

Beyond Task Design: The Synergistic Influence of Job and Social Characteristics on Gig Workers, Job Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Due to the fast growth of gig work, there has appeared a unique type of workforce, which is distinguished by non-continuity in employment, algorithmic management, and intense customer interactions. As opposed to conventional work settings, job satisfaction among gig workers is influenced not only by core job features but also by social relationships formed in the process of platform work. Although gig work is gaining relevance, there is a shortage of empirical studies that combine job and social features. In order to fill this gap, this study develops and empirically verifies an integrated model. According to the model, job satisfaction is affected by job characteristics (autonomy, skill use, engagement and interest, and job stability) and social characteristics (social respectfulness, mutual trust, and platform support). The model was developed using the job design perspective and the perspective of social exchange. Following the recommendations of Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2011), reflective indicators were used to measure the constructs. To test the proposed model, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis was conducted using survey data collected from gig workers from various digital labor platforms in Visakhapatnam district, India. The findings reveal that both job attributes and social attributes have a strong impact on gig worker job satisfaction, as the proposed model accounts for a significant amount of variance in job satisfaction. This study contributes to the development of research on the gig economy by offering some valuable information for the designers of platforms as well as policymakers interested in promoting sustainable gig work through these attributes.

Keywords: Gig Workers, Gig Economy, Job Satisfaction, Job Characteristics, Social Characteristics, PLS-SEM, Social Exchange Theory.

Introduction

Gig workers refer to those individuals who carry out flexible and temporary jobs through digital platforms such as Uber, Swiggy, Zomato, Upwork, and Fiverr among others. Gig workers differ from regular employees in that they are normally regarded as independent contractors who do not qualify for employment benefits such as social security, paid vacation time, job security, and minimum wage. Gig workers refer to the contract laborers who perform flexible and short term gig economy jobs facilitated through digital platforms. Although the above arrangement is associated with flexibility, gig workers experience many problems including job insecurity, income instability, and lack of traditional benefits of employment such as health care insurance and retirement package (Ishak et al., 2025; Khan, 2025). Gig workers are 'independent contractors' who have intense algorithmic control and high commission rates that make their working conditions and their legal status ambiguous (Lata, 2023). Gig workers are digitally mediated, non-standard workers who do not have formal employment, carrying out short term task based jobs without guaranteed payment.

On the other hand, unlike regular employees who work within established organizational structures that have supervisors and networking colleagues, gig workers operate in digitally mediated highly fragmented environments where their work is monitored through algorithmic systems of management, measurement and consumer feedback rather than direct supervision. It is here that social attributes become important since access of gig workers to future employment opportunities and financial stability along with visibility on the platform often depends on consumer feedback provided by the platform itself. In the context of platform-mediated work environments such as those provided by Uber, Swiggy, Zomato, Upwork, and Fiverr, while employees are required to communicate continuously with customers, there are no established ways for them to voice their expectations or dispute unfair reviews and seek organizational help. Absence of any traditional managerial system results in lack of organizational support, making social respect, trust and platform support highly important attributes of their work environment.

Gig economy workers are likely to encounter problems such as rude customer behavior, unfair rating, delayed payment, danger, and lack of appropriate complaint resolution processes. Customer rating has great influence on algorithms for assigning tasks, and as a result, even one bad experience can have a disproportionate influence on income and future opportunities. This leads to stress and performance pressure and increases the importance of fair treatment, respectful interaction, and platform accountability.

Moreover, gig economy workers suffer from social isolation due to the individual nature of their work. Unlike traditional jobs, where colleagues and corporate culture ease the stressful situation, gig economy workers mainly depend on digital interaction tools and client interaction. In this context, social characteristics become important not marginal but key factor that affect psychological state, equity perception, and job satisfaction.

Therefore, studying job satisfaction of gig workers requires taking into account not only design characteristics of the job itself, but also socially embedded features that affect the relational characteristics of platform-based jobs. This study meets this requirement by creating an integrated model of job and social characteristics.

Literature Review

H1: Job characteristics have a significant positive effect on job satisfaction among gig workers.

- **Effect of Job Characteristics on Job Satisfaction:**

The Hackman and Oldham (1976) Job characteristics model identified that job characteristics will have an influence on job satisfaction. This model has been widely validated in traditional organizational contexts. However, the applicability of the JCM to gig work remains underexplored due to the non-standard, algorithmically mediated, and insecure nature of gig employment. This study extends the logic of the Job Characteristics Model to the gig economy by examining how selected job characteristics influence job satisfaction among gig workers.

Numerous other studies also have examined the connection between various work attributes and job happiness. Work attributes have a big impact on job satisfaction, and when organizational commitment acts as a mediator, this relationship gets stronger (Christian et al. (2011); Saks (2006). Job aspects, like autonomy, feedback, task identity, skill variation, and task significance, improve intrinsic motivation by making work more interesting and meaningful.

Judge et al. (2017), identified that a variety of elements, including job title, work arrangements, occupational identity, interpersonal interactions, and institutional regulations, influence job satisfaction. Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002) Job happiness is positively impacted by opportunities for professional advancement, fair compensation, training availability, managerial assistance, and a favorable corporate culture. Happiness among employees was increased due to the support and fair treatment from organizations that is explained by the Social Exchange Theory. Consequently, the Job characteristics have been proven to influence Job satisfaction through multiple studies.

- **Impact of Autonomy on Job Satisfaction**

The workers that have more autonomy are happier and more productive. This might be because autonomy allows people to plan their work the way they want and need (Delic, Djedovic, and Mekic, 2021). The autonomy positively influences wellbeing and helps people to cope with the stress at work (Karasek, 1998). Job autonomy is important for increasing the job satisfaction (Cho & Jung (2023); Oldham & Hackman (2010)). The workers that feel that they have more autonomy at work are much

happier in their jobs. Increasing the autonomy of workers is extremely important for increasing their motivation and work satisfaction.

The increased perception of the job autonomy has direct and indirect positive impacts on the job satisfaction of crowd workers, as well as the mediation role of self-efficacy and meaningfulness of work (Cho and Jung, 2023). When crowd workers experience greater control over task selection and execution, they develop stronger beliefs in their own capabilities and perceive their work as more meaningful, which in turn leads to higher job satisfaction and sustained engagement with platform work.

- **Effect of Employee Engagement and Interest on Job Satisfaction**

Highly engaged employees exhibit positive attitudes, behaviours, and intentions, including stronger commitment, higher productivity, improved retention, and better organisational performance (Ologbo, C. A., & Sofian, 2012). Engaged employees invest physical, cognitive, and emotional resources into their work, enabling both in-role and extra-role performance (Ariani, 2013). Engagement fosters proactive behaviours such as helping, voice and teamwork while reducing deviant behaviours. Employee engagement can enhance discretionary effort and job satisfaction leading to organizational effectiveness. Syaiful Arifin (2024) states that engaged employees experience greater recognition, social support, meaningful work and development opportunities, leading to higher satisfaction and intrinsic motivation.

- **Effect of Skill Utilization on Job Satisfaction**

Gordon E. O'Brien (2007) in his work "Skill-utilization, skill-variety and the job characteristics model" identified that skill utilization is one of the important job characteristics missing in Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model and found that skill-utilization accounted for as much unique variance in job satisfaction as did the additive or multiplicative combinations of job attributes denoted by the job characteristics theory.

Kaori Fujishiro, Catherine A. Heaney (2017) examined skill utilization, defined as employees' opportunity to do their best at work, as an important work-related resource influencing employee well-being and health outcomes. Drawing on Self-Determination Theory, the authors proposed that higher skill utilization satisfies fundamental psychological needs, thereby promoting healthier behaviors and improved physical health.

- **Effect of Job Security on Job Satisfaction**

A key factor in determining job happiness is job security, which is frequently assessed using the perceived danger of losing one's employment in the near future. The relationship between job security and job satisfaction depends on both the likelihood that an employee would leave their job and the likelihood that they will find another. Depending on whether perceived job loss happens (or not) while job openings are plentiful or scarce, this has varying effects on worker job satisfaction. (Artz and Kaya, 2014).

Employee Wellbeing and Job Satisfaction were Directly Correlated with Job Security.

The workers' job security was what affected their job happiness and wellbeing, not the security of their employment. (O. Fatima et al, 2012). Job insecurity has a significant negative impact on employee satisfaction and an indirect effect on perceived organizational performance (W. Reisel et al, 2007). Organizational justice mediates the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction, reducing negative effects. The greatest effect is in the case of interpersonal and informational justice. These two factors of organizational justice relate to interpersonal relationships and communication between management and employees, as well as employees with each other, i.e. availability, timeliness, completeness, and transparency in the placement of information within the organization (Reisel et al. (2007)).

H2: Social characteristics have a significant positive effect on job satisfaction among gig workers.

- **Effect of Social Characteristics**

Lin, PMC, Au, WCW, Baum, T & Xia, and SJ 2025, in their article "Effects of social job characteristics on gig workers' well-being: The mediating role of off-the-job embeddedness" investigated how social job characteristics impact the well-being and social connections of food delivery workers in the gig economy and identified that Five social job characteristics: social respectfulness, mutual trust, interdependence, platform support, and recognition/feedback. Off-the-job embeddedness mediates the effects of these characteristics on worker well-being. Highlights the gig economy's social interactions, contrasting with traditional isolated work settings. Offers practical recommendations for gig platforms to

enhance trust, develop mutual rating systems, recognize workers' motivations, and foster community ties.

Drawing on the expanded Job Characteristics Model proposed by Morgeson and Humphrey (2006), job characteristics are broadly classified into motivational, social, and contextual dimensions, all of which have been identified as important antecedents of workers' well-being (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Ariza-Montes et al., 2019). Empirical evidence suggests that motivational (e.g., skill discretion and decision authority), social (e.g., supervisor support, colleague support, and personnel resources), and contextual job characteristics (e.g., work agreements) positively influence workers' well-being (Pisanti et al., 2011). However, compared to motivational and contextual characteristics, findings on the effects of social job characteristics have been inconsistent, with some studies reporting insignificant relationships (Van Veldhoven et al., 2005). Subsequent research has explained these inconsistencies by highlighting occupational differences. For instance, Ariza-Montes et al. (2018) demonstrated that social job characteristics, particularly supervisor support, significantly predict well-being only among occupational groups facing poorer working conditions, such as front line hospitality workers. Gig workers exhibit comparable employment conditions, including low entry barriers, limited job security, and minimal professional qualification requirements (De Beer et al., 2013; De Stefano, V. 2016), suggesting that social job characteristics may play a more prominent role in shaping their well-being.

Moreover, unlike traditional employment contexts where organizational structures strongly influence well-being, gig workers' well-being is largely derived from social interactions within their work environment (Watson et al., 2021). Positive interactions with clients, agencies, and peers such as constructive feedback and cooperative relationships have been shown to enhance job satisfaction and emotional fulfillment among gig workers (Wood et al., 2019b). Collectively, these studies provide strong theoretical and empirical support for examining social job characteristics as a key predictor of workers' well-being in the gig economy.

• **Research Gap**

Existing studies on gig workers have primarily focused on flexibility, autonomy, income volatility, algorithmic management, and worker well-being. While previous research has examined individual job characteristics such as autonomy, skill utilization, and job security, relatively limited attention has been devoted to understanding the combined influence of occupational and social characteristics on gig workers' job satisfaction. Furthermore, recent studies emphasize the growing importance of social interactions, platform support, mutual trust, and social respectfulness in digitally mediated work environments. Yet, there is very little empirical research that integrates these social dimensions with classic job characteristics in job design theories, especially within the Indian gig economy environment.

Previous literature has focused mostly on particular kinds of platforms such as ride-hailing or food delivery platforms, thus failing to draw general conclusions on the job satisfaction of gig workers in different gig economy environments. Hence, this study aims at filling these gaps through developing and testing empirically an integrated model of both job characteristics and social characteristics.

Methodology

• **Data Collection**

While reviewing previous research few researchers have examined gig work in the context of particular platforms, such as mobility platforms like Uber or Ola, food delivery platforms like Swiggy or Zomato, or other platform specific settings, and few collected data from workers of multiple platforms. As per previous research digital gig platforms differ significantly in their managerial practices, work organization, and levels of employment insecurity. In order to capture more heterogeneity in work circumstances and employment experiences, a different stream of study takes a more comprehensive approach we considered examining gig workers across several platforms. So the current study uses a platform-agnostic research design to investigate how social and occupational variables interact to affect gig workers' job satisfaction, improving the findings' generalizability throughout the gig economy.

A systematic questionnaire was used to gather data from gig workers in the Visakhapatnam district who were connected to many digital platforms. After being screened for completeness and response quality, 308 of the 320 questionnaires that were gathered were found to be valid, resulting in an effective response rate of 96.25%. Gig workers expressed moderate to high perceptions of job characteristics, social characteristics, and job satisfaction, suggesting sufficient variability for structural model estimation.

Data Analysis

The data analysis involved a methodical review of global model fit and evaluation of measurement and structural models. Partial Least Square Structure Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) is employed as it allows the simultaneous estimate of the measurement (outer) and structural (inner) models and is especially appropriate for predictive research models involving latent constructs. Additionally, PLS-SEM is suitable for assessing complex path models with small to medium sample sizes and for investigating the causal links between variables.

The analysis was done with Smart PLS 3.2.9. The model was initially evaluated to determine construct validity and reliability, and then the structural model was evaluated to investigate the potential connections between gig workers' job satisfaction, social features, and job characteristics.

• Conceptual Model

The proposed model examines job satisfaction among gig workers by incorporating both job characteristics and social characteristics.

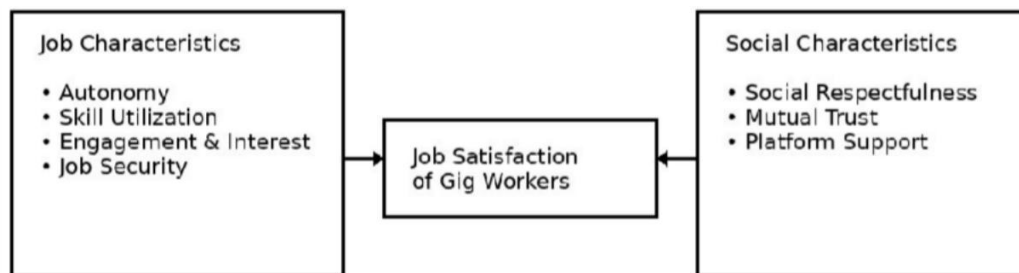


Figure 1: Conceptual Model for Job Satisfaction of Gig Workers

• Assessment of Measurement Model

All the indicators were measured using five point Likert scale anchored from 1= Strongly Agree to 5=Strongly Disagree. The Job Characteristics Model (JCM) proposed by Hackman and Oldham (1976, 1980) posits that core job dimensions influence critical psychological states, which in turn lead to positive work outcomes such as job satisfaction. Drawing on the Job Characteristics Model, this study conceptualizes job characteristics as a latent construct reflected through autonomy, skill utilization, engagement and interest, and job security. These dimensions capture the motivational and security-related aspects of gig work that are most relevant to gig workers' job satisfaction. Based on prior research on social job characteristics in the gig economy by Lin, PMC, Au, WCW, Baum, T & Xia, SJ 2025, 'Effects of social job characteristics on gig workers' well-20being: the mediating role of off-the-job embeddedness', this study conceptualizes social characteristics as a latent construct reflected through social respectfulness, mutual trust, and platform support. These indicators represent the quality of social interactions between gig workers, customers, and platform entities. Both job characteristics and social characteristics were modeled as reflective constructs and examined as direct predictors of gig workers' job satisfaction.

• Step: 01: Convergent Validity & Discriminant Validity for First Order Constructs

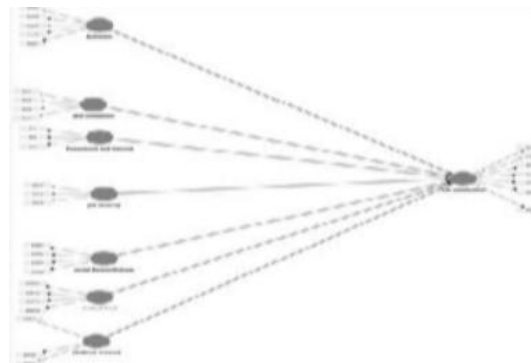


Figure 2: Outer Model

All latent constructs in the model were specified as reflective. Job characteristics were operationalized through four first-order constructs: autonomy, skill utilization, engagement and interest, and job security. Social characteristics were operationalized through three first-order constructs: social respectfulness, mutual trust, and platform support. Job satisfaction was modeled as a reflective endogenous construct measured using multiple indicators adapted from prior validated scales.

Table 1: Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct reliability and validity	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Autonomy	0.779	0.776	0.841	0.517
Engagement and interest	0.768	0.778	0.866	0.684
Job satisfaction	0.862	0.885	0.895	0.553
job security	0.763	0.774	0.864	0.680
mutual trust	0.796	0.799	0.869	0.627
platform support	0.751	0.809	0.848	0.651
skill utilization	0.880	0.905	0.917	0.734
social Respectfulness	0.788	0.817	0.860	0.607

Reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). As shown in Table 1, Cronbach's alpha values were in the range of 0.751-0.880 whereas Composite Reliability values were in the range of 0.848-0.917, surpassing the threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019). Of particular note are constructs that showed exceptionally high reliability levels such as skill utilization, job satisfaction, and mutual trust because of the good internal consistency between measurement items of these variables. The results prove that the measurement scales used in the study are reliable.

The construct validity was tested using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). According to the data presented in Table 1, all constructs reached AVE values higher than the required minimum value of 0.50, being in the range of 0.517-0.754 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Higher AVE values for constructs such as skill utilization, platform support, and mutual trust show that the constructs are measured very accurately by its indicators. Consequently, the convergent validity is established.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity: HTMT Matrix

Discriminant validity								
Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) - Matrix	Autonomy	Engagement and interest	Job satisfaction	job security	mutual trust	platform support	skill utilization	social Respectfulness
Autonomy								
Engagement and interest	0.535							
Job satisfaction	0.501	0.577						
job security	0.355	0.513	0.697					
mutual trust	0.425	0.551	0.889	0.583				
platform support	0.381	0.675	0.548	0.798	0.681			
skill utilization	0.350	0.854	0.413	0.243	0.670	0.905		
social Respectfulness	0.421	0.606	0.708	0.769	0.890	0.904	0.532	

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT). As shown in Table 2, all HTMT values were below the conservative threshold of 0.85, indicating that the constructs are empirically distinct and confirming discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). The relatively lower HTMT values among conceptually related constructs such as autonomy and engagement, or mutual trust and platform support further indicate that while the constructs are theoretically related, they remain statistically distinguishable.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity: Fornell–Larcker Criterion

Fornell-Larcker criterion	Autonomy	Engagement and interest	Job satisfaction	job security	mutual trust	platform support	skill utilization	social Respectfulness
Autonomy	0.719							
Engagement and interest	0.515	0.827						
Job satisfaction	0.443	0.475	0.744					
job security	0.305	0.386	0.577	0.825				
mutual trust	0.371	0.446	0.744	0.449	0.792			
platform support	0.305	0.470	0.490	0.559	0.515	0.807		
skill utilization	0.479	0.735	0.376	0.200	0.561	0.278	0.857	
social Respectfulness	0.345	0.487	0.604	0.602	0.560	0.645	0.445	0.779

Discriminant validity was further supported using the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Table No: 03) as the square root of AVE for each construct exceeded its correlations with other constructs. This provides additional evidence that each construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with other constructs in the model. The consistency between HTMT and Fornell-Larcker results strengthens confidence in the discriminant validity of the measurement model.

Taken together, the results demonstrate that the measurement model exhibits strong psychometric properties. All constructs satisfy the criteria for internal consistency reliability, convergent

validity, and discriminant validity. The reflective measurement specification is therefore appropriate, and the validated measurement model provides a solid foundation for evaluating the structural relationships among job characteristics, social characteristics, and job satisfaction among gig workers.

• **Step: 02: Assessment of Structural Model**

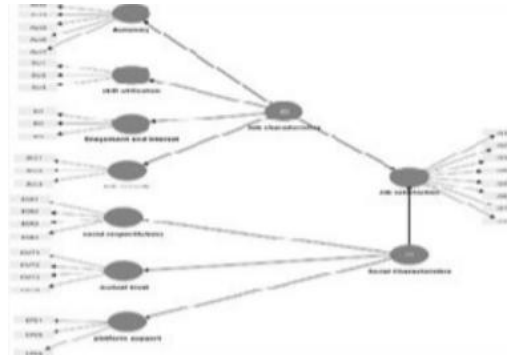


Figure 3: Structural Model

In the PLS-SEM Algorithm we used the following settings: a path weighting scheme, a maximum iteration of 3000, and a stop criterion of 10^{-7} . Path weighting scheme provides the highest R^2 value for endogenous latent variables and is generally applicable for all kinds of PLS path model specifications and estimations (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015).

	Path coefficients
Job characteristics -> Autonomy	0.700
Job characteristics -> Engagement and interest	0.867
Job characteristics -> Job satisfaction	0.339
Job characteristics -> Job security	0.640
Job characteristics -> skill utilization	0.715
Social Characteristics -> Job satisfaction	0.492
Social Characteristics -> mutual trust	0.839
Social Characteristics -> platform support	0.824
Social Characteristics -> social respectfulness	0.869

Table 4: Path Coefficients

The estimated path coefficients indicate strong and meaningful relationships among the latent constructs, supporting the theoretical structure of the model.

Job Characteristics → Lower Order Constructs: Job characteristics show strong positive effects on all its associated dimensions

- Autonomy ($\beta = 0.700$)
- Engagement and Interest ($\beta = 0.867$)
- Job Security ($\beta = 0.640$)
- Skill Utilization ($\beta = 0.715$)

Among these, engagement and interest exhibits the strongest relationship with job characteristics, suggesting that the nature of gig work significantly influences workers' intrinsic involvement and motivation. The substantial effects on autonomy and skill utilization further confirm the importance of task discretion and competency usage in shaping gig workers' job perceptions.

Social Characteristics → Lower Order Constructs: Social characteristics also demonstrate strong explanatory power across all its dimensions

- Mutual Trust ($\beta = 0.839$)
- Platform Support ($\beta = 0.824$)
- Social Respectfulness ($\beta = 0.869$)

The strongest association is observed with social respectfulness, indicating that perceived dignity, fairness, and respectful treatment within platform-mediated work environments are central elements of social characteristics in the gig economy.

Direct Effects on Job Satisfaction

Both higher-order constructs significantly influence job satisfaction:

- Job Characteristics → Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.339$)
- Social Characteristics → Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.492$)

It can be observed from the above results that social characteristics have a greater impact on job satisfaction than job characteristics. This shows how important it is to consider social and relational factors like trust, platform support, and respect when determining job satisfaction levels for gig workers.

The PLS-SEM algorithm results have shown that the developed model is properly specified and is theoretically sound with significant path coefficients. The high loadings of the lower level constructs provide evidence of the validity of higher level constructs, while the direct links to job satisfaction illustrate the combined but distinct impact of job-related and social factors.

The above findings lay a firm base for bootstrapping analysis of the estimated relationships.

• Step: 03: Bootstrapping

The parameters utilized in the Bootstrapping technique were the following: 5000 subsamples, Complete bootstrapping results, Bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrap, Two tailed test type, and Significance level of 0.05. In line with the recommendations provided by Ringle, Wende, & Becker (2015), we use "Bias-Corrected and Accelerated (BCa) Bootstrap" as the most stable approach which does not require a lot of computing time and the use of numerous bootstrap subsamples (for example, 5,000).

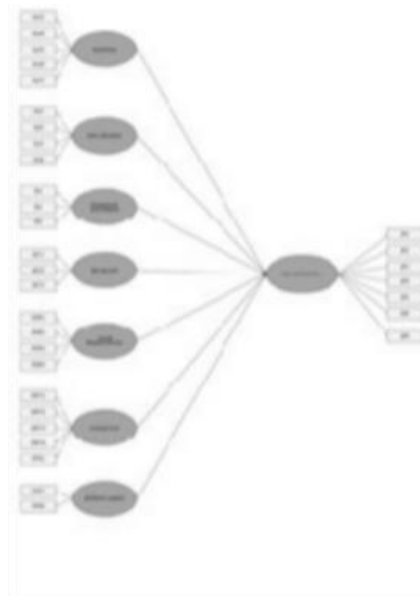


Figure 4: Model Stability

Figure 04, depicts the bootstrapped structural model with the path linkages between the constructs of Job Characteristics, Social Characteristics, and Job Satisfaction. The bootstrapping output suggests that the estimated path coefficient values for the model are consistent with each other in various resampling procedures, thus validating the robustness of the suggested model. Since there are consistent path directions and significant path relationships (using the t-value, p-value, and BCa confidence intervals not crossing the zero point), the predictive significance of job and social characteristics for job satisfaction is justified.

In general, bootstrapping procedure validates the reliability, statistical significance, and absence of sampling error in the structural paths of the model.

Implications

The major contribution of this study lies in the fact that the researchers have made a theoretical breakthrough by modifying the Job Characteristics Model for the gig economy and incorporating it with the Social Exchange Theory to understand the concept of job satisfaction in digital environments. Although most previous studies concentrated on the elements of flexibility and autonomy of gig work, it was found out that the social aspects such as respect, trust, and support provided by the platform have even more influence on job satisfaction. This study enriches the existing theoretical understanding of job satisfaction by confirming empirically the higher-order construct model of PLS-SEM and proving that the job satisfaction of gig workers is influenced by task-related as well as socially determined factors.

As seen from the managerial perspective, the findings indicate the importance of the need for gig platforms to move beyond transactional and algorithmic approaches to management in favor of more relational and worker-centered ones. Seeing as how the social characteristics have a larger influence on job satisfaction, platforms should focus on establishing rating systems, fair complaint handling, and proper means of communication that will build up trust and social respect between both parties. Providing platform support through timely help, safety, clear directions of what needs to be done, and improving their skills can make a significant improvement in how workers see themselves and their engagement in the platform. At the same time, providing workers with independence, ability to use their skills, and opportunities to develop can improve their motivation and productivity.

On the level of policy, the research demonstrates the need to think about gig workers as social beings rather than independent contractors working alone. The authorities should consider policies which will increase algorithmic transparency, set minimal standards of treatment, allow easy access to complaints and include elements of social protection such as insurance and income security protection. In light of the fact that customer reviews and platform structures affect the workers directly, protection is essential not to let exploitation and unfairness happen. It is possible to make decision-making in regulatory frameworks more dignified and just by incorporating those aspects into the gig economy structure.

Conclusion

This research provides a thorough understanding of job satisfaction among gig workers by integrating job features and social features into an analytical framework. Building upon traditional task-related evaluations, the study proves that the satisfaction of gig workers depends not only on such features as autonomy, engagement, skills utilization, and job stability but also on such social aspects as respect, trust, and support from platforms.

The findings suggest that social features play a more significant role in shaping gig workers' job satisfaction than job features, which points out to the inherently social nature of platform-based work. When one's performance is evaluated by algorithms and customer ratings affect one's ability to earn money in the context of digitalized environment, equal treatment, trust, and support become very important psychological resources.

Using empirical validation of the proposed integrated model by means of PLS-SEM, the research demonstrates the importance of job design perspective and social exchange perspective for atypical employment contexts. It proves that gig workers are not just self-employed agents carrying out independent tasks but socially embedded individuals whose well-being is greatly determined by their social interactions.

On the whole, the paper supports the transition from the one-sided view on gig work to an alternative view which includes both the element of flexibility and the element of equality. The creation of platforms which would provide a sense of dignity and trust, as well as some degree of flexibility and autonomy for the workers, is important for improving the well-being of workers and sustainable development of the gig economy.

• Practical Contributions

Implications of this study's results can be viewed from various perspectives, including those of relevance for the gig platforms themselves as well as for policymakers. First of all, the increased importance of social factors implies that gig platforms need to go beyond transaction-based approaches to management.

Platforms have to promote mutual trust and social respect through the use of clear and transparent algorithms, fair rating systems, mechanisms of dispute resolution, and respectful communication between platforms, clients, and workers. Secondly, the significance of the organizational

support factor implies that, despite non-standardized relations, the perception of organizational support is of vital importance. It can be achieved via providing help, task instructions, feedback, protection, and learning opportunities.

Third, the positive influence of the job characteristic features like autonomy, skill usage, and engagement shows that while retaining flexibility, platforms should allow gig workers to utilize and enhance their skills. The variety of tasks, work allocation based on choices and up-skilling opportunities may increase intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction. Regarding policy implications, the findings highlight the necessity of treating the gig workers as socially embedded economic agents, not as isolated independent contractors. Policymakers can employ the obtained insights to develop social policies and regulatory approaches that would facilitate the establishment of decent working conditions, minimum job security standards, and platform accountability. Overall, the study gives recommendations on how to create more human-centered gig workplaces.

• Study Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite the contributions of the study, there are some limitations in the current research that may open doors for future research in this area. For instance, the research used a cross-sectional research design which is unable to infer causality. In future, longitudinal research design may be used to study how job characteristics and social relationships affect job satisfaction among gig workers as the workers gain experience or move to other platforms. Data used in the study were obtained from gig workers from one geographic area. Although this platform agnostic nature increases generalization ability, future researchers may use the same model in other regions, countries, or different cultural settings to find out any differences if they exist. In this research, job satisfaction is the only outcome studied. Future research can generalize the model to include other outcomes such as wellbeing, work engagement, turnover intentions, organizational commitment or mental health of gig workers. In addition to this, even though this research focuses on the direct impact of the variables, in the future research, researchers may focus on exploring mediating and moderating mechanisms such as fairness perception, algorithm transparency, income volatility and off-the-job embeddedness etc. Finally, qualitative or mixed methods may help future.

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Ethics Statement

This study did not involve human or animal subjects and, therefore, did not require ethical approval.

Statement of Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest related to this study.

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