In late December 2019, COVID-19, commonly referred to as the Coronavirus was identified in China because of the main explanation for recent human respiratory health cases. The virus was first detected in Wuhan City, and during a space of months, it had covered the whole globe. There are yet no therapeutics and vaccines available. The virus has engendered huge drastic changes to world healthcare, economic, transportation, and education systems around the world. Purpose: the general purpose of this study was to explore truck drivers’ views regarding commuting to the workplace under the COVID-19 circumstances of selected counties in Alabama. Methods: The research paper goal necessitated the truck drivers’ views regarding commuting to the workplace. Following a summary of the literature review research phase, the researcher conducted a variety of semi-structured interviews with truck drivers in Alabama through Survey Monkey by a postgraduate student in June-July 2020. Overall, 50 truck drivers have completed the survey. The info was stored on Survey Monkey servers within the Center for Urban and Rural Research (CURR), Department of Community and Regional Planning, Alabama A&M University. Results: The data analysis reveals their main workplace before the COVID-19 pandemic 94% of the truck drivers residing in Alabama especially from Jefferson county provided information about commuting to workplaces, while 4% to the places of educations (lecture room) and a couple of production site. Furthermore, 92% of the truck drivers reported NO change within the means of transport in commuting trips during the COVID-19 pandemic, while 8% indicated changes within the means of transport. Conclusion: This research paper contributes important new empirical analysis of the truck drivers’ views regarding commuting to the workplace under the COVID-19 pandemic to some extent where there’s an abundance of conceptual papers and opinion pieces but still scant evidence on the particular road safety of the pandemic for researchers to think about on potential person and situation factors related to COVID-19 that would affect road safety during and after the pandemic. Collaborative efforts by researchers and public and personal sectors are going to be needed to collect data and develop truck drivers’ road safety strategies in reference to the new reality of COVID-19.

Keywords: COVID-19, health disparities, roadway safety, syndemics, truck drivers

INTRODUCTION

In December 2019 in Wuhan, China, (Hui et al., 2020; Sohrabi et al., 2020) and named coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) by the earth Health Organization (World Health Organization, 2020). Reported that a cluster of cases of “pneumonia of unknown origin” during which subsequently was confirmed and Vingilis (2020) indicated that, in March 2020, the WHO had declared COVID-19 a world-wide pandemic with 216 countries, areas, or territories showing 10,719,646 cases and 517,337 deaths combined as of July 2, 2020 (World Health Organization, 2020) and this pandemic led to worldwide public health measures to contain and reduce its spread. It should be noted that in many developed and underdeveloped countries the measures as intervention included physical distancing measures a touch just like the “lockdown” of educational institutions, restaurants, bars, retail, and other non-essential businesses, banning public events, like sporting events, concerts, theatre shows and galvanizing or requiring teleworking from home and staying reception (de Vos, 2020). Truck drivers occupy a pivotal role within the economies of us of America.
Purpose: The general purpose of this study was to explore truck drivers’ views regarding commuting to the workplace under the COVID-19 circumstances of selected counties in Alabama.

An overview of state of the art

Global transmission of COVID-19 is at an alarming rate and most of the countries of the world are not adequately prepared for this pandemic. Despite the partial ease of lockdown in most states, there are over 3.1 million confirmed cases and 555,977 confirmed deaths as at the period of this review. (John Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Centre July 2020).

The different measures of prevention and controlling COVID-19 have put a lot of pressure, re-alignment and re-organization in the workforce and ways of doing things by people globally. This has resulted in various limitations especially travelling as well as maintaining social distance while most official work assignments are done online; there is also paradigm shift to virtual teaching and learning in most educational institutions globally. (Neis et al 2020).

There is a great anxiety when there is pandemic, a lot of people tend to exhibit high level of anxiety which might worsen the level contagious or make the situation to be more complicated, which could make the pandemic to be unmanageable. However, those with low level anxiety tend to have little symptoms or little challenge with their health and are able to recover quickly (Vigo et al 2020). There are various issues associated to the means of reducing the spread of this virus, staying in-door when there is no reason for going out, maintaining social distancing and the use of facemask for preventing the spread when going to a restricted social gathering.

Transportation systems have been altered as a result of this pandemic. People are only required to travel when it is highly essential while very few people fly and public transit only allowed scattered seat to curtail the spread. The Long Haul Truck Drivers (LHTD) who spend long hours on the road and away from their homes are also affected by the spread of this virus. Various studies have shown that LHTD have been linked with spread and dissemination of diseases (Valway et al 2007).
Transportation and population is closely related to the transmission and acquisition of infectious diseases. The LHTD spend major part of their working hours in worksite environment. There is excessive time pressure with poor or little time for good diet, poor sleep hours and high rate of cigarette smoking which they think could improve their alertness. All these activities could make them to be easily susceptible to covid 19 (Lemke et al 2020). The LHTD can be exposed when they are in close proximity with store workers, dock workers, other truck drivers or other people with covid 19 and thereafter touch their nose or eyes after a contact with the surface already touched or handled by someone with the virus. The only way to reduce the spread is when they spend most active period in their truck and lessen the contact with other people (CDC 2020).

According to Hege 2018, he identified the long haul truck driving as a profession which poses danger to cardiometabolic health of the drivers which they tend to exhibit at an early age as a result of work-related stress. They have low level quality of sleep due to long work hours, frequent shift work as well as poor dietary choices. The danger of cardiometabolic health condition can make COVID-19 to be more complicated on the part of the driver who has a contact with the virus because various reports from CDC indicated that people with underlying health condition usually have some complications.

**METHODS**

The research paper goal necessitated the truck drivers’ views regarding commuting to the workplace. Following a summary of the literature review research phase, the researcher conducted a variety of semi-structured interviews with truck drivers in Alabama through Survey Monkey by a postgraduate student in June-July 2020. Overall, 50 truck drivers have completed the survey. the info was stored on Survey Monkey servers within the Center for Urban and Rural Research (CURR), Department of Community and Regional Planning, Alabama A&M University.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

Using respondents postal code reveals that 38 respondents were from the Jefferson County in Alabama representing 76% of respondents (see fig 1).

![Figure 1: Respondents Postal Code](image)

As one can see from the figure 2 below 27 respondents were married, 14 were single, 8 were divorced and 1 was in a civil partnership.
Figure 2: Marital Status of the Respondents

Figure 3 below shows the age breakdown of the truck drivers and one can see that 8 truck drivers are within the 19-29 age range, another 9 are within the 30-39 age range, 10 are within the 40-49 age range, another 18 are within the 50-59 age range, 4 are within the 60-69 range and finally 1 truck driver is within the 70 or older age range.

Figure 3: Age breakdown of the Respondents

Figure 4 shows the highest completed level of education of the respondents. 31 respondents completed mandatory education, 11 completed high school, 5 chose not to answer and 3 have a university education.

Figure 4: Highest Completed Level of Education of the Respondents
As one can see from Fig 5 that the gender of the respondent’s truck drivers with 47 trucks drivers identified as males, while 3 truck drivers identified as females. Male truck drivers accounted for 94% of the sample size, while female truck drivers accounted for 6% of the sample size.

![Figure 5: Gender of the Respondents]

Of the questionnaire surveyed, in fig 6 below, 33 are employees; 15 are self-employed and 2 are in some sort of internship, traineeship or apprenticeship the issue of truck driver’s main workplace (before COVID-19) where they spend the longest time in a week.

![Figure 6: The table 1 The issue of truck driver’s main workplace (before COVID-19) where they spend the longest time in a week.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Truck Drivers Main Workplace (before COVID-19)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note Valid number 3, 8, and 9 are:
3. was a production site (e.g. factory, workshops, studio), storage or a logistics Centre.
8. was a vehicle on the move (e.g. driver, conductor, flight attendant, on-board catering personnel, etc.
9. was a lecture room (school, university), theatre stage or a religious facility.

Under the COVID-19 circumstances, the data analysis reveals (see fig 7) that 26 respondents are commuting, as usual, 16 are commuting more often than usual, 2 are not commuting and 6 are commuting less.
The respondents to the issue of change of the means of transport during COVID-19 in commuting to workplace showing in Fig 8 that 46 respondents said they didn't have to change their means of commuting while 4 respondents had to change their means of transport.

Furthermore, the issue of how truck drivers now commute to their workplace in response to COVID-19 by chosen the one you use most frequently or the one covers the longest distance.

As one can see from fig below that 34 respondents drive themselves to the workplace and 9 respondents' carpool.

The data analysis on how long you commute now regarding the duration for one way. 50% of the respondents said they commute between 10-20mins, 20% were commuting between 20-30mins, 12% were commuting between 5-10mins and 30-45mins, the rest commute between 1-5mins;45-60mins or 60-90mins.
Figure 10: Truck Drivers Time Commute to work during COVID-19 Pandemics

However, why did you change the means of transport for your commuting trip? 13 respondents responded to this question. 6 respondents said their means of transport didn’t change, 7 commented that their means of transport changed due to the pandemic. The analysis on sentence describes respondent's grocery shopping before the COVID-19 outbreak the best.

Table 2: Sentence describes truck drivers grocery shopping before the COVID-19 outbreak the best

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>54.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note Valid number 1-7 are:
1. I tend to buy a small quantity of grocery in stores many times a week.
2. I tend to buy a large quantity of groceries in stores once or twice a week or less often.
3. I mainly get my groceries delivered regularly (e.g. pre-ordered weekly delivery by cooperatives).
4. I mainly order my groceries online and get them delivered as necessary (e.g. online supermarket).
5. I mainly order my groceries online and get them delivered as necessary (e.g. online supermarket).
6. I get most of my meals delivered, and I rarely go to a grocery store.
7. My housekeeping staff takes care of the grocery, and I do not do grocery shopping.

Furthermore, table 3 reveals truck driver’s perceptions to the question on how did truck drivers change their grocery shopping due to COVID-19?

Table 3: Truck drivers change lifestyle in commuting to grocery shopping due to COVID-19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Val</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>id</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>86.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note valid number 1-2
1. I did not change it at all.
2. I changed my grocery due to COVID-19

The analysis of the issue of how truck drivers now get to grocery stores as noted in figure 11, reveals that 37 respondents drove themselves to the grocery store, 4 trekked, 5 carpools, and the rest either use a scooter, didn’t do groceries, or used a bicycle.
CONCLUSION

This research paper contributes important new empirical analysis of the truck drivers’ views regarding commuting to the workplace under the COVID-19 pandemic to some extent where there's an abundance of conceptual papers and opinion pieces but still scant evidence on the particular road safety of the pandemic for researchers to think about on potential person and situation factors related to COVID-19 that would affect road safety during and after the pandemic. Collaborative efforts by researchers and public and personal sectors are going to be needed to collect data and develop truck drivers' road safety strategies in reference to the new reality of COVID-19.

REFERENCES