

Road Transportation

Student's Name

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The paper aims at exploring four major reasons contributing to the shortage of truck drivers in the United States. The paper will also focus on the past and future of trucking companies as the shortage of drivers threatens to decelerate the growth of the United States' economy. The key reasons leading to the shortage include poor compensation, long hours without family, restrictive government regulations in licensing and driver poor working conditions leading to health challenges.

Neil, I. (August 9, 2014). The trucking industry needs more drivers. Maybe it needs to pay more.

*The New York Times.*

The author starts by providing an example of Swift Transportation - one of the biggest logistic companies in the United States. Swift Transportation employs more than 20,000 employees including 14,000 truck drivers. Swift Transportation's earnings fell by 18% in the fourth quarter of 2014. Higher demand for trucking services and low supply of licensed truck drivers caused the revenue loss. The American Trucking Association data indicates a shortage of 30,000 truck drivers in 2014 and estimated 200,000 in a decade. Thousands of long haul truck drivers are quitting the job each year raising serious questions. The author emphasizes that cutting the salary and allowances is the main factor contributing to the shortage of truck drivers regardless of the market employment potential. The author notes that the salary of a truck driver has fallen by 9% when adjusted with inflation rates. An average truck driver earns less than \$50,000 annually with only a few hazardous materials truckers earning up to \$70,000. The author notes that the compensation is not sufficient considering the nature of the job and the state of the economy. Truck drivers spend months on the road risking accidents, having poor health and diet, deprived of sleep, having poor healthcare and losing family time. The average white employee earns \$45,000 working about 8 hours a day and receives health insurance, family time

and enough resting time of 16 hours a day. The author concludes that trucking companies can increase driver turnouts by increasing basic salaries, extra time allowances, health insurance, and general welfare allowances.

The article is great exposing the most significant factor leading to a shortage of truck drivers. Human beings perform better when appreciated and truck driver's sacrifices are not appreciated.

Keith, V. (2012). Why truck driving is one of the deadliest jobs in America. *IO9*

The author notes that truck driving is a horrible job compared to other technical skills jobs. The author highlights three main factors that make the job horrible. They are poor pay, extremely long working hours and poor lifestyle. The author lays strong emphasis on the long working hours leading to a poor lifestyle and the impact on the truck driver's health. The author highlights that truck drivers work extremely long hours, driving for up to 12 hours without a rest. The author also notes that though legislation exists governing the time limit for a truck driver, the legislations are hardly followed. Truck drivers earn an average of \$38000 per year working up to 4400 hours. Truck drivers also account for 12% of work-related deaths in the United States. Truck drivers also lead unhealthy lifestyles, only 86% of the 3 million truck drivers are obese. Few truck drivers have time to stop and find a good meal because finding parking spaces for the trucks is challenging. The drivers settle for fast and unhealthy salt saturated foods ending up creating health challenges. The drivers cover thousands of miles surviving on high calorie and sugar snacks. The author also notes that only 8% of the 3 million truck drivers engage in any form of physical exercises. The figure is too low compared to over 49% of the general population that engage in physical exercises. Truck drivers, therefore, work for extremely long hours, sleep for a few hours and have poor diets leading to lifestyle diseases. The author

concludes that the factors combined drive the shortage as most Americans are health conscious and want conducive jobs.

The article is relevant to the research. The poor lifestyle associated with truck driving is a major factor leading to a shortage of truck drivers. Americans value jobs that need less work, offer more family time and also create time for personal health management.

Davidson, P. (2012). Trucker jobs go unfilled, leading to delayed deliveries. *USA Today*.

The author notes that the trucking business is headed for a disaster as many of the old and experienced drivers retire. The average age of a truck driver is 52 while there is more truck drivers above the age of 45 compared to those between 21 and 25 years. Thousands of students are graduating from high school annually and are willing to take over the jobs. However, government regulations are a big challenge to the young people accessing employment in the trucking industry. Government regulations and the high cost of gaining a trucking driving license is pushing thousands of working and potential drivers out of the desperate sector annually. For example, few people can afford the \$4000 to \$6000 charged for a six-week truck driving course. The cost climbs up to \$8000 combined with medical certificates and other miscellaneous costs.

The author also notes that government regulations require truck drivers to be at least 21 years old locking out thousands of potential drivers above the legal age of 18 years. The government has also reduced the driving hours to 11 per 24 hours reducing the benefits and allowances earned by drivers. The safety rules publication has also forced companies to avoid hiring drivers with past records of accidents to avoid trouble with authorities. The author concludes that government regulations and the huge cost of licensing lockout thousands of drivers who can not afford the rates or have a history of accidents.

The article is detailed and supports critical factors leading to the truck driver's shortage. Government regulations contribute significantly to the shortage. Adjustment of the standards can ease the shortage and save the economy from time delay losses.

Shattell, M., Apostolopoulos, Y., Sönmez, S., & Griffin, M. (2010). Occupational stressors and the mental health of truckers. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 31(9), 561-568.

The authors conducted a research to evaluate challenges faced by the long haul truck drivers highlighting high occupational stress. The authors note that long haul drivers spend weeks on the road completely isolating them from family, friends and also social support available in the home environment. Occupational stressors in long haul trucking include social isolation, time pressures, driving hazards, loss of family and also a poor lifestyle. The authors note that stressors are risk factors for other related problems such as drug use and also engagement in commercial sex. Example, 76.3% of long-haul drivers reported multiple physical problems such as back pain, knee pain, leg and hip problems. The study also highlights that 18.7% of the drivers report severe mental health problems. Stress and anxiety were reported by 11.9% of the long haul drivers. The authors note that 74.6% reported having a health insurance while 23.7% had no health insurance or support arrangement. The authors highlight that 32.2% of the drivers reported high alcohol consumption. Drug use was also profound with 88.1% reporting using drugs while on duty. On family relationships, only 49.2% percent reported having good family relations while 50.8% reported poor, strained or dysfunctional family relations due to distance. Only 32.7% of the drivers reported having great relationships with their children. 23.5% quoted distance as the main factor hindering a relationship with their children. The authors conclude that long haul truck drivers experience occupational stressors including loss of family, social relations, isolation and also violence.

The article is relevant to the study. Occupational stress associated with long haul truck driving is a major factor leading to a truck driver's shortage. Americans value family time and creating social relations over a great pay in a stressful job.

## References

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