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A TRIADIC VIEW OF TRUCK DRIVER SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT

In this research, the authors surveyed three groups concerning job satisfaction: experienced drivers, new drivers, and managers. Statistical tests were conducted using a sample of 196 new drivers, 145 experienced drivers, and 59 managers from a large TL firm based in the U.S. The results suggest that many discrepancies exist on driver satisfaction among the three perspectives. In particular, new drivers provide managers with opportunities and challenges for satisfaction. Given the current state of the trucking industry, managers will likely benefit from approaching this segment of drivers differently to meet their expectations and keep them from leaving their firms.

INTRODUCTION

Driver turnover has persistently plagued for-hire truckload (TL) motor carriers since deregulation in 1980. Many trucking firms have tried higher wages, bonus programs, family incentives, guaranteed time-home schedules, and a variety of other plans, but the problem persists—drivers switch firms or leave the industry, a process that costs trucking firms \$6,000-\$15,000 per driver lost (Min and Lambert 2002; ATA 2007). Although driver turnover fluctuates, on average it has risen to 121% average for large TL firms and 102% for small firms (annual revenue of \$30 million or less) (ATA 2007). Some large firms have turnover rates above 200% annually. To put this in perspective, the annualized turnover rate for all jobs in the U.S. was 23.7% in 2006 (BLS 2007).

Driver turnover adds to the cost of consumer goods, cuts profits for trucking firms, and lowers logistics productivity. In 2005, Ozark Motor Lines reported a

66% annual turnover rate for 750 drivers. They hired 495 drivers that year, estimating the turnover cost to be \$2.5 million (Paz-Frankel 2006) and those costs were likely passed down the supply chain.

As the U.S. economy faltered in 2008, an influx of workers from other industries alleviated the driver shortage and slowed turnover (CSCMP 2008). The trucking industry welcomed the new hires, but experienced managers know that bringing in new drivers puts additional pressure on training and education. New, less-experienced drivers are more likely to miss customer appointments and disrupt operations. Even experienced drivers can create these problems when they are new to a company and unfamiliar with local procedures.

An important gap in the literature revolves around understanding the differences between experienced drivers and new drivers. Managers often struggle to understand drivers' perspectives and attitudes

concerning job satisfaction. But no research to date has compared different perspectives between new drivers, experienced drivers, and managers. What attitudes do they share? What attitudes are different? Does management understand one group better than the other? Understanding the difference between these groups and how management perceives this situation is important for retention strategies.

The purpose of this research is to compare job satisfaction for new drivers and experienced drivers, and then to compare to them to perceptions of management. In short, we will attempt to answer the following question: For different job satisfaction attributes, are there differences between new drivers and experienced drivers, and managers' interpretation of driver satisfaction?

To reach these objectives, we report our findings of a literature review. Then, we discuss our research method and analysis, followed by our results. Finally, we discuss both theoretical and managerial conclusions, and outline the next steps to further this research stream.

TRUCK DRIVER TURNOVER RESEARCH

Research on turnover has taken three primary approaches: 1) surveys of managers that focus on characteristics of the firm and how management decisions affect turnover; 2) surveys of drivers that focus on attitudes, job satisfaction, and how they impact retention; and 3) surveys of drivers that focus on career commitment and the likelihood of staying in the industry. This research will bridge the gap among these different research streams, bringing together research results of both managers and drivers, comparing and contrasting the results.

Surveys of Managers

Southern et al. (1989) analyzed 148 responses to a survey questionnaire sent to managers of truckload (60%), less-than-truckload (21%), truckload and less-than-truckload combined (10%), and other (9%). The questionnaire asked personnel directors what methods they used to recruit drivers, what benefits they stressed in recruiting, and what experience and other qualifications they demanded of drivers. Most relevant to the current research, they asked personnel directors to rank "What incentives . . . are most important to drivers in choosing a company to work for?" (Southern et al. 1989, p. 43). The findings are in

Table 1, where the results are compared to a later study conducted by Dobie et al. (1998).

Dobie et al. (1998) reproduced this research, advancing this stream significantly. Although fewer firms responded—62—the carrier profile was similar: 63% truckload, 29% truckload and less-than-truckload, and 8% less-than-truckload only. They asked personnel directors the same questions as the 1989 study. Table 1 compares the rankings of driver incentives from the two studies. The 1998 study asked about more incentives, so the two results are not directly comparable, but the top five were the same with some changes in order. Pay was ranked first by the personnel directors each time. Carrier reputation increased in importance, changing from fourth most important (1989) to second most important (1996).

Respondents in both studies reported turnover problems. In the 1989 study, 89% of the respondents reported problems with turnover (Southern et al. 1989). In the 1996 study, researchers asked more specific questions. More than 50% of respondents reported turnover of over 50% (Dobie et al. 1998). These turnover rates may seem less dramatic than those in other studies, but they were lower because of the mixture of carrier types.

The same situation applies to another major study in this tradition. Min and Lambert (2002) analyzed 480 responses from a survey questionnaire sent to a mixture of carriers. Like the two earlier studies of managers, they found pay to be the most important factor affecting driver recruitment and retention. Their top four factors in importance coincide with results from the earlier research. These factors were competitive pay scales, condition of equipment, company reputation, and amount of time not on the road. Consistent with the earlier research, this study stressed recruitment methods, finding that the most frequently used methods were also the methods the respondents believed to be the best.

Min and Lambert (2002) found no systematic relationship between driver wages and turnover, except when the firm paid substantially higher salaries. Still, managers in this study were convinced that drivers considered wages and pay rates foremost in choosing where to work.

Works by Keller (2002) and Keller and Ozment (1999) are in a distinct subcategory of surveys of managers. These studies were based on survey questionnaires distributed to first-line managers—dispatchers—to

TABLE 1
RANKING OF DRIVER INCENTIVES BY MOTOR CARRIER PERSONNEL DIRECTORS

Incentive	1996 Rank	1989 Rank
Pay	1	1
Condition of the Equipment	3	2
Time at Home	4	3
Carrier Reputation	2	4
Health Benefits	5	5
Vacation Time	10	6
Freedom from Direct Supervision	9	7
Sick Leave	14	8
Advancement Opportunities	12	9
Extra OJT	13	10
Equipment Type	6	-
Access to Management	7	-
Pension	8	-
Expenses	11	-
Sign-up Bonus	15	-

Adapted from Dobie, Rakowski, and Southern (1998)

identify sources of the turnover problem and potential solutions. Keller and Ozment (1999) analyzed responses from 149 dispatchers in five truckload carriers to test Hirschman's concept of Exit, Voice, and Loyalty (Hirschman 1970). They also gathered monthly turnover data for each dispatcher, so they could associate sensitivity to voice, sensitivity to exit, and responsiveness scores with turnover. In testing a structural equation model, they found a strong, negative relationship between a dispatcher responsiveness and monthly, voluntary driver turnover. Sensitivity-to-voice and sensitivity-to-exit had no statistically significant, direct effect on turnover, so responsiveness was an essential moderating variable.

In a related study, Keller (2002) found turnover to mediate the relationship between driver pay and driver relationships with customers, the relationship between time home and driver relationships with customers. Turnover also mediates the relationships

between pay and performance and time home and performance. If turnover is lower, drivers build better relationships with customers and perform better. Also, drivers who build strong relationships with customers perform better. It is no surprise that drivers work harder for people they know and like.

These studies bridged the gap between external studies, which surveyed managers, and the internal studies, which surveyed drivers. Taylor (1991) also discussed dispatchers as critical to controlling driver turnover, but his work was normative, informing trucking managers on how to use performance appraisals of dispatchers to help lower turnover.

Surveys of Drivers About Their Intent to Quit

LeMay and Taylor (1988) and Taylor (1991) offered normative approaches to driver recruitment and retention, laying a foundation for later empirical work on driver attitudes, job satisfaction, and intent to quit

(Taylor and LeMay 1991; LeMay et al. 1993; Richard et al. 1994; Richard et al. 1995). This research tied truck driver attitudes and job satisfaction to intent to quit. They included driver attitudes towards the company, dispatchers, top management, pay administration, time home, equipment, other companies, and other drivers. They used the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) to measure intrinsic, extrinsic, and overall job satisfaction. In this body of work, the researchers built a variety of models that linked these attitudes and the MSQ to intent to quit, an indirect measure of likely turnover. This work was conducted with drivers from a large truck-load carrier, but included responses from 426 drivers. Other research in this tradition analyzed more responses from more carriers.

McElroy et al. (1993) analyzed 3,405 responses from drivers for thirteen TL firms. They studied the effects of career stage and time away from home on driver attitudes. They used component measures for job satisfaction, asking whether drivers liked or disliked driving the truck, relationships with customers, paperwork, meeting safety requirements, and so on. They also delved deeply into driver attitudes toward their equipment, interest in training, job enlargement, recognition, adequacy of benefits, supervisors, and perceived attitudes of the company to drivers. They found that late career drivers had more negative attitudes and saw little chance for advancement. Early career drivers were more positive and saw more chances for advancement. They used scales that were developed specifically for their project. In other words, even though scales existed for the constructs of interest, McElroy et al. (1993) developed their scales independently and did not utilize scales developed in prior research.

The most comprehensive work in this stream of research also did the most to span the boundaries between surveys of drivers and surveys of managers. Stephenson and Fox (1996) surveyed drivers from 57 truckload motor carriers, getting 1,791 usable responses, 1,464 from company drivers. They developed extensive work demographics on the respondents—annual income, hours worked a week, miles driven a week, frequency getting home, number of companies worked for, and age.

Surveys of Drivers Commitment to the Trucking Industry

Corsi and Martin (1982) developed a model to explain turnover among owner-operators. Data for the study were collected in 1978 from 323 owner-operators

under permanent lease and 156 trip-leased owner-operators. One year later, the same owner-operators were surveyed again, yielding 287 and 139 responses. From 1978 to 1979, 20% of the permanent-lease respondents were no longer under permanent lease; of those, 39% had left the trucking industry—an exit rate of about 5%. Most left the industry for economic reasons. In the same period, 18% of the trip-leased respondents were no longer owner operators; of those, 23% had left the industry, an exit rate of about 4%. Other respondents had changed status in the industry, becoming employee drivers for carriers or private fleets. This study differs from most in this review because it dealt with owner operators and because it was based on data gathered before motor carrier deregulation in 1980. Nonetheless, it was important because it was the first systematic, academic attempt to explain driver turnover.

The next empirical work on driver turnover came from Beilock and Capelle (1990). They analyzed responses from 878 drivers on career commitment—the likelihood that they would still be driving in five years. They studied the relationship between drivers' ages, status as a driver—owner-operator or company driver—years of driving experience, years of experience in other jobs, recent income trends, and training. They found that opportunity costs most heavily influenced whether a driver said he would stay in the business for the next five years. Drivers with more education and work experience outside driving were more likely to leave the industry.

Beilock (2003) updated this work thirteen years later, partly in response to Belzer's book, *Sweatshops on Wheels: Winners and Losers in Trucking Deregulation* (Belzer 2000). In a survey with 1,642 responses, Beilock found truck drivers of refrigerated trucks rated their jobs as better than a sweatshop and were more likely to stay in the industry than to leave it. The 2003 results were similar to those from earlier work.

Beilock's work relied on an economic tradition and ignored research that took a managerial approach. This research neither measured turnover directly, as did researchers who surveyed managers, nor did he use scaled approaches to assess driver attitudes, job satisfaction, and intent to quit. Other surveys of drivers concentrated on these issues.

Summary of the Literature on Truck Drivers

Each of these streams of research offers valuable information that should help researchers and

managers. The surveys of managers showed how a firm's policies and practices can tie directly to turnover. They were based on many responses from cross-sections of the industry. The surveys of drivers should help managers understand how drivers think, potentially leading to better policies and practices. The other surveys of drivers focused on intent to stay in the industry. This work gave a valuable view of turnover throughout the industry, concentrating on the work demographics of the drivers and tying them to intent to leave the industry.

In the past, these streams of research have been difficult to compare. The surveys of managers drew responses from several categories of carriers—truckload, less-than-truckload, and mixed. The surveys of drivers drew responses from truckload carriers only, while the driver surveys on exit from the industry drew from refrigerated truckload and less-than truckload carriers. Only the work by Keller and Ozment (1999) tied turnover to dispatcher behavior at the micro level. Research needs to bridge the gap more, explaining truck driver attitudes as well as managerial beliefs about these attitudes.

No research studies to date have examined the difference between new drivers and experienced drivers. Given the influx of new drivers to the trucking industry, an understanding of new drivers is now needed more than ever. Even more important, researchers need to examine whether or not there is a difference between the perspectives of new drivers and experienced drivers in their job satisfaction.

A final gap in the literature is gaining the perspective of management in regards to job satisfaction of both new and experienced truck drivers. Can management accurately interpret job satisfaction of their truck drivers?

RESEARCH METHOD

In this section, we will first address the research question, followed by data collection, survey measures, and the analysis and results.

Research Question

To better understand some of the gaps left by previous research, this research will address the following research questions:

Research question: For different attributes of truck driving job satisfaction,

are there differences between new drivers, experienced drivers, and managers?

Data Collection

We partnered with a large Midwestern truckload carrier to distribute copies of the survey to drivers and management. At the company's request, eight hundred hard-copy surveys were distributed through five of the firm's larger terminals. The firm notified experienced drivers about the research through its driver communications system, so drivers could pick up the surveys if they chose to participate. Experienced drivers were asked to complete the survey concerning their current levels of satisfaction. They were asked to return the finished surveys to secure collection boxes in the terminals. New drivers were asked to complete the hard copy surveys at new driver orientations at various locations. These drivers were asked to complete the survey as to their expected levels of satisfaction. This perspective was requested because new drivers would not have the ability to fully answer all items because they had not yet been driving yet.

After all surveys were collected, the secure boxes were returned to the researchers. Responses came from the firm's largest division, the van division. This group included 2,800 company drivers and 400 owner operators.

Three hundred and seventy four of the 800 driver surveys were returned. Thirty two were incomplete or deemed unusable, and thirteen more were cut out as the respondent failed to identify themselves as experienced or new drivers, leaving 328 usable surveys for a response rate of 41 percent. This included 196 responses who identified themselves as new drivers and 145 as experienced drivers. We did not try to investigate non-response bias for two reasons: first, surveys were completely confidential, with no way to identify respondents; second, the surveys were collected by the sponsoring firm and mailed back to the researchers in batches, so there was no way to identify early or late respondents, a common way to assess non-response bias (Armstrong and Overton 1977).

To fulfill the objectives of this research, we asked company managers to participate in the survey. The managers were asked to respond to the questionnaires as they thought most truck drivers would respond (i.e., relying on their experiences with interacting with drivers). We contacted 97 managers (from Vice

Presidents to Dispatchers) and received 59 responses, for a response rate of 60.8 percent.

Data were analyzed with SPSS 15.0. We approached the data pairwise to allow for missing data on an item by item basis.

Measures

In this study, we used the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) to assess truck drivers' satisfaction with their jobs. The MSQ is considered one of the best constructed, most useful measures of job satisfaction (Henneman and Schwab 1985; Thompson and Blain 1992). For this research, a 5 point Likert scale (1 strongly disagree – 5 strongly agree) was used mimicking previous applications of the MSQ.

The MSQ has a long form and a short form, both with extensive validation studies (Weiss et al. 1967). The long form has over 100 items, too long to fit this research program. We instead used the 20 item MSQ short form with a twenty-first question that asked about satisfaction with fringe benefits (Weiss et al. 1967). The MSQ has shown strong ties between facet measures and overall satisfaction, a link lacking in other measures of job satisfaction such as the Job Descriptive Index or the Hoppock Scale (Scarpello and Campbell 1983). The MSQ has also shown strong convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability in studies comparing methods for measuring job satisfaction (e.g., Dunham et al. 1977).

The original research showed three factors: extrinsic satisfaction, intrinsic satisfaction, and general satisfaction. Extrinsic satisfaction measures satisfaction with the environment of the work—pay, supervision, advancement, and so on. Intrinsic satisfaction measures satisfaction with the work itself—accomplishment, serving others, trying ideas, and so on. These factors aligned with Herzberg's concepts of extrinsic and intrinsic dimensions of work (Herzberg 1966; Herzberg et al. 1959). General satisfaction includes satisfaction with working conditions and coworkers (Weiss et al. 1967).

Subsequent research has frequently, but not always, validated this structure with factor analysis. Two factors have typically been reported, again aligning with Herzberg (See, for example, Weiss et al. 1967; Bledsoe and Baber 1979; Hauber and Bruininks 1986). Tan and Hawkins (2000) found three factors in a study of people with psychiatric disabilities who were participating in vocational rehabilitation programs.

Hancer and George (2004) found four factors in a study of hourly restaurant workers in the Midwestern United States.

In addition to the many issues of factor structure of the MSQ scale, the researchers find that the factors are too broad, which can mask valuable results. In addition, previous experience with MSQ scales suggests that managers find the information at the item level to be more actionable and meaningful. Thus, this research will keep the MSQ measurements items at the item level, instead of using the items to create factors.

RESULTS

In review of the mean satisfaction scores, a couple things become apparent. On most of the satisfaction measures, the new drivers expected levels of satisfaction are higher than the other two groups. Also apparent is that the management group anticipated levels of driver satisfaction was much lower than what drivers reported. The new drivers reported the lowest expected satisfaction levels with "Your pay and the work you have to do," and the highest with "The chance to do something that uses your abilities." Experienced drivers lowest current satisfaction levels were with the same item as the current drivers. The highest was with "The freedom you have to use your own judgment." The management team also scored the lowest levels of satisfaction with the pay and work satisfaction item (although the mean value was much lower than both driver groups). The highest level of satisfaction came with "Being able to do things that don't hurt your conscience." Table 2 shows all the mean values for each item.

The data was analyzed in two ways to better gain insight for the stated research questions. First, ANOVA was utilized on the MSQ items to understand if significant differences exist between job satisfaction of new drivers, experienced drivers, and managers' perceptions. Second, Bonferroni analysis within ANOVA was used to understand the specific differences among the three perspectives. If the overall ANOVA suggests that there is a difference among the three groups, the Bonferroni analysis will pinpoint exactly where the difference exists.

The ANOVA results in Table 3 indicate multiple differences among the mean scores. At the .05 level of significance, 13 of the 21 MSQ items were significantly different among the three groups surveyed. With all significant differences, the management expected

TABLE 2
MEANS FOR MSQ ITEMS BY GROUP

MSQ Item	ND Mean	ED Mean	MGT Mean
Your pay and the work you have to do	3.09	2.74	2.15
The chance to work alone	3.16	3.36	2.66
The praise you get for doing a good job	3.18	2.92	2.81
The chance to tell people what to do	3.21	3.30	2.81
The fringe benefits you receive	3.22	2.82	2.53
The way your coordinator handles employees	3.26	3.39	3.32
The way your co-workers get along with each other	3.26	3.29	3.41
The chance to do something different from time to time	3.27	3.42	2.98
The competence in your coordinator in making decisions	3.27	3.40	3.49
Being able to keep busy all the time	3.29	3.11	2.80
The way company policies are put into practice	3.30	3.01	2.86
The chances for advancement on this job	3.31	3.00	2.58
The chance to be somebody in the community	3.33	3.21	2.68
The working conditions	3.37	3.58	3.09
The chance to do things for other people	3.45	3.47	3.24
The way your job provides steady employment	3.48	3.65	3.36
The feeling of accomplishment you get from the job	3.50	3.62	3.00
Being able to do things that don't hurt your conscience	3.51	3.71	3.70
The chance to try your own methods of doing the job	3.54	3.81	2.75
The freedom you have to use your own judgment	3.55	3.87	3.09
The chance to do something that uses your abilities	3.57	3.66	3.36

TABLE 3
MSQ ANOVA RESULTS

MSQ Item	ND Mean	ED Mean	MGT Mean	F- Value	Sig Level
Your pay and the work you have to do	3.09	2.74	2.15	18.58	0.001
The chance to work alone	3.16	3.36	2.66	10.74	0.000
The praise you get for doing a good job	3.18	2.92	2.81	5.47	0.005
The chance to tell people what to do	3.21	3.30	2.81	8.63	0.000
The fringe benefits you receive	3.22	2.82	2.53	12.98	0.000
The way your coordinator handles employees	3.26	3.39	3.32	0.89	0.413
The way your co-workers get along with each other	3.26	3.29	3.41	0.85	0.429
The chance to do something different from time to time	3.27	3.42	2.98	5.14	0.006
The competence in your coordinator in making decisions	3.27	3.40	3.49	1.85	0.158
Being able to keep busy all the time	3.29	3.11	2.80	6.61	0.002
The way company policies are put into practice	3.30	3.01	2.86	6.81	0.000
The chances for advancement on this job	3.31	3.00	2.58	13.87	0.000
The chance to be somebody in the community	3.33	3.21	2.68	13.22	0.000
The working conditions	3.37	3.58	3.09	6.41	0.002
The chance to do things for other people	3.45	3.47	3.24	2.07	0.128
The way your job provides steady employment	3.48	3.65	3.36	2.58	0.077
The feeling of accomplishment you get from the job	3.50	3.62	3.00	10.77	0.000
Being able to do things that don't hurt your conscience	3.51	3.71	3.70	2.60	0.076
The chance to try your own methods of doing the job	3.54	3.81	2.75	35.27	0.000
The freedom you have to use your own judgment	3.55	3.87	3.09	15.29	0.000
The chance to do something that uses your abilities	3.57	3.66	3.36	2.15	0.118

Level of significance = .05

levels of satisfaction were much lower than reported by drivers. Also, in most instances, the new drivers and experienced drivers satisfaction scores were paralleled. All results are shown in Table 3.

The 13 items that were identified as significantly different were then analyzed post-hoc with the Bonferroni technique to indentify the specific differences. Those differences are categorized as differences between new drivers and management, differences between experienced drivers and management, and finally, differences between new drivers and experienced drivers. As before, the .05

level of significance was used as a threshold to determine significance.

Differences Between New Drivers and Managers

Managers' perceptions differed significantly from new drivers' expectations on 11 of the 21 items in the MSQ. Table 4 highlights the differences between new drivers and managers.

On each of the 11 significantly different measures, managers significantly underrated the new drivers' expectations. This suggests that managers do not

necessarily have a great understanding of the satisfaction expectations of new drivers. In other words, new drivers expect to be much more satisfied than managers think they will be..

Specifically, the major item that stood out as having major difference was "Your pay and the work you have to do." This shows the largest mean difference between new drivers and managers. This discrepancy might suggest that new drivers expect to have satisfactory levels of pay for the work they are expected to do. On the other hand, managers may have answered in a way that they expect drivers to never be happy with their levels of pay.

Differences Between Managers and Experienced Drivers

Managers' perceptions differed from experienced drivers on many issues as well. The results show that significant differences on nine of the 21 items. Table 5 highlights those differences.

As with the new drivers, managers greatly underestimated the satisfaction levels of the experienced drivers. Surprisingly, the major difference between experienced drivers and management was not

over pay. Rather, it was on the item "The chance to try your own methods of doing the job." This suggests that management may not have a good feel for experienced driver's method of performing the job. Experienced drivers expressed very high levels of satisfaction with this measure.

Not surprisingly, there were seven MSQ items in which manager's misinterpreted both drivers groups on satisfaction levels:

- the chance to work alone;
- the chance to be somebody in the community;
- the chance to tell people what to do;
- pay for the work they do;
- the freedom to use judgment;
- the chance to try your own methods;
- feelings of accomplishment drivers get from their jobs

Differences Between New Drivers and Experienced Drivers

The new drivers and experienced drivers satisfaction responses mirrored one another, except for three items. The differences are highlighted in Table 6.

**TABLE 4
DIFFERENCES AMONG NEW DRIVERS AND MANAGEMENT**

MSQ ITEM	ND Mean	MGT Mean	Mean Difference	Sig Level
Being able to keep busy all the time	3.29	2.80	0.49	0.001
The chance to work alone	3.16	2.66	0.50	0.002
The chance to be somebody in the community	3.33	2.68	0.65	0.000
The chance to tell people what to do	3.21	2.81	0.39	0.002
The way company policies are put into practice	3.30	2.86	0.44	0.005
Your pay and the work you have to do	3.09	2.15	0.94	0.000
The chances for advancement on this job	3.31	2.58	0.73	0.000
The freedom you have to use your own judgment	3.55	3.09	0.47	0.003
The chance to try your own methods of doing the job	3.54	2.75	0.79	0.000
The feeling of accomplishment you get from the job	3.50	3.00	0.50	0.000
The fringe benefits you receive	3.22	2.53	0.69	0.000

Level of significance = .05

TABLE 5
DIFFERENCES AMONG EXPERIENCED DRIVERS AND MANAGEMENT

MSQ ITEM	ED Mean	MGT Mean	Mean Difference	Sig Level
The chance to work alone	3.36	2.66	0.70	0.000
The chance to do something different from time to time	3.42	2.98	0.44	0.005
The chance to be somebody in the community	3.21	2.68	0.53	0.000
The chance to tell people what to do	3.30	2.81	0.49	0.000
Your pay and the work you have to do	2.74	2.15	0.59	0.001
The freedom you have to use your own judgment	3.87	3.09	0.79	0.000
The chance to try your own methods of doing the job	3.81	2.75	1.06	0.000
The working conditions	3.58	3.09	0.49	0.002
The feeling of accomplishment you get from the job	3.62	3.00	0.62	0.000

Level of significance = .05

TABLE 6
DIFFERENCES AMONG NEW DRIVERS AND EXPERIENCED DRIVERS

MSQ ITEM	ND Mean	ED Mean	Mean Difference	Sig Level
Your pay and the work you have to do	3.09	2.74	0.35	0.004
The freedom you have to use your own judgment	3.55	3.87	-0.32	0.007
The fringe benefits you receive	3.22	2.82	0.40	0.001

Level of significance = .05

In two cases, the new drivers expressed much higher levels of satisfaction than did the experienced drivers ("Your pay and the work you have to do;" "The fringe benefits you receive"). Interestingly, experienced drivers expressed higher levels of satisfaction on "The freedom you have to use your own judgment." This suggests that once driving, the driver has the ability to make their own decisions, which drivers like.

DISCUSSION

The results of the statistical tests show that drivers and managers differ on perceptions of job satisfaction. The following will present discussion on those findings.

The short answer to the research question is that the three interpretations differ significantly on job satisfaction, but the most compelling differences are between the driver groups and managers. Unfortunately managers perceived both new and experienced drivers to be much less satisfied than they really are. New drivers and experienced drivers reported higher satisfaction on most of the twenty-one items on the scale than managers projected. From the perspective of mean scores, managers missed badly on a majority of satisfaction measures (13 of 21 items; 62%) for each driver group. Based on these results, managers appear to understand little about what expected levels of satisfaction are (new drivers) and how satisfied drivers are (experienced drivers).

When comparing their responses to new drivers, it becomes apparent that managers feel that new drivers expect less satisfaction than they do. This resulted in differences on 11 of the MSQ items, the most differences between any two groups. This suggests that managers do not know their new drivers very well. New drivers are entering the firm with high job satisfaction expectations – expectations that decline over time. By understanding and managing new driver expectations, managers are likely to retain qualified and experienced drivers.

Managers did have a better view of their experienced drivers, only missing significantly on nine of the MSQ items. However, the manner in which they missed was intriguing. They again greatly underestimated the satisfaction that their experienced drivers enjoy. This would suggest that managers have a perception that drivers are unhappy, which will likely lead to turnover. The contrary is true: on these nine items, the mean scores from the experienced drivers were actually quite high. The notion that managers do not fully understand the satisfaction levels of their experienced drivers may be a fundamental reason as to why turnover among TL drivers is so high.

A subsequent finding was that expectations of new drivers and satisfaction among experienced drivers were very similar. Managers may need to note where the three differences existed: pay, freedom to use judgment, and fringe benefits. New drivers expect higher satisfaction with pay and work levels and with fringe benefits. Experienced drivers were more satisfied with freedom to use their own judgment than new drivers expected to be.

IMPLICATIONS AND SUMMARY

The findings of the current study have important implications for managers and for the existing body of knowledge about truck drivers and satisfaction, which ultimately impacts turnover. This research took a triadic view of job satisfaction, giving perspectives from new drivers, experienced drivers, and managers' perceptions of driver attitudes. This is the first research to adopt this perspective in transportation research.

Perhaps the most important implications in this research are about new drivers. A new driver is either the driver of the future or the turnover statistic of the future. Managers can alter long-term turnover statistics by bringing drivers into the firm with greater care and with greater honesty. This means

assuring that drivers hear the same messages in orientation that they hear from recruiters, and that the message they hear from recruiters gives them a realistic idea of what to expect on the job. Long term, this will help the firm build a reputation for truthfulness with drivers—for the oddest of reasons—because it is true. This will give a firm a competitive advantage, but only as long as they retain the reputation.

The new drivers' scores showed greater uncertainty about the job, a rational result based on little experience with the firm. The scores from this group show that they expect high job satisfaction with the new firm. This optimism may be the result of career changes; many new drivers have come to the industry from other economically depressed industries, such as construction. This may be why new drivers differed from the experienced drivers. Managers should be cognizant of these differences. Training and orientation should help new drivers understand and manage expectations. More important, trucking firms should work to help new drivers keep their higher levels of expected satisfaction as they move into the experienced driver group. This should help to cut turnover.

Experienced drivers' levels of satisfaction were higher than managers expected them to be. This is good news for trucking firms, given that job satisfaction impacts ITQ. But the analysis showed significant differences that suggest managers may not be in touch with drivers, meaning that managers may commit to programs that mean little to drivers and little to controlling turnover, or to programs that actually raise turnover and dissatisfaction. Also, satisfaction was higher for new drivers than for experienced drivers, suggesting that over time, drivers are becoming less satisfied. Managers use these findings to better understand the expectations of drivers and manage those expectations over time.

New drivers and experienced drivers also differed on pay, freedom to use judgment, and fringe benefits. This suggests that new drivers come to the firm looking for a better deal than they had at their previous job, whether it was in the transportation industry or outside of it. If managers better understand the driver as he or she joins the firm, then they will find it easier to continue to understand the driver who remains with the firm. The broad sweep of these results is consistent with other research: drivers expect to be treated as human beings, not truck numbers or replaceable parts. Too often that is what

they perceive. In effect, managers must 'get' the driver's job, and drivers must perceive that the managers 'get' it.

Managers underrated job satisfaction among drivers. Managers often judge a job from their own perspective: it is not something they would like to do, so others must not like it either. This suggests that these managers still need to work on understanding the drivers' jobs from the drivers' perspective. This may require more research, but can be improved through simpler programs like having managers regularly eat lunch in the drivers' lounge, frequently riding along with drivers, and other techniques for more work-related contact between managers and drivers.

Many of these ideas transcend the current labor economy. Managers must always address the problems and opportunities of the moment, but a better understanding of drivers will help them make better decisions, whether the labor pool is growing or shrinking, and whether turnover is high or low. The industry is unlikely to return to the conditions of the union-dominated 1960s, but the labor market could tighten for other reasons. Managers must seek to educate themselves on the labor pool they have, which will change.

Limitations, Future Directions, and Summary

This research clearly has limitations. First, it was conducted in one firm, so results should not be generalized to every firm. The firm's management also volunteered to participate, another factor that distinguishes it from a firm or firms selected at random. Also, managers were asked to respond how they thought "most" drivers would respond, not

segmenting and asking them to respond for new drivers and experienced drivers separately (for parsimony). Finally, given the study design, assessing non-response bias was not an option.

However, the research does provide directions for further research in the single firm tradition, collecting these same kinds of data from more firms and comparing the results, or gathering the same kind of data from drivers from multiple firms simultaneously, in keeping with other traditions in this arena. Multi-firm studies using similar methods would assist managers in decision-making and would also help researchers further refine the methods for capturing satisfaction information and assessing its relationship to driver turnover. Future research should also do more to address the differences in the information needed to recruit drivers, and the information needed to retain them. Future research should address job attribute importance for these different groups as well. Based on this research, the messages managers need to send to different groups of drivers should differ significantly.

The driver labor market remains problematic for TL firms. They face competition from other industries, from one another, and from other parts of the trucking industry. The difficulties are magnified by rising fuel costs, which add to the problem of paying driver wages that draw drivers away from alternative careers. Still managers must compete and must understand the difference between the information they need to recruit new drivers and the information they need to retain drivers they already have. Managers should attempt to understand drivers the way marketers attempt to understand customers, because both compete for a critical resource.

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