Ride driver-partners (3,213 respondents), Go-Car driver-partners (2,801 respondents) and customers (4,048 respondents) that had actively used the app for the preceding three months.

The survey was conducted from April 6 to 11 in 15 locations, primarily in big cities, such as Medan in North Sumatra, Bandung in West Java, Solo in Central Java, Palembang in South Sumatra and in Bali, with a 1.5 percent margin of error.

Puskakom UI main researcher Alfindra Primaldhi said income, flexible working hours and facilities provided by the app — namely access to insurance — were the main reasons behind partners' satisfaction.

The survey shows that most of the Go-Jek drivers are male breadwinners, middle school or high school graduates, older than 34 years and have two to four dependents.

"The on-demand app also offers job opportunities for many unemployed, most of whom are middle school and high school graduates," Alfindra added.

According to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), 7.01 million people were unemployed as of February 2017, resulting in an unemployment rate of 5.3 percent.

Graduates of state vocational schools dominate the figure, followed by high school graduates, diploma graduates and middle school graduates.

Besides benefiting the partners, the joint research also found that most users — single women in their 20s and university graduates — feel safe and comfortable using a ride-hailing app.

Tri Anreianto, the head of public affairs at Grab Indonesia, claimed that its partners earned 40 to 70 percent more per hour than the average public transportation driver or courier in Indonesia.

Similar to other countries, app-based ride-hailing services in Indonesia have not been all smooth, with protests coming from drivers of "conventional" modes of transportation.

The government has issued, but postponed, a series of regulations that it claims will create a level playing field between the app-based services and other modes.

The latest regulation came in form of Transportation Ministry Decree No. 26/2017 on the apps' fleet quota and base and ceiling prices.

However, another survey conducted by the Indonesian Consumers Foundation (YLKI) reveals that most users object to the pricing plan.

About 63 percent of 4,668 respondents said they opposed the plan, which the government expects to implement on July 1.

YLKI's survey was conducted from April 5 to 16. Male respondents accounted for 55 percent and most of the surveyed were 26 to 35 years old.

Affordable prices, speed, comfort and security played key roles in their decision to use ride-hailing apps.

Go-Jek topped the list of the most-used apps, followed by Grab, Uber and My BlueBird. (dra)