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Diving Deep into the Screen: The Realities of Online Transport Tariff Disputes

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to uncover the reality of online transportation "fees", a primary source of conflict, and to explore the social structures and cultural patterns that construct these fees. Employing a netnographic method, this study reveals the socially mediated realities behind tariff disputes. Our findings indicate that drivers perceive the “fee” not merely as income but as a socio-culturally binding burden that fosters dependency. We delineate the social and cultural structures emergent from this fee system. Consequently, we propose a transformative approach rooted in local values to reconfigure this reality into a form of conflict resolution and enhance driver prosperity. This study offer significant practical and policy implications.

1. Introduction

Online driver applications are part of technological development that has been rampant in several countries, including Asian regions such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and India. The development of this application encourages many start-ups that offer services with their respective advantages. Some of these online driver services and applications are Gojek, Grab, Maxime, and other forms of e-hailing. This application's use is also inseparable from the *user interface*, *which* can help users to the maximum in one application that offers convenience to carry out this *online* motorcycle taxi service. The existence of this application is welcomed by the community, especially those who are jobless and or who expect significant additional income. Several drivers E-Hailing application users. Profit-sharing wage system for drivers and providers on online driver applications such as Gojek, Grab, and Maxime

The State of Mobile 2024 Report published by Data.ai shows that there are at least five best-selling online transportation applications downloaded in Indonesia throughout 2022-2023, ranking first with an average download per month reaching 957 thousand downloads from Indonesian mobile phones or *smartphone* users in 2023 can be seen in the following table:

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Table 1. Five best-selling online transportation applications

Data Name	2022	2023
Gojek	1.358.000	957.000
maxim	773.000	892.000
inDrive	297.000	321.000
Grab Driver	207.000	170.000
Taxsee Driver	113.000	135.000

Source: https://databoks.katadata.co.id/

According to a survey by the Research and Development Agency (Balitbang) of the Ministry of Transportation (Kemenhub), in 2019, as many as 34.5%. *Online* ojek drivers only have an income of Rp1 million-Rp2 million per month. Meanwhile, according to the Ministry of Transportation's Balitbang survey in 2022, as many as 50.1% of *online* ojek driver respondents only earn Rp50 thousand-Rp100 100,000 daily. Meanwhile, 44.1% of respondents incur daily operating costs of Rp50 thousand-Rp100 thousand.

Head of Advocacy and Society of the Indonesian Transportation Society (MTI) Djoko Setijowarno emphasized that the daily income of *online ojek* drivers is almost equal to their operational costs. This means that the income they get is only enough to pay for fuel, food, and drink while working. This is not in line with the promise of *online-based* transportation applicators in 2016, which reached Rp8 million per month. This fact makes it hard to make this profession a living..

The Ministry of Transportation's Balitbang survey in 2022 also found that 52.08% of *online* ojek drivers admitted that they rarely received bonuses from applicators such as Gojek, Grab, and Maxim. Then 37.4% never get bonuses from applicants, and 75% rarely get tips from passengers. The survey was conducted *online* on 13-20 September 2022 after the government raised the price of subsidized fuel oil (BBM) types of Pertalite and Solar.

Online ojek drivers involved in this survey totaled 2,016 respondents, with domiciles spread across Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi. 81% of them are male, and 40% are between 20-30 years old. There are also *online ojek* drivers who are able to earn Rp4 million-Rp5 million per month, but the proportion is tiny, as shown in the following table:

Table 2. Before and after the use of application

DATA NAME	BEFORE	AFTER
<Rp1 Million	19,5	18,5
Rp1-2 Million	23,8	34,5
Rp2-3 Million	26	26,9
Rp3-4 Million	19,4	14,6
Idr 4-5 Million	6,8	4,3

Source: https://databoks.katadata.co.id/

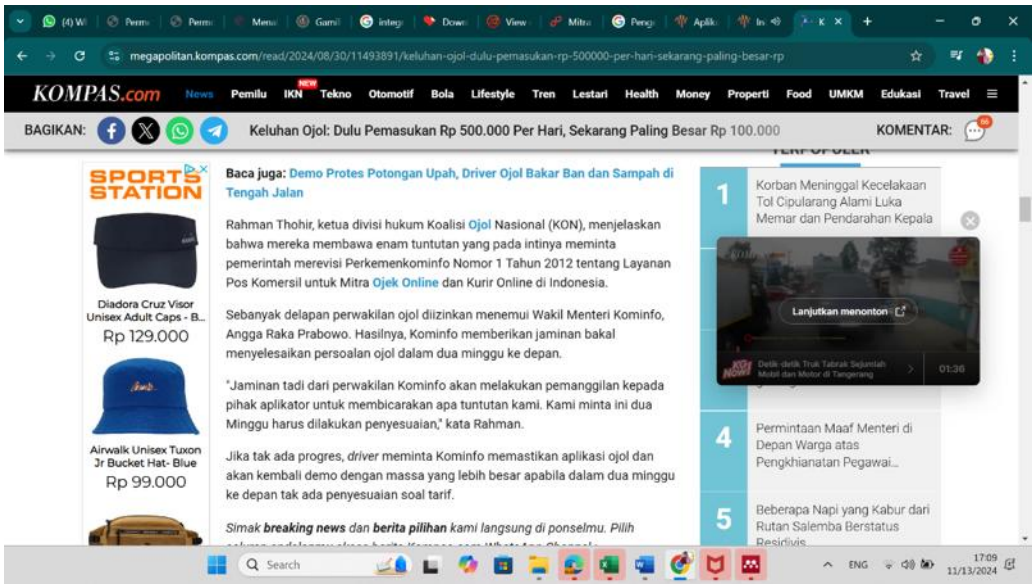
Although their income has increased nominally after using online transportation applications, they still complain about their real income after deducting some of the costs they incur.

Figure 1. The Complaint of the Ojek Driver

Source : bbc.com/indonesia

BBC News Indonesia met with several online transportation drivers who said they earn between Rp10,000 and Rp100,000 a day. There are even times when they earn zero rupiah. That is why, of the 1,000 online transportation and courier drivers studied by London School of Economic (LSE) doctoral student Muhammad Yorga Permana, 66% said they wanted to quit and, if there was an opportunity, switch to office work.

Figure 2. Online transportation Complaints



Source : https://megapolitan.kompas.com/read/2024/08/30/11493891/keluhan-online transportation-dulu-pemasukan-rp-500000-per-hari-sekarang-paling-besar-rp).

However, the Gojek application company claims it always complies with government regulations and seeks to improve the welfare of its driver partners so that it can impact Indonesia's economic growth. Rahman Thohir, head of the legal division of the National Online transportation Coalition (KON), explained that they brought six demands which

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essentially asked the government to revise Perkemenkominfo No. 1/2012 on Commercial Postal Services for Online Ojek Partners and Online Couriers in Indonesia. Eight major representatives were allowed to meet the Deputy Minister of Communication and Information, Angga Raka Prabowo. As a result, Kominfo gave a guarantee that it would resolve the central issue in the next two weeks. "The guarantee from the Kominfo representative is that they will call the applicant to discuss our demands. We ask that adjustments be made in two weeks," said Rahman. If there is no progress, the drivers ask Kominfo to ensure the job application and will return to the demo with a larger mass if, in the next two weeks, there is no adjustment to the tariff. (This article has been published on Kompas.com with the title "Online transportation Complaints: Used to earn Rp 500,000 Per Day, Now the Most is Rp 100,000".

This research aims to reveal some complaints from online transportation drivers in three countries, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, and India, to find out whether the mechanism and profit-sharing system of the e Hailing application meets the principles of justice and has an impact on increasing the real income of drivers or not by using Netnography techniques.

E-hailing services have revolutionized urban mobility in India, offering millions of convenient and affordable transportation options. Platforms like Ola and Uber have become ubiquitous, connecting passengers with drivers through smartphone apps. However, the rapid growth of this sector has also brought forth a range of challenges that demand attention.

One of the primary concerns is the precarity of work for drivers. Many drivers are independent contractors, facing fluctuating incomes, long working hours, and lack of social security benefits. The algorithmic nature of these platforms can also lead to exploitation, with drivers often facing pressure to accept rides at low fares or face deactivation.

Another critical issue is road safety. While e-hailing services have the potential to improve road safety by reducing drunk driving, concerns remain regarding driver fatigue, overworking, and the lack of adequate background checks. The rise of ride-sharing has also contributed to traffic congestion in many Indian cities, as more vehicles compete for limited road space.

The regulatory landscape surrounding e-hailing services in India is also complex and evolving. Issues such as licensing, taxation, and data privacy remain contentious. The lack of clear regulations can create an uneven playing field and hinder the sector's sustainable growth. Furthermore, the social impact of e-hailing services is a subject of ongoing debate. While these platforms have created employment opportunities, they have disrupted traditional taxi services, leading to job displacement and social equity concerns.

Addressing these challenges requires a multi-pronged approach. Policymakers must work with industry stakeholders to develop a comprehensive regulatory framework that protects drivers and passengers. This framework should address issues such as minimum wages, social security benefits, and driver safety standards.

Technological innovations can also play a crucial role in mitigating some of these challenges. For example, predictive analytics can optimize driver schedules and reduce idle time, while blockchain technology can enhance data security and transparency.

In conclusion, e-hailing services have transformed urban mobility in India, but their rapid growth has brought forth various challenges. Addressing these challenges requires a

collaborative effort between policymakers, industry stakeholders, and researchers to ensure that this transformative technology benefits both riders and drivers while promoting sustainable and equitable urban development.

The shift from conventional to online transportation systems has affected working arrangements, with drivers often classified as partners rather than employees [1]. This partnership model is likened to the Sharia concept of shirkah 'inan, where parties contribute resources and share profits or losses [2]. Mobile applications have been developed to improve data processing and reporting to address challenges in the vehicle rental industry [3]. Although drivers receive some protection, such as accident compensation and social security, these benefits often depend on certain conditions during transportation activities [1].

Recent research has explored various online mechanisms to improve efficiency and user experience in various domains. In the field of mechanism analysis, web-based systems have been developed to allow users to perform kinematic and dynamic analysis, graphical plots, and animation of planar mechanisms online [4]. For ridesharing services, online hybrid mechanisms have been proposed to optimize matching, routing, and pricing while satisfying user preferences and ensuring financial sustainability [5]. In mobile edge computing, online allocation mechanisms based on time splitting and combinatorial auctions have been designed to address resource allocation challenges. In addition, the *Reconfigurable Mechanism for Application Control* (RMAC) framework has been introduced for direct machining and control, enabling CAD/CAM applications to control mechanisms directly through device drivers, eliminating the need for traditional M&G codes. One of the findings is a community-driven navigation app that provides real-time traffic and road condition updates on Driver Online. The app offers driving directions based on live traffic updates from fellow drivers [6].

The Gojek driver application uses a gamification system that blurs the line between work and play, creating the illusion of freedom while potentially exploiting drivers [7]. Partnership agreements between Gojek and drivers are made electronically, with standardized terms for all partners. Although Gojek offers some protections, such as safety guarantees, the relationship between drivers and the company is not fully regulated by labor laws [8]. Drivers face challenges such as false orders and unilateral cancellations, which can affect their well-being. Platform-based business models attract workers with the promise of flexibility and higher wages but also create vulnerability by removing certain workers' rights, such as social security and overtime pay. Ultimately, the promised well-being may be illusory, as drivers experience exploitation through unreasonable working hours and income inconsistency [9].

Several studies have examined profit-sharing systems in ride-hailing services such as Gojek and Grab. Research shows that the Gojek wage system in Yogyakarta is considered fair, providing equal opportunities and transparent treatment to drivers [10]. The partnership between Gojek and its drivers is likened to the Sharia concept of syirkah 'inan, where both parties contribute and share profits or losses [2]. These findings highlight the complex dynamics of profit sharing and competition in the ride-hailing industry.

Of the many previous studies that discuss the work system in the digitalization of transportation services, mechanisms, and profit-sharing systems that are considered fair, the

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researcher actually found another interesting phenomenon that is different, namely that there is dissatisfaction among online drivers with the profit sharing system that has an impact on their actual income so that this research space is what researchers want to enter by offering developments from the method aspect, namely using Netnography techniques in collecting data and data analysis techniques that are slightly different from the qualitative approach in general.

2. Method

This research uses living netnography as a method. The reason for using living netnography is that researchers want to raise and look deeper into how people interact and shape their culture in today's massive social media and try not only to trace the culture but also constructively provide changes and impacts on the culture that exists on social media and the original reality outside social media. For Kozinet itself, Netnography is an effective and efficient tool or method for exploring online communities.

> Netnography is ethnography adapted to the study of online communities. As a method, netnography is faster, simpler, and less expensive than traditional ethnography and more naturalistic and unobtrusive than focus groups or interviews [11].

Initially, netnography was used by (Kozinets, 2002) to interpret the symbols, culture, and consumption patterns of online communities or netizens in the field of marketing, but considering that cultural patterns are also present in accounting, this netnography can also be used in accounting and business research [12-13]. In accounting, Netnography can provide a new lens to study accountability. It can also be used to analyze stakeholder interactions and government-society interactions [12]. These types of realities cannot be captured by the usual lenses or research methods, so netnography is an appropriate method. However, researchers cannot just follow or agree with the online culture that shapes how society is today. Researchers think there needs to be an act of change so that culture is filtered in accordance with the original reality of the archipelago. Because of this, we follow the Living Netnography rules, which were born from the archipelago paradigm's lens [14]. Online reality is not the "real" reality; it contains many symbols and cultural patterns formed by various values. To find the absolute truth, Kozinest's (2002) ' Netnography cannot be fully used. The reality of Kozinet's Netnography actually believes in existentialist consciousness, where consciousness is formed due to the existence of surrounding reality, but does not have the basis of belief in a person. As we already know, Indonesian people have a strong belief in God even long before modern times [11]. It is proven that in every decision in the government of the Mataram and Majapahit kingdoms and their interactions with the people, the King always bases himself on the presence of the highest Reality, namely God [15][16]. It can be said that the DNA of the archipelago contains holiness, namely the presence of the highest reality. This cannot be captured by ordinary netnography, so if symbolism and patterns that contain religiosity appear, it will be considered a mere myth. Even in secular ethnography, religion is only seen as a function, not a real value [17]. The interaction between religion and Indigenous culture can ultimately form an Islamic epicenter or

epicenter society based on the interaction of religion, culture, society, and politics. All of them are inseparable and will always be connected to become a real driver of change.

The context and setting of this research is the online community related to the fee or tariff policy set by Gojek and its partners. The *gojek* party in the spotlight is the *owner* or owner of the e-hailing start-up company, followed by the *gojek* application, which is a tool used by the public and *gojek* partners. At the same time, *gojek* partners are currently considered partners and work for *gojek*, while the public uses these services. The interaction patterns of the three parties can be seen online on social media, the terms are interpreted from these online interactions. This study or observation was conducted intensively for one week following the video's upload. This period was strategically selected as it captured the peak of viral engagement and the most intense, emotionally charged interactions among users, which is primary focus of our netnographic analysis. While longer immersion is common in netnography, the concentrated and high-volume discourse. Researchers also looked at the official social media of business owners or start-ups on Instagram, namely Gojek Indonesia. We use the YouTube social media platform because YouTube is in the form of videos that can influence people and trigger people with interesting discussion themes. The duration of YouTube videos is also longer than others. Indonesian people from all walks of life are also very familiar with YouTube. Referring to Tempo.com, 91% of Indonesians use YouTube shorts more often than other social media platforms. The number of hours spent on content grew by more than 85% from June 2023 to June 2024. 77% of users choose YouTube for in-depth topic exploration. YouTube users reached 139 million, meaning that 48.9% of the Indonesian population uses YouTube. (**www.worldometers.info)**. We used a lurking approach in this study, which is an in-depth observation of one theme in the comments column of the video that is the object of research. Participants in lurking are those who are directly involved in the discussion about the video posted by one of the private television stations in Indonesia, namely partners and the e-hailing community. The data collected are comments related to the video posted by the account owner. The account posted a video titled "Blak-blakan! Curhatan online transportation driver Kepihan Potongan Aplikator | Indonesia Business Forum tvOne" posted on September 18, 2024. This post has 1200 likes, 1650 comments and has been watched 116,784 times. Data on the number of views, likes, and comments is important because this video has high engagement. This engagement arises because of similar feelings, fate, and sympathy for the problem of online transportation tariffs. In addition, comment data is also critical because it is there that interaction, discussion, and symbols must be interpreted. Because this research uses lurking techniques, without interviews, we want to see the symbols and social and cultural interactions that arise from the video naturally. Therefore, the author did not comment or intervene in the process. Kozinet (2002 p 63) states:

> In general, online communities should be preferred that have (1) a more focused and research question-relevant segment, topic, or group; (2) higher "traffic" of postings; (3) larger numbers of discrete message posters; (4) more detailed or descriptively rich data; and (5) more between-member interactions of the type required by the research question. These evaluations entail an

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important adaptation of ethnography to the online context, and their use distinguishes the method of netnography from traditional ethnography [11].

So, in this study, the data is collected entirely online because it looks at how communities interact with each other. As mentioned by Kozinets (2002), the community here comprises parties who have an interest in or empathy for e-hailing users. This research has seven stages including: (1) find the issue/problem of our research on social media (IG/Youtube/Tiktok); 2) See the viral content and look at the comments on the content; 3) make field notes; 4) create a descriptive question matrix 5) conduct semantic relationship analysis and create an analysis domain then examine comments on social media and find keywords that are related to the domain we are researching, namely "FEE"; 5) make a focused analysis; 6) make a taxonomic analysis to look for relationship patterns; 7) create componential analysis and cultural themes[11].

After stages 1 to 2 are complete, we analyze the data and notes in our field notes. In stage 4, we made a description question matrix to find relationships and patterns that arise in the field related to the problem under study and understand the social setting [18]. For example, the question of *"why do applicators have to give deductions on fees?"*. Stage 5 is to look for semantic relationships and make a domain analysis. Next, we conducted a semantic relationship analysis based on the many comments recorded in the filed notes to narrow down the analysis. We looked for cultural categories or expressions to find the relationship with the keyword we focused on, "FEE." The next stage was domain analysis, where we detailed the semantic relationships to find various cultural categorizations. The next stage is taxonomic analysis, which selects the domains that will be used for in-depth study. After that, we conducted a contrastive and componential analysis, and finally, we uncovered the cultural themes that emerged.

3. Results and Discussions

Research site selection

Figure 3. The Research Site

Source: Indonesia Business Forum

This is our research site, a YouTube video uploaded by the channel of one of the private television stations in Indonesia on September 18, 2024. Since its airing until January 7, 2025,

this video has received 117,000 views with 1,360 likes from viewers and 1,610 comments. The channel itself has received a total of 9.90 billion views and 14.8 million subscribers. We took this site because it fits the purpose of our research, which is to uncover the meaning of fees and propose policy changes on this issue. From the title, we also assume that it will invite debate interactions both pro to online drivers and against online drivers. Furthermore, to obtain a complete social setting condition, we make a question matrix to make or interpret the relationship patterns in this comment because comments are part of social interaction, and cultural symbols appear in them [18].

Table 1. Question Matrix

	Space	**Actor**	**Activity**
Space	The cultural space studied is social media (IG, YouTube)	Actors shape the space by posting on social media to externalize their situation.	Activities undertaken create content related to their "vent" interaction through social media content comments.
Actor	Actors are in the real world but exist in virtual space	The main actors are online ojek drivers and users/people who are online ojek customers.	Activities occur because actors become partners of online motorcycle taxi applicators and experience problems. After all, their aspirations are not heard, so they realize them through social media content.
Activity	activities happening on social media	Actors contribute to the activity by creating content	Drivers attended a dialogue event related to the polemics over tariffs/fees from online motorcycle taxis which were facilitated by
Object	complaint content posted on social media	by creating content on personal social media	Social media applications allow actors to interact with each other through liking, commenting, sharing, saving, and using certain emoticons.

The questions in the Table 1 matrix will guide us to lurk in our research site's comments. The four dimensions of the matrix are space, actor, activity, and object. Since the key research object is "FEE," the design of this matrix is based on this key research object. Space is the place where social and cultural interactions occur. Actors are informants involved in the interaction. Activities are activities that occur or are experienced by informants that are revealed in the comments column when interacting. The object we observe is the posting of comments made by both drivers. In the comments column of the existing video, we analyze how online drivers tell stories to express their feelings regarding fees. Table 1 shows that these questions are more focused on online transportation drivers because we see them as the "victims" of this business. However, a system that maintains a large circulation of capital among top management means that it has gained added value, while this added value is obtained from workers who work in the field; this is how the capitalist system works [19]. It can be said that this reality is constructed. From this perspective, we cannot just look from the lens of objectivity; this problem is caused by one big value, namely capitalism. With these questions, we then lurked on important terms that appeared in the comments. These terms are in Table 2.

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Table 2. Domain analysis worksheet

Included Term	Semantic Relationship	Cover Term
Bill	Is a kind of	
Incentives	Is a kind of	
Revenue	Is a kind of	
Deposit	It is a kind of	
Income	Is a kind of	
Tips/Tip Money	Is a part of	
Partner	actors who got	
Driver	actors who got	
Applicator	Decider	
Government	Arbitrary	
Cost/Cost	cost	
Discounted Selling Price	cost	
Prosperity	Reason for doing	
Difficult/Difficult Condition	Effect of	Fee
Inequality/ Unfairness	Effect of	
Victim Applicator/ Victim	Effect of	
Modern Slavery	Effect of	
Online Transportation/E-Hailing System	sequential chronological stages	
Forced Labor System	sequential chronological stages	
Muter-Muter / Going Around	sequential chronological stages	
Narik/Transporting Passengers	sequential chronological stages	
Application	Tools to get	
Sad Emoticon 😢	negative result of	
Tumb Emoticons 👍	negative result of	
Laugh Out Loud Emoticons 😂	negative result of	
Love Emoticon ❤️	negative result of	
Surprised 😮	negative result of	

Domain analysis

Domain analysis allows researchers to explore accounting practices as part of a cultural process [20]. We grouped the comments to make a cultural categorization in the domain analysis [18]. As shown in Table 1, according to Kamayanti's (2020) procedure, we made a domain analysis by finding the cultural terms that appeared and then looking for semantic relationships with our main domain of "FEE." As a result, several semantic relationships emerged [18]. From this domain analysis, several terms emerged that have semantic relationships with Fee. Bill, incentive, income, and deposit are terms we found in the comments column that are similar to the term Fee. So viewers who are online transportation drivers and sympathizers give the meaning that a fee is a "bill," which means not their own, something income that they have to deposit, the same as a deposit. Income and revenue also have similar terms, incentives are bonuses.

Incentives have an important role in shaping behavior to maintain the employer's dominant ideology [19]. In a position of conflict and power of interest, the establishment of capitalist ideology can be maintained through the agency theory narrative that glorifies materialistic values [21]. In a historical context, the term incentive has evolved. The concept of incentives from the Cold War era is a distinguishing factor between socialist and capitalist systems. Crombie (2003) found that the narrative shifted post-Cold War, emphasizing the role of incentives in the politics of unemployment and the discourse of Shared Obligation influenced by Adam Smith's Neo-Classical ideology, and created inequities during this period. Our finding also reinforces that the tone in the comments section is hostile towards the applicators.

The following semantic relationship analysis is driver and partner. In actual terms, a driver is a person who uses the app to work, while a partner in KBBI is a colleague or friend who should have the same role and contribution. This is because the narrative of friends is balanced, not superiors and subordinates, while drivers mean people who work. Because the term working person is the dominant meaning understood by the actor, so what is felt by the driver is working for the owner with inadequate fees and incentives. This is revealed in the semantic relationship of negative expressions such as victims of applicators and modern slavery. Accounting can indeed shape violence and dehumanization [22-23], and enable modern slavery to occur. Accounting can do so by reducing humans to numbers [24], in his statement:

Accounting terms and reports dehumanized enslaved men and women, classifying them as assets and loan collateral. Accounting forms and statements treated slave ownership and the use of slave labor as routine. In these ways, accounting statements helped normalize and legitimize the practice of slavery and helped distance investors and lenders from its brutal reality [24],

The emergence of the term ‘modern slavery’ in the discourse is not merely metaphorical; it aligns with the critical accounting perspective that accounting practice can dehumanize labor and facilitate exploitation [22]. By reducing driver contributions to mere numbers (e.g. fees, incentives, ratings) within an algorithmically managed system, the platform obscures the human cost of its operations. The cultural appearance of this term in the comments is a powerful vernacular critique of the capitalist logic embedded within the platform’s accounting and governance model, where drivers feel stripped of agency and treated as interchangeable assets. This is corroborated by some system terms in the comments column, such as e-hailing system (online motorcycle taxi system) and forced labor system, which shows excessive work but only gets a little reward. The term muter-muter (going around), which drivers use to get passengers or customers, also appears. Because of these negative tones, the terms victim of applicators and unfairness also emerged. In the end, emoticon symbols appeared in the comments column, showing sadness and support for online drivers.

The emoticon symbol itself has meaning in netnography. Emoticons and emojis are significant tools for understanding social and cultural trends in online communities. Emoticons are a visual language that goes beyond traditional text. Emoticons represent emotional expressions, cultural nuances, and social interactions. Emoticons can be analyzed

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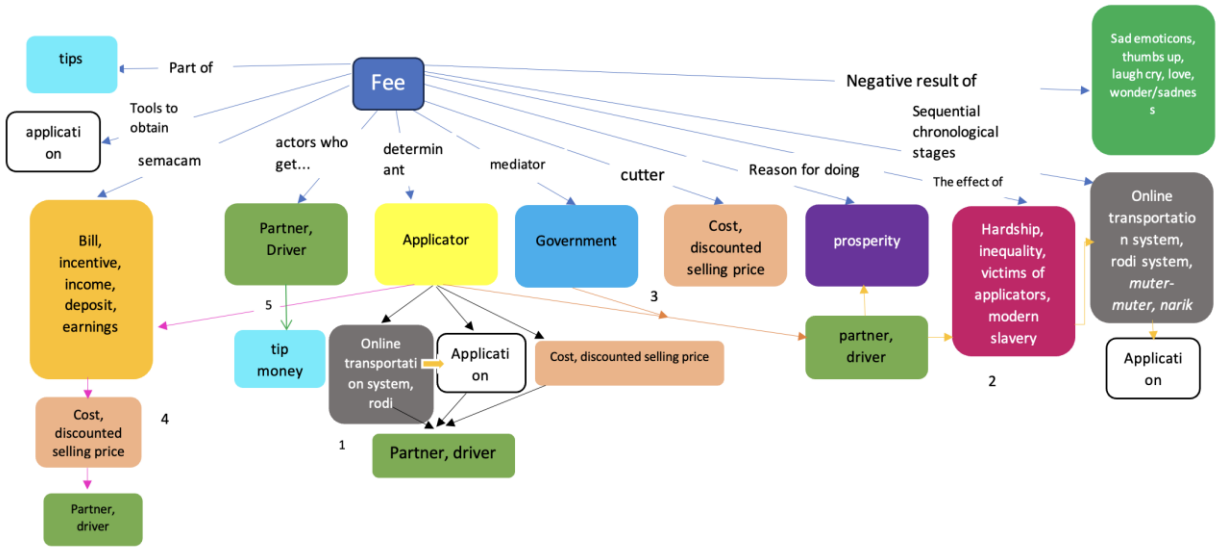
to understand cultural and social dynamics in online communities. Emoticons are shaped by culture, gender, and social media, reflecting diverse cultural contexts and social norms [25]. Emoticons are not only a tool for communication, but also a cultural identity and social trend. If plain text seems flat, social media allows users to express feelings in a different language, namely emoticons. Emoticons in social media are a tool to show linguistic and emotional expressions, which also contribute to a change in the tone of the written message [26]. In certain situations, emoticons can influence neural responses. Sad emoticons can elicit negative potentials in the brain [26]. Through emoticons, social media users can directly construct reality with the meaning of the emoticons. Given that this influences social media algorithms, the more comments likes, and shares, the more viral it will be. Of course, this will also affect the views of many people.

Fees have an essential role in the capitalist system by involving many terms that have deep connections with cultural terms. The interaction of society and a handful of wealthy individuals results in a Pareto-like distribution of wealth. This means that a small portion of the population holds most of the wealth. This is the pattern of wealth distribution in consolidating the power of capitalism and economic injustic e[19].

The following research stage after conducting a domain analysis is to conduct a taxonomic analysis of the cultural themes revealed in the domain analysis. We analyzed the everyday relationships that emerged in the domain analysis [18]. Figure 1 shows the taxonomic analysis of the various cultural terms that emerged.

Figure 4. Taxonomy analysis



A System to Obtain Fees

The applicator makes an online transportation system, a rodi system, muter-muter, and *Tarik* through the application and determines the deduction fee charged to the actor, namely the partner or driver. By reclassifying the work, e-hailing companies introduce risk and insecurity for drivers, which further deepens their vulnerability. This form of 'job work'

affords them no such security and guarantees no predictable amounts, simply because they are regarded as self-employed independent contractors rather than employees [27]. A large part of drivers receive compensation that amounts to less than the minimum; some are driving at a loss after calculating their vehicle costs. What is worse is that the research indicates that 74% of them earn less than the minimum wages of the states [28]. As Goh et al., (2020) put it, in a country like Malaysia, the outlays required to result in a dismal net profit for drivers, often taking their earnings below the federally legislated minimum wage. This means that "partner" is just a narrative of e-hailing business owners to get a lot of workers for profit. At the beginning of the problem in Indonesia, it was explained how the income of online drivers has decreased drastically, coupled with large deductions. This means that the social welfare of online drivers is not a concern [29]. This is unclear; initially, they are considered partners and then become workers, but if they demand online welfare, business owners will remind them that they are only freelancers, not part of the workers in the company. This creates a dilemma because if they leave the system, they don't get a job, but if they stay in the system, they have to accept this condition.

The reason drivers join the system is to get welfare, but instead of the welfare obtained, they get hardship, and they become victims of the applicator/business owner so that the system created by the applicator becomes a modern slavery system. This modern slavery system is realized in the performance flow of the system created by the applicator through the application. The conditions fostered by e-hailing services can be inadequate, and drivers can be vulnerable to exploitation due to minimal regulations. Due to the anonymity and flexibility of these services, traffickers could exploit and misuse the industry by abusing individuals for driving or any other positions without any form of protection (Milivojevic et al., 2020). The applicator still has to deduct Incentives earned by driver-partners, so driver-partners do not get the full incentive; sometimes, these deductions are even burdensome for the drivers. Occasionally, drivers also get tips from customers because they feel sorry for the drivers.

On this issue, the government should be able to mediate between applicators and drivers by intervening in these tariffs and deductions, but that has not happened yet. The Indonesian government has some issues with e-hailing services. These issues include legal matters, regulatory spaces, and restraints, which significantly affect the growth of the rapidly developing e-hailing market. There is uncertainty about the applicability of present laws because the current legal system does not sufficiently address the distinctive features of e-hailing services [30]. The legal position and rights of online motorcycle taxi drivers are complicated by the fact that they are not included in the Employment Law system [31]. Significant regulatory gaps exist, especially with regard to ride-hailing firms' duties to provide drivers with social security [32]. The lack of explicit legislation for e-commerce taxation leads to non-compliance among taxable entrepreneurs and unrealized income [33]. The inefficient application of current regulations is a result of inadequate oversight and enforcement systems [33].

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Table 3. Selected Observations of Texts

Dyadic contrast question		Reflection
Tips	The customer gave the extra money to the driver because they were sorry for the driver.	Extra money outside the fee
Bill	money and so on, which must be collected from customers	driver as an intermediary/courier/non-fixed amount
Incentive	additional income (money, goods, etc.) given to increase work motivation; stimulus money	not genuine income/permanent income, given owner
Revenue	work results	fixed amount
Deposit	what is deposited	drivers as intermediaries/couriers (in the past, it was like angkot drivers, who only drove, but the angkot was from the boss. If the driver of the vehicle is private, the term must still be deposited to the owner.
Income	work results	fixed amount
Partner	coworkers	It's equal because it's a partner; it should be a symbiotic mutualism for the driver's designation.
Driver	driver	worker
Applicator	owner or business owner, app owner.	business owner
Government	the system of exercising authority and power that governs a country's social, economic, and political life or parts thereof.	Third-party mediator between owner & partner
Cost	money spent to procure (establish, do, etc.) something	drivers who bear deductions/fees
Discounted Selling Price	fees charged to partners	stall partners who bear the discounted costs
Well-Being	a state of security and prosperity; a safe	financially
Difficult	poor shortage	
Inequality	things that are not as they should be (such as unfair, out of order)	
Victim of Applicators	a person, animal, etc. that suffers (dies, etc.) as a result of an event, evil deed, etc.	
Modern Slavery	the system of a group of people deprived of their freedom to work for the benefit of another group of people in a new form (through technology)	modern means up-to-date, slavery uses an up-to-date system, with technology
Online Transportation System	a set of elements that are regularly interrelated so as to form a totality in online ojek.	The online transportation system can also be called a labor system because drivers are dependent on this system; it is difficult to leave because the choice is if you leave, you can't get a job; if you don't leave, you have to accept a fate that depends on the applicator.
Rodi System	a device of elements that are regularly interrelated to form a totality in online ojek that produces forced labor.	
Muter-Muter	go around looking for customers, because the applicator chooses the customer	drivers will usually hang out somewhere or move around to get customers in the area where they pass because they depend on the online transportation system.
Narvik	leaving for work, running errands so motorcycle taxi	
Application	a computer program or software designed to perform a specific task.	The application is designed according to the wishes of the applicator/owner.

The government's ability to maintain up-to-date and applicable regulations is complicated by the dynamic nature of the e-hailing sector [34]. On the other hand, some contend that the rapid expansion of e-hailing services offers the government a chance to develop novel regulatory strategies, which could result in better digital economy regulation.

Table 4. Selected Observations of Emoticon

Sad Emoticons	😢	illustrations, icons, or groups of characters on a keyboard that show facial expressions, attitudes, or emotions, commonly used in electronic communications, social media, and so on. All of them are expressions of sadness at the condition of online transportation drivers, support for online transportation drivers, satire at applicators and the government, and astonishment at the government and applicators.
Thumbs Up Emoticons	👍	
Emoticons Laughing Crying	😂	
Love Emoticons	❤️	
Wonder/ Sad Emoticon	😮	

Explanation of taxonomy analysis and Selected observations

In the taxonomy analysis presented in Figure 2, we looked for patterns of relationships that emerged from cultural terms. Kamayanti (2016) says that in emerging taxonomic patterns, a step is taken to find contrasts through selected observations. There are three types of contrast questions that researchers can use: (1) dyadic contrast questions, (2) triadic contrast questions, and (3) card-sorting questions [35]. Dyadic contrast questions look for differences between terms; Triadic contrast questions mean taking three terms and trying to distinguish which is different, then card-sorting questions look for contrasting terms to be used in the componential analysis. From this, it can be seen that various terms appear in the comments column during interaction. In the reflection column, the researcher conducted an in-depth reflection. The author explores the 27 cultural terms that appear in the comments and then reflects on these cultural terms. This can be seen in Table 3. In Table 3, we can see a contrast between the positions of applicators and partners. As we have written above, the partner is no more than an outsourcer, not an equal business partner. At the same time, the applicator is the business owner or owner and determines the system to manage the income of partners or freelancers. So, there is an unbalanced position here, namely the business owner as the dominant party and the freelancers, the online drivers who depend on the system made by the owner.

Outsourcing might increase wage inequality because it is biased towards skilled workers, unlike unskilled workers. There are signs of this within the US manufacturing sector, where the differences in skilled and unskilled wages have been associated with the skill-biased outsourcing productivity effect [36]. In Colombia, outsourcing was linked to a deterioration of labor standards, and consequently, regulatory responses were aimed at preventing abuses. This underscores the risk of abuse when outsourcing is not exercised with proper controls [37]. Although reengineering labor relations enables outsourcing, it may also negatively impact job insecurity and the erosion of workers' rights globally.

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Componential analysis

The componential analysis is also the result of the contrast dimension. In the componential analysis, we made certain groupings. This is done to find out whether the cultural terms that appear are present from the same group or different. Table 4 is the componential analysis.

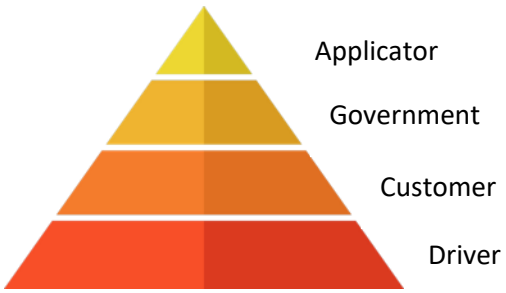
Table 5 Componential Analysis

	Dimensions of Contrast			
Cultural Domain	**Applicator**	**Driver**	**Customer**	**Government**
Tip Giver	No	No	Yes	No
Tip Recipient	No	Yes	No	No
Bill Payers	No	No	Yes	No
Incentive Recipients	No	Yes	No	No
Receive Income	Yes	Yes	No	No
Receiving Deposits	Yes	Yes	No	No
Income	Yes	Yes	No	No
A Partner	No	Yes	No	No
A Driver	No	Yes	No	No
An Applicator	Yes	No	No	No
Government	Yes	No	No	Yes
Cost Determinants	Yes	No	No	Yes
Determinant of Discount/Sale Price	Yes	No	No	Yes
Prosperous Party	Yes	No	No	Yes
Difficult Party	No	Yes	No	No
Victim of Inequality	No	Yes	No	No
Victim of Applicators	No	Yes	No	No
Victims of Modern Slavery	No	Yes	No	No
Creator of The Online Transportation System	Yes	No	No	No
The Creator of The Slave Labor System	Yes	No	No	No
Victim of The Job System	No	Yes	No	No
Victims of The Slave Labor System	No	Yes	No	No
Actors Running Around	No	Yes	No	No
Narik Actors	No	Yes	No	No
App Maker	Yes	No	No	No
Application User	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Emoticon Users	No	Yes	Yes	No

Table 5 shows that there are four different groups or parties that use the selected cultural domain terms: applicators, drivers, customers, and government. The four are different parties. In the cultural domain of giving tips, the customer does this, not the other three. Drivers are only recipients, while applicators only provide tools or means for giving these tips. Similarly, the recipient of tips is the driver only, not the government or the applicator. Customers make bill payments for services used. The incentive recipient is the driver only. We see here that the driver and the applicator both receive income and deposits, but the

difference is that the term deposit is very familiar among drivers, because they feel that the income they get is not their own, with all the deductions they must be willing to give some of it to the applicator. Here, we clearly see how the relationship between the two is between the owner and worker, not a balanced partner, partner, or friend. The government and applicators both have a role in determining costs. The difference is that the fee deduction from the applicator for the driver will go into the applicator's pocket, while the government sets the upper limit and lower limit of the fee to protect all parties. We see here that the prosperous party is the applicator and the government because there is indeed a tax deduction that the applicator must pay to the government. Meanwhile, the problematic party, the victim of inequality, the victim of the applicator, and the victim of modern slavery are the online drivers for the emergence of the online transportation system. From this interaction, we can see that in this business pyramid, the party with the highest caste is the applicator because it has the power to dominate the economy in accordance with what it wants. Figure 2 is the pyramid of levels that emerged in this research.

Figure 5. Caste in the online transportation business



An Equitable System

Based on the field data, the profit-sharing system between Providers and Go-Jek drivers is 20%: 80%. The company receives a 20% share, while the driver receives an 80% share. The profit-sharing system uses the principle of revenue sharing, not just profit *sharing*. Meanwhile, if there is a loss, it will be borne by the driver, and there is no responsibility from the company. When viewed from Islamic law, the practice mentioned above is included in the *shirkah (Cooperation)* contract.

There are five syirkah contracts in Islam: *syirkah Inan, Mufawadah, Wujuh, Abdan, and Mudharabah* [38]. *Shirkah Inan* is a form of cooperation between two or more parties in capital assets for a business, where profits will be shared based on the portion of capital. *Syirkah Mufawadah* is almost the same as syirkah Inan. Only the portion of capital must be the same, Syirkah *Wujuh* Cooperation of two or more people without using property capital but other values from each. *Syirkah Abdan* is cooperation for specific work to be done together with the provision that the wages of the work will be divided according to the agreement. While *Mudharabah* is a form of cooperation contract for business where one is the owner of the capital as a whole while the other party is only a worker or executor, the distribution of profits is based on agreement, but the owner of the capital will bear losses.

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Based on the explanation of the types of syirkah contracts, cooperation between the Company / Provider and Online Drivers includes *syirkah Inan* because each has contributed capital to the online transportation business, where the Provider provides an application system. In contrast, online drivers include capital in the form of vehicles and those who run the business. The determination of profit sharing for drivers and providers 80:20 in the contract is valid; only in determining the profit sharing may not be apparent, meaning that when viewed from the implementation in the field, the system uses the principle of revenue sharing and not profit sharing. Because what is shared is not net profit after deducting costs, fuel, and wages or, in other words, profit sharing from gross income. Meanwhile, if the profit-sharing principle is used, what is shared is the net profit after deducting costs. However, looking at the aspect of losses in shirkah, if there is a loss, it should also be divided based on the portion of the capital, as long as the loss is not due to the failure of the driver. The weakness here is that it is not known how much the capital portion of each is, so the loss that bears is the executor in the field, and this often causes disputes in cooperation, including conditions as described in netnography research data from several driver comments on several social media (Youtube, Instagram, and Tiktok) which all describe complaints of injustice in this online transportation service cooperation system. So, it is necessary to review the contract and the terms of cooperation for the amount of profit sharing and risk coverage that arises to be more equitable, considering that the working hours of this driver are 24 hours.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study employs a living netnography approach to deconstruct the reality of “fees” in the transportation sector. Our analysis reveals that the fee is not a neutral economic term but a socially constructed mechanism that perpetuates dependency and power imbalance. Drivers interpret it as a binding burden, often articulated through cultural term like “bill”, “deposit” and “modern slavery”, rather than fair income or partnership. The ensuing conflict stems from a system where applicators (platform owners), positioned at the apex of the value chain, design the rules and capture disproportionate value, while drivers, despite being labeled “partners” bear most costs and risks.

Theoretically, this study contributes to critical accounting literature by demonstrating how accounting terminology (“fee”, “incentive,” “partner”) can obfuscate power relations and enable exploitative practice account to modern slavery. Looking ahead, the resolution of conflicts and the attainment of equitable wealth may be realized by transcending solely capitalist frameworks and incorporating local, culturally-informed partnership values, exemplified by the Islamic principle of shirkah, which advocates for transparent profit-and-loss sharing. However, its implementation necessitates meticulous redesign to guarantee genuine equity. Subsequent investigations could quantitatively assess the income inequality identified herein or examine the relevance of this framework in alternative gig economy scenarios.

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