



The Political Institute  
of Action Research

# Taxis In St Andrews

**What are the experiences and  
challenges faced by local taxi drivers  
in an increasingly competitive  
transportation market?**

Authors:

*Edwin Brattselius-Thunfors (Head Researcher)*

*Michelle Berkovich*

*Maia Gubitza*

*Catriona Hall*

*Jean-luc Marchand*

Junior Editor: *Sofia Yevmenkina*

Deputy Editor: *Grace Risucci*

Editor-In-Chief: *Cadence Mak*

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The transportation market in St Andrews, Scotland, combines traditional and modern systems to create a unique blend. With its unique and constantly fluctuating demographics, the business is constantly changing as students, golfers and tourists are constantly coming and going. Furthermore, the local population is changing too, allowing for even more changes in the transportation market. Local taxi companies face increasing competition from independent drivers, public buses, and the potential emergence of ride-hailing platforms such as Uber and Bolt.

### **Key Findings**

- A significant increase in unlicensed and self-employed drivers has disrupted the local taxi industry, leading to concerns about overcharging, regulatory non-compliance, and reputational harm to the market.
- While these platforms are currently absent in St Andrews due to regulatory restrictions, their potential entry could introduce severe pricing competition and technological advancements that local operators may struggle to match.
- Subsidized and widely used by students, Stagecoach buses present an affordable alternative, capturing a large segment of cost-sensitive customers.
- Seasonal demand trends further complicate the market, with peak activity during the university term and golfing season contrasting sharply with the winter lull.
- Declining demand, exacerbated by negative customer experiences and alternative transport options, underscores the challenges for the local taxi industry.

### **Recommendations**

This study concludes with a call for regulatory intervention and strategic adaptation by local taxi companies to sustain their relevance in a competitive market. Local authorities should implement stricter regulations and enforce compliance to ensure all drivers operate under similar standards. This could include requiring all drivers to register with the council and display official badges. Furthermore, standard communication about existing regulations to both drivers and consumers would create more transparency in places that currently lack it. And finally, it is important that St. Andrews advocates for policy decisions that maintain a balanced, competitive local market, emphasizing local economic benefits and employment sustainability.

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## **Introduction**

The transportation industry in St Andrews operates within a unique context shaped by the town's demographic composition and seasonal influxes of students and tourists. Despite its small size, the town presents a diverse transportation landscape, including traditional taxi companies, independent drivers, and public transportation. These players compete to meet the town's fluctuating demands, influenced by a high population of university students and visiting golfers.

This study aims to explore the competitive dynamics of St Andrews' transportation market: focusing on the challenges traditional taxi companies face in adapting to an always changing environment. By analysing the impact of independent drivers, potential disruptions from ride-hailing platforms, such as Uber and Bolt, and competition from Stagecoach buses, this research seeks to provide a new understanding of the factors driving competition. Additionally, the study considers seasonal trends and customer demographics to assess their impact on demand, providing insights into the future of the local taxi industry.

## **1. Competition**

The transport industry in St Andrews, a tiny but active town in Fife, Scotland, is complex. As a result of the town's distinctive mix of inhabitants, students, tourists, and seasonal visitors, which causes a changing demand for transport services, there is a competitive market for transportation companies. Public transportation systems, independent drivers, traditional taxi companies, and new ride-hailing platforms all constitute important parts of the transportation market. In the interviews conducted, participants identified many competitors, but three stood out:

- 1. Independent drivers*
- 2. Uber and Bolt*
- 3. Stagecoach Buses*

### **1.1 Independent Drivers**

In St Andrews, Fife, independent taxi drivers have become a major source of competition, presenting a critical component in the increase of competition for both well-established taxi businesses and the community's transit system. These

drivers often operate without the required permits or insurance and lack official affiliation with any company. One interview identified that in the past two decades, there has been an increase in such taxi services (Appendix Q1, A1.3). In the past two decades the number of transportational services increased from 4-5 taxi companies to approximately “120 new drivers”, according to the interviewee (Appendix Q1, A1.3). This trend is not exclusive to St Andrews. In 2019 the ONS reported that there has been a steady increase in self-employed workers across the UK for the past twenty years (Brown, Welsby & Roberts, 2022). In the same year, ONS reported that there had been an increase of 90,000 new self-employed workers in the quarter (2019) (Berger, Chen & Frey, 2017). Thus, this trend of independent drivers is not an exclusive phenomenon congenital to St Andrews. Yet, it is still a prominent part of the competition in the town. In fact, in an interview with Golf City Taxis, the interviewees claimed that the independent drivers were the biggest competition to the local companies (Q1, A1.2). One anonymous interviewee from Golf City Taxis claims that these independent drivers pose a new form of competition as they are “unlicensed” and “put themselves on google” to “steal customers” (Q1, A1.2). This statement is recurrent throughout all the interviews with the local taxi companies. Drivers from KM Taxis and St Andrews also claimed that these independent drivers not only pose a competition but “ruin” the market as they do not follow regulations (Q1, A1.2, A1.3). For instance, according to a driver from KM Taxis some independent drivers ignore the meter regulations, adding extra fare money based on time and distance (Q1, A1.3). Drivers from Starfish Taxis and Golf City Taxis further reinforced this point (Q1, A1.1, A1.2)

## **1.2 Uber and Bolt**

Uber and Bolt have disrupted traditional taxi services globally, attracting a huge portion of the customer base. These ride-hailing apps offer competitive pricing, convenience through on-demand services, and seamless mobile payment systems, positioning them as strong competitors to traditional taxi companies (Berger, Chen & Frey, 2017). Berger’s study on automation and labour markets highlights how companies like Uber and Bolt have shifted the transportation landscape, making it increasingly difficult for traditional models to compete without adopting similar technologies (Berger, Chen & Frey, 2017). This transformation has not only impacted pricing strategies but also customer expectations for ease of use and availability (Berger, Chen & Frey, 2017). However, concerns regarding regulatory compliance, fair wages, and long-term sustainability persist as these companies continue to expand their reach.

Interestingly, this global trend has not fully permeated St Andrews. Despite their potential to disrupt the local taxi market, Uber and Bolt are not operational in the area, primarily due to regulatory restrictions (Q2, A2.1, A2.2). Local drivers have acknowledged that these companies could pose significant competition because of their lower prices and perceived modernity (Q2, A2.1, A2.3). However, as one interviewee from St Andrews Taxi Company pointed out, the absence of these ride-hailing services has insulated the local market (Q2, A2.3). Consequently, local taxi operators do not view Uber and Bolt as direct threats, enabling traditional services to retain their customer base without adapting to the pressures of global competition.

### **1.3 Stagecoach Buses**

Stagecoach buses, in contrast, have emerged as a major competitor to local taxi companies in St Andrews. According to a Starfish Taxis driver, the affordability, reliability, and convenience of Stagecoach buses make them particularly appealing to students (Q1, A1.1). With limited budgets, students often prioritize cost-effectiveness over the personalized service offered by taxis, and buses fill this need effectively (Q1, A1.1). The structured schedule and frequent routes of Stagecoach buses provide an additional advantage, particularly in a small town like St Andrews where distances are manageable by bus (Q1, A1.1). For many students, the ability to wait a few minutes for a bus, combined with the significant cost savings compared to a taxi ride, makes buses an attractive alternative.

## **2. Analysing the Demand and Seasonal Trends in Taxi Services in St Andrews**

The taxi industry in St Andrews operates within a unique local context heavily influenced by the town's demographic composition and seasonal fluctuations. This report synthesizes qualitative insights gathered from interviews with taxi drivers, focusing on the primary demand drivers, seasonal work variations, and customer demographics. By examining the interplay of these factors, the report highlights the challenges and opportunities within this sector.

### **2.1 Primary Sources of Demand**

The student population emerges as the primary driver of taxi demand in St Andrews. According to one interviewee, approximately 70% of the customer base comprises students. This is unsurprising, given that students account for a significant portion of the town's population—10,234 (University of St Andrews,

2023) out of 18,282 (Gov.scot, 2016) as per recent figures. However, the tendency to use alternative transportation options mitigates this dependency on students.

The availability of free or subsidized public transportation, such as the Young Scot program— which provides free bus services throughout Scotland for ages 5 to 21— significantly impacts student reliance on taxis. Moreover, Fife Council subsidizes Stagecoach, the bus provider in St Andrews, enabling more flexible time schedules and further incentivizing students to use public bus services. Additionally, the University of St Andrews provides a night bus service which many students utilize. These trends reflect broader patterns in Scotland, where 62% of young people use buses at least five days a week for educational purposes that encompass “school/college/university” (Transport Scotland, 2022).

Besides students, golfers constitute another key customer segment. However, this demand has been declining due to reputational issues associated with overcharging and not following meter regulations. According to taxi drivers interviewed, independent taxi drivers in the region have faced reputational issues due to alleged unethical practices. Complaints include turning off meters, leading to inconsistent and inflated fares, and charging extra for luggage without clear justification. Interviewees have also reported drivers taking unnecessarily longer routes, raising suspicions of fare manipulation. Additionally, some drivers reportedly canvass on streets like Bell Street, waiting to solicit passengers, which creates congestion and may contravene regulations. This conduct goes against Fife Council guidance for taxi drivers (Fife Council, 2024). These behaviours tarnish trust in local taxi services, frustrating residents, and tourists alike, and risk undermining the reputation of St Andrews as a welcoming and orderly destination for visitors. As a result, numerous golfers and tourists now prefer hiring private cars or coaches, particularly when traveling in large groups.

## **2.2 Seasonal Variations in Demand**

Seasonality plays a critical role in shaping the demand for taxi services in St Andrews. During the warmer months of spring, summer, and early autumn, the influx of golfer tourists significantly boosts taxi usage. The combination of better weather, longer daylight hours, and major golfing events ensures consistent demand during this period. Conversely, demand diminishes in winter due to the dual impact of fewer tourists and the absence of students during the university's winter break. Golf tourism wanes as weather conditions become less favourable,



with shorter days and colder temperatures making outdoor activities less appealing. Concurrently, the departure of university students during the winter holidays further reduces local taxi usage. This seasonal overlap of reduced activity from both key customer bases—tourists and students—creates a sharp decline in taxi demand. December and January represent a low point in demand for taxi companies.

Oftentimes, winter can represent increased demand for taxi services in the United Kingdom. During winter, adverse weather conditions such as rain, wind, and colder temperatures make walking or cycling less appealing (Richardson, 2024). However, in St Andrews, this increased inclination to use taxis is offset by a significant reduction in the town's population.

This cyclical nature of demand creates challenges for taxi operators, who must adapt to periods of heightened activity followed by significant downturns. The overlap of reduced demand from both golfers and students during winter exemplifies the vulnerability of the industry to seasonal fluctuations.

### **2.3 Local Residents and Ride-Sharing Services**

The townspeople of St Andrews, despite forming a stable population, contribute minimally to taxi demand. Most residents own private vehicles, reducing their reliance on taxi services. Furthermore, ride-sharing platforms like Uber and Bolt have not significantly disrupted the local taxi market. St Andrews' small size and population density make it an unattractive location for such companies to establish operations.

### **2.4 Industry Challenges and Declining Demand**

Interviews revealed an overall decline in taxi demand in recent years. Contributing factors include the reputational challenges within the golfer market and the widespread availability of alternative transportation options for students. Combined with the seasonal nature of the business, these issues pose significant obstacles for taxi operators striving to maintain profitability.

The declining demand in St Andrews does not seem to follow the larger trend in East Scotland. Dundee City Council's Taxi Demand Survey in 2024 has revealed the taxi demand and supply has been in an overall state of equilibrium. During 9% of the observed hours, there was an oversupply of taxis, while 12% of the observed hours experienced excess demand (Dundee City Council, 2024). A

Survey of Demand with the City of Edinburgh, has also concluded that “there is no evidence of significant unmet demand for taxis in Edinburgh” (Edinburgh Regulatory Committee, 2022). Yet, it is important to note that Dundee and Edinburgh are both large cities that boast a high number of local resident demand, where St Andrews' primary source of demand are students and tourist golfers.

This overall decline in taxi demand reflects broader shifts in consumer behaviour and market conditions. Among students, the rise of alternative transportation methods such as ridesharing apps, bicycles, and affordable car rental schemes has reduced reliance on traditional taxi services. Additionally, St Andrews' compact geography encourages walking, further diminishing the need for taxis in day-to-day activities.

For the golfer market, reputational issues—such as inconsistent service quality or perceived excessive costs—have compounded these challenges, driving some tourists to opt for private hire vehicles or hotel-arranged transport services. The growing availability of organized group shuttles, which cater specifically to golfing parties, has also siphoned away demand.

The taxi industry in St Andrews is highly reliant on a dual customer base of students and golfers, both of which are subject to seasonal and situational fluctuations. While the small-town dynamics shield the industry from competition from ride-sharing giants, local operators face significant challenges, including declining overall demand and seasonal volatility.

### **3. Challenges faced by local taxi drivers (2.0)**

The taxi industry in St Andrews has undergone significant changes in a context of an increasingly competitive transportation market. Local taxi companies face salient challenges, notably due to the rise in the number of new competitors, such as independent taxi drivers. Although services like Uber and Bolt have not emerged as major rivals in the St Andrews taxi industry, the latter has experienced a sharp increase of informal, and often unlicensed taxi drivers, creating new dynamics in an evolving transportation market.

### **3.1 Independent drivers**

The surveys we conducted allowed us to assess the nature of these transformations and the extent to which they pose a threat to existing taxi companies. Local taxi drivers described how their experiences at work have changed over time, and several recurring patterns unfolded. The longest-established company noticed a surge in the number of companies in the last two decades, with only around 4 to 5 taxi services 20 years ago to around 120 taxi services today (Appendix Q.3.1). This growth is attributed to the rise of independent taxi drivers yet also includes a variety of other factors such as shifts in the labour market and changes in consumer preferences. The Covid-19 pandemic was a turning point and a key factor in driving these changes. Consumer demand declined significantly due to the limited need for transportation, leading to a reduction in the supply of taxi services. Indeed, local drivers turned to alternative employment, resulting in an overall decrease in workforce. The end of the pandemic saw on the one hand, fewer local drivers left to meet the ongoing demand, and on the other hand, new job opportunities for independent drivers (Appendix Q.3.2). The number of independent drivers rose sharply, destabilising the existing taxi industry and becoming a growing concern for local companies.

### **3.2 Pricing**

As independent contractors, these new drivers operate outside the traditional framework regulating local companies, giving them an unfair advantage, and threatening local taxi businesses. Established taxi companies have contended in our surveys that independent drivers offer their services without being subject to the same oversight and accountability due to a lack of regulation. They expressed frustration over a particular concern which was the overcharging of customers by independent drivers, and this complaint was voiced consistently in our different interviews (Appendix Q.3.3). Often, regulatory standards and requirements bind these drivers less strictly, allowing them to charge fixed rates or overcharge customers in general. Such practices destabilise the market and the pricing scheme, exacerbated by a lack of transparent and regulated rates that only contributes to eroding trust with customers in the long run.

### **3.3 Work opportunities**

Another salient challenge is the issue of competition for work opportunities. Survey responses highlighted a specific concern according to which independent drivers were “taking jobs” from locals. The saturation of the taxi industry in St Andrews reveals a competitive environment with an expanding and overcrowded market, exemplified by Bell Street, which interviewees mentioned several times (Appendix Q.3.1). Local taxi drivers denounced the methods and tactics used by independent taxis to attract customers, thus accusing them of “cheating the system.” In fact, at night, on Bell Street, when the demand is higher, around 20 taxis can be found on average, waiting for customers rather than getting customers off phone work like local drivers do (Appendix Q.3.4). Such practices, combined with overcharging and high fare rates, foster a broader sense of reputational harm to the St Andrews taxi industry. Furthermore, local drivers fear that the actions of independent drivers will create a bad reputation not only through overpricing, but also through their lack of knowledge of the landmarks, streets, and overall geography of the town (Appendix Q.3.5). While established companies rely on their local knowledge, expertise, and familiarity, they fear that poor customer service and passenger dissatisfaction will damage the credibility they have created.

### **3.4 Buses**

Additionally, along with the rise of independent drivers, local drivers face competition from other forms of public transportation services. Buses and stagecoaches were mentioned in the survey responses, given they have become a more affordable option and a more efficient one for many students (Appendix Q.3.6). This issue is less relevant among golfers and tourists, yet students account for a significant portion of the town’s population, and in turn, of the taxi’s customers. The implementation of the Night Bus service by the University of St Andrews would be a prominent example to illustrate the competition and challenges taxi companies face. Buses can emerge as relevant competitors thanks to the support of local institutions and the financial support from the Fife Council. Hence, buses run more frequently, they can operate at lower prices and appear as a more attractive option for cost-conscious students and customers.

### **3.5 Fife council**

Lastly, taxi drivers have expressed some degree of frustration towards the inaction of the Fife Council regarding the issues. In one survey, a respondent described the Council as being “absolutely useless” since it “does nothing to help taxi drivers” (Appendix Q.3.7). They noticed a lack of any meaningful help or actions to help local companies deal with the rise of independent drivers and denounced the absence of efficient regulations to cope with this increasing competition. One of the ways of fostering change in the Fife Council according to them would be for each customer to report any unpleasant experience with an independent taxi. Indeed, local taxi companies believe authorities are not addressing their concerns and are not providing any help to keep them competitive, while the Council is implementing policies favouring buses, challenging even further the businesses of taxi services in St Andrews.

## **4. Future outlook of Taxi Industry**

### **4.1 Uber and Bolt’s Impact**

It is quite often that a person living in any major town or city uses a service like Uber or Bolt to get around. These companies are so persistent in many countries that some governments are considering restricting their existence altogether. This is exemplified in St Andrews, where Uber and Bolt are non-existent because the Fife Council has not approved their operation in the area. As a result, there is extreme competition among local taxi companies in St Andrews. Fife Council restricts these companies to rates strictly based on the meter, meaning a certain minimum rate applies at all times of day. Taxi drivers worry that Uber and Bolt entering their cities could ruin local taxi businesses. A driver from Starfish Taxis mentioned that Uber and Bolt hurt taxi businesses in small towns and cities like St Andrews by offering much lower rates and providing drivers at the convenience of customers.

### **4.2 Personal Experiences**

Personally, my research partner and I tried to use Uber multiple times in St Andrews, but each of the three attempts resulted in the message, “we cannot find you a driver at this time.” This intrigued me—why would the app try to connect to a driver rather than simply stating that Uber does not operate in the

area? When we attempted to book a ride, the fare displayed was far cheaper than local cab fares. For instance, the app showed a fare of £8 from McIntosh Hall to The Castle Course, whereas the ride with Club Cars, based on the meter, cost £12.80. This stark difference highlights why drivers like Ivor would not want Uber to operate in Fife (see appendix A, Q1). My personal experiences with cab drivers in St Andrews have been nothing but respectful, as each offers a warm welcome and a smooth ride to your destination. However, the question is twofold. First, as St Andrews continues to grow with the University admitting more students each year, the town becomes increasingly populated. Second, the influx of millions of visitors for golf, the town's second-largest population driver, adds to this growth. With this rise in demand, should Fife Council consider allowing Uber as a potential move of Smart Power? Visitors, especially those from abroad, may find ordering an Uber much easier than researching local taxi companies, potentially encouraging repeat visits. This is just some something to consider.

When looking at the growth of Uber and Bolt in small towns and cities, there is an important case study showing their success after implementation. This is something that could potentially happen in St Andrews and completely change the outlook of the taxi industry there. A journal article discussing the impact of ride sourcing on North American cities supports many points raised by drivers like Ivor. The article highlights that taxis lack effective communication tools and rely solely on tracking drivers by phone calls, whereas apps like Uber and Bolt enable customers to see fares upfront and reduce transaction times compared to traditional methods (Hess and McKane, 2023). Ivor's claim that Uber offers lower rates is accurate; as the article notes, "ride sourcing users typically pay around 40% less than taxi trips" (Hess and McKane, 2023). By that measure, introducing Uber or Bolt in St Andrews would devastate the taxi market, as these factors would drive customers to choose to rideshare over local taxis. Fife Council is making the right decision by keeping Uber and Bolt out of St Andrews' transportation market. The introduction of ridesharing apps could lead to a monopoly in St Andrews, which would be harmful since a strong economy is typically associated with healthy business competition, something a monopoly would eliminate.

### **4.3 Impact of Stagecoach**

If we look at the understanding of public transportation and its effect on the Taxi Industry in St Andrews, there is a lot to connect. Currently, many taxi companies believe that public transportation has no effect on their current customer base.

When speaking to Golf City taxis, a woman who asked to be anonymous stated that “it is such a different clientele and that “the ease of getting a taxi is why people get a taxi instead of the bus” (see Appendix A, Q2). This is a fully accurate point that makes complete sense. I strongly agree with it. Currently, public transport is taking away the clientele from Taxi companies. Although time will tell whether that continues, there is an opportunity for Stagecoach to increase the number of its users with subsidized bus service. Currently, Stagecoach subsidizes its service with the Young Scot card, where users who are 22 can travel in Scotland by bus for free. This certainly turns away some students who would otherwise use a taxi in St Andrews to take the bus as it is far cheaper than a taxi. This goes the same for people who are over 60 years old, who can also travel throughout Scotland for free, reducing some of the clientele from St Andrews Taxi services.

However, the impact of Stagecoach will not be that vast unless they change the frequency of their bus service and the destinations in which they serve to take clients from Taxi companies. The reality holds true that taxi services in St Andrews will continue to be extremely competitive in an increasingly more competitive market as the number of students continues to grow in this town and the number of golfers reaches peak heights every summer. The only way that the taxi business becomes an issue of bankruptcy or failure is if Uber or Bolt start to operate in this town. It will only take time to tell whether this will happen, but as of right now, the Taxi market will continue to stay extremely competitive.

## **5. Methodology**

The study aims to investigate the dynamics of the taxi industry in St Andrews, focusing on the challenges faced by local taxi operators amidst competition from unlicensed and self-employed drivers, regulatory restrictions on platforms like Uber, and alternative modes of transportation such as buses. The research further explores customer preferences, financial considerations, and seasonal demand variations to evaluate the sustainability and competitiveness of the local taxi sector.

### **5.1 Questions and Research**

We interviewed 11 different taxi companies, out of those 11 only one was an independent driver. In the interviews we asked the following questions, and any other follow ups the interviewer saw fit:

Age of the driver and their professional background?  
Tenure in the taxi industry and with their current company?  
Motivations for becoming a taxi driver?  
Awareness of or experience with competing driving services such as food delivery platforms?  
Attitudes towards ride-hailing companies like Uber and Bolt, including perceptions of independent drivers?  
Observations on changes in demand for taxi services over the past five years?  
Shifts in customer demographics within the same period?  
Impact of alternative transportation, particularly buses, on customer inflow?  
Comparisons of their work experience between St Andrews and other cities (if applicable)?  
Identification of major competitors in the current taxi market, distinguishing between local and global companies?

The methodology encompasses qualitative interviews with taxi drivers to best understand local transportation. That being said, it is important to make note of various challenges within the research.

## **5.2 Challenges and Considerations**

The research faced several challenges and potential biases that may have influenced the findings. Convenience bias was a significant factor, as the interviews were largely conducted within easily accessible groups, such as drivers readily available during working hours. This may have excluded harder-to-reach demographics, such as less active taxi drivers or independent drivers working irregular hours. Response bias could also be present, particularly in the interviews, as drivers may have tailored their answers to reflect concerns they believed the researchers expected to hear or to highlight grievances against competitors. Additionally, sampling bias might have emerged in the survey due to uneven participation across demographic groups; for instance, students and locals may have participated in greater numbers compared to visiting golfers, whose transportation preferences are seasonal and potentially underrepresented. These limitations underscore the importance of cautious interpretation and suggest that broader outreach methods and longitudinal studies could provide a more representative view.



## **6. Conclusion**

The taxi industry in St Andrews stands at a crossroads, facing significant challenges from emerging competitors and evolving customer preferences. Independent drivers, Stagecoach buses, and the looming potential of ride-hailing platforms like Uber and Bolt have transformed the transportation landscape. Seasonal fluctuations, demographic shifts, and reputational issues further compound the difficulties faced by traditional taxi operators.

To remain competitive, local taxi companies must innovate, leveraging their strengths in convenience and personalized service while addressing concerns about pricing and regulatory compliance. Additionally, collaboration with local authorities to curb unlicensed operations and improve service standards could rebuild trust among customers.

The insights from this study suggest that while the industry faces substantial obstacles, proactive measures by both local operators and policymakers can mitigate these challenges, ensuring the continued viability of taxi services in St Andrews amidst a competitive transportation ecosystem.

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## 8. Appendices:

(1) Q1: What is your biggest competition in the current taxi market?

A1.1 (Starfish Taxis): The biggest competition is the buses. They offer a better way for students to get around St Andrews. Since the town is so small and the buses are cheap, they are ideal for students. So, they are a big threat to the local taxi companies here. Taxis can be quite expensive, and our customer base are often older.

A1.2 (Golf City Taxis): The independent drivers. They take a lot of the jobs for our companies, especially from students (...) They are unlicensed, so it is impossible to track them. They put themselves on google and steal customers from us. They are cheating the system as well, not putting on meters and overcharging.

A1.3 (KM Taxis): The independent drivers are the biggest competition (...) There were 4-5 Taxi companies 20 years ago, now there are 120 taxis in St Andrews, and twenty just sits on bell street waiting to pick people up (referring to independent drivers). They do not put their meter on, and do not follow regulations so they are not only a threat to our companies but to the reputation of our profession.

(1) Q2: Is Uber and Bolt a competition in St Andrews

A2.1 (KM Taxis): Not really, they are not allowed to operate here because of Fife council. They are not present, and they are mostly competitive when it comes to airport transfers, but that is not really a big competition. But they do lower fees and that will be a problem in the future.

A2.2 (A&J Taxis): No, they do not operate in Fife at all. Fife has regulated their presence, plus the town is way too small.

A2.3 (Saint Andrews Taxi Company): Uber have lower fees which is attractive to a lot of customers, but they do not really operate here.

Q.3.1:

A lot more competition and taxi companies nowadays - 20 years ago, there were 4 or 5 companies - Now there are like 120+ taxis in St Andrews (20 ones on bell street)

Q.3.2:

Due to the pandemic, a lot of local drivers left and with them the craft of being a local driver with local knowledge left. "They have all been replaced by Turkish Drivers," he says. And the other locals who did not leave during Covid started driving for Deliveroo.

Q3.3:

Biggest issue is taxi companies (usually independent drivers) overcharging

Everything should be by the metre and a lot of rogue drivers are charging fixed rates and overall, not following the rules - Creating bad reputations for the taxi companies there is an issue of independent taxi drivers overcharging and not using metres

Q.3.4:

Usually do not get customers off phone work, rather just sit, and wait for customers - Late at night, people are more likely to go for a taxi on the street

Cannot make any money when taxis are loitering on bell street, taking customers and what not (which is illegal) - Taxi's parking on Bell Street are a huge issue

Q.3.5:

Independent drivers also create bad reputations (especially when they do not know where locations are)

Q.3.6:

In fact, the biggest competition to his line of profession are the buses. They are efficient, cheap and take most of the students and thus the taxi companies lose customers to the stagecoaches. Stagecoaches are also financed by Fife Council which makes a difference to them being able to operate more often, with better prices etc.

Q.3.7:

Fife council has done nothing to help this issue - "Absolutely useless. Does nothing to help taxi drivers" - Cannot act on hearsay, so students and customers need to report plate numbers to fife council - "The council "Doesn't care about taxi drivers at all"

Q1: Has Uber or Bolt Affected the industry?

Currently Uber does not operate in St Andrews, but there is a strong possibility that it may affect the St Andrews taxi industry. It could weed out small taxi companies currently.

Q2: Are other modes of transportation affecting the St Andrews Taxi Market?

it is such a different clientele and that, "the ease of getting a taxi is why people get a taxi instead of the bus"



**The Political Institute  
of Action Research**

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