

Profiling motorcycle delivery riders: Insights from a baseline survey of riders in Pretoria, South Africa

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Abstract

This paper profiled the demographic characteristics, working conditions, road safety behaviours, and crash involvement of 109 motorcycle delivery riders in Pretoria, South Africa, using a quantitative descriptive survey. The findings indicated that the sector was overwhelmingly male at 97% and predominantly young, with 62% of riders aged between 25 and 34 years. Most riders worked extended hours, with nearly 70% reporting more than 55 hours per week, and the majority, at 61%, relied on rented motorcycles, and 31% of them relied on company-owned motorcycles. Guided by the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and the Job Demand-Resources (JDR) model, the results revealed a contrast between high self-reported regulatory compliance and exposure-driven risk. Most riders, 97% of them, reported never riding under the influence of alcohol, running red lights at 83%, or riding without a helmet at 94%. However, time-pressure-related behaviours were evident, including frequent lane changing to overtake, reported sometimes by 39% of riders, mobile phone use while riding, reported always by 12%, and failure to maintain safe following distances, reported always by 11%. Crash involvement in the preceding 12 months was reported by 18% of riders, mainly involving light injuries or minor incidents. The findings highlight the need for targeted policy interventions, improved working conditions, rider training, and motorcycle-inclusive urban infrastructure.