

Examining incidents of taxi violence at the Durban station taxi rank in eThekweni Central Policing Cluster (South Africa)

Nothile A. Nzuzo¹, Dee Khosa², Adewale, A. Olutola³

^{1,2,3} Department of Safety & Security Management, Faculty of Humanities, Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria, South Africa.

³ Corresponding author: olutolaAA@tut.ac.za

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Abstract: This paper explores taxi violence occurrences at the Durban station taxi rank (South Africa). Police officials have various challenges to curb taxi violence. The Department of Transport (DOT) continues to engage police officials and taxi operators in the fight against taxi violence. This study utilised qualitative research method to gain an understanding and viewpoints of the participants regarding taxi violence. A focus group strategy was utilised to collect data from the research participants. Fifteen research participants were interviewed. The research participants comprised of 5 SAPS (South African Police Service) officials, 5 DoT employees and 5 taxi operators. Ethical principles were adhered to throughout the study.

Participants indicated that taxi violence contributes to a high number of murders, as the wellbeing of the taxi operators and innocent passengers continue to be at stake. These taxi violence-related murders contribute to instability in the taxi industry in the areas of the eThekweni Central cluster.

The root causes which triggers taxi violence mainly emanate from many factors such as, “collection of rank fees”; App-based taxi services such as “Uber”, “Taxify”, and “YoTaxi”; “The GO Durban” “bus project”, also known as “Corridor 3”; “Emerging and new security companies at taxi ranks”; “Greed”; “Hitman services”; “Route encroachment”; “Politics”; “Building of new malls”; “Revenge-related attacks or killings”; “Taxi fare increases”; “Employer and employee relationships between the taxi owners and taxi drivers”; “Taxi fleet inheritance”; “Omalume” (the drivers who transport school learners); “Impoundment of unroadworthy taxis”; “Favouritism regarding lucrative routes”; “Ill-treatment of the taxi conductors by the taxi drivers”; “Infrastructure improvement” (such as roads and bridges); and “The TRP”.

The study recommends the following to reduce taxi violence at the Durban station taxi rank in eThekweni Central Policing Cluster (South Africa). Firstly, an SOP must be formulated and implemented. This SOP must bind taxi operators, the DoT, the municipality, Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA), and the police. Once there is a binding document that states that taxi ranks must be gun-free zones, anyone who carries a gun at a taxi rank must be charged and prosecuted.

Secondly, the absence of a unit that specialises in the investigation of taxi violence is a cause for concern. The South African Police Service (SAPS) management needs to review the decision(s) that led to the disbandment of the former Taxi Violence Unit. A specific crime code that will stipulate on the systems that the incident is related to taxi violence needs to be formulated. Similarly, establishment of properly paid informers. Police officials must recruit informers who will supply proactive information regarding taxi violence. These informers must infiltrate taxi violence perpetrators, as an outsider will not be able to obtain proactive information about the perpetrators’ activities. Important also is the identification and profile of hitmen. The hitmen need to be identified. Comprehensive profiling of the hitmen must be conducted, and their movements and activities must be closely monitored.

Thirdly, promotion policy review is crucial. The SAPS management needs to review the promotion policy that is used to promote SAPS officials. This will boost the morale of the policing personnel. Fourthly, establishment of a finance committee is equally important. The taxi operators should have a finance committee that must have at least three signatories. The committee members will ensure that all the money collected at the taxi rank is accounted for. The taxi associations must hold meetings with the commuters when there is a need to increase taxi fares. These meetings should involve the affected police stations and clusters.

Finally, there is a need to establish a centralised app-based services office. The taxi associations should engage members of the public who are operating or who wish to operate app-based services. Such office will ensure the preservation of a database of all app-based services.

Keywords: commuters' crime, Durban station taxi rank, eThekweni Central policing cluster, policing reactive approach, taxi violence

Introduction

Research has shown that taxi violence is not a new phenomenon in South Africa. Researchers have similar and different views about the history of taxi violence in South Africa. For example, Ngubane (2016:1), indicates that incidents of violence have escalated and are contributing to the growing number of traumatic experiences faced by South Africans. It can erupt at any point on a route where taxis might be passing or where operators might be found. According to Ntuli (2015:32), the taxi wars began in 1990 when different taxi associations fought over routes. These wars resulted in the deaths of thousands of taxi owners, drivers, and commuters. Ngubane (2016:3) argues that South Africa was characterised by extraordinary inter- and intra-community violence between 1990 and 1994. Thornhill and Hanekom (1995:54) agree that the taxi industry in South Africa has been in a vicious and violent cycle for many years, more than any other transport industries, such as the bus and train. Ultimately, the passengers become part of taxi violence. Booysen (2009:2) found that taxi violence is a difficult concept to explain because there are no specific elements that can be used to classify or separate it from any other form of violence besides the fact that it involves taxi operators. Geldenhuys (2019:17) notes that there are several issues that contribute to taxi violence in the country. Taxi violence has a devastating socio-economic impact because it significantly affects the commuters. Employees fail to go to work and public and private service deliveries are hampered when taxi violence erupts. This impacts negatively on the economy of the country (Molefe, 2016:35). Barret (2003:9) indicates that multiple types of crime can be committed in relation to taxi violence, such as common assault, assault with the intent to cause grievous bodily harm, arson, the use of illegal firearms, and robbery.

Geldenhuys (2019:17) indicates that victims of taxi violence can also include the families of taxi operators; non the less, the passengers and passers-by are mostly affected. Ngubane (2016:2) indicates that victims of taxi violence include innocent passers-by. Sekhonyane and Dugard (2004:15) found that there is no section in the South African Police Service (SAPS) that focuses specifically on profiling taxi violence offenders or victims. Booysen (2009:2) notes that the policing of taxi violence is done by conventional policing and investigative methods.

Problem Statement

The primary author of this article is a Senior Officer in the SAPS. She wanted to conduct research to find out why the police seem to be struggling to combat taxi violence. Fourie (2003:32) found that taxi violence is a problem that has not been completely eradicated as it occurs in different forms. Majeke (2003:18) explains that police officials have attempted to stop taxi violence but failed and, as a result, it has intensified. Mathekga (2019:01) states that the taxi industry is in a deep crisis ranging from rampant violence and killings. This is an industry that is very violent and at times uncivil. Taxi violence is an increasing national problem. It results in injuries and death as taxis are stoned and set alight. Commuters are left stranded whenever this occurs. The family members of the taxi owners are sometimes shot when hitmen attack or shoot at taxi owners. The hitmen shoot whoever is in the targeted house (Geldenhuys, 2019:17-18). Authors and researchers who have conducted studies on taxi violence agree that it is a serious problem and that it does not look like it will end any time soon. Incidents of violence in the taxi industry are constantly increasing (Molefe, 2016). Most of the taxi violence killings involve the use of firearms. Children continue to be orphaned and wives continue to be widowed. Hitmen are always implicated. It is a fact that arrests are affected, but there are few convictions (Fobosi, 2023).

Taxi violence is indeed a cause for concern. Most people are directly or indirectly affected by taxi violence. It affects the perpetrators, victims, and innocent bystanders at taxi ranks. It also impacts negatively on the crime statistics

since other crimes are committed in the process (Fobosi, 2023). The investigation of taxi violence is of importance so that better policing strategies can be put in place. The reactive policing strategy or approach is not bearing any positive results (Maskály, Ivković, Liu, Prislán & Lobnikar, 2023). The challenges encountered by police officials when dealing with taxi violence need to be examined. The study will also serve as an eye opener to those who are considering pursuing business opportunities in the taxi industry (Maskály, Ivković, Liu, Prislán & Lobnikar, 2023).

Literature Review

Legislative framework

Legislative institutions can appoint committees consisting of their members and other persons to investigate specific matters for policymaking purposes. The legislature should draw policies based on the proper engagement of other role players (Cloete, 1994:113). The framework would have to be accepted by all relevant stakeholders and the government (Bryman, 2004:158). Francolini, Mann-Lang, McKinley & Mann, 2023) note that legislation has been inadequately enforced in many parts of South Africa for several years and has resulted in a situation where many public transport operators provide illegal transport and use poor-quality vehicles (Rothengatter & Huguenin, 2001:176). Historically, there has been limited focus on the rights to provide transport for people with disabilities, as is the case in other societal domains. People with disabilities remain marginalised and excluded, with unequal access to education, employment, and healthcare (Hashemi, Wickenden, Santos, & Kuper, 2023). This unequal access is due to, among other reasons, the inaccessibility of transport; yet, whenever taxi violence erupts, it victimises people with disabilities as well (WHO, 2011:03).

Regulations were used by the apartheid regime to enforce racial segregation of transport and to protect the near monopoly held by the South African Transport Services Subsidy of the rail and bus industry (Dugard, 2001:9). There are problems in the taxi industry that need to be addressed. In 2005, the DoT announced that South African municipalities would take control of the taxi ranks and their management, and that taxi ranks and routes would no longer be under the control of the taxi associations. The Taxi Recapitalisation Programme (TRP) was also introduced to regulate the taxi industry with the aim of improving road safety and decreasing violence. However, this goal has not yet been achieved (Ntuli, 2015:13,37).

Challenges For Law Enforcement

The most active law enforcement agencies in the City of Durban are the SAPS members from the Durban Central Police Station and the Metro Police.

The South African Police Service (SAPS)

Ngubane (2016:2) indicates that the SAPS acknowledged taxi violence as a priority crime. According to Dugard (2001:25), the involvement of the police in the taxi industry created problems as it negatively affected service delivery in terms of policing taxi violence. Boudreaux (2006:23) concurs that the involvement of the police in the taxi industry made it difficult for the people involved, including the victims, to provide information to the police. The victims feared that they would become targets. Dugard (2001:4) found that ownership of taxis by police and other government officials contributes to criminality and it also exacerbates attempts to resolve the violence. On 11 September 2018, the Police Portfolio Committee met for a briefing on the 2017/2018 crime statistics (SAPS, 2018:1). The Minister of Police, Mr Bheki Cele, and the former National Commissioner of the SAPS, Mr Khehla Sithole, were in attendance. The issue of specialised units was discussed as gang crime and taxi-related violence were on the increase. The commissioner mentioned that the process of creating specialised units was under way (SAPS, 2018:1,22).

According to Molefe (2016, cited by Geldenhuys, 2019:21), local police members are also often reluctant to enter a taxi rank or to be involved in taxi violence issues because they are threatened and fear for their lives. Police usually establish taxi violence task teams when the help of specialised units is needed. For example, the SAPS launched a task team comprising detectives, Crime Intelligence, and Visible Policing members to tackle taxi violence after the ambush of members of the Ivory Park Taxi Association in July 2018 (Geldenhuys, 2019:21). The justice system does not seem to impose proper sentences on offenders regarding taxi violence, and corruption is letting taxi violence perpetrators prevail. There is a challenge for law enforcement in terms of dealing with taxi violence (Geldenhuys, 2019:21).

Research Methodology

This study utilised the qualitative research method to gain an understanding of the attitudes and viewpoints of the participants regarding taxi violence. A focus group strategy was utilised to collect data from the research participants

to investigate incidents of violence at the Durban Station taxi rank in the eThekweni Central cluster. A total number of 15 research participants was interviewed. The research participants comprised of 5 police officials, 5 Department of Transport employees and 5 taxi operators.

Purposive sampling was used to select research participants for this study (Fujioka, Nguyen, Phung, Bhattacharyya, Kelley, Stamenova, Onabajo, Kidd, Desveaux, Wong & Bhatia, 2023). Research participants were selected from among taxi association executive committee members, taxi owners, taxi drivers, rank marshals at the Durban Station taxi rank, officials from the SAPS Durban Central Police Station Crime Prevention Unit (CPU), and DoT offices at the KwaZulu-Natal provincial offices in Durban. These research participants were selected because they are perceived as knowledgeable in terms of the taxi industry and taxi violence (Fujioka, Nguyen, Phung, Bhattacharyya, Kelley, Stamenova, Onabajo, Kidd, Desveaux, Wong & Bhatia, 2023). The researcher asked the research participants follow-up questions where ambiguity was perceived. For example, the research participants from the third focus group mentioned that “lack of promotion” of police officials in the SAPS was one of the challenges that the police officials face when dealing with taxi violence. The researcher asked follow-up questions to clarify the point by asking the research participants how is lack of promotion a challenge that the police officials face when they deal with taxi violence? The research participants indicated that the most experienced police officials regarding the investigation of taxi violence resort to applying for any available post, just for the sake of being promoted because promotions are scarce. This situation creates havoc because such is not apt.

The researcher sought to observe, analyse, and understand the participants' viewpoints regarding taxi violence in eThekweni Central, specifically at the Durban Station taxi rank. Semi-structured interviews assisted the researcher to understand the feelings and attitudes of the research participants more clearly (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:148). De Vos *et al.*, (2017:64-65) indicate that the qualitative approach is usually used to answer questions regarding the complex nature of phenomena. Qualitative research assists researchers to interpret what they see and hear so as to understand the phenomena (Fujioka, Nguyen, Phung, Bhattacharyya, Kelley, Stamenova, Onabajo, Kidd, Desveaux, Wong & Bhatia, 2023).

This study was conducted at the Durban Station taxi rank, which is situated at Durban Station, as the name indicates. The taxi rank is policed by the Durban Central Police Station, which falls under the eThekweni Central policing cluster in the KwaZulu-Natal province. Taxis operating at the Durban Station taxi rank only deal with long-distance routes and no local trips are provided. This decision was taken because the researcher is stationed at the SAPS KwaZulu-Natal provincial headquarters in Durban, which is a walkable distance from the researcher's office to the Durban Station taxi rank (Fujioka, Nguyen, Phung, Bhattacharyya, Kelley, Stamenova, Onabajo, Kidd, Desveaux, Wong & Bhatia, 2023).

Study Population

In this study, the researcher identified the research population as follows:

Five SAPS members from the Durban Central (Crime Prevention Unit-CPU): They were targeted because they are the ones who patrol the area where the study was conducted. SAPS electronic systems also capture records whenever taxi violence erupts. These members are the ones who experience challenges in dealing with taxi violence.

Five taxi association members operating at the Durban Station taxi rank: These included an executive committee member, rank marshals, taxi drivers, and taxi owners. They are perceived as the most experienced in the taxi industry. They are also believed to have the knowledge of the taxi industry and taxi violence (Zickar & Keith, 2023). Five DoT officials at the KwaZulu-Natal provincial offices in Durban: These officials are regarded as the regulators of the taxi industry. They are the custodians of the records pertaining to taxi associations and the incidents that take place during taxi operations. They also intervene and engage in meetings when there are problems in the taxi industry itself (Zickar & Keith, 2023).

Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured that all ethical principles were upheld during the research process. The right to privacy of the participants, the right to confidentiality and anonymity, and informed consent were borne in mind when the researcher worked with the research participants. No ethical principles were contravened during the study (Nuechterlein, Feng, Yehia & Illes, 2023). The researcher did not question the research participants when they refused to have their verbal responses recorded. The researcher ensured the rights of the research participants without compromising the study (Nuechterlein, Feng, Yehia & Illes, 2023).

Research should be based on mutual trust, acceptance, co-operation, kept promises, and well-accepted conventions and expectations between all parties involved in a research project (De Vos *et al.*, 2017:113). This study was based on mutual trust between the researcher and the research participants. The researcher ensured that all the research participants were treated with respect throughout the study (Nuechterlein, Feng, Yehia & Illes, 2023). All the research participants were treated with dignity, irrespective of their education level and positions. Ethical principles were adhered to throughout the study (Nuechterlein, Feng, Yehia & Illes, 2023). The research participants who were in the focus group comprising police officials requested that they be given the feedback as soon as the study is completed.

Findings

The three focus groups were interviewed on different occasions and in different locations. Some of the points that the research participants from Focus Group 1 (taxi operators) raised, as root causes of taxi violence were also mentioned by members of Focus Groups 2 and 3. Most of the points that were raised or mentioned by the research participants were similar, even though the data were collected from different research participants at different times.

Facts, perceptions, and beliefs revolving around taxi violence in the eThekweni Central cluster, particularly at the Durban Station taxi rank.

All the focus group members stated their facts, perceptions, and beliefs about taxi violence in the eThekweni Central cluster. The research participants were expected to provide information about their experiences and observations regarding taxi violence in the eThekweni Central cluster. The study found through the research participants that taxi violence is seasonal at the Durban Station taxi rank. It is quiet for some time but resurfaces at a later stage. When it is quiet, one might even think that it does not exist, yet it does. Two of the three focus groups (police officials and Department of Transport (DOT) employees) indicated that taxi violence contributes to a high number of murders as the lives of the taxi operators and innocent passengers continue to be at stake. *These taxi violence-related murders also contribute to instability in the taxi industry in the areas of the eThekweni Central cluster.* The study further found that police officials and DoT employees are trying everything in their power to resolve taxi violence; however, there is minimum breakthrough as incidents of taxi violence continue to occur.

Taxi operators have different perceptions and beliefs about the strategies that the police officials use when dealing with taxi violence. The police officials have a perception that lack of promotions contributes to taxi violence. The police officials tend to turn a blind eye to taxi violence-related issues because of being aggrieved due to lack of promotions. This is a huge challenge for the SAPS because the promotion system does not favour all employees. The promotion policy states that police officials will only be promoted if there is an available post.

Strategies that police officials use to curb taxi violence in the eThekweni Central cluster.

This study found that the strategies that are used by police officials to curb taxi violence have minimum results. There is still a lot to be done in terms of the police's strategies. It is imperative that new strategies be recommended to try to resolve taxi violence. This study found the following strategies are used by the police: Formation of task teams; Use of minimum force; Reactive policing strategy; Disruptive operations; and Impoundment of un-roadworthy taxis. The research participants indicated that all these strategies that are utilised by the police create more challenges in the process.

The challenges that police officials encounter when dealing with taxi violence issues

It appeared that police members utilise the Crime Prevention Unit (CPU) to attend to all taxi violence-related complaints since there is no specific unit in the SAPS that is assigned to specifically deal with taxi violence issues. This strategy causes a challenge to the SAPS because when CPU members are attending to taxi violence complaints, other crimes are not attended to. The study also found that police officials are mandated to use minimum force. They are not allowed to carry rifles when they attend a taxi violence crime scene under normal circumstances. This strategy makes security guards feel more empowered than police officials do. The other strategy that is utilised by the police is the reactive policing strategy. The most common challenges for the police officials are: Shortage of human and logistical resources; lack of promotion; lack of evidence; being charged for unlawful arrests; favouritism regarding lucrative routes; lack of evidence; fear by the eyewitnesses; business jealousy; oversaturation of the taxi industry; "fronting"; and taxi association dual membership and police being on the payroll of the taxi owners.

The triggers and root causes of taxi violence

The research participants stated 19 root causes of taxi violence. Four of these root causes of taxi violence were also discovered by other researchers who conducted studies in other areas before this study was conducted. These root

causes are hitman services, politics, revenge-related attacks or killings, and the Taxi Recapitalisation Programme (TRP). The root causes and triggers of taxi violence mainly emanate from: “Collection of rank fees; App-based taxi services such as Uber, Taxify, and YoTaxi!; The GO!Durban bus project, also known as “Corridor 3”; Emerging and new security companies at taxi ranks; Greed; Hitman services; Route encroachment; Politics; Building of new malls; Revenge-related attacks or killings; Taxi fare increases; Employer and employee relationships between the taxi owners and taxi drivers; Taxi fleet inheritance; “Omalume” (van drivers who transport school learners); Impoundment of unroadworthy taxis; Favouritism regarding lucrative routes; Ill-treatment of the taxi conductors by the taxi drivers; Infrastructure improvement (such as roads and bridges); and The TRP”.

Improvement of the working relationship between the SAPS and other government departments

The study found that the SAPS mostly works with the DoT in terms of taxi violence issues. There are two Taxi Priority Committee meetings that involve other stakeholders. These meetings were initiated by the DoT. These meetings are held twice a month with other government departments that are affected by taxi violence and are chaired by police officials. All role players get an opportunity to deliberate on issues revolving around taxi violence. The Taxi Priority Committees seek to address transport conflicts and to ensure police deployment in areas identified as the most problematic. The concern is that the perpetrators cease their involvement in taxi violence if the Public Order Police (POP) is deployed in that area but resurface as soon as the deployments are withdrawn. This strategy has had a limited impact as incidents of attacks and violence in the industry continue to be reported.

Recommendations

To declare taxi ranks as gun-free zones

It is recommended that an SOP (Standard operating procedure) must be formulated and implemented. This SOP must bind taxi operators, the DoT, the municipality, Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSiRA), and the police. Once there is a binding document that states that taxi ranks must be gun-free zones, anyone who carries a gun at a taxi rank must be charged and prosecuted. This will reduce incidents of taxi violence because most of these incidents involve the utilisation of guns. This will also do away with hitmen and security companies who are implicated in taxi violence at taxi ranks. The loss of the lives of innocent passengers at the taxi ranks will also stop.

Establish a Taxi Violence Unit (TVU) in the SAPS

The absence of a unit that specialises in the investigation of taxi violence is a cause for concern. The SAPS management needs to review the decision(s) that led to the disbandment of the former TVU. Possible solutions to the challenges that led to the disbandment need to be tabled and deliberated on. This will assist the SAPS to have police officials in place who will specialise in the investigation of taxi violence issues. This will also increase the arrests and successful prosecution of taxi violence perpetrators. The level of confiscation of firearms used in taxi violence incidents will also increase because the Taxi Violence Unit (TVU) members will have specialised training. This will also address revenge attacks and will minimise the lack of human and logistical resources because the TVU will have its own resources. The Crime Prevention Unit (CPU) and Public Order Police Unit (POP) will be able to focus on their own mandates.

Establish a Highway Patrol Unit

The KwaZulu-Natal province relies on the activation of the POP Unit and taxi violence task teams when taxi violence erupts. The activation of a Highway Patrol Unit will prevent the taxi killings that occur along the taxi routes. This unit will also save the money that is currently spent on POP deployments because the members attached to this unit will be performing their normal duties.

Promotion policy review

The SAPS management needs to review the promotion policy that is used to promote SAPS officials to boost the morale of the SAPS members. There must be room for growth in terms of officials' career path. Posts for promotions must be made available. There must be a database for qualifying police officials in place. This will minimise the situation where employees apply just for the sake of possibly getting a promotion. This will also ensure that employees who have knowledge of taxi violence become experts in dealing with taxi violence issues.

Formulation a taxi violence crime code

The Crime Registrar component in the SAPS should assist in this regard. A specific crime code that will stipulate on the systems that the incident is related to taxi violence needs to be formulated. This will ensure data integrity

and will give a clear picture of all murders and other crimes that occur in relation to taxi violence. This will make the work of the analysts easier. The motive of a committed crime will be clear due to the crime code assigned.

Establish properly placed and paid informers.

Police officials must recruit informers who will supply proactive information regarding taxi violence. These informers must infiltrate taxi violence perpetrators as an outsider will not be able to obtain proactive information about the perpetrators' activities. This will intensify proactive intelligence, which seems to be lacking. This will also increase proactive policing regarding taxi-related matters in problematic areas because the perpetrators will be too scared to be involved in taxi violence issues.

Identify and profile hitmen

The hitmen need to be identified. Comprehensive profiling of the hitmen must be conducted, and their movements and activities must be closely monitored. This will assist in ensuring the arrest and successful prosecution of the hitmen. Incidents of taxi-related violence will be reduced if all hitmen can be successfully prosecuted.

Vetting of security companies

The security guards who are employed by security companies need to be vetted to minimise incidents where they are implicated. Proper screening of the security companies themselves must be conducted before a company is given the responsibility of guarding a taxi rank. This will reduce situations where taxi associations just give anyone the huge responsibility of guarding the taxi rank.

Control routes to and from new malls

There is an indisputable need for an improved process of registering new routes, especially in areas where there are new malls. An agreement should be made and recorded, which clearly states who is to operate in which route and the taxi drivers should stick to their allocated routes. Such arrangements will put an end to a situation where drivers are greedy and encroach routes.

Establish a finance committee

The taxi operators should have a finance committee that must have at least three signatories. The committee members will ensure that all the money that is collected at the taxi rank is accounted for. An annual general meeting should be held where financial matters will be discussed openly with all taxi association members. This will reduce taxi violence that emanates from the "bucket money" system.

GO! Durban bus project awareness campaigns

The DoT and the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality should visit taxi ranks and conduct awareness campaigns regarding this project. This will provide an opportunity for all taxi operators to gain clarity about the aim of the project and will also clear the taxi operators' insecurities and uncertainties about the GO!Durban bus project. The violence at construction sites will also come to an end, and the project will be finalised. The GO!Durban buses will start to operate and the City of Durban will generate more money.

Engage commuters.

The taxi associations must hold meetings with the commuters when there is a need to increase taxi fares. These meetings should involve the affected police stations and clusters. The commuters must have an opportunity to express their feelings about the proposed taxi fare increase, and the taxi owners must explain the reasons behind increasing the taxi fares.

This will also help in peacefully reaching an agreement, and it will also reduce the number of incidents where commuters end up blockading the roads with burning tyres to express their anger.

Establish a centralised app-based services office

The taxi associations should engage members of the public who are operating or who wish to operate app-based services. An office must be established, which will ensure that a database of all app-based services is kept. An agreement must be reached regarding the involvement of the taxi owners in app-based services. The Department of Transport (DoT) must be involved in the establishment of this office. This will create a working relationship between the taxi operators and the app-based services.

Conclusion

Taxi violence is indeed a cause for concern. It affects the perpetrators, victims, and innocent bystanders. It also impacts negatively on the crime statistics. The policing strategies in place need to be enhanced. The justice system does not seem to impose proper sentences on offenders regarding taxi violence. Dealing with taxi violence is a big challenge for law enforcement. More information in this regard needs to be obtained and analysed to enable the development of the best possible recommendations that will assist in dealing with taxi violence. It is concluded that taxi violence is indeed an ongoing problem that continues to claim people's lives. It has a negative impact on crime statistics, stakeholders, police officials, and victims. Taxi violence affects the taxi operators themselves, as well as employees of different departments and companies, learners, university students, vendors, businesspeople, commuters, and people with disabilities.

The findings of this study conclude that taxi violence is a challenge that does not show signs of ending any time soon. Some of the causes and triggers of taxi violence have existed for many years, and more new ones continue to be uncovered. This study concludes that more research needs to be conducted regarding taxi violence. Further findings will help to propose more, new recommended strategies that will address the challenges that are identified by other researchers. Many people are affected directly or indirectly by taxi violence; it is truly a national crisis. The strategies that are used by police officials have little impact. There seem to be many challenges for the police officials when it comes to curbing taxi violence. Government interventions must be reviewed. The SAPS, the DoT, and the municipalities have a major role to play in curbing taxi violence. Policies must be examined. It has been established that taxi violence starts in the taxi industry by problematic taxi operators.

Taxi violence is a problem that needs to be dealt with by many government departments. The police and the DoT cannot resolve taxi violence on their own. The Department of Health needs to intervene because when there is taxi violence, patients cannot access healthcare facilities such as clinics and hospitals. The Department of Education must also become involved in the fight against taxi violence because schools and tertiary institutions are also affected by this problem. Learners cannot go to school and students are unable to attend lectures if there is taxi violence. The Department of Community Safety and Liaison also needs to come on board because taxi violence affects the community at large.

Business owners must also get involved because their businesses are often affected when taxi violence erupts. Employees cannot go to work and employers sometimes impose unfair disciplinary steps against the employees. The eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality needs to work with other stakeholders because taxi violence also affects other stakeholders who are operating in the city at large. There is an indisputable need for an improved process of registering new routes, especially in areas where there are new developments, such as shopping malls and new housing settlements. An agreement should be reached and recorded, which must clearly state who is to operate in which route and the drivers should stick to their allocated routes. Such arrangements will put an end to a situation where drivers fight over routes.

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Ethics

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