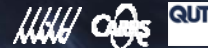




Choosing not to speed: A qualitative exploration of differences in perceptions about speed limit compliance.

**Judy Fleiter
Alexia Lennon & Barry Watson**

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The Way Ahead

- Drivers who speed and those who don't
- Why these differences are important to study
- Current study
- Implications



Driving speeds

- A growing body of evidence confirms that speeding contributes to the:
 - risk of crash involvement
 - severity of a crash.
- Many factors contribute to driving speed.
- Majority of previous research has focused on those who exceed speed limits.
- May benefit from understanding speeding from the perspective of those who don't.



Driver differences ¹

- Drivers who DO NOT (or rarely) speed are more likely to:
 - be female and older
 - view speed limit compliance as a moral issue
 - believe compliance is easy and common

(Elliott, 2001; Forward, 2006; Silcock et al, 2000; Stradling, 2007)



Driver differences ²

- Drivers who DO speed are more likely to be:
 - younger and male
 - **more comfortable at high speeds**
 - less likely to see speeding as dangerous
 - **less deterred by speed cameras**
 - believe they have less control over speed
 - **certain of being fined if caught**
 - experience time pressure when driving

(Fleiter & Watson, 2006; Fylan et al, 2006; Harrison et al, 1998;
Hatfield & Job, 2006; McKenna, 2005, Williams et al, 2006)



The current study

- Examined perceptions relating to themes:
 - Time
 - Safety
 - Control
 - Enforcement
- Part of a larger qualitative examination of factors influential on driving speed across various driver types (N=67).



Participants

	Speed Rarely	Speed Regularly
<i>n</i>	10	12
Mean Age	46.4 yrs	34.25 yrs
<i>SD</i>	18.01	14.74
Range	26-77 yrs	18-59 yrs
Gender split	5F, 5M	10F, 2 M



Focus groups

- 2 x Speed Rarely & 2 x Speed Regularly
- 60 - 90 minutes duration, audio-recorded.
- Questions:
 - personal definitions of speeding,
 - ease/difficulty of compliance with limits,
 - influences on speed selection.
- Demographic data:
 - Age, gender
 - No. speeding offences & crashes in previous 3 yrs
 - No. licence suspensions/disqualifications



Validating self-selection

Group	% reporting offences	% reporting crashes	% reporting licence sanctions
Speed Rarely (n = 10)	10	0	0
Speed Regularly (n = 12)	83	42	33
Males <25 yrs (n = 7)	42	16	0



Definitions of speeding & attitudes about compliance ¹

All groups defined speeding as driving above posted limits.

▪ Rare Speeders:

- safety-related responses,
- indicating acceptance of need for and compliance with legislated speed limits,
- underpinned by a moral imperative.

"...it's a choice to be as safe as I can be." (Male, 39)

"it is always morally wrong [to speed] because you are risking your safety and others too." (Male, 47)



Definitions of speeding & attitudes about compliance ²

Regular Speeders:

“ Well I do any speed I want really, ‘cause I drive so much. Sitting on 130 for me is nothing when I’m driving, you know, 20 hours at a time. I don’t think that’s speeding really.” (Male, 27)

“ ...115 [km/hr] being the absolute minimum [before I consider it speeding].” (Female, 19)

“ You have your own limits of course...you can certainly get up to 160.” (Male, 54)

“ I’ll definitely go like 20 ks over [in a 60 km/hr zone], if I know I have to be somewhere.” (Female, 18)



Definitions of speeding & attitudes about compliance ³

- happens by default, no conscious thought.

“ You don’t have to use your brain to drive...it’s really just going on automatic.” (Female, 59)

“ ...you are just driving, to a degree, absent-mindedly. You can get up to 160 [km/hour] and not be aware of it.” (Male, 54)



Definitions of speeding & attitudes about compliance ⁴

“Once you know the street, you don’t bother [with speed limits]. I think, ‘oh stuff it, I’ll just drive at whatever’.” (Female, 20)

“Actually, I’ll be honest, I’ve lived here 24 years and I don’t even know what the speed limit is out on our roads.” (Female, 53)



Definitions of speeding & attitudes about compliance ⁵

- **Rare Speeders:**
 - strong moral imperative to comply
 - desire to remain safe.

- **Regular Speeders:**
 - base speed on individual preference
 - not on legal requirements, moral imperatives or safety concerns
 - lack of importance placed on driving task.



Ease of compliance ₁

Rare Speeders:

- Little or no difficulty adhering to speed limits
- Linked to conscious effort to obey.

“I just think it is easy to not speed, it is easy for me to take the time, easy for me to decide that I will drive under the speed limit.” (Female, 26)

“You just do it [comply] because you want to.”
(Male, 39)



Ease of compliance ₂

Regular Speeders

- Reported difficulty complying for a number of reasons.

1. Perceived incongruence between access to faster vehicles and ever-decreasing speed limits:

“I find [complying] ridiculous...they're making faster cars and they're getting us to drive slower...that doesn't make it easy.” (Female, 59)



Ease of compliance ³

2. A desire not to feel hemmed in:

“It’s about having your space around you...you speed because you want to get away [from drivers close behind]. Whether you’re gonna go 20 ks [over the limit]...you don’t really think about that.”

(Female, 20)



Ease of compliance ⁴

3. Cognitive distractions:

“In business where you have to do a lot of thinking about your job, you hop in your car...use that time as thinking time.

If I’m driving to a client or away from a client, I’m usually thinking what I’m going to say to him or how I’m going to approach the deal...so I think that is a problem [for compliance].” (Male, 54)



Stress associated with speeding 1

Rare speeders:

- Driving at or under the speed limit contributes to stress-free travel:

“It [complying] just cuts all the stress out of driving I reckon.” (Male, 33)

“I just seem to be content...I know the limit, I set me thing [cruise control] and away I go, and I never worry about being over .” (Male, 77)



Stress associated with speeding 2

Regular Speeders:

- Reported a rush of excitement and stress-release associated with exceeding speed limits.

“I think it’s that adrenaline surge [that makes it hard to comply]. I feel so much better when I’m speeding.” (Female, 46)

“Part of it [speeding] is relaxation actually.”

(Female, 59)



Time pressure 1

Rare speeders:

- plan for potential delays
- don't equate speeding with time saving

"I think it's proactive to think ahead and try and plan for what might hold you up so you can still be in charge of the trip." (Male, 41)

"I plan so I'm not in a hurry, even in peak hour...speeding is so unnecessary." (Male, 33)



Time pressure 2

Regular Speeders:

- running late featured prominently,
- some indicated time constraints are ever-present.

"You've got a party to get to...you've got 5 minutes, you're running late, you're going to speed...if you're not organised enough, you end up speeding." (Female, 20)

"The cars [on highway] are consistently going at 120, so if you want to get somewhere [on time], you end up around 120 [in a 100 km/hr zone]."
(Female, 49)



Time pressure 3

“Deep down, I’m trying to make up a little bit of time all the time, ‘cause I’m generally going to a meeting or something...you can get locked out if you’re late.”

“Driving to work, I generally leave a bit late ‘cause I do a few too many things around the house before I go...I don’t even know what speed I drive...I just get in and I drive, and the only thing that slows me down is um, if there is another car in front of me that’s driving slow...[laughs].”

(Female, 53)



Time pressure 4

Suggests that:

**Rare Speeders
see themselves in control of their travel speed**

BUT

**Regular Speeders
see more externally-related control mechanisms.**



Avoiding detection

Site learning (Regular speeders)

"I like to think that I know where their speeding things [cameras] are." (Female, 59)

"I like to watch the roof of every car coming towards me... I can pick a cop car for miles" (Male, 54)

"I think it's [speeding] a lot more stressful at night 'cause usually in your rear mirror, you can work out whether it's a cop car. At night they can hide." (Female, 46)



Avoiding sanctions 1

1. Opportunistic points sharing

"My best friend has had multiple fines and both her parents have taken fines for her." (Female <25)

"It goes on all the time. I've talked to all the blokes at work, lots of them do it for their family....they've always got people taking points for them." (Male >50)



Avoiding sanctions ²

2. Systematic points sharing

"I know one bloke who does it...a young girl he bought his off. She lives in the city, in peak hour traffic, you're never going to get done [booked for speeding]."

Another bloke, he pays, like if someone's got 12 points, and he gets a speeding fine, he'll say, I'll give [money in exchange for your points]." (Male, 27)



Avoiding sanctions ³

■ Work-related driving

- company pays higher fine by not nominating a driver

"If they [company] pay triple the fine, they [driver] don't lose any points...the company pays the money if you don't put down who was driving". (Regular, M27)

"The Transport Department or Queensland Government [say], 'we don't really care if you're speeding or not, just give us \$450 bucks and we'll turn a blind eye to it'."

Perceived as evidence of revenue raising, not harm minimisation.



Avoiding sanctions ⁴

- **Willing sanction defiance**

"I did 3 months without a licence, 'cause I lost my licence [for speeding]. [My options were to have] one point for 12 months or lose it [licence] for 3 [months] and get your whole 12 [points] back [after 3 months]."

Facilitator: "How did that affect work?"

"Well I just kept driving." (Regular, M27)

- May signal altered perception of apprehension risk, and/or dismissal of severity/legitimacy of sanction.



Discussion

- **Consistent with previous research**
 - 2 factors predicting intention to NOT speed: belief that speeding was easy to control & perceived moral obligation to not speed.

Control over speed choice an important distinction

- **Proactive strategies to avoid time pressure (Rare)**
 - Trip planning & time management
- **Speed to arrive on time (Regular)**
 - Challenge notion that speeding saves time?
 - SafeCar project



Lack of awareness of/attention to speed limits

Regular speeders

- Lack of moral compulsion to conform
- Casual attitude to enforcement?
- Immune from compliance & consequences?

- If licence sanctions are ineffective for some drivers, should we consider vehicle sanctions?



Attention on driving task

- Mindful of safety of self and others (Rare)
- Absent-minded/automatic (Regular)

- Is driver distraction/inattention particularly relevant to those who speed regularly?

- Do they have an elevated crash risk beyond that associated with faster speeds?





The Way Ahead ?

- Two extremes of the speeding spectrum...
- Remainder fall somewhere in the middle:
“ the Undecided ”
- Future countermeasures could appeal to this group using factors that appear pertinent to those who choose not to speed.



The Way Ahead ?

Promoting positive consequences of choosing not to speed.

- Trip planning
- Time management
- Ease of compliance
- Safety of self and others
- Stress-free driving
- Reinforcing the ‘right thing to do’
- Challenge notion that speeding saves time.



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Dedicated to K. Thorn



CRICOS No 00213J



Thank you

j.fleiter@qut.edu.au

