

An investigation on the rights of truck drivers in China and the role of social media platforms in social monitoring through Jin De Qiang's suicide

Nuoyi Shi

Imperial College London, London, UK

thepersontheperson@icloud.com

Abstract. The suicide of the truck driver Jin De Qiang in 2021 following a penalty for Beidou navigation disconnection sparked widespread public discussion on social media. This study analyses a selection of Sina Weibo posts collected in a dataset organised by Fu et al. [1] regarding Jin's incidence to examine public attitudes and their emotional tendencies towards this societal event. Bar graphs were used to assess relationships between multiple aspects of language choice and public attitudes, while word clouds were constructed for word frequency. The results suggest that overall the public was critical of the rigid Beidou policies and was sympathetic towards Jin. Such voices on social media platforms demonstrates their increasingly pivotal role as a channel for public expression, reflecting their opinions and acting as a platform of social monitoring. In addition, this study uses Jin's incidence as a case to discuss working conditions of logistics workers in China overall. Their systemic societal vulnerability, including physical, psychological, and financial vulnerability was highlighted and analysed, while also referencing to recent changes that demonstrates or may lead to an improvement of their working conditions.

Keywords: truck drivers, public attitude, logistics working conditions, social media, societal vulnerability

1. Introduction

Truck drivers are a pivotal component of the agriculture, industrial production, and economics of China through their role in cargo delivery. Hence, their working conditions and relevant policies are becoming increasingly under awareness. According to the "Research Report on the Employment Status of Truck Drivers" [2], truck drivers are enjoying high employment stability. This occupation is also viewed as an appreciated experience for switching to other freight jobs, offering some degree of employment flexibility in the labour-intensive fields. However, this report also revealed some concerns regarding truck drivers' working conditions. For example, they often suffer from occupational illnesses and insufficient social insurance coverage. Long working hours, which is accompanied by high physical demands with inconsistent wages, worsens their working conditions and payoffs.

In 2017, the People's Republic of China introduced an updated version of "Regulations for the Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Road Traffic Safety". One of the new

regulations implemented is the mandatory installation and operation of the Beidou navigation system for all trucks. Apart from securing a platform for navigation guidance, this policy also aims to monitor the driving habits of drivers to ensure safety. Violations to keep the Beidou system active will result in penalties to the driver.

The suicide of the truck driver Jin De Qiang in 2021 was a highly publicised event across the news and on social media platforms, such as Sina Weibo. Jin De Qiang, who was born in 1971, has worked as a truck driver for more than 10 years. On April 5, 2021, he was penalised while passing through an overload checkpoint in the Fenrun district of Tangshan city. The traffic police officers found that his Beidou navigation system had dropped offline. This violation resulted in a penalty of 2,000 RMB and the truck withheld. Jin was devastated by this penalty, and he committed suicide later that day by drinking pesticide. Although he was discovered and sent to hospital, unfortunately the rescue failed, and he passed away on the same day.

In the final letter written by Jin before his suicide, he described his family's economic difficulty. A penalty of 2,000 RMB would significantly deepen their financial crisis. He also commented on his declining health status, suffering from chronic conditions including hypertension and diabetes. Most importantly, Jin De Qiang argues that as a truck driver, it is impractical for them to be constantly monitoring the status of the navigation system. He calls for the government's attention to consider the practical situation, and to give more attention to the working conditions of truck drivers.

In this information age, social media platforms are one of the most widespread and fastest ways of sharing information and expressing opinions. When a socially heated incidence occurs, these platforms can provide an immediate insight into the public's reactions, values, and expectations. The suicide of Jin De Qiang quickly spread across many social media platforms and in turn became a central topic for discussion.

Investigating Jin's incident is of particular importance, as it can reveal systemic issues regarding relevant policies, but also display the role of media platform in expressing the general public's emotions and opinions. Although there were personal factors involved in Jin's suicide, it still does reveal possible inadequacies in the Beidou policies. This may raise questions regarding policy implementations and to prompt relevant departments to make adjustments. In addition, considerations to reduce drivers' workload, as well as ameliorating their healthcare and social insurance may also be beneficial.

Furthermore, studying the case of Jin De Qiang allows an analysis of the social response towards public events, particularly through social media platforms. This yields interesting insights into the public's emotions, concerns, and societal values, which can contribute to formulating more suitable adjustments to match the common perception. This incident also serves as a gateway for examining other societal events, particularly regarding labour conditions and policies, to improve the overall life quality and happiness in China.

Fu et al. [1] conducted a study on Jin De Qiang's incidence named "Group Emotion Evolution in Online Social Networks", which involved the collection of Sina comments regarding this case from April 5th to April 12th of 2021. My paper extracted sections of the comments collected in Fu et al.'s database and conducted relevant analyses to provide further insight into the public's opinions and attitudes. Visual tools such as bar graphs and word cloud diagrams were used for better visualisation of the results.

2. Literature review

2.1. Occupational health in logistics

With a continually expanding agricultural and industrial output, logistics is becoming an important field in China. As a result, the occupational health of logistics workers is under increasing importance and awareness.

Zhang et al. [3] conducted research to survey occupational health overall in China, and some of the results are especially relevant to the situation of truck drivers.

Zhang et al. [3] discovered several common health concerns for labour intensive workers in their paper "The current status of occupational health in China". One of the most common occupational illnesses are the Musculoskeletal Diseases (MSDs). The most prevalent form of MSD is low back pain, which develops from extensive hours of poor or fixed postures during driving. In addition, psychological stress is another occupational health issue concerned. This typically arises from financial burden, tiredness, and road stress. Furthermore, the social insurance and health coverage for these workers are usually quite limited. Their wages are relatively low, leading to economic difficulties. This reduces or delays their plans for medical inspections and treatments, leading to worsened health conditions.

Migrant workers from rural or economically less developed areas are more at risk of these health and social issues. They are more likely to be hired without contracts and thus lack legal protection and are often less aware about their rights. Those who work in smaller, less recognised organisations may also face working issues more seriously, since these organisations are often ignored by health inspections and so may not adhere to labour rights as strictly.

According to Zhang et al. [3], China has already passed several laws aiming to improve the health situation of workers. In 2002, the "Code of Occupational Disease Prevention of the PRC" was published. This document identified the common occupational health concerns and imposed a health standard system, regulating the necessary physical, chemical, and atmospheric standards required in the workplace. Further law enhancements in recent years added more specific guidelines. So far, health inspections teams have been set up at local levels. Relevant research and surveys are also being conducted, aiming to issue both more safe and stable regulations for companies.

However, challenges still exist. It may be difficult to remove some factors of the working environment which pose health concerns. A typical example is the requirement for truck drivers to be continually paying full attention to road conditions under long journeys. This can be mitigated by decreasing working hours, but ultimately it is part of the nature of the job. In addition, funding for health inspections and health services may not be sufficient. With the mobility of the workforce, it would also be difficult to correctly track and estimate the health conditions of many truck drivers, leading to uneasiness in issuing effective next step movements.

2.2. Social media for solidarity among workers

In recent years, social media is becoming a powerful method for expressing public emotions and opinions in response to social events. This is well demonstrated through Jin De Qiang's suicide, which quickly went viral on many platforms and aroused widespread public attention and discussion. Liu & Wang [4] focused their research on the use of social media by truck drivers to construct a new type of solidarity that includes both virtual and practical aspects in their paper "From Disembedding to Digital Re-Embedding: Social Media Empowerment and Solidarity Practices of Chinese Truck Drivers".

Their research was conducted based on the usage of two popular social media platforms in China: WeChat and Douyin, by truck drivers and their associations. It was discovered that WeChat was mainly used for sharing job information, calling for help, discussing problems, while Douyin is more for sharing daily life, expressing emotions, protesting, and gaining public sympathy. This reflects a variation in the purposes of different social media platforms, where Douyin is more popular for sharing leisurely content to a wider public, whereas WeChat is more dominant for work and personal communications.

Liu and Wang [4] then explained that the organisational changes of truck drivers proceeded in three stages during the People's Republic of China (PRC). The first stage was the planned economy era from the 1950s to

1980s, where workers entered state enterprises and belonged to formal organisations which serves to protect their rights. The second stage was market reformation, from the 1980s to 2014, where there was a surge in the economy and thus an increased number of labourers entered the logistics field, which led to an oversupply of labour. Closing of many state enterprises during this period caused many trucker drivers to become isolated workers lacking labour protection. From 2014 onwards, the third stage, known as the digital era, is marked by a beginning of reorganisation of drivers online through social media. Increased connections via media platforms between allows increased unity among workers, making them more empowered.

However, although digital platforms play a role in developing stronger connections through virtual re-embedding, it is not without downsides. A key issue is the increased control the platforms exert on the truck drivers. Although the internet makes it easier to find relevant jobs, it also creates harsh competition between workers, weakening their bargaining power, forcing them to eventually accept jobs of lower wages and longer working hours. Digital exploitation can also take place through the platform pulling away profit in unfairly high proportions.

Furthermore, policies regarding digital platforms may not entirely be suitable. This is depicted by Jin De Qiang, who voiced out the impracticality of truck drivers constantly paying attention to the status of the Beidou navigation system. This phenomenon is not only observed in truck drivers, but also in other similar occupations, such as Didi taxi drivers and food delivery workers. Didi taxi drivers are faced with strict requirements, including tight time limits and forced road choices. Food delivery workers are regulated by a tight delivery time and ambiguous service quality. However, road conditions are not always predictable, and congestion may be unavoidable. The restaurant's food quality is also uncontrollable, but the delivery worker may often be blamed for this instead. In these situations, the workers have tried their best but may still be marked poorly and penalised by the digital platforms.

3. Methodology

The dataset used for analysis in this paper is adapted from the dataset included in the research paper "Group Emotion Evolution in Online Social Networks", by Fu et al. [1]. Fu et al. collected comments posted on Sina Weibo regarding Jin De Qiang's incident from April 5th to April 12th of 2021, which were the eight days directly following the Jin's suicide. It is worth noting that there are posts irrelevant to Jin De Qiang in Fu et al.'s dataset. There are also repeated posts of the same content by official news and media platforms, which indicates that this data collection has not been filtered and can effectively reflect the original comments of the public.

The original dataset by Fu et al. [1] consists of three columns: the exact date and time of each post; the content of the post; and an indication of whether the posts are positive, neutral, or negative. Sampling was conducted on the original dataset: 90 posts were chosen from each day, resulting in a total of 720 posts analysed over the 8-day period. Sampling was done by collecting the 1st to the 60th and the last 30 comments of each day was chosen. The comments are randomly distributed, so sampling in blocks, which is more convenient, will likely not introduce significant biases. The emotional tendency of positive/neutral/negative is not used in the subsequent analysis, and thus this variable was not considered in the sampling design.

The independent variables considered in my essay are: the length of the posts; the use of emojis and exclamation words, the tone of the language, and the type of sentence. The dependent variable to be investigated is the attitude of the posts towards Jin De Qiang's incident.

The variable "length of post" has 3 possible values: (1) short; (2) medium; and (3) long. A post shorter than a sentence or only conveys a single idea is labelled as "1". A post which is more than a sentence and conveys

several related ideas is labelled as "2". A post with 5 sentences or longer is labelled as "3".

The variable "use of emojis/exclamation words" has 4 possible values: (1) no use of emojis/exclamation words; (2) use of emojis, but only as an aid for sentences; (3) emojis as the main content of the post; (4) exclamation words or punctuation as the main content of the post. Exclamation words include characters which aid the expression of emotion, such as "嗯 (en)", "啊 (a)", "哇 (wa)", etc.

The variable "tone of language" has 2 possible values: (1) serious; (2) casual. This is determined by the choice of characters, the mood and tone of the language, and the meaning the writer wishes to convey.

The variable "type of sentence" has 5 possible values: (1) statement; (2) question; (3) metaphor; (4) report/article; (5) poetry. A metaphor label is given when the post conveys a hidden or inexplicit meaning. A report/article, in the context of this paper, generally refers to official news/media articles. A poetry label is given to quoting or self-creating classical style Chinese poetry. This often is also a metaphor, but the label given will still be 5.

The variable "attitude towards Jin De Qiang" has 9 possible values: (1) sympathetic towards Jin and his family; (2) compassionate to the difficulties of the lives of the people; (3) critical of relevant policies, the government, or the officers in the situation; (4) the need for reformation in relevant policies/departments – this differs from 3 by not only criticising, but also expressing specific ideas for change; (5) mocks the society – this differs from 3 by making fun of the society, and expressing negative wishes; (6) disapproval of Jin's actions, and agrees with the policies and solutions given; (7) believes Jin's choice of suicide is not wise, but he should take more drastic actions instead. Apart from the above, there is also (10) unclear, where are posts related to the incident but expresses no particular opinion or the opinion is unclear to me; and (11) irrelevant, for posts with irrelevant content. Table 1 gives examples of comments of each label for the "attitude towards driver" variable.

Sampled data is organised into tables and word clouds regarding the variables considered. Sentiment analysis [5] was performed under context to infer societal values and opinions.

Table 1. Example Sina Weibo comments corresponding to each label of the "attitude towards driver" variable with English translations

Attitude to driver	Example comments	Translation
Sympathetic to driver (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 唉，下面网友的评论很公平公正，这位大哥太不容易了[悲伤][悲伤][悲伤][悲伤] • 为这位司机默哀[蜡烛][蜡烛][蜡烛] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ai, the comments from the netizens below are very fair and just. It is not easy for this big brother (driver) [sad] [sad] [sad] [sad] • A moment of silence for this driver[candle][candle] [candle]
Compassionate to public (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 老百姓真的太苦了[泪] • 哀民生之多艰 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The common people are really suffering [tears] • Mourning for the hardships of people's lives
Critical to policies (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 只会欺负平民百姓[泪] 活着就已经很不容易了还罚那么多钱 • 我也想知道北斗(政策)谁发明的? 他掉线，为什么罚款司机!? 只要不是故意破坏的，不应该找系统提供商?? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They only bully the common people [tears] It's hard enough to live, and they still fined so much money • I want to know who invented Beidou (policy)? If the system went down, why should the driver be fined? If it wasn't an intentional sabotage, shouldn't the system provider be held responsible?

Table 1. Continued

Advocates for reformation (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [哼]绝对存在不合理性, 以罚代管不可取? 希望砖家及有关部门需采用人性化的管理方式而不是暴力等等列行为执法 • 唉, 可以让货车收费便宜些么? 多给他们一些便利, 这样疲劳驾驶应该会少一些, 超载应该也少些, 更多的钱可以多保养车子过好生活 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Hmph] Irrationality absolutely exists here. Is it not reasonable to replace management with punishment? I hope that "experts" and relevant departments will adopt a humane management method instead of violence for law enforcement. • Ai, can we make truck fares cheaper? Give them more convenience, so there will be less fatigue driving, less overloading, and the drivers will have more money to maintain their truck and live better lives.
Mockery (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 不掉线怎么(政府)罚款 • 执法部门真是温柔体贴. [doge][二哈][喵喵] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can they (<i>the government</i>) fine you if (the Beidou system) didn't disconnect • The law enforcement department is so gentle and considerate. [doge][doge][miaomiao] • Making illegality (<i>Jin's Beidou falling offline</i>) sound so charming, bah!
Disapproves driver (6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 把违法(北斗掉线)说得这么妩媚, 呸! • [费解]一个引导暂停接受进一步调查变成扣车了[摊手] 那这交警路上临检岂不是都算被扣车了? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Confused] This is just a temporary suspension for further investigation turning into a vehicle impoundment [spreading hands] Does that mean any traffic police inspection on the road also counts as a vehicle impoundment?"
Advocates for more drastic actions from driver (7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 可惜了, (金德强)死都不怕, 为啥不带走一个两个(官员)? 为民除害 • 自己(金德强)都不活了, 还不带走几个。不知道咋想的, 反正水不让我活, 我带走他全家。 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What a pity, if he (<i>Jin</i>) is not afraid of death, why don't he take one or two (<i>officers</i>) away? • He (<i>Jin</i>) already decided not to live, and yet he doesn't even take a few people with him. I don't know what he's thinking, but if the water won't let me live, I'll take his whole family with me.
Unclear attitude (10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 【#官方通报司机罚款后服农药身亡#: 已成立联合调查组 [话筒]】近日, 有媒体报道, 一名货车司机4月5日途经唐山丰润区超限检查站时, 因北斗定位掉线, 被处以扣车, 罚款2000元。随后该司机服农药自杀, 最终抢救无效去世。据@丰润发布消息, 事件发生后, 相关部门组成联合调查组, 开展全面调查, 结果及时上报政府。 • 太多细节不清楚, 所以暂时不讨论。 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [#Official report: Driver dies after taking pesticide after being fined#: A joint investigation team has been established [microphone]] Recently, media reported that a truck driver was fined 2,000 yuan and had his vehicle impounded due to a Beidou connection failure while passing through an overload inspection station in Fengrun District, Tangshan on April 5. The driver then committed suicide by taking pesticide and eventually died despite rescue efforts. According to @Fengrun, after the incident, relevant departments formed a joint investigation team to conduct a comprehensive investigation and promptly reported the results to the government. • Too many details are still unclear, so I won't discuss this incident for now.
Irrelevant comment (11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 宋慧乔姐姐新剧必看啊[smile] • 用新演员吧~ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Song Hue Qiao's new drama is a must-see[smile] • Let's use new actors~

4. Results

4.1. Bar graphs

From the bar graphs, several results can be inferred. First, from Figure 1a, we can observe that the largest proportion of media users posted a medium length (2) comment (53.8%), followed by short length (1) (33.6%) and then long length (3) (14.5%). This demonstrates this incident was noteworthy enough for a significant proportion of people to spend their time writing several sentences to fully articulate their point. It may also suggest that the public became aware of the situation shortly after it occurred, or they are willing to actively search for the details and post their views online. The long comments are mostly reports/articles, which are mainly from official news or public media sources. This indicates that although many Sina users are willing to share their point in full sentences, few actually take the time to write lengthy paragraphs, which conforms to the stereotype that social media platforms are for short, quick communication. This is also shown through Figure 1d, where most users posting statements (1) (70.4%) instead of questions (2) (20.7%), metaphors (3) (8.4%), or poetry (5) (5.1%).

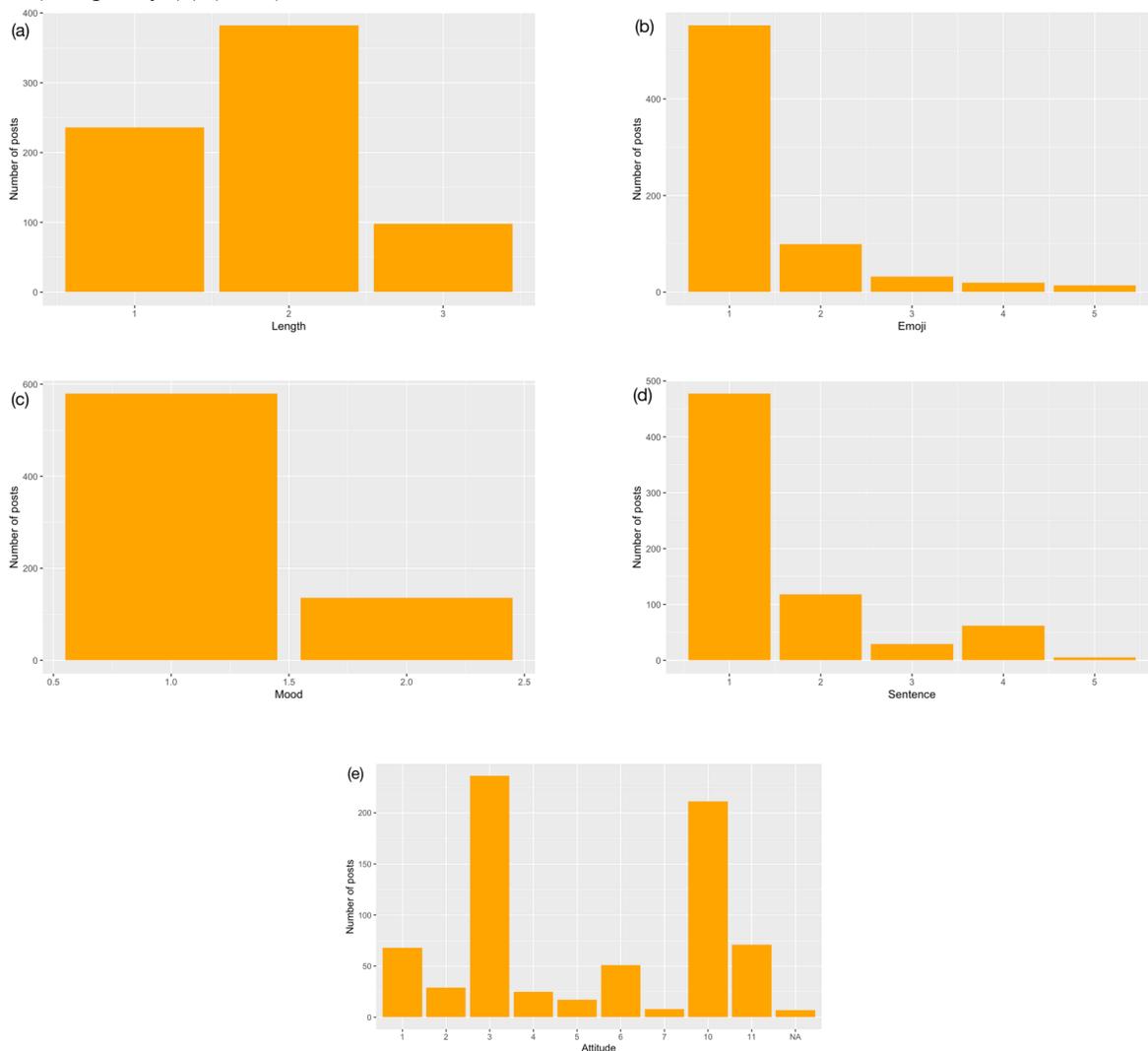


Figure 1. Number of Sina posts for each value under one independent variable: length (a), emoji (b), mood (c), sentence (d), attitude (e). The x-axis numbers represent the values as stated in the methodology section

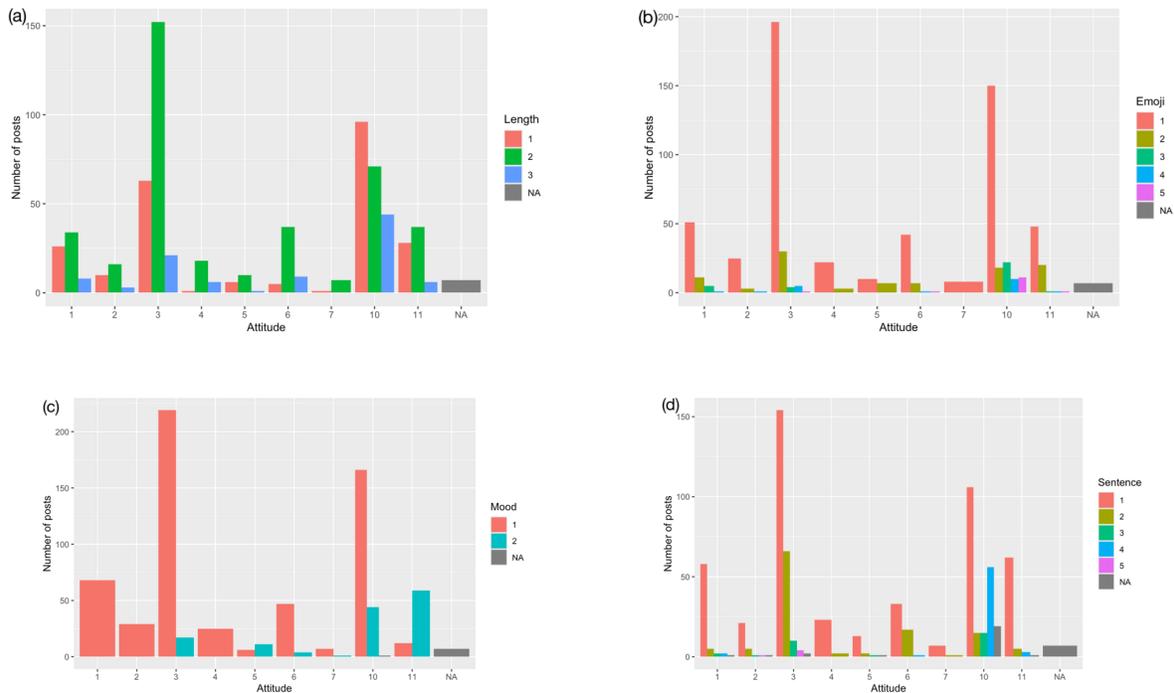


Figure 2. Number of posts under one independent variable with the dependent variable "attitude towards driver"

Figure 1b indicates that most of the comments did not use any emojis/exclamation words (1) (77.3%) as part of their posts, with few using some emojis as only a supplementary to their words (2) (14.7%), and very few using emojis/exclamation/punctuation as the main part of their comment (3) (5.3%). This demonstrates a clear tendency to use textual language, which is more effective at expressing complex ideas. Results from Figure 1c suggests that the majority of the comments are serious (1) (81.1%) in language style, demonstrating that people treated Jin De Qiang's suicide and its societal consequences seriously even on social media, which is generally considered to be an entertaining platform. Furthermore, it reflects the high morality and social responsibility of the public, demonstrating the role of social media as not only as a source of leisure but can also play vital roles in social monitoring.

In terms of the attitude towards the Jin De Qiang as shown in Figure 1 and 2, the largest number of people were critical towards relevant policies or officers (3). Compared to expressing sympathy towards Jin or the general population (1, 2), Sina users were more lenient towards criticising the situation, possibly suggesting the population thinks criticism is a more useful approach than giving soft words online. However, most of the criticism remains as criticism (3), and relatively few people gave specific ideas on exact changes (4). This is reasonable, as most people are not experts in relevant fields. However, this still demonstrates that social media is providing adequate channels for the public to self-monitor the society. Very few people expressed mockery (5) or disapproval (6) towards the incidence, indicating that most people are supportive of Jin, and are not completely pessimistic towards the society. In addition, a significant amount of people posted comments which had an unclear attitude or meaning. Some posts were irrelevant, especially towards the end of the 8-day period. This shows that as time goes on, the focus on this incidence has faded down, which is within expectations.



Figure 6. Cleaned-up word cloud diagram illustrating the most frequent words in posts categorized under 3 and 4 for "attitude towards driver"

Figure 6 is constructed from only the comments under the attitude categories 3 and 4, which comprises the posts where a critical attitude is displayed towards relevant policies or departments (3) and may give suggestions for change (4). It has also been cleaned up. From this diagram, we can see the highest frequency words are "司机 (driver)", "德强 (De Qiang)", "北斗 (Beidou)", "掉线 (dropped offline)", "货车 (truck)", "罚款 (penalty fare)", "问题 (problem)", and "政策 (policy)". Compared to categories 1 and 2, the high frequency words here put a higher emphasis on the specific problems and procedure during Jin De Qiang's incident instead of the sympathetic emotions. We can infer there were repeated discussions regarding the reasonability of the Beidou policies and the rationality of the resulting punishments which led to the tragic suicide. The comments focused on the possible "问题 (problems/questions)" regarding current "政策 (policies)" and possible changes, demonstrating the role of netizens in not only monitoring social incidences but also displays their responsibility and participation in the society to give positive suggestions.

5. Discussion

5.1. Vulnerability of drivers

In the paper "Vulnerable persons in society: an insider's perspective", Numans et al. [6] conducted in-depth interviews with 16 people who were classified as "vulnerable" in the Netherlands to explore the concept of "vulnerability" as a social identity. They investigated on the effect of being "vulnerable" on the daily lives and social roles of such individuals, reaching the conclusion that vulnerability is not a fixed condition but a dynamic interaction between personal conditions and societal responses.

Vulnerability as a term is difficult to define exactly. Numans et al. concluded several defining characteristics of vulnerability, including accumulation of problems or limitations, feelings of powerlessness and distrust, disrupted communication, limited or no access to resources, and low self-esteem. These traits well reflect the dilemma that truck drivers are often in. The fact that their occupation is commonly viewed as one of a lower societal status resulted in a neglect of their voices, leading to limited access to resources and a lack of opportunities for communication. Accordingly, truck drivers can appropriately be regarded as a vulnerable group. Thus, it would be reasonable to analyse their societal vulnerability using theories concluded by Numans et al.

Numans et al. [6] classified vulnerability into three types: mental (psychological), physical, and financial vulnerability. These three categories often do not exist separately from each other, but rather in combination. This is often the case for truck drivers. Many drivers have to endure prolonged working hours, which disrupts their sleep schedule. Their sleep quality is also disrupted by their sleeping conditions, where many nights they are forced to rest uncomfortably in their vehicle. The nature of their job requires sustained, unbroken attention while on the road, which puts a heavy burden on their mentality, leading to psychological vulnerability. Furthermore, the long journeys require drivers to hold a rigid posture, which stimulates the development of Musculoskeletal Diseases (MSDs) such as low back pain. Many also suffer from hypertension, diabetes, and other physical health challenges.

In addition, truck drivers, or logistics occupations in general, are usually viewed as low-class blue-collar jobs. This is reflected in their relatively low societal status, which may serve to introduce more pessimism into their mentality, worsening mental health. A blue-collar job is often linked with lower wages as well, which causes financial vulnerability. Financial crisis appears as a mental burden to support their family and provide better education to their children with their low income. Taking Jin De Qiang as an example, he suffers from unsatisfactory health, while also having to bear the psychological stress to support his family. Together, these factors demonstrate the fact that he, and other truck drivers like him, are vulnerable members in society.

Another dimension of vulnerability discussed by Numans et al. [6] is the feelings which may coexist with vulnerability. At the individual level, this includes pessimistic feelings such as fear, insecurity, anger, and frustration. In the case of truck drivers, their occupation does not require a high level of education, nor does it require specialised, long-term training. As a result, their labour is fairly replaceable, stemming feelings of job insecurity. Such an employment situation leads to frustration and anxiety, which may further worsen into anger and loss of hope.

In addition to the individual level, Numans et al.'s research suggested that vulnerable groups tend to have negative feelings at the societal level as well. The participants interviewed expressed feelings of inferiority, lack of self-determination, powerlessness, and being patronised. Such phenomenon is also reflected in the situation of truck drivers. As mentioned previously, logistics occupations tend not to have a respected societal status with a low income, stimulating a sense of inferiority which may lead to a hindrance in self-determination. As noted by Zhang et al. [3], logistics workers often suffer from insufficient medical coverage. Their weaker voice in society means that these rights may be difficult to gain, stemming a feeling of powerlessness. Drivers may also feel trapped between the economic necessity of their work and the constant risk of punishment. This is exemplified in the strict enforcement of the Beidou policy and penalties, which illustrates the patronisation that drivers experience.

One key concept that Numans et al.'s paper highlights is that ignoring the living realities of vulnerable groups may lead to policies that deepen exclusion rather than enabling empowerment. This finding suggests that certain adjustments may be required in relevant policies regarding truck drivers, such as moving beyond flat management policies but instead develop regulations that recognize the relevant practical challenges. In addition, measures such as strengthening healthcare access and social insurance would be another vital adjustment. Furthermore, media platforms can take a role in advocating the importance of logistics workers in the society, which can help diminish the societal prejudice against blue collar workers, thus reducing feelings of inferiority among such workers.

Finally, Numans et al. [6] concluded in their research that vulnerability should be seen as a relational condition shaped by societal structures and interactions, and not just an individual weakness. This conclusion also applies adequately to my analysis. Although truck drivers indeed demonstrate vulnerability in psychological, physical, financial, and educational aspects, their relative weakness is also a result of their

environment. However, according to Liu & Wang [4], truck drivers are gaining increasing solidarity as a group through social media to amplify their voices. With social media taking a role as platforms of social monitoring, it is possible to minimise the vulnerability of not only truck drivers but also other occupations, taking a step towards a more harmonious society.

5.2. Cases of truck driver rights protection

In Liu and Wang's paper "From Disembedding to Digital Re-Embedding: Social Media Empowerment and Solidarity Practices of Chinese Truck Drivers", it was discussed that in recent years truck drivers have gained increasing solidarity to protect their rights through virtual communication on social media. This significantly improved success in cases of rights protection and allowed the voices of truck drivers to be amplified to the public, which helps in raising awareness towards exploitation.

One such case of rights protection is an incident in Luohe city of Henan province in 2024. Since 2016, a group of drivers was hired at a service company in Luohe to engage in freight transport tasks. However, the company never enrolled them in any social insurances, and their wages were not paid from April 2024 onwards. The drivers themselves lack sufficient legal knowledge, so after multiple unsuccessful attempts at negotiation, they decided to seek help at the Luohe Municipal Bureau of Justice [7].

Lawyer Tian at the bureau guided these drivers to collect evidence such as wage transaction records, work schedules, vehicle operation files, and WeChat records. With substantial evidence supporting the drivers, the company's denials were quickly rendered indefensible in court, announcing the drivers to be successful. It was decided that the company must repay the missing wages, as well as a compensation of 235,000 yuan. The Luohe Legal Aid Centre also actively carried out follow-up visits, where staff members contacted each supported driver to confirm whether the compensation had been received, provided effective answers to subsequent questions, and reminded them to contact the aid centre for extra help if any more issues arose.

Another case of a successful rights defense is Mr. Zhang's incidence. In March 2025, Mr. Zhang accepted orders through a logistics platform to transport goods from Kunming to Xuanwei of Yunnan province. However, after completing 12 trips from March to August, he was owed 17,200 yuan in salary. The company insisted he should provide platform order records first, even though it was stated in the agreement that the payment should be given immediately. However, Mr. Zhang has lost all of his digital order records due to a phone malfunction, which became an excuse for the company to refuse paying Mr. Zhang with his rightful wages [8].

Feeling desperate, Mr. Zhang called the 12,328 service hotline for help, which forwarded his case to the Kunming Municipal Transportation Bureau. Staff members undertook investigations and found that the original logistics company had transferred some of its transport orders to another logistics company. Facing this more complex situation, the staff guided Mr. Zhang in sorting through documentation, while also repeatedly communicating with both logistics companies. In the end, they were successful at helping Mr. Zhang take his salary back.

From the cases above, it can be clearly seen that although truck drivers may still meet unfair treatments, there are now an increasing number of channels for them to seek help and defend their rights. The Chinese government is placing increasing attention on unfair exploitation towards blue collar workers. Relevant legal departments and offices have also become more responsible in providing effective services such as legal aid. This also reduces the opportunity of some companies which may take advantage of the workers' lack of legal knowledge. In addition, strengthening in societal support reduces the vulnerability of blue-collar workers, enabling them to speak up against injustice.

The successes in the cases above also demonstrated the importance of social media platforms, as discussed by Liu and Wang. Both the truck drivers in Luohe and Mr. Zhang discovered that they could seek help at the local municipal bureaus through information from media platforms. Chat histories stored on these platforms, such as work groups in WeChat, are often important evidence during rights defense. Furthermore, their cases of success became widespread through Weibo, Douyin, WeChat, and other platforms. Other truck drivers are now able to see and learn from their colleagues' experience, providing guidance for themselves. The nature of social media as platforms of rapid information exchange may also serve to intimidate certain companies, as their possible unjust actions can now be quickly spread to the public and to their other workers. Considering their image in society and in their own staff members, companies are more likely to adhere to proper treatment principles, reducing the amount of unjustness blue collar worker may experience.

6. Conclusion

The suicide of the truck driver Jin De Qiang in April 2021 not only exposed consequences of rigid policy enforcement but also drew attention to broader aspects such as the living standards of and societal views towards logistics workers in general. For this study, Sina Weibo comments collected by Fu et al. in their work "Group Emotion Evolution in Online Social Networks" were utilized to conduct an analysis, aiming to reveal the general public's emotions and opinions towards this incident through their social media posts.

Overall, the public was critical of the policies and was sympathetic towards Jin's situation. Such voices on social media demonstrates an increasingly pivotal role of social media in society, as not only platforms for entertainment, but also as a channel to reflect the public's reactions and opinions towards social events. This marks the emerging role of media platforms emerging in social monitoring, serving as an extra layer of public regulation of issued policies. In addition, it allows an early detection of possible social issues, giving researchers and authorities time to investigate and intervene. A possible crisis or concern identified earlier in its development is more easily tackled with. This may also stop the emergence of a more serious societal incidence resulting in loss of lives and properties.

By studying and revealing the conditions of truck drivers, we can better understand their vulnerable status in society and hence provide more targeted and effective help to reduce their physical, mental, and financial stresses. The discovery of prevalent occupational illness among logistics workers means that more focus should be placed into monitoring companies to provide sufficient medical coverage. Hospitals may also be advised to pay more attention to the health status of logistics patients, especially for the commonly detected occupational illnesses. To tackle with psychological stress, it may be plausible for community centres to employ psychologists which can provide mental support to these workers with little cost. Companies should also take more care in their workers' mental state, as well as manage their road journeys more rationally, avoiding long, overnight tasks with a short time limit. Furthermore, the government can issue financial support to drivers whose income cannot support their family. Conducting research into minimum wages as well as setting reasonable wage levels for logistics workers may be another helpful idea. Overall, although the exact actions to be undertaken may be still require further research and discussion, recent improvements in the working conditions and rights defense of truck drivers are signalling constructive steps towards a more harmonious society.

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