



Influence of Job Factors and Risky Riding Behaviours by Food Delivery Riders in Malaysia

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Abstract

Road traffic accidents in Malaysia have progressively increased, enhancing the potential of a food delivery rider breaking traffic regulations and causing a road accident. The objectives are to identify the level of safety awareness of riders when they perform their work. Next, determine the primary circumstances that contributed to the food delivery rider being involved in a road accident. Hence, identify the implications for the food delivery rider while delivering the food to the customer. It benefits food delivery riders because it minimises the number of violations and improves training for practicing road safety while delivering food.

Keywords: Food delivery rider, traffic violations, safety awareness, and accidents

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1.0 Introduction

In Malaysia, food delivery riders such as Foodpanda, GrabFood, and Dah Makan are an essential link in the chain of this service. The service was popular among millennials and convenient by allowing them to order from a wide range of restaurants with a simple tap of their mobile phone. Motorcycles are one of the most dangerous modes of transport and contribute significantly to accidents. According to Wahab and Jiang (2020), more individuals, particularly in low- and middle-income nations, are riding motorcycles. Due to their compact size, ease of usage in congested traffic, reduced price, greater fuel efficiency, and ease of parking in narrow streets, motorcycles are currently being used for business transportation, as stated by Chang and Chen (2019). The motorcyclist, on the other hand, is vulnerable to harm. To meet this demand, food delivery riders make an effort to deliver any type of food on the road at any hour. This is because the food delivery riders ride for long periods and follow a rigid timetable. Since the value of the delivery determines their income, they were working under pressure or in hazardous conditions. The food delivery riders must also go at high speeds on busy or confined highways. These factors may cause them to disobey the law or partake in unsafe behaviour. The issues attributed were focused on the prevalence of unsafe riding behaviour of food delivery riders in the food services industry platforms, such as ignorance of traffic rules, not wearing proper attire, using a safety helmet, texting messages, and talking on a hand phone while riding, which have all contributed to a road accident. Individual and environmental factors are commonly to blame for road traffic accidents. Therefore, it is necessary to look at this frightening issue, especially concerning the safety of riders on the road. Additionally, Malaysia has applied existing regulations to reduce and control these problems. By filling these gaps, this study can provide a comprehensive understanding of the influence of job factors and risky riding behaviours among food delivery riders in Malaysia. According to Dave (2020), in Malaysia, although there is not a specific breakdown for food delivery riders, 66% of the people killed in traffic crashes are motorcyclists.

2.0 Literature Review

Food delivery in Malaysia was a growing trend in metropolitan areas due to its technological businesses like Foodpanda, Grab Food, Dah Makan, and many more. As stated in Ang (2019), motorcyclists are at a higher risk of collision than automobile drivers. Yousif (2020) says this is mainly due to motorcycle riders' inherent fragility and the growing number of hazards they face. According to the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Status Report on Road Safety (2018), motorcycles are responsible for 28 percent of all traffic fatalities worldwide, and the percentage is increasing each year. The issues were focused on the work implications of food delivery riders in the food services industry platforms, such as ignorance of traffic rules, not wearing proper attire, using a safety helmet, texting messages, and talking on a handphone while riding, all of which contributed to a road accident. Cell phone use is the main cause of road distraction, according to a study by Razi-Ardakani et al. (2019). A previous study found a link between desensitisation and late responses to hazards among Malaysian motorcycle riders (Ibrahim & Ab Rashid, 2018).

2.1 Disobeying Road Regulations

Referring to Vijayasankari (2020), 56 of the 173 food delivery workers were involved in an accident, and the age group most vulnerable to an accident is 20–29 years old. Road traffic accidents (RTAs) are a major public health concern that demands immediate attention in developing countries such as India, which has the highest rate of RTA mortality in Southeast Asia. According to the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Status Report on Road Safety 2018, released in December 2018, the annual number of road traffic deaths has increased to 1.35 million. Therefore, mobile phone use while driving is considered to be a key risk factor for road traffic accidents. The prevention of traffic accidents requires careful and effective interventions and training for teenagers. Furthermore, health professionals play a significant role in educating the public about traffic safety regulations and techniques, especially for the younger population. Tamrin (2020) mentioned that 150 riders involved in road accidents earn as much commission as possible with high delivery rates. According to statistics published by the Bukit Aman Traffic Investigation and Enforcement Department, one-third of the cases included serious injuries, while the remaining 73 were minor injuries. Numerous food delivery riders frequently violate traffic laws, such as running red lights or exceeding the speed limit. Moreover, one of their issues is that they use cell phones to dodge traffic, which leads them to crash with other cars, slip off the road, or lose control of bends and junctions. Thus, to preserve their employees, they must undertake defensive motorcycling training and courses before accepting new riders, as well as provide safety jackets that are visible to other road users and bright reflective strips on food boxes.

2.2 Statistics of accidents involving food delivery riders

According to Ishak (2021), the Social Security Organisation (Socso) recorded more than 150 road incidents involving food delivery riders on motorbikes between March and June 2020. Commuting accidents have increased by over 83 percent in the last year, from 20,810 in 2009 to 38,142 in 2019. Meanwhile, the number of fatalities was three times that of industrial accidents in 2020. Over 55 percent of employee accidents occurred within 5 kilometres of their office, and 65 percent of commuting crashes included young people under the age of 40, with 80 percent being male workers. Exhaustion and a rush to arrive at their destination on time were the main causes of the accidents. Supramani (2021) stated that 70% of p-hailing riders disobey traffic rules while on delivery runs. Miros shows how, when the country is under lockdown, food delivery riders provide a critical service while simultaneously posing a hazard on the road. 70% of them break traffic laws while on a delivery route, according to research by the Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research (Miros). For instance, halting in the yellow box accounted for 57% of all violations. Following that are running red signals (16%), talking on the phone while riding (15%), riding against traffic (7%), and performing illegal U-turns (5%). Such behaviour may cause them to lose control of their motorcycles, resulting in a traffic accident. According to police statistics, there were a total of 6,176 road fatalities in 2019, with motorcyclists accounting for 3,959 (64%) of them. There were 4,653 deaths last year, with motorcyclists accounting for 3,118, or 67% of the total.

2.3 Existing guidelines implemented on food delivery riders

Syah Zulkifly (2023), the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) in Malaysia, released guidelines for the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994 that all employers and employees in Malaysia must adhere to in order to ensure that a safe working culture and environment are both practiced. Employers and employees both have a responsibility to ensure safety, and the latter must be aware of their underlying duties, such as abiding by the law's requirements for safety measures and following safety and health procedures. Ajmal et al. (2022) stated that in order to improve the health and safety of food delivery riders, it is crucial to expand their knowledge and awareness of occupational safety and health hazards, as well as their responsibilities to ensure their workplace safety as well as health. Safety training enables employees to gain knowledge about work-related hazards and associated risks.

3.0 Methodology

In this study, the researcher conducted an interview session with a 26-year-old Foodpanda delivery rider to collect the data. The Foodpanda rider is from Klang Valley, Malaysia, which is the range area that is common with the hectic lifestyle of urban people. The Klang Valley region of Malaysia was chosen as the study location because of its considerable contribution to urbanisation and growth. Furthermore, Ampang Jaya, Petaling Jaya, Shah Alam, Subang Jaya, Klang, and Kuala Lumpur are all linked by a sophisticated infrastructural network. Moreover, the existence of some local universities, such as University Technology Mara (UiTM) Shah Alam, University of Selangor (Unisel), Management and Science University (MSU), and others, contributes to the use of online food ordering. Hence, with all of these communities, the influence of online food ordering platforms such as Foodpanda is in high demand.

The study utilised a semi-structured interview guide to collect data that included the study's key themes. The themes are the safety awareness of food delivery riders, major contributors to traffic accidents, and the implications of delivering food to customers. Through a phone-depth interview, a Foodpanda delivery rider was selected as a researcher's respondent for data collection. This is because the research was conducted during the Movement Control Order (MCO) by the government of Malaysia in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the researcher had difficulties scheduling interview sessions due to time constraints. The Foodpanda delivery rider has more than two years of experience as a full-time food delivery rider in Malaysia. Permission is also permitted to conduct an interview where they will be questioned about their personal experiences as food delivery riders. Following the study's introduction, the researcher will explain the purpose of the interview and the research provided. The interview questions consist of four parts: Part A: which consists of demographic information. Part B: include questions regarding safety awareness practices by the food delivery rider. Part C: describes the factors influencing the involvement of food delivery riders in a traffic accident, and Part D: describes the consequences they faced while delivering food to customers. To analyse the participant's perception, the questions will be asked in a specific order for the topic, which is categorised into themes based on the study area. Follow-up questions will be asked as needed.

The researchers gathered data for the data analysis procedure by recording and transcribing audio from a phone call. Transcribing allows researchers to collect reliable and complete information. The researcher used Atlas.ti to analyse the coding and transcripts from the interview session.

4.0 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Disobeying Road Regulations

The researcher discovered the participant was exhausted from a long ride and not having a good rest. The participant also experienced microsleep while riding the motorcycle, putting himself in danger. Next, speeding, violating traffic lights, taking the wrong turn, or taking a shortcut road are the reasons to gain extra commission and orders. Somehow, the participant knows about the risk, but he can't resist doing it as he deals with stakeholders who are putting him under time pressure. He has a daily goal to achieve in a day. The researcher found that the participant had never had an accident while being a food delivery rider. This issue illustrates how the "Top Rider," or food delivery rider, will receive a proper and systematic schedule based on the batch. The food delivery rider's rating determines the schedule, and they will do so for the sake of money. According to the participant, collecting multiple orders at once was not a convenient method to follow because he needed to be fast and focused at the same time. It was a tough challenge and did not bode well. Factors contributing to the food delivery rider's accident due to weather. Weather is one of the trials he needs to deal with every day. The researcher discovered that the participant checking his phone while riding has an impact on the safety risk on the road. The reason is that he needs to check the customer's address and time constraints.

4.2 Safety Awareness

The researcher found that a modified motorcycle will become a hazard in the future. As previously stated, the participant is responsible for his motorcycle's maintenance. For example, he will service his motorcycle once a month. When it comes to clothing, the participant follows all the specifications, such as wearing shoes and a t-shirt provided by the Foodpanda company.

4.3 Customers

Following that, heavy traffic during peak hours results in late deliveries. Furthermore, some guarded houses do not allow the food delivery rider to deliver and send the food in front of the customer's house. In this scenario, the respondent thought of this problem because he feared exchanging the meal with others. Up to a point, the participant encountered impatient customers. The customers mostly make faces when he is late delivering the food. As a result, he needs to take good care of his customers, which results in rating satisfaction. Some of the customers are understanding, some are not. But having good communication will make things better for both sides.

4.4 Vendor

Aside from that, the participant stated that some vendors are late in preparing food. Sometimes he must wait for a long time, about an hour, to get his meal done. It's all about the time he needs to deal with, and he can get 2-3 orders at that time. Furthermore, drink packaging from the vendor is always a problem, resulting in spills in his box. However, complaining isn't the best solution because the vendors will not take full responsibility. In summary, the participant must take good care of their customers, resulting in rating satisfaction. While some customers understand, others do not. However, effective communication will benefit both sides. Furthermore, the vendor's drink packaging is always a problem, resulting in spills in his Foodpanda box. To reduce customer complaints, vendors must make an effort to improve the drink packaging, particularly for online customers. Following that, heavy traffic during peak hours causes delivery to be late. The participant is aware of the risk, but he is unable to help himself because he is dealing with stakeholders who are putting him under time pressure. A food delivery rider's time is valuable and priceless because their commission depends on the order he earns.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the Gig economy, such as being a food delivery rider, is a great way to start a career because no experience is required. Up to a point, most job requirements require at least some experience in their job scope. Furthermore, the delivery business is profitable

due to the massive demand in the online ecosystem and the evolution of customer behaviour to have access to everything at their doorsteps with the touch of a button while making easy money every day. Because no prior experience is required, this job is more attractive to younger people. Nowadays, it is challenging to find a job that suits the field you are engaged in. The presence of food delivery riders as a job helps to reduce the number of unemployed young people and provide job opportunities to all people who are needed. Since its inception as a convenient way for everyone to get things delivered to their doorstep, the Gig economy has thrived. During the pandemic, trends have shown a sudden increase in food delivery platforms, urging people to stay at home and order as they please. As a result, hundreds of people who have lost their jobs in the last two years have found new employment. Furthermore, it assists the rider in earning additional income for living expenses due to flexible working hours. As a result, in terms of health, being a food delivery rider is not a long-term job because they are exposed to risk on the road. Certainly, this job is not suitable for the elderly due to health concerns, unless there are no other options. Job pressures, long working hours, and financial burdens have led many riders to adopt dangerous traffic behaviours, such as speeding. A motorcycle accident is a problem that never ends. Proactive measures should be taken to reduce and prevent this situation, since prevention is preferable to treatment. As a result, food delivery riders are aware of safety awareness practices and the risks of traffic violations; however, they do not apply them.

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are hereby specified:

5.1 Monthly maintenance

To minimise unforeseen problems when delivering and to reduce deadly road injuries, a food delivery rider, for example, must update their motorcycle monthly check-up service in the application. A motorcycle maintenance system for monthly inspections is necessary for the food delivery rider's application. There is a need for this additional system in the food delivery application for all food delivery riders. Motorcycle riders are more difficult to handle and are more vulnerable in a crash. The same goes for food delivery riders.

5.2 Personal device alert

Furthermore, riding alone is one of those times when a personal safety device can be helpful, especially at night. The safety alert device assists food delivery riders involved in an accident or an unwanted incident in seeking emergency help. The safety device is placed on the rider's motorcycle and can track the location through the application system. Hence, the companies can track the rider and take responsibility for immediately sending help. This safety alert device can be implied by the food delivery riders who are in need, and the rider's data can also be tracked through the application.

5.3 Authorities

Authorities, such as television stations, are allegedly required to provide an awareness programme or advertisement about preventing traffic offences among food delivery riders in Malaysia. This awareness seeks to educate food delivery riders on how to take precautions if they are involved in an accident on the road. Furthermore, food delivery companies can provide new food delivery riders with a 6-month trial period without any traffic or customer issues before becoming permanent riders by enhancing the commissions. It helps to minimise unsafe working behaviour with good safety records.

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Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

There will be a decrease in the number of accidents caused by speeding, saving the lives of food delivery riders by reducing the number of violations.

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