MEASURES TO ENHANCE PERSONAL SECURITY
IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT

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Summary: *The paper presents some detail the public's preferred measures for greater safety when travelling, and drew on their experience of measures taken by transport operators and others to enhance personal security in public transport.*

Key words: *Enhance Personal Security, Public Transport, Public Transport Survey*

Anotace: *Článek popisuje detaily veřejností preferovaných opatření ke zvýšení bezpečnosti během přemístění a dokresluje je zkušenostmi dopravců se zajišťováním osobní bezpečnosti ve veřejné hromadné dopravě.*

Klíčová slova: zajištění osobní bezpečnosti, veřejná hromadná doprava, průzkum veřejné hromadné dopravy

1. INTRUCTION

Fear of crime is one of the most serious deterrents to travel by public transport. It is a problem in most cities in different degrees and among different groups, and the fear is based on different types of crime (physical attack, thefts of cars, thefts of cycles, vandalism to shops, etc.). Those carriers who are able to cope with personal security issues and provide physical help and information enjoy respect among their users.

The paper focuses on what can maximise the potential of measures taken to enhance the public's perceptions of personal security when using public transport. Attention to the detail of how a measure is delivered can often make the difference between one that has little impact on the public's perceptions of its effectiveness and one that is seen as making a significant contribution to security when travelling.

2. PHYSICAL MEASURES TO ENHANCE PERSONAL SECURITY

The findings from public transport surveys and the discussion groups identified the importance of the location and design of public transport infrastructure and the design and quality of vehicles for the public's perceptions of personal security.

2.1. Location and design of stops and stations

The public transport surveys and the discussion groups identify the importance for personal security of the location and design of stops and stations. Much is already known about the importance of design for ensuring clear sight lines and good visibility for the station and shelter user. Only relatively recently, however, has attention been

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given to the location of bus stops both to maximise patronage and to enhance personal security (Picture1).

This study's research revealed the importance of:

- A location that is not isolated but where there are other activities close by, especially those that would not be their nature attract anti-social behaviour and nuisance. There is some indication from the research that people would prefer to wait at a bus stop in a busy location.
- Good quality and well maintained on-street or shelter lighting is a key factor for enhancing personal security, together with regular attention to any nearby vegetation to maintain good visibility.

Picture1 – Refuges and corridors must be designed with regard to carrying capacity and safety

2.2. Maintaining a quality and well managed travelling environment

Although the presence of litter, graffiti and other examples of criminal damage is not identified through the public transport surveys as being particularly influential in making people feel insecure, the qualitative research reveals that such features are of much greater significance and have gained in importance. In the intervening years, the removal of litter bins for security reasons, the growth in "take away" food outlets, and perceived increases in graffiti (Picture 2) and vandalism are seen as contributing significantly to a poorer quality travelling environment.

The features that would maximise the potential for a quality and well manage environment to enhance perceptions of personal security are to:

- Ensure that programmes for the lighting, cleaning and maintenance of stops, shelters and stations extend over the entire bus or train route and are not only focused on infrastructure in a city or town centre or at a busy station.

- Maintain the cleanliness of train and bus stations throughout their hours of operation and not only during the daytime or times of peak use.
- Ensure the cleanliness, maintenance and lighting of all entrances and walkways in train and bus stations, and not only those that are used most frequently. Design features at stations often mean that disabled passengers are required to gain access through less frequently used entrances and walkways, and these should also be maintained and cleaned to provide a safe and quality environment.
- The design of train or bus stations should enable the entrances to public toilets to be visible to other users and staff.

Picture 2 – The bus covered with graffiti

2.3. Design and maintenance of vehicles

Previous research has highlighted the importance for maximising perceptions of personal security of travelling in a vehicle (bus, train or light rail) that provides good visibility throughout the carriage. For train and underground rail systems, passengers now give increased importance to seeing and being seen from adjoining carriages.

The qualitative research identified two features where their impact on personal security has increased in importance for passengers in recent years:
- The personal space that is provided for a passenger needs to be sufficient for she or he not to feel intimidated by the proximity of others (Picture 3). The newer designs for train and bus rolling stock tend to restrict personal space and are now seen by passengers as contributing to feelings of insecurity.
- The cleanliness of trains, underground rail and buses and rapid action to remove graffiti and repair vandalism is given greater weight by participants in the qualitative research. Participants stress the need to ensure good standards of cleanliness on all routes and throughout the hours of service.

Picture 3 – The personal space that is provided for a passenger in a vehicle

3. STAFF MEASURES TO ENHANCE PERSONAL SECURITY

As in the research, the findings from the public transport surveys and the discussion groups identify the importance of a human presence to enhance the public's perceptions of personal security.

To maximise the effect of transport staff or other staff for personal security requires that:

- Personnel are duty during those hours when members of the public feel most insecure i.e. after dark and during off peak journeys.
- The initiative is targeted at those routes or infrastructure where it is known that passengers feel most insecure.
- Publicity and information is made available to the public on the role of the staff or other personnel and what kind of response they can expect should an emergency arise.
- Personnel should be visible and clearly identified by uniform.
- Train passengers are aware of the base for the conductor or other member of staff, and where he or she is accessible to them. It is preferably that such a base is visible and in a central carriage in the train.
- The driver or other member of bus or tram staff is seen by passengers to be "in control" of their vehicle and able to prevent people from boarding who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

4. CRIME PREVENTION MEASURES TO ENHANCE PERSONAL SECURITY

Those canvassed through the surveys and discussion groups give greater weight to the use of crime prevention measures to enhance their perceptions of personal security.

4.1. Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Camera Surveillance

The presence of CCTV camera surveillance is widely perceived to be the most effective measure for personal security when waiting for and using public transport and had increased in popularity (Picture 4).

Participants identified that their perceptions of its effectiveness would be maximised by:

- Assurance that the cameras could provide a good quality, colour image that is sufficient for perpetrators who are "caught on camera" to be identified.

- Assurance that active live monitoring of the CCTV cameras is taking place and, in an emergency, a response can be dispatched to provide assistance. People have more faith in monitoring that takes place at a local control centre rather than one that is centralised some distance away and where they feel those conducting the monitoring may not be aware of local conditions.

- Providing localised information about the presence of CCTV, the monitoring arrangements and what response you can expect in an emergency. Such information needs to be in large print, not only for people with sight impairment but also to encourage that it is read.

Picture 4 The presence of CCTV camera surveillance to be the effective measure for personal security

4.2. Targeted Police Initiatives

Through partnership working a number of police forces and transport operators delivery a scheme for free travel to police officers in uniform. In addition, there are a number of targeted initiatives where the Czech Republic Police conduct spot checks on

trains and Municipal Police provide a presence on bus routes, especially those that are problematic for crime and anti-social behaviour.

The effectiveness of such interventions for personal security can be maximised by:

- Targeting the presence of police officers or specials when members of the public feel most insecure i.e. after dark and during off-peak journeys.
- Using incident and anecdotal information to ensure the initiatives are targeted at those routes or infrastructure where there are problems of crime and anti-social behaviour and passengers feel most insecure.

5. INFORMATION AS MEASURE TO ENHANCE PERSONAL SECURITY

It was especially in the discussion groups that participants identified the receipt of good quality travel information as important to their perceptions of personal security.

The effectiveness of travel information for enhancing personal security can be maximised by:

- Ensuring up to date information is available and easy to read in static timetable and other displays for travel information.
- Ensuring that up to date timetables are not only available in city centre or other busy locations but also at less well used stops and stations. Replacement of damaged or vandalised timetables should be prompt, especially at those locations where access to staff or other sources of information is not available.
- Providing Real Time information displays along less well used routes as well as for city centre and other busy services.
- Announcing the next station can be important in enhancing confidence and personal security, especially to assist disabled passengers and all those travelling in dark.
- Providing prompt information on any delays or cancellation of service and alternatives that are available for on-going travel.

6. CONCLUSION

The previous chapters identified features that would maximise the influence of individual measures for enhancing passengers' experience and perceptions of personal security. Passengers' safety threats are often higher out of the stops areas rather than within them, where passengers are protected by fellow-travellers. Besides, safety matters are more connected with off-peak travelling when only a small amount of people are at the stops. Police patrols regularly checking stops and parking lots serve as deterrent effect against criminals and also increasing sense of passengers' security.

The criminals might be also deterred by using different instruments, such as CCTV. Changing attitude of passengers towards public stops and means of transport as dangerous places is very important for attracting new users, but the higher sense of passengers' security should not lead to the insouciance. It's essential to reach suitable balance when every passenger of a public transport will feel comfortably enough, but on the other hand, he will also be aware of necessary safety issues.

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