

# Deviant behaviour in the workplace



# **A STUDY OF CHARGING PRACTICES AMONG PRIVATE HIRE TAXI DRIVERS IN MANCHESTER.**

## **Human Resource Management**

### **Introduction**

The paper is structured as follows. The next chapter presents theories of deviant behaviour in the work place and the theories on the rationale of this topic. Then chapter two describes the data and methods before chapter three, which present and discusses the results. Chapter four concludes the dissertation.

The purpose of this dissertation was to provide a focused and original study of deviant behaviour among hackney carriage taxi drivers in relation to their charging methods. One can argue that this is a known reality yet to be authenticated by academic research. Therefore, the rationale for this specific subject area was due to the understated relevance and importance of deviant taxi charging methods and the stealthy cost implications to society as whole.

Findings were obtained by taking a specified amount of journeys from Manchester Piccadilly Train Station to various locations in the Fallowfield. (This is provided in greater detail in Chapter 3- Methods.) Hackney carriage taxi drivers were used as the object of study due to the designated taxi rank which they dominate and operate from and to the train station.

In order to understand the context of research it is important to identify the two main types of taxi service in the UK, private hire taxis and hackney carriages. According to Transport for London, private hire taxis are not

restricted as to where they can work and can only undertake advanced bookings made through a licensed operator. Whereas hackney carriages, better known as black cabs, can be hailed in the street alternatively they can be found waiting at a taxi rank.

Licensing, regulations and fares for both private taxi services and the hackney carriage service are set by the local council borough. Thus, findings discovered by this investigation would therefore be of use to the Manchester City Council Licensing Borough as significant discoveries in deviant charging practices reflect the efficacy of their monitoring and regulation policies.

The dissertation therefore recommends that significant deviant findings be used by the local council as an indication to conduct or support further research in order to help adjust or create policies which better monitor and regulate the industry.

Employee deviance is a major problem for corporate owners and managers. It is the nemesis to employee integrity which Jones and Terris (1991) claim to be an important tool in the effective functioning and productivity of organisations and in the case of this dissertation, the Manchester City Council Licensing Department. It is no surprise therefore, that the issue of employee deviance is one of vast research, definition, and measurement.

The dissertation used Robinson and Bennett's definition and strands of employee deviant behaviour formed the basis of research as it proved to be the most concise and applicable to the research. It is defined as "voluntary behaviour that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of an organization, its members, or both." Robinson  
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and Bennett went onto to categorise employee deviance further by defining various other strands. The two main strands which feature in the literature review are product deviance and property deviance.

The former is the violation of the quality and quantity of work, the latter involves the unauthorized acquisition and or damage of company property or staff.

Reports have shown that the aforementioned forms of deviant behaviour exist within the taxi industry, although little academic research in the UK has been undertaken regarding this. According to various local news reports and the HSL taxi drivers are victims of deviant behaviour described by Robinson and Bennett, in terms of property deviance for example, theft or attempted theft, verbal and physical assault. Although there is no or little UK evidence regarding product deviance committed by taxi drivers, there is also evidence to suggest that deviant behaviour has been committed by taxi drivers in the category of property deviance, where the victims were passengers and the offences were verbal, physical or sexual assault. These behaviours and evidences are discussed in the next chapter, the literature review.

In summary, the aim of the study was to provide real findings to validate a known but unproven reality and theory. This theory is that deviant taxi driver charging practices exists within the industry, that it is based on their knowledge of the city in which they operate and the perceived ignorance of their passengers. Therefore, objectives of the dissertation were three fold, to study the nature of deviant charging practices and the motives for their

practices and to provide any recommendations regarding the regulation of the taxi industry in light of the findings.

The preceding Chapter, the Literature Review, provides a critical analysis of deviant behaviour theories. It also, provides evidence regarding the deviant behaviour committed by taxi drivers and balances the view by discussing deviant behaviour committed against taxi drivers. The chapter is a culmination of how the theory of charging practices as a form of deviant behaviour in taxis came about.

## **Literature review**

Employee deviance is a subject which has been widely defined and thus has many forms. Kidder referred to it as misconduct and went on to disclose the various other definitions by which it also known such as called detrimental behaviours, anti-social behaviours, counter-productive behaviours. The issue that researchers have discovered is not the terminology but the growth of deviant behaviours in recent years. Kidder noted that such workplace behaviours have not only grown in frequency and typology but in severity also. Examples of these behaviours easily range from spending an extra 5 minutes on break to workplace homicide. This dissertation avoided the difficulties posed by the loose and varying definitions of employee deviance by has focusing on a type and career specific form of deviant behaviour. The hopes were that this clear and comprehensive research would instigate wider research to eventually measure and ultimately manage the levels and types of employee deviances within the taxi industry.

Further interpretations of deviant behaviour can be taken from Robinson & Bennett, 1995. They confirm its complexity by describing “ employee deviance” as a term which encompasses a very diverse set of loosely related behaviours. In addition Bolin and Heatherly stated that most research in this area has not addressed the complexity of employee deviance and its relationship with attitudes. As a result, little information is available that evaluates the relative effectiveness of different attitudes in predicting each of several types of employee deviance.

Boye and Slora defined acts of employee deviance as follows: arguing or fighting with customers, doing slow or sloppy work on purpose, and not reporting various types of theft. More importantly Boye and Slora stated that the complexity of employee deviance, in its various forms extents and definitions has resulted in the prevalence of many types of on-the-job theft and counterproductive behaviour, also making it very difficult to assess.

After reading the ample research on employee deviance it can be said that the majority of research is simply putting a new label on an old package. That is, many researchers have simply found different ways to title the same topic. For the reasons mentioned above, this research has avoided complexities by using one, widely acknowledged definition of deviant behaviour.

Robinson and Bennett (1995) I believe have provided the most complete definition of deviant behaviour. This definition has been cited by many other researchers and used as the framework on which they base research. In “ A

## Typology of Deviant Workplace Behaviours: A Multidimensional Scaling

Study” Robinson and Bennett classify employee deviance into two groups.

1. Organizational deviance and 2. Interpersonal deviance. They then go onto classify the different form of deviance within these groups which I have depicted below.

## Employee deviance

(Counter-productive behaviour)

## Interpersonal deviance

- Political deviance
- Personal aggression

## Organisational deviance

- Production deviance
- Property deviance

Robinson and Bennett define production deviance as behaviours that violate organisation norms regarding the minimum quality and quantity of work to be accomplished. *E. g. leaving early, procrastinating and wasting resources.*

Property deviance is defined as instances when employees acquire or damage the tangible property or assets of the work organisation without authorisation. *E. g. stealing from company, sabotaging equipment.*

In terms of interpersonal deviance, Robinson and Bennett define political deviance as social interaction that puts other individuals at personal or

political disadvantage . *E. g. competing non-beneficially or gossiping about co-workers*. More severe deviances such as sexual harassment or verbal abuse were deemed as acts of personal aggression.

Other types of deviance have also been established by other researcher; however they also fall into the classification already outlined by Robinson and Bennett, for instance;

- Employee theft- Hollinger and Clarke (1983)
- Absenteeism- Johns (1997)
- Forms of aggression- Folgern and Baron (1996)

The interpersonal deviant behaviour mentioned above, was investigated by the HSL in a recent study of “ Workplace Violence to Lone Working Staff”. The focus of the report was to establish how organisations could manage this risk to their staff and the findings were presented in a set of case studies.

The case study which is of relevance here is that of work related violence (or interpersonal deviant behaviour) against taxi drivers. The Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) reported that this was a real and growing problem in which certain aspects of the taxi drivers’ work expose them to the risk of violence from the public. These include carrying money in the cab (or the public perception that the driver is carrying money), drunken and disorderly behaviour, and working late at night or early in the morning.

The HSL case study also revealed that the members of the taxi organisations they had talked to had experienced robberies involving a variety of weapons, and verbal abuse and aggressive behaviour by passengers. Furthermore, the



consequences of these forms of deviant behaviour were taxi driver injuries, depression, and in the worst case death. The HSL concluded that prevention was the key and that the use of violence prevention methods increased drivers' confidence and enabled self-employed drivers to continue to work with minimum risks to their health and safety.

However when looking into deviant behaviour committed by taxi drivers, news reports often referred to severe acts of interpersonal violence, primarily sexual assault. However, it is important to add here that the majority of cases reported in the news were of bogus taxi drivers, that is unlicensed vehicles posing as official taxi services at night. One of the biggest barriers to understanding the problem of interpersonal deviant behaviour by bogus or real taxi drivers is the lack of data specifically collected on the crime. There is the problem of under-reporting especially given the sensitivity of some of the offences committed. These offences show a major weakness in the regulation of the taxi service, as it appears easy to imitate leaving the public at risk from rogue taxi drivers. Also, there is a lack of supported evidence and research to address fully the problem. However, initiatives such as marshalled taxi ranks at night (allows customers) in Manchester not only confirm that this problem is real and that measures are also being taken to ensure passenger and driver safety.

The remainder of this chapter is a review of the theories that have attempted to explain the rationale of deviant behaviours. A summary of my recommendations and hypothesis concludes this chapter of the dissertation.

Robinson and Bennett's definition and categorisation of employee deviance was used as the framework for this research. However, in understanding the rationale behind the behaviour I found other models to be better and suited more applicable given the nature of topic of the research.

Robinson and Bennett categorised the rationale for deviant behaviour into various factors, the main being, motivation e. g. stress and boredom, organisational constraints e. g. poor working conditions, inadequate training and justice perceptions e. g. fairness and rewarding. Their research established that the rationale for the behaviour could be identified by observing the link between the relationship between these factors above and employee deviant behaviour.

.....also cited unfairness a potent rationale for employee deviant behaviour and according to be widely regarded to be among the most. ...also reported that the research of Greenberg, 1990, 1993b has specifically shown that employees are inclined to steal company property when they feel underpaid for the work they do.

According to Rickman and Wittz, criminological and psychological theories have each postulated a main determinant for employee deviance; a conscience model and an impulse model respectively. The conscience model stipulates that employee deviance in terms of crime is motivated by the deviant's degree of apathy towards acting illegally. The impulse control model stipulates that the above is due to when employees assess that the gains from crime is greater than the potential cost.

Thus far dissatisfaction at work is a broad summation of one of the rationales researchers have identified regarding deviant employee behaviour. This dissatisfaction at work included the sense of working conditions, unfairness in job reward or earnings, as mentioned by Robinson, Bennett and Greenberg. However, this estimation is too broad a theory to identify the rationale for deviant charging practises among taxi drivers.

The theories best applicable to the research of deviant behaviour among taxi drivers have been identified by various schools of thought. For example in Coyne and Bartram's Personnel managers' perceptions of dishonesty in the workplace, it is noted that previous research has indicated that honesty and integrity were most important cues for managers were assessing counter productivity.

Also in,..... Rousseau and McLean Parks, (1993) agency theory is rooted in the economic assumptions of self-interested behaviour and utility maximization. That is, employees will always shirk or misrepresent their capabilities if they can get away with it .

According to Cornish (1993) employee deviance is the result of opportunism. It links the likelihood of employee deviance occurring to when subjects are confident that the risks in being detected were small. Nagin et al. (2002) also use 'rational cheater' model to explain deviant behaviour. It assumes that employees and employers commit and monitor crime on the basis of a familiar cost-benefit calculus; where the immediacy of gains from crime outweighs any long term potential costs.

Therefore my theory is that taxi drivers would be likely to charge non locals more for the journey within the city. This is because the likeliness of detection is small if the assumed “ foreign” passenger is unfamiliar with local routes. Therefore, the rationale to cheat is great due to the high chance of getting away with it. This therefore covers the issues of opportunism, dishonesty and self ma

## **Method**

For this dissertation there are no contemporary works that can be drawn on the analysis of why and how taxi drivers impose different fares on different passengers.

Economists may argue that this is a form of price discrimination which is defined as

“ the ability for a supplier to sell the same product or service in a number of different markets at different prices” For the purpose of this discussion, the “ supplier” being the taxi driver, “ service” being the transport and the “ different markets” refers to the different types of passengers. Although taxi services are normally regulated by the associated local authorities or boroughs discrepancies still exist especially in regards to tariffs, which this dissertation investigated. This dissertation has therefore been based on actual research. The chosen areas for the actual research were Fallowfield and the Piccadilly train station in Manchester. The population of Manchester in .... was ....., while the student population was ..... Fallowfield Manchester has a population of ..... with the percentage of its student population being .....%.

The two main transport facilities within Fallowfield are bus and taxi.

There are no tram or train facilities from Fallowfield to the city centre.

### **The questionnaire**

Some practitioners would reserve the term ‘ questionnaires’ exclusively for self-administered and postal questionnaires, while others would include interview schedules which are administered face to face or by telephone under the general rubric of ‘ questionnaires’ (Oppenheim, 1992). A questionnaire is an important instrument for research and a tool for data collection.

Without doubt, the postal questionnaire is generally cheaper than other methods. ‘ Questionnaires can be sent through mail; interviews cannot’, in the startling words of Selltiz (1959). It also has low cost of processing such as stamps and it avoids interview bias. Moreover, it has the ability to reach respondents who live at widely dispersed addresses or abroad. Alternatively, questionnaires can be distributed electronically through emails with even lower delivery costs. If this is the case, responses can be very quick and efficient. This however depends on the willingness of the potential respondents whether to respond or not.

Hence, the weaknesses of the method is that there is generally low response rates and consequent biases. Potential respondents are more likely to respond to questionnaires given the fact that they have perceived interests or importance in the subject of the questionnaires otherwise they will be unlikely to respond. Even with a well planned questionnaire using follow up request letters and telephone calls, the response rates can remain very low.

Heberlein (1978) has found that responses to the government sponsored surveys to be higher may be due to the fact that, information transmitted to the government may have a direct effect on the individual or on other similar individuals through policy changes. Besides that, employees may respond to a survey if it were to be concerned with their livelihood. On the contrary, low importance would explain why market research surveys net lower returns. This is because of potential respondents' perceived information about one's demographic characteristics, used to benefit a firm may not strike as particularly important to them. It is equally more difficult to make appeals or sample to specific self-interest or specialised questionnaire content, for example, from driver's licenses or voter registration lists. Although it is possible to achieve high response rates from general populations, but there is an initial inertia which must be overcome.

In addition, postal questionnaires are also unsuitable for respondents with poor literacy and who are visually handicapped. Thus, message cannot be conveyed and there will be a communication failure. It is also inappropriate for people with language difficulties such as children below ten or people who are in a very old age. Lack of control over the order in which questions are answered, inability to check on incomplete responses, incomplete questionnaires or the passing on of questionnaires to others can also be problematic thus results from questionnaires can be far from accurate. A busy executive, for instance may ask his personal assistant to complete the questionnaire on his behalf therefore answers may not reflect the true performance pertaining to the study of the subject. There is also no opportunity to collect ratings or assessments based on observations.

Despite the fact that the length of the questionnaire is considered as a cost barrier to be avoided if at all possible, longer questionnaires may impress the potential respondent with the importance of his inputs. While discarding 20 pages of questions is depriving the investigator of a good deal of information, tossing a one page instrument may be relatively easy to do and convenient for respondent who is disadvantaged with time. Nevertheless, if the researcher has taken the time to compose 20 pages of questions, it is always assumed that the research is a serious matter, signalling importance to respondents therefore they will likely to complete the questionnaire forms. Consequently, this may outweigh the costs associated with the length of the questionnaire.

There is also concern with the fact that the questionnaire is difficult to complete even though it may be short. Furthermore, the potential respondent may be ambivalent or undecided about the alternatives when it comes to attitude questions which often involve a response choice. Such cognitive assertion may be sufficient cost to deter the individual from completing the questionnaire. Another potential cost for respondent is that the risks of that information asked for may invade privacy and implicate the individual. A useful way to overcome this problem is via anonymous procedures such as 'uncoded' questionnaires. Not returning a questionnaire can also incur costs. This not merely include costs of repeating mails or follow-up costs but also the costs of feeling the 'guilt' for not completing the questionnaire descended upon the potential respondent. This reflects the psychological cost of the individual which can have a negative effect. Employee's inability to respond to a company's survey may lead to follow

ups from the company which will add to employee's stress of not complying thereby the fear of losing his job.

On the other hand, questionnaire interviews have a higher response rate therefore more effective in the information gathering or research.

Incompleteness can be controlled, observations can be carried out and the interviews are useful in answering sequence. They also provide the opportunity to rate and correct misunderstandings. It is also a prolific mean when dealing with respondents with language and reading difficulties.

Contrarily, interviews can be time-consuming and expensive to conduct and process, particularly when attempting to reach a wide dispersed sample.

There will also be risks for interview biases. Essentially, in the case of the postal questionnaires on the contrary, biases can also exist because the respondent may conjure up an image or stereotype of the organisation which sent the questionnaire and may 'project' some kind of person or organisation behind the questions, and this may bias their responses.

### **The research interview**

“ Personal interviews are direct communications wherein interviews in face to face situations ask respondents questions. This versatile and flexible method is a two-way conversation between an interviewer and a respondent” (Zikmund, 1991, p: 162). It can also be used in a variety of contexts and situations and in conjunction with other research methods. For example, problems which incorporated into questionnaire may be identified by preliminary interview. It can also form the basis of a later or more searching interview.



One of the benefits of personal interviews is the opportunity for feedback to the respondent. An example of this is where an interviewer whom could be a supervisor would be able to reassure the interviewee, whom is the employee that her answers will be strictly confidential. The interviewer may also provide feedback in clarifying any questions the employee has on the restrictions or questions. Respondents would also be acknowledged through some information regarding the purpose of study. This can be done more convincingly than a covering letter can. It can also clear up misunderstandings immediately and the researcher can re-word and re-order the questions, if something unexpected happens. In maintaining the control over the order or the sequence in which questions are answered, it can be assumed that the longer, the more difficult and the more open-ended the question schedule is, the more interviews method will be preferred.

Another gain of personal interviews may include the opportunity to probe. If a respondent's answer is brief or unclear, the researcher may ask for clarification or expansion of answers to standardised questions which is known as 'probing' for a clearer or more comprehensive explanation. Apart from allowing some flexibility, personal interview is useful to obtain unstructured information. Complex questions that cannot easily be asked through mail surveys or telephone can be handled by skilful interviewers.

Personal interviews may be the only alternative if the research objective requires an extremely lengthy questionnaire. While personal interviews last as long as one hour and a half, telephone interviews may only takes less than 20 minutes. Improved response rate is another advantage for using interviews method in taking into account postal questionnaire which may

have less than 40% response rates. Furthermore, interview surveys may be less biased since it uses probability sampling rather than quota sampling used in postal questionnaire. The presence of an interviewer generally increases the number of people to complete the interview. Respondents sometimes enjoy sharing information and insights with friendly and sympathetic interviewers. Location of the interview to take place may include at the respondent's home or office. Increasingly, interviews have also taken place in shopping malls and the locale for the interviews usually influences the participation rate. In addition, door to door interviews provide a more representative sample of the population than mail questionnaires. For example, the ethnic minorities such as the Hispanics, regardless of education, frequently prefer to communicate through the spoken rather written word. Hence, interviews help to solve the problem of non-response mainly. However, the method, may under-represent or over-represent certain groups. Individuals living in multi-dwelling units with security systems, such as high-rise apartment dwellers may be excluded, similarly with busy executives who do not have time to participate in interviews at office hours.

Apart from that, interviews will reach less well-educated respondents or with reading difficulties more easily than questionnaires. Investigator can also show the respondent a resume, a new product sample, plan layout or some other visual aid when interviewing respondents face to face. In a survey to determine “super-lightweight” chain saw should be manufactured, visual props were necessary because the concept of weight is difficult to imagine. On the other hand, to survey the demand for various drinks, the researcher

could get the interviewee to taste the different drinks and gave valuable opinions for the study as part of the research.

The first main drawback of the method is that respondents may not be anonymous and therefore may be reluctant to provide confidential information to another person. Interviews are also much more expensive than postal questionnaires which cost a little more than the expense of paper, the cost of two envelopes and stamps per subject and printing or duplicating costs. The total cost will become greater the larger or more dispersed the sample (Thorpe, 2002). Added to this are the travel and call backs costs. In the data processing stage, there is a major coding operation cost in terms of money and time to analyse the respondents' answers especially when it comes to open-ended questions.

What is more, interviews can be very time consuming, apart from having problem with briefing interviewers who may come from different backgrounds. As a result, length of interview, travelling to and from interview, transcription of tapes and notes must be considered. In contrast, only a small sample may be interviewed which may not be representative of the whole population. Interview bias is another reason for invalidity or unreliability of the method. This problem must be addressed throughout the interview to ensure that researchers will avoid personal views that will lead to bias creeping in when the interview information is being evaluated and interpreted. Ambiguous questions may confuse interviewers which may cause problems in collecting appropriate data thereby may lead to inconsistency and inaccuracy. For instance, in a consumer survey, simple term such as 'week' can be confusing as to what commence time should be

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decided on, for the term of ‘ this past week’ (Oppenheim, 1997). Thus, pilot work has to be conducted and questions have to be discussed to avoid any misunderstandings.

### **The case study**

The purpose of the case study is to obtain information from one or a few situations that are similar to the researcher’s problem situation. It is a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings. Example of a case study research, include Pettigrew’s (1973) research on decision making at a British retailer. Case studies can involve either single or multiple cases, and numerous levels of analysis (Yin, 1984). Apart from that, they can employ an embedded design, that is, multiple levels of analysis within a single study (Yin, 1984). Warwick study of competitiveness and strategic change within major UK corporations is conducted at two levels of analysis, which are industry and firm (Pettigrew, 1988) portrays an example of this form of case study. On the other hand, case studies typically combine data collection methods such as archives, interviews, questionnaires and observations. The evidences may be quantitative or qualitative. They can also be used to provide descriptions (Kidder, 1982), test theory (Pinfield, 1986) or generate theory (Gersick, 1988, Harris and Sutton, 1986).

The primary advantage of the case study is that an entire organisation or entity can be investigated in depth and with meticulous attention to detail. This considerably focused attention enables researchers to carefully study the order of events as they occur or to concentrate on identifying the relationships among functions, individuals or entities. Case studies are

suitable for explanatory research because such questions of how and why can be dealt with operational links needing to be traced over time rather than mere frequencies or incidence. This method can also be carried out by a single researcher. Conversely, the theory-building from cases will generate a novel theory. Creative insight often arises from the juxtaposition of contradictory or paradoxical evidence (Cameron and Quinn, 1988), which can be gained from drawing up a case study research. This is where attempts are made to reconcile evidence across cases, types of data, different investigators, between cases and literature which increase the likelihood of reframing into a new theoretical vision. Although it is assumed that the process is limited by investigator's preconceptions, however this is not necessarily true. This constant juxtaposition of conflicting realities tend to 'unfreeze' thinking, and so the theory from the process tend to be "less researcher bias than theory built from incremental studies or armchair, axiomatic deduction," (Eis