

MIDNIGHT TAXI CHARGES ABUSE AT LCC TERMINAL, SEPANG

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ABSTRACT

Several countries in the world had implemented the surcharge rate during off peak period to encourage the availability of taxi service. The encouragement by applying surcharge was found necessary to ensure continuous taxi services during off peak period which are currently least remunerative. However this incentive had been abused. A study was done to investigate abusing on midnight taxi charges at LCC Terminal where it was found that taxi driver exploiting midnight rate for their personal advantages. This creates inconvenience scenario and unfairness treatment to midnight taxi users. Immediate improvement action needs to be done to certain area such as improving taxi queuing operation, revising on the implementation of the midnight surcharge rate policy, services and operations of midnight taxi. This will benefit midnight taxi users as well as to ensure the smooth running of midnight taxi operations. Above all, response from taxi industry participants itself is the key to gain public confident with the LCC Terminal taxi services.

ABSTRAK

Di dalam dunia terdapat beberapa Negara melaksanakan kadar caj tambahan untuk mengalakan bekalan teksi semasa bukan waktu puncak. Galakkan dengan tambahan caj ini dirasakan perlu bagi memastikan perkhidmatan teksi yang berterusan semasa bukan waktu puncak. Walaubagaimanapun insentif ini telah disalahguna. Satu kajian telah dibuat bagi menyiasat penyelewengan terhadap caj teksi tengah malam di Terminal Tambang Murah di mana pemandu teksi telah mengambil kesempatan untuk kepentingan mereka. Ini menyebabkan keadaan yang tidak disenangi dan ketidak adilan dalam melayani pengguna teksi tengah malam. Langkah memperbaikinya perlu dilakukan dengan segera ia adalah dengan memperbaiki aturan operasi teksi, mengkaji perlaksanaan polisi perlaksanaan kadar caj tambahan tengah malam seterusnya memperbaiki operasi dan perkhidmatan teksi tengah malam. Ini akan memberi kebaikan kepada pengguna teksi tengah malam dan pada masa yang sama melancarkan operasi teksi tengah malam dapat dipastikan. Respon dari mereka yang terlibat di dalam industri teksi ini menjadi faktor utama untuk memenangi kepercayaan orang ramai terhadap perkhidmatan teksii di Terminal Tambang Murah.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The Low Cost Carrier Terminal (LCC Terminal) is specifically built to cater to the ever growing passengers of the Low Cost Airlines, purposely the international and domestic airline passengers. The air transport service is integrated with other transport mode that such as bus and taxi service. The only 24 hours a day and 7 days a week transport service at the terminal is the taxi service. Likes the other taxi services, the terminal taxi also provide doo to door service to the passenger. This is the key service characteristics that make the taxi service most popular than the other service at the terminal.

In order to ensure reliability of LCC Terminal taxi service during peak off time specifically midnight time, 50% midnight surcharge are currently being imposed. The implementation started on October 2006 on the seventh month after the commencement LCC Terminal taxi operation. This fare revision shows that the government is concerned on improving the terminal taxi service by inducing more drivers to work at midnight time.

However, some of drivers are taking advantages in a different way. They abuse the scheme by overcharging passenger. Government was very concerned and put an effort to tackle on raised overcharge issue as it was addressed by the Tourism Minister, taxi drivers who are found to overcharge or mistreat their customers are the new enemies and they are same as communist and should be shot. They would also

call for lesser, but equally harsh, forms of punishment, including jailing and a lifetime suspension of the taxi licence (NST, 2002).

1.2 Background of the Study

This study focuses on the raising issue on abusing of midnight charges where the taxi driver to overcharge from the perspective of its passenger who are midnight taxi user. Passengers make use midnight taxi service to bring them to the terminal where else they use midnight taxi service from terminal to their desired destination. This study will cover midnight taxi passengers who use midnight taxi service from terminal to their final destination. On the second part of the study, the researcher will undergo taxi operation to find improvement area that need to be considered to improve midnight taxi operation. In the taxi operation, the researcher will look at the midnight taxi operation beginning with the taxi alighting process until taxi boarding process.

In overall, this study is to find passenger point of view towards abuse midnight taxi charges that is accused by the taxi driver at the same time the study is also to find improvement measures on midnight taxi operation. In the next section the LCC Terminal taxis will be overviewed in order to point where and when abuse midnight charges occur.

1.3 The LCC Terminal Taxi Services

Under the Commercial Vehicle Licensing Board (CVLB) Act 1987 (Act 334) typical of taxi service is classified taxi into 5 types. The classification is based on vehicle cylinder capacity (c.c) and passenger load capacity. The LCC Terminal taxi is classified under Airport Taxi which is means a motor vehicle having a seating capacity of not more than 7 persons used exclusively to carry passengers to and from the airport in consideration of a payment and operated from a fixed base or in an

authorized area. At the LCC Terminal taxi is pooled at the pool operation site which is approximately 200 meters from the terminal and taxi will dispatch their passenger to an authorized zone according to purchased coupon.

Taxi operation is designed to cover both inbound and outbound trips. An inbound trip is where passenger is dispatched to the LCC Terminal whereas an outbound trip is dispatched passenger from the LCC Terminal to their desired destination. An inbound service is sensibly by hailing taxi and the fare is charged based on taximeter. At the moment, inbound service is available within Klang Valley area.

In order to cater passenger's demand at the terminal, there are three service packages currently being offered. Those are Budget, Premier and Family packages. Each service package makes a different in term of loading capacity, comfortably as well fare charge. Table 1.1 is to show typical service package that is Budget, Premier and Family package. As at December 2008, there are 688 taxis of Budget package, 217 taxis of Premier package and 65 taxis of Family package. The type of car models that currently available for budget package are Proton WIRA, Proton ISWARA, Proton GEN2, Nissan Sentra and Renault Kanggoo. Proton PERDANA, Nissan Cefiro and Serena, Mercedes Benz, Naza Citra, Hyundai Sonata and Elantra are vehicle models that are available for Premier package. Then, NAZA Ria , KIA Pregio, Stavic, Toyota Hiace and Nissan Urvan are vehicle models that are available for Family package.

Table 1.1: Service Package Differentiate

Service Package	Passenger Capacity	Luggage Load Capacity
Budget	1 to 4	2 Medium and 1 Small
Premier	1 to 4	1 Big and 1 Medium
Family	1 to 9	4 Big and 2 Medium

(Source: Mesra Indah Jaya Sdn Bhd, 2008)

The passenger needs to purchase taxi coupon at the coupon counter operated at the arrival hall of the LCC Terminal to engage with the taxi service. According to Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (1999) in regulating the taxi industry, a trade off must be made between prices, quality and waiting times, all of which relate to the service received by the customer. At this counter, passenger will choose service package. Upon choosing the package, the counter will produce two copies of printed coupon which will be used by the passenger to claim the service at the taxi pickup point.

Passenger then will have to proceed to the pickup point where the network company provides marshal to assist passenger into queuing line. The marshals on duty will hand over a coupon to the taxi driver according to the queue and write the taxi's number on the coupon. A portion of the coupon will be given to the passenger for his/her reference.

1.3.1 The LCC Terminal Taxi Participants

There are four main participants in the LCC Terminal taxi industry that is permit owner, taxi operator, taxi network and taxi driver. Figure 1.1 is to show the LCC Terminal taxi industry's participants. These alliances had been established to be the fundamental of taxi operations.

i) Permit owners: all the permit owner is belongs to the 45 taxi operators. As at July 2008 the total of 1,442 permits were issued by CVLB that comprises of budget permit, premier permit and family permit is lodged to cater passenger demand. The taxi operator leases their plates to taxi driver at the range of RM300 to RM400 a month that is subject to the permit service categories. Whilst conditions attach to all permits, permit holders are subject to few obligations under the CVLB.

ii) Taxi operator: These groups of taxi operators sell bundled services such as car financing, insurance, repairs and car detailing to the drivers. They may also manage permit, license plates, operate taxi businesses and provide network services.

Table 1.2 is to show the list of taxi operator and number of permit obtained based on service package. All taxi companies must be authorized by the CVLB to provide services and hence must meet operator's standard performance standards.

Table 1.2 List of taxi operators and number of permit obtained from CVLB.

No.	Taxi Operators	Numbers of Permit Obtained from CVLB Base on Service Package			
		Budget	Premier	Family	Total
1	ASANISA LIMOU SDN BHD	20	14	0	34
2	BUTIRAN RAYA SDN BHD	0	5	0	5
3	DAMAI OTOMOBIL SDN BHD	53	0	0	53
4	GEMILANG TRAVEL & TOURS SDN BHD	10	0	0	10
5	HANDAL SEPAKAT SDN BHD	31	0	0	31
6	IBEX CORPORATION AMALGAMATED SDN BHD	2	0	0	2
7	IKATAN PRESTIJ SDN BHD	0	0	7	7
8	INOVASI TIMUR SDN BHD	0	0	0	0
9	INSAN SEMARAK SDN BHD	9	0	0	9
10	KLASS SERVIS (M) SDN BHD	9	41	0	50
11	KOPERASI BERJASA NEGERI SEMBILAN	15	5	0	20
12	KOPERASI NESA PELBAGAI BERHAD	9	0	0	9
13	KOPERASI NIAGA GLOKAL (M) BHD	15	0	0	15
14	KOPERASI PEMANDU TAXI BERHAD (KOTAXI)	10	0	0	10
15	KOPERASI POLIS DI RAJA MALAYSIA	10	0	0	10
16	KOPERASI SERBAGUNA MALAYSIA BERHAD	5	0	5	10
17	LEDANG UNGGUL SDN BHD	42	0	0	42
18	MAHABBAH SDN BHD	0	40	0	40
19	MARLIS CORPORATION SDN BHD	7	0	0	7
20	MINANG JATI CORPORATION SDN BHD	5	0	0	5
21	NEWSTAR EXCELSIAR (M) SDN BHD	0	0	12	12
22	PERKHIDMATAN TEKSI GEMBIRA SDN BHD	58	0	0	58
23	PINTAR RINGKASAN SDN BHD	26	0	0	26
24	PROTONWIRA PLASMA SDN BHD	9	0	21	30
25	PUNCAK HOLDING SDN BHD	0	3	0	3
26	PUJANGGA MOTOR SDN BHD	43	0	0	43
27	RB PREMIER TAXI SDN BHD	0	0	0	0
28	RIA SETUJU SDN BHD	75	38	5	118
29	RICH BONUS SDN BHD	11	0	0	11
30	SMART EXPRESS SDN BHD	26	0	0	26
31	SUASANA EDARAN SDN BHD	0	0	0	0
32	TEKSI SEDUNIA SDN BHD	0	20	0	20
33	TERMINAL LIMO (TELLI - LCCT)	0	0	0	0
34	THOYEBAH MOTOR SDN BHD	0	8	0	8
35	TUNAS PUNCAK SDN BHD	1	0	15	16
36	UFUK TERBILANG SDN BHD	10	0	0	10
37	UNGGUN MAYANG SDN BHD	44	0	0	44
38	UFUK SEMARAK SDN BHD	47	0	0	47

39	KOPERASI PEMANDU KENDERAAN AWAM MALAYSIA BHD (KOPANDU)	26	5	0	31
40	KOPERASI WANITA BERJAYA LENGGONG BERHAD	0	0	0	0
41	KOPERASI JURUPANDU USAHAWAN LIMOSIN AIRPORT KLIA BHD (KJPU)	5	35	0	40
42	KOPERASI ANGKATAN TENTERA MALAYSIA BERHAD	10	0	0	10
43	DESTINATION TRANSPORT (M) SDN BHD (PUNCAK HOLDING SDN BHD)	45	3	0	48
44	KOPERASI PEMUDA GEMILANG BAGON DATOH BHD	KIV	0	0	0
45	KOPERASI PERMODALAN PEMUDA PERAK BHD	KIV	0	0	0
Total		688	217	65	970

(Source: Mesra Indah Jaya Sdn Bhd, 2008)

iii) Taxi networks: Mesra Indah Jaya Sdn Bhd (MIJ) Company provides pre paid coupon system to the passenger. The company also responsible to manage coupon claim and dispatching system directly to their members i.e. taxi operator and driver. The company collects commission for each coupon sold to passengers. The coupon commission collected depends on the zones where passengers are travelling to. The amount of commission received is also dependent upon the type of taxi, whether budget services, premier services or family service.

Service is subject to performance standards (principally sales of passenger coupon and driver coupon claim) imposed as conditions of their authorization by the CVLB. The taxi network monitors their own performance against the standards and report to the CVLB for every 3 month times. There are no penalties for failure to meet these standards other than the threat of removal of authorization.

iv) Drivers: By law, LCC Terminal taxi drivers are regarded as independent contractors rather than as employees of taxi operators. The drivers are called as Taxi Entrepreneur. They drive their own vehicles through leasehold agreement and contract their services to the operators. This bounded the driver with as such Entrepreneur Scheme. Under this scheme driver has to pay a fixed amount of daily rental to the taxi operator depending on the class of vehicles. One of the most importance taxi driver requirements are to be licensed to Public Service Vehicle

(PSV) under the Road Transport Department (RTD). And the service provision is under a series of rules by the CVLB that governing their behavior in taxis and at rank. The regulations require drivers to:

- keep records of shift details including times of meal breaks
- ensure the taxi is clean and tidy at all times
- not smoke in the taxi
- not solicit for passengers
- not cause danger to passengers or the public by inappropriately moving the taxi
- wear the uniform of the appropriate network
- comply with all reasonable requests from passengers
- not leave the taxi without good reason
- park the taxi at the first available space on the taxi rank
- comply with any direction given by an authorized officer in respect of rank management
- comply with all reasonable requests of the network in relation to public passenger services
- not refuse a hiring, except in limited circumstances

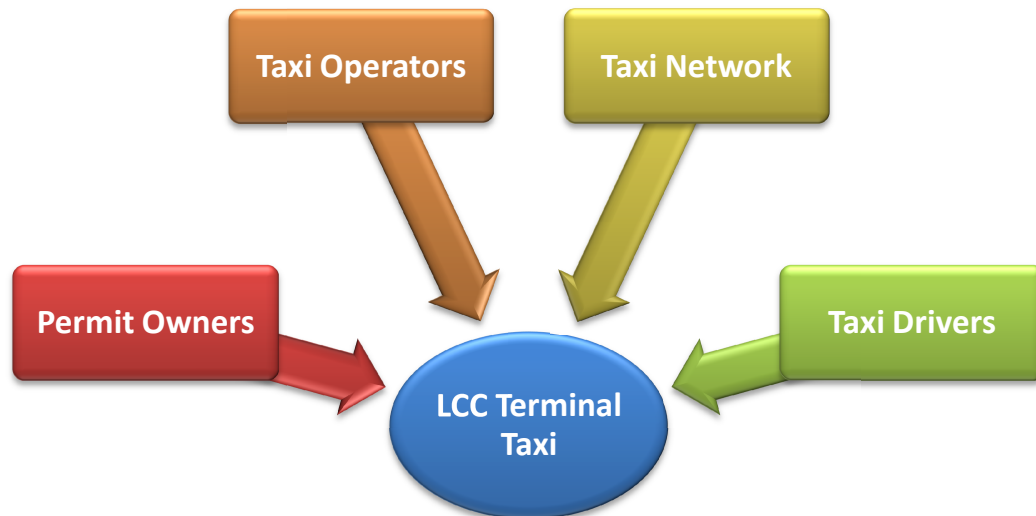


Figure 1.1: LCC Terminal taxi industry's participants.

1.3.2 The LCC Terminal Taxi Fare Structure

The LCC Terminal taxis implements prepaid coupon system where the fare charges is based on authorized zone. Fare charges and authorized zone determination are subject to the CVLB and taxi network operator implements the prepaid coupon system to the taxi drivers as well as to the taxi passenger.

For every purchased coupon, the fare is inclusive distance charges, toll charges and coupon sales commissions. The distance rate charges is belongs to the taxi driver where from this earnings the drivers need to bear their operating cost i.e. vehicle rental and maintenance cost, insurance cost, fuel cost and lease of permit charge. Because of the coupon charge includes toll charges, the taxi driver will pay toll charge for their passenger. Then at the taxi network operator counter claim the toll charge will be reimbursed to the driver. On the other side, taxi network operator gains their income from the coupon sales commissions. The commission of coupon sales was determined at 9% of the coupon rate.

For example, the fare charges to Subang Jaya is at RM52.50, the distance charges is at RM44.36, toll charges is at RM3.75 and coupon sales commissions is at RM4.39. Based on coupon counter sales report, most of the trip is made to the Klang Valley area, Kuala Lumpur City centre and to the KLIA. Table 1.2 shows the highest of 10 passenger's destinations for the LCC Terminal taxis service.

The fare of midnight service is calculated at additional 50% of normal rate. For example, normal fare charges to Subang Jaya trip is at RM52.50 and an additional charge of RM26.25 is to be included in midnight fare. The new fare for midnight service is at RM78.75, it shows additional increase in fare that is to bring an incentive to the driver.

Table 1.3: The highest of 10 passenger destinations for the LCC Terminal taxis service

No	Destination	Zone Code	Distance Charges (RM)	Toll Charge (RM)	Coupon Sales (RM)	Total Fare Charges (RM)
1	KLIA	201	29.30	Nil	2.90	32.20
2	USJ	401	44.73	3.15	4.42	52.30
3	Subang Jaya	402	44.36	3.75	4.39	52.50
4	Puchong/ Petaling Jaya/ Kelana Jaya	407	45.96	2.00	4.55	52.50
5	Damansara	501	52.87	2.70	5.23	60.80
6	Kuala Lumpur City	502	53.10	3.25	5.25	61.60
7	Serdang	504	52.87	3.00	5.23	61.10
8	Klang	505	52.69	3.20	5.21	61.10
9	Cheras	602	61.52	3.00	6.08	70.60
10	Ampang	603	61.29	3.25	6.06	70.60

(Source: Mesra Indah Jaya Sdn Bhd, 2008)

1.4 Problem Statement

There have been many complaints received by taxi network operator regarding overcharges by taxi driver (refer to Appendix A). Although, the complaints received does not represent all the passenger using LCC Terminal taxi as many complaints have also been channeled to agencies such as regulator, authority etc. A part from those complaints has also been posted on the internet, printing media etc (refer to Appendix B).

This issue has also to be addressed, the country image will be also effected because LCC Terminal is gateway to Malaysia.

1.5 Objectives of Study

1. To investigate midnight overcharge case accused by taxi driver
2. To study how midnight taxi queuing operations can be improved.

1.6 Importance of The Study

It is vital to investigate midnight overcharge case accused by taxi driver to determine when and where taxi drivers are found to overcharge their passengers.

The study on midnight taxi queuing operations resolves an understanding on the midnight taxi operation and through the proposed improvement it will resolve abused midnight rate problem. Hence, it leads the midnight taxi service to be more reliable.

1.7 Method of Study

In this study a probability sampling that is systematic sampling with random starting point will be used in midnight passenger survey and census survey will be applied in taxi network company survey. The detail of the method used will be further detailed in Chapter 3.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to out bound midnight taxi service which is operated at the LCC Terminal whereby the out bound operation is defined as passenger movement starting from the taxi coupon counter where the passenger engage the taxi service by buying coupon until they reach to their final destination.

1.9 Expected Contribution

Upon the completion, result on the survey can be set as point of reference to improve midnight taxi service. The group i.e. terminal operator, taxi network taxi operator and CVLB can use this paper as guide to further the study.

In addition the recommendation can be immediately implemented to overcome overcharge case. Hence, the public confident towards the public transportation can be maintained.

1.10 Summary

In summary, this chapter gives us the understanding of the LCC Terminal taxi service in term of industry structure and its function. It is important to know each function so that the improvement can be addressed correctly.

The issue here is that there are complaints which is addressed by midnight taxi passenger. But this passenger compliants are not representing the whole midnight rate cases abuse at the terminal. This study is to get overall view from the midnight taxi user on abusing midnight taxi charge. If the problem is not handled accordingly it deteriorates public confident towards public transportation system.

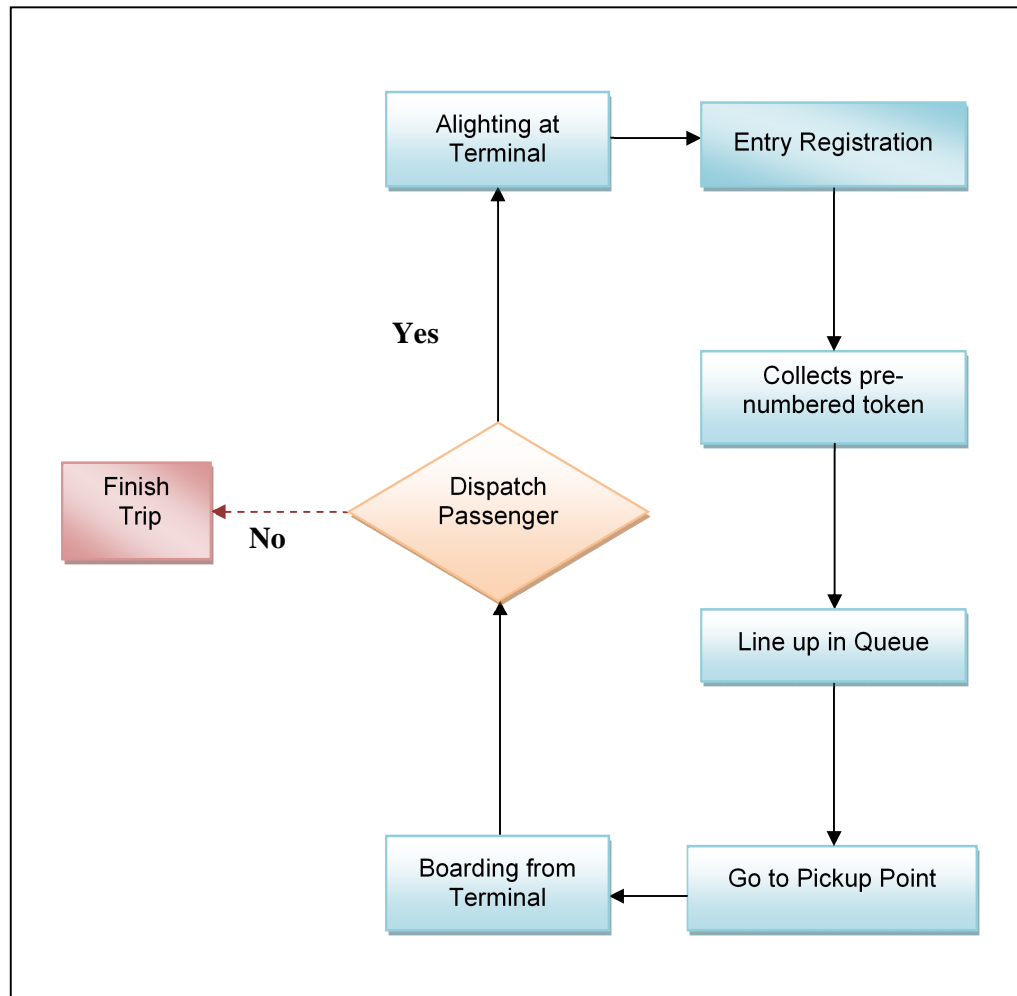


Figure 2.1: Diagram on taxi queuing process
(Source: Mesra Indah Jaya Sdn Bhd, 2008)

2.6 Driver, Skill and Stress

According to Hanzlíková (2001) there are various sub-types of professional drivers. Drivers in public transport, drivers of long-distance coaches, drivers of trams and trains, taxi-drivers and truck drivers. To describe this group easily, we can just say that driving the vehicle is their occupation; they are getting paid and have to keep specific demands from the employer and whole society.

Work by Wa (2001) in Singapore, a taxi driver must have a vocational licence to provide taxi services. To be qualified for a vocational licence, a person must:

- (a) be a Singaporean citizen;
- (b) be between 30 and 70 years old;
- (c) have one year driving experience with clean record in certain offences;
- (d) attend an interview to demonstrate proficiency in English plus with Mandarin or Malay, unless evidence of such proficiency can be produced;
- (e) attend a 99-hour course (which costs US\$200) on vehicle, hygiene, geography and regulations;
- (f) pass a written test (candidates may choose to take the test in English, Chinese or Malay; passing rate averages 70%); and
- (g) attend a medical examination

According to Hanzlíková (2001a) among the most important skills and requirements of professional drivers are

- Reaction time – the ability to quickly respond
- Far and near vision – the ability to see things close at hand (such as signs) or at distance
- Operation and control – controlling operations of equipment or systems
- Equipment maintenance – performing routine maintenance and determining when and what kind of maintenance is needed
- Psychological eligibility (low level of aggressiveness for instance)

Work by Hanzlíková (2001b) to driver stress play a key role in determining the subjective and behavioral outcomes of driving. Those are factors participating on emergence of stress:

- Processing of big amount of information and signals within a very short time segment – ordinarily for 8 hours per a day
- Awareness that mistake or error are usually irreparable and can lead to tragic consequences
- Every-day conditions raising responsibility and possible risk: big amount

of passengers, high price of the vehicle and of the cargo or dangerous character of the cargo (petrol, oil); material and moral responsibility

- Working conditions: vibration, noise with high intensity and frequency, irregular work schedules, long hours
- Irregularity of work and leisure time; night and weekend shifts may not coincide with those of their families. Irregularity of shifts can have negative impacts on their family and personal life
- External environmental factors, in particular extreme temperatures; buses are heated and some air-conditioned, however drivers experience heat, cold, rain or wind because they frequently must open the door (draught)
- Monotony
- Mental, sensorial and emotional load
- Characteristic of traffic (high density, congestions)
- The task is mentally demanding because it involves having to cope with conflicting demands (the company and the public want the driver to maintain good contact with passengers and to be service-oriented, for example through the provision of information to passengers on timetables, routes, stops etc. However the need to provide service to individual passengers often conflicts with the requirement to keep to a right schedule in dense traffic. A further demand, which may conflict with the previous two, is the need to drive safely according to traffic regulations and conditions)
- Ergonomic problems: a driver's cabin is subject to several constraints, and the seat often lacks sufficient adjustability, other source of stress is the fact of using different vehicles for different shifts (no familiarity)
- Feelings of isolation
- Work schedules that strain home life and interferes with sleep

All these components may lead to a state of fatigue, which is a key factor causing traffic accident. These factors are participating in the coping capacity which has influence on health, and all this is with connection of capability to cope with these factors. Figure 2.2 is to show coping capacity model.

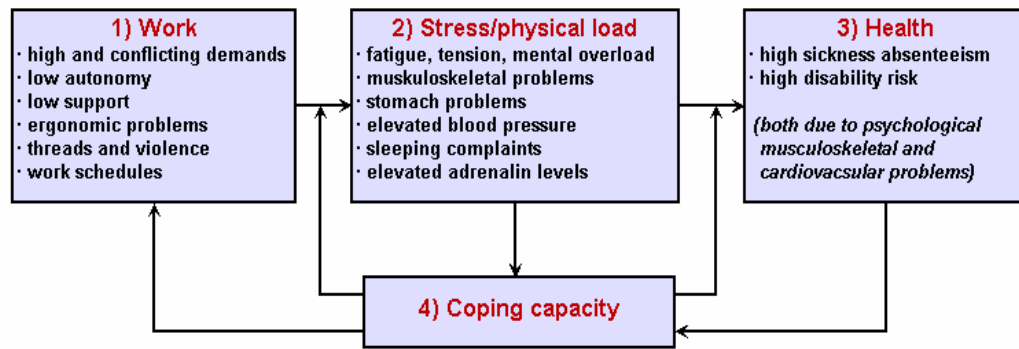


Figure 2.2: Model of coping capacity among drivers

(Source : Hanzlíková, 2001)

Night time driving is differed with day time driving. A study by Essenberg (2003a) stated that because taxi drivers usually work 12-hour shifts, night driving is inevitable. However, night driving involves disruption to the normal body circadian rhythm and results in decreased concentration capacities at low biological points, that is, between 2 a.m. and 4 a.m. Inevitably the ability to perform complicated tasks, or recognize warning signs of impending violence, are compromised at these low points of the circadian rhythm. Any relationship between circadian rhythms and times of assaults is unknown.

2.7 Complaints against Taxi Driver

Work by Mundy (2007) taxi driver behavior has become a significant problem in recent years. In an attempt to reduce rude behavior, short trip refusals, long riding of airport passengers, and poor service, airport officials developed a taxi starter system which is paid for by dispatch fees paid by the drivers and added to the meter fare.

According to Wa (2001a) taxi drivers are the front line to contact passengers, hence the quality of taxi services is mainly determined by the services provided from taxi drivers. Since the 1990's, there is an increase of number of taxi complaints received by the Government, mainly about the malpractice of taxi drivers. It can reflect that the quality of the taxi service is rapidly decreasing. Over the years, the

majority of the complaints were about taximeter offences, taxi drivers' behavior and the refusing of hiring. The Government's focus has been placed on law enforcement actions against malpractice by taxi drivers. It is clear that there are discrepancies between the public's expectation for taxi services and the existing level of services provided. As taxis are an important public transport mode, there is an equivocal demand from the community for improvement to the quality of taxi services particularly to the quality of drivers.

The complex nature of the taxi industry may result in the lodgment of complaints incorrectly, which means they are declined as misconceived. A respondent who is responsible for discriminatory behavior may not be a simple endeavor given the complex business structure of the taxi industry and the specific role of the taxi regulator. In relation to the complaints process, there are barriers that are inherent with the formal requirements of the complaints process and more accessible complaint handling functions could be entertained.

According to Land Transport Authority (2003) Vocational Licence Points System (VLPS) is the revised framework for investigation of complaints and discipline of taxi drivers who breach the rules of conduct. The VLPS makes the process of investigation and imposition of discipline more transparent to both commuters and taxi drivers. Under the VLPS, taxi companies play a greater role in the discipline of their drivers, to educate and encourage their drivers to provide good customer service. Figure 2.3 is to show the complaint handling process.

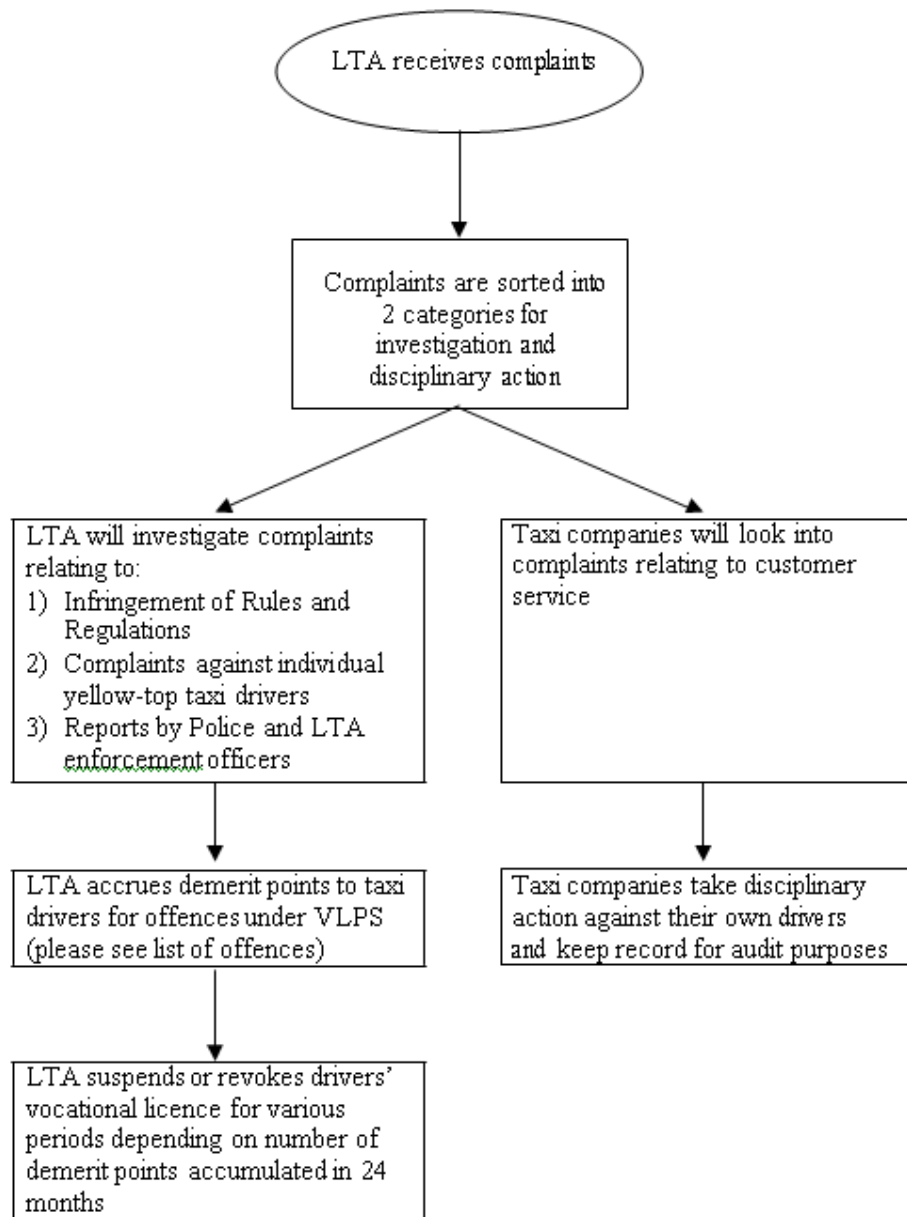


Figure 2.3: VLPS complaint handling process.

(Source : LTA, 2003)

In some country the monetary penalty policy has being imposed and to some extended the licence can be suspended. A study report by King County (2006), the City sets out a specific monetary penalty schedule for violations. Each violation results in penalty points attributed to the taxicab association. For example, a third “Class B” violation (such as worn tires) would result in 10 penalty points assessed

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