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Exploratory approach to teenage moped and light motorcycle driving: between risk-taking and safety.

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► To cite this version:

Sandrine Gaymard, Mathieu Bessin. Exploratory approach to teenage moped and light motorcycle driving: between risk-taking and safety.. 5th International Conference on Traffic and Transport Psychology (ICTTP), Aug 2012, Groningen, Netherlands. 2012. hal-03355899

HAL Id: hal-03355899

<https://univ-angers.hal.science/hal-03355899>

Submitted on 27 Sep 2021

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The 5th International Conference on Traffic and Transport Psychology, Groningen, The Netherlands, August 29-31, 2012



RESEARCH CONTEXT

The concept of social representation (Moscovici, 1961/76) articulated with normative aspects (Flament, 2001; Gaymard, 2003a) is the framework of this study.

Social representation can be defined as a “functional vision” which allows individuals to give a meaning to their behaviour. When studying an object of representation, it is possible to observe via the replies, the complex reflection of various normative models.

Several studies based on a specific methodology enable to highlight these models in the field of biculturalism (Gaymard, 2003b), education (Gaymard & Andrés, 2009) or road safety (Gaymard, 2009).

The aim of this work is to show the influence of normative models in the representation of young teenage riders.

Keys-words: Social representation, mopeds, teenagers.

POPULATION AND METHODOLOGY

The population is composed of 34 senior high school students. Their average age is 16.3 (SD=0.87). They have been driving a motor scooter for 1.9 years on average (SD=0.73). In this sample, only boys were selected considering their involvement in accidents.

We elaborated a questionnaire constituted by thirteen items, following the model of alternative choices questionnaire (Gaymard, 2003a). Each item includes a model « A » closer to the risk-taking and young people’s lifestyle, and a model « B » closer to safe behaviour. Each young chooses A or B for himself (standard condition) and answers as their parents would do and as their friends would do (table 1).

We used a Q plane methodology (Reuchlin, 1976) and multiple regression analysis.

Table 1 : Alternative choice questionnaire adapted to motor scooter riding; example of item 5.

	Myself	Parents	Friends
5-A: The advantage of the motor scooter is to go faster.			
5-B: On a motor scooter, you don't exceed 30 m.p.h.			

RESULTS

The regression model explained 73% of the total variance. We observe that the peer model weighs heavily against the parent model (table 2). Thus the standard condition replies are largely influenced by the peer model which is a good predictor.

Table 2 : Regression summary

	Non stantardized		Standardized		
	Coefficient	Std.Error	Beta	t	p
Constant	.394	.308		1.280	.229
Parents	.040	.126	.055	.318	.757
Friends	.640	.128	.870	5.015	.001

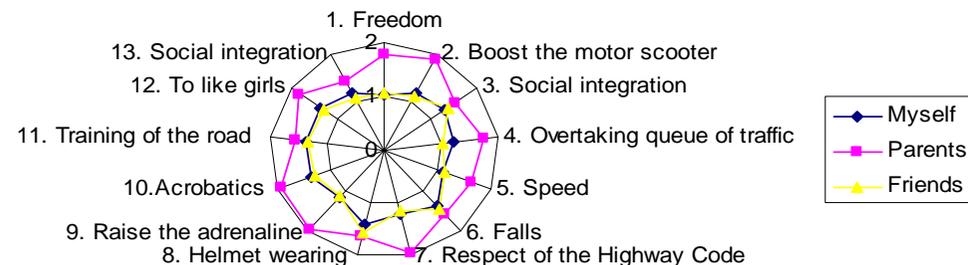


Figure 1 : Layout of the average profiles

Figure 1 shows the layout of the three average profiles. We saw that the young people’s choices and the choices for the peers are closer to the risk-taking side (model A). The choices attributed to parents are closer to the safety side (model B). We can identify some aspects for which young appear agree in their choices with their parents such as the item 8 “helmet wearing”.

CONCLUSION

The moped is the favorite implement of mobility of teenagers but during adolescence, young people and more particularly boys easily adopt risky behaviours (Brandau, Daghofer, Hofmann & Spitzer, 2011; Gaymard, Bessin, Bordarie & Leguen, in press).

The aim of this study was to show the impact of normative models, parents and peers, on the young riders’ choices. In the multiple regression analysis, this last appears as the best predictor. These results confirm the importance of the peer model during adolescence. In the field of motor car driving, Gaymard (2009) shows this effect with young adults. Even if adolescents are more closer to the model of risk-taking, they must negotiate certain aspects with their parents, who are closer to the security model (for example the helmet wearing).

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