

Shaping the gig economy: insights into management, technology, and workforce dynamics

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Abstract

The gig economy is revolutionizing modern labor markets, redefining employment structures and workforce dynamics. This study offers a bibliometric analysis of gig economy research, drawing from 84 Scopus-indexed articles (2017–2024) to uncover key themes such as worker vulnerability, regulatory frameworks, human resource management, and the impact of digital platforms. Keyword co-occurrence and thematic mapping reveal pivotal research clusters, including algorithmic management, policy systems, worker safety, and the influence of technological disruptions like artificial intelligence. Findings highlight the gig economy's multidisciplinary nature, intersecting fields like labour economics, organizational studies, and digital innovation. Global collaboration (39.29% international co-authorship) underscores the interconnectedness of research, yet gaps persist in exploring worker well-being, regulatory efficacy, and sustainable practices. The analysis emphasizes the urgency for robust policies to safeguard labour rights, promote equitable platform management, and enhance workforce well-being. Future research should address underexplored areas such as mental health, job sustainability, and environmental dimensions of gig work. By aligning interdisciplinary academic inquiry with real-world challenges, this study provides actionable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers. This work contributes to understanding the complexities of gig economy management and shaping equitable and sustainable practices in the evolving world of work.

Keywords: Gig Economy; Platform Economy; Algorithmic Management; Worker Rights; Automation and Employment; Labor Market Disruption; TCCM Framework.

1. Introduction

The shift towards digitalization has transformed the way services and products are delivered, with many now available online or through hybrid methods, spanning areas such as news, banking, healthcare, education, and commerce (Fuerst et al., 2023). Technological advancements, particularly in information and communication technology (ICT) and the internet, have given rise to new economic models, including the "access economy," "platform economy," "sharing economy," and the rapidly expanding "gig economy" (Scuotto et al., 2021). Among these emerging trends, the gig economy has seen remarkable growth, although its definition remains somewhat ambiguous and continues to evolve. The term "gig economy" gained traction within the last decade, driven by the prominence of platform-based companies like Airbnb, Uber, Lyft, TaskRabbit, and Upwork, which have become central to its expansion (Vallas & Schor, 2020). While some argue that gig work is not a novel concept, tracing its roots back to jazz musicians in the early 20th century (Friedman, 2014), technology has significantly reshaped its scope and scale, creating a more structured and accessible framework for gig-based employment.

Previously, the gig economy was primarily associated with short-term contracts or freelance roles in sectors like transportation or food delivery (Healy et al., 2017). However, its scope has broadened to encompass various professions facilitated through digital platforms or remote work. At its core, the gig economy can be defined as a digital marketplace where employers and workers connect via online platforms to complete specific tasks (Bunders et al., 2022). This paper delves into the evolving dynamics of the gig economy, exploring its implications, growth trajectory, and broader influence on the global workforce. The gig economy's rapid growth is driven by cultural shifts toward flexible and independent work preferences, coupled with technological progress. Education systems have also evolved to align with these trends, fostering a generation that embraces gig work. Currently, 53% of gig workers, primarily aged 18–34, depend on gig work as their main source of income. Many individuals prefer working from home, a trend reinforced by increasing unemployment rates, pushing more people into gig-based employment.

Despite its benefits, gig work has brought new challenges to labor markets. The increasing prevalence of short-term contracts and independent work arrangements raises tax system complexities, including potential issues of tax avoidance or differential tax burdens (Adam et al., 2017; Oyer, 2020). The gig economy evolution has not only impacted labor and employment patterns but also brought accounting and financial management complexities. Gig workers tend to have difficulties with tax compliance, especially considering the nature of having multiple income sources and no conventional employer-offered documentation like W-2 forms. Several employees might not be

aware of their self-employment tax requirements, estimated tax payments, and deductible expenses, and hence the non-compliance risks (Zhang, 2023). Governments across the globe are slowly aligning laws so that gig earnings are reported and taxed properly, with certain platforms having to provide yearly earnings overviews to employees and taxing authorities.

Financial reporting requirements for gig platforms also requires serious consideration. Since platforms are intermediaries between workers and clients, they are under scrutiny regarding how they recognize revenue, report liabilities, and disclose contingent obligations (Puschmann & Alt, 2016). Accurate revenue recognition procedures, especially about fees and commissions, become essential to ensure transparency and compliance with accounting standards like IFRS 15 or ASC 606, which focus on the identification of performance obligations and transaction prices.

Furthermore, platform accountability is also a principal issue of concern. Gig platforms are increasingly expected to be accountable not only for enabling transactions but also for guaranteeing financial transparency for workers as well as government regulators. Taxes at the source are now demanded by some places, and by others, complete disclosures on the payments, deductions, and benefit eligibility of the workers (De Groen et al., 2021). Securing sound accounting practices reinforces platform legitimacy, raises worker trust, and serves overall policy objectives to advance fair, sustainable gig work.

Research indicates that while gig employment introduces wage flexibility and expands employment opportunities, it also shifts economic risks onto workers, particularly in low- and middle-income countries like Nigeria, Malaysia, and the Philippines, which have seen positive economic outcomes from gig work (Wood et al., 2019; Friedman, 2014). While gig work provides flexibility, autonomy, and opportunities to enhance skillsets, it comes with drawbacks, including low pay, income instability, social isolation, and a lack of benefits such as social insurance or retirement pensions (Hardy & McCrystal, 2022; Scuotto et al., 2021). The expansion of gig work has outpaced expectations, with the global gig economy generating \$204 billion in 2019 and projected to reach \$455 billion by 2023 (Mastercard and Kaiser Associates, 2019). This study aims to analyse the existing literature on the gig economy through bibliometric analysis. Specifically, it examines the most prominent sources, influential authors, contributing countries, keyword trends, and thematic clusters. The findings aim to guide future research and inform policymakers on how to address the challenges and opportunities presented by the gig economy. Based on the

2. Research objectives

RO1 Identify the most influential authors, journals, and countries contributing to the field, along with the most cited publications and prolific research outputs.

RO2 Examine the recurring themes, popular keywords, and their progression over time to uncover emerging research areas and evolving focuses in gig economy studies.

RO3 Visualize and analyse collaboration networks, citation patterns, and research clusters to understand the interconnectedness and intellectual development within the gig economy literature.

3. Review of literature

Over the past decade, there has been rapid growth in the gig economy as many organisations have relied heavily on outsourcing their work through crowdsourcing platforms (Wong et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2019). With its rapid growth gig economy has emerged as a significant and critical area of research that combines various scholarly contributions by focusing on various aspects like work autonomy, entrepreneurial opportunities, skill development, platform regulation, power dynamics, workers' resilience, socioeconomic disruptions, and its impact in the global disruptions. The reviews reveal that one of the critical issues in the field gig economy is power asymmetry, which is driven by algorithmic management that diminishes the workers' autonomy and intensifies the workers' persistent insecurity with their jobs (Pilatti et al., 2024; Guduru et al., 2023; Katta et al., 2024). Thus, providing a thoughtful understanding of the scenario and suggesting a resistance mechanism through collective work action. But Montgomery & Baglioni, (2021) have placed gig workers as innovative and flexible rather than limiting them within the borders of precarity.

The gig economy serves as a gateway to entrepreneurship by reducing traditional entry barriers such as high startup costs, regulatory hurdles, and formal education requirements. Platforms like Fiverr, Upwork, and UrbanClap enable individuals to commercialize their skills with minimal infrastructure, promoting micro-entrepreneurship and self-employment (Burtch, Carnahan, & Greenwood, 2018). These platforms provide accessible marketplaces where workers can build client bases, enhance reputations through ratings, and incrementally scale their operations. It is argued that digital platforms are characterized by lower barriers to entrepreneurial entry, self-employment, and skill development (Silva & Moreira, 2022). The perspectives at the macro level have been complemented at the micro level by highlighting the importance of skill enhancement through the concept of 'skill space' with a comprehensive analysis of skill provisions in the gig economy, which emphasized how related skills impact work performance in the gig economy (Huang et al., 2019). The existing labour market division and the continuing precarity among the migrant workers engaged in the gig economy are identified and analysed in a multi-level framework where the institutional framework, social networking, and individual agency are considered as different dimensions for evaluating the migrant worker experiences. Here, social networking is identified as an enabler and a constraint for migrant gig workers and provides insight for the policy intervention to mitigate the inequalities (Katta et al., 2024). Also, the gig economy's resilience during the global crisis is evaluated by employing GARCH and VAR models to establish bidirectional disruptions between the gig economic activity and the crisis, and the study reveals that the gig platform adapted itself to the external shock and has significantly contributed to the economic stability (Umar et al., 2021; Batmunkh et al., 2022).

Although most of the gig economy literature has focused on developed economies in the past, emerging markets like India, different African nations, and Southeast Asia are now experiencing their distinct gig economy dynamics influenced by specific socio-economic and cultural circumstances. In India, for example, gig employment is frequently prompted by the need for work as opposed to desire, reflecting a structural reliance on informal labour markets (Sundararajan, 2021). Platforms such as Ola, Swiggy, and UrbanClap show how gig work is embedded in an economy with strong informal employment habits, which do not have strong social protections (Rani & Dhir, 2020).

Likewise, in African countries, the gig economy provides openings to fill joblessness gaps among youth groups. Nevertheless, precariousness is underpinned by issues like internet connectivity limitations, financial exclusion, and the absence of formal recognition of gig work (World Bank, 2019). Regional investigations indicate that there are cultural customs surrounding community working, informality, and cooperative resources that condition perceptions and practices of gig working (De Stefano & Aloisi, 2021). In addition, gender inequalities are greater in developing economies. Women in South Asia and Africa face added impediments in reaching gig work because of mobility limitations, insecurity, and information illiteracy (Mahesh & Rathi, 2022). Such variations in contexts point to the necessity of

geographically specific policy interventions, design modifications in platforms, and place-based worker rights over a homogeneous policy response (Banik & Padalkar, 2021).

Despite the extensive studies in the field of the gig economy that focus on the ethical challenges, regulatory barriers, and well-being of workers. A significant gap remains unexplored for shaping future management, overlooking the need for globally adaptable regulatory strategies that cover different economic contexts.

While the literature provides valuable insights into the evolving nature of gig work, a structured bibliometric analysis is essential to systematically map key contributions, identify emerging themes, and highlight gaps for future exploration.

4. Methodology

A systematic and structured approach was adopted to review the academic contributions to gig economy management research. Data was collected from the Scopus database and supplementary sources such as bibliographies and manual searches. A systematic review was conducted using Scopus and supplementary sources. From 185 records, 59 studies were included for qualitative synthesis and 50 for bibliometric analysis. The selection process is summarized in Table 1. The keywords used for data retrieval included "Gig Economy Management," "Freelance Workforce," and "Platform-Based Work." These terms were chosen to ensure the inclusion of relevant literature focused on the management discipline. Management-focused papers were only considered to sustain precision in identifying meaningful contributions to the field. Bibliometric analysis using Biblioshiny in R Studio provided research landscape insights.

Table 1: Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses

Stage	Description	Count
Identification	Records identified through a Scopus database search	160
	Additional records identified through other sources (e.g., bibliographies, manual search)	25
	Total records identified	185
Screening	Records after duplicates removed	170
	Records were screened based on the abstract and title	170
	Records excluded due to irrelevance (e.g., unrelated to management discipline or keywords)	86
	Full-text articles assessed for eligibility	84
Eligibility	Articles excluded with reasons:	
	- Not focused on gig economy management	15
	- Insufficient data or unavailable full text	10
Inclusion	Studies included in the qualitative synthesis	59
	Studies included in quantitative analysis (e.g., citations, co-authorships, keywords, collaborations)	50

Note. The table summarizes the PRISMA-based process of identifying, screening, and including studies on gig economy management.

Adopting the PRISMA framework, a systematic review was undertaken of studies that may be included in this bibliometric analysis of the management of the gig economy. Of the 185 records screened, 160 resulted from the Scopus database while 25 came from other sources consulted, including bibliography and manual searches. In addition, 170 records underwent a process called abstract and title-level screening for ensuring relevance in terms of contribution to the management discipline by including keywords like "gig economy management," "freelance workforce," and "platform-based work." Therefore, 86 studies were removed as not relevant. On the eligibility stage, 84 articles are subject to full-text screening, of which 25 articles have been removed based on inadequate focus on the management discipline of the gig economy and the absence of data. A total of 59 studies were used for qualitative synthesis, while 50 studies were quantitatively analyzed to understand co-authorship patterns, keyword trends, and international collaborations. This structured approach ensures an all-inclusive and reliable review of the academic landscape in gig economy management research.

5. Results and discussion

The bibliometric analysis is based on the discourse on "Gig Economy Management," "Freelance Workforce," and "Platform-Based Work," within the Scopus database used in this study. The keywords led to 84 relevant scientific sources within the given area of management. It reflects an increasing interest in knowing the dynamics of gig work at the organizational and economic level. Much of the literature explores these issues- legal frameworks, job precarity, and workers' rights- in parallel with the potential for innovation and economic empowerment. In addition to valuable aggregate data and bibliometric trends, worker narratives provide rich qualitative detail on gig working realities. For example, Rani and Furrer (2021) asked ride-hailing drivers in Bangalore, India, to recount their experiences with gig work, and they found that while workers valued the flexibility that gig work provided, they also expressed concerns about long periods of motivation or financial stress and what they described as work insecurity. Similarly, Woodcock and Graham (2020) reported that food delivery riders in Nairobi, Kenya, lost control of their time and increased the psychological demands of work due to algorithmic management systems such as supervised task assignment for deliveries and customer rating systems.

These case studies drawn from platform workers in the UK (e.g., Deliveroo and Uber Eats couriers) found that many workers operated with undefined boundaries between personal and working lives and when they were operating; often work for long hours, unrecognized and uncompensated, engaging in barrel-scrapping labour to ensure the minimum pay requirements over some time (Cant, 2019). By contrast, some freelancers listing their services on Upwork in Southeast Asia described the nature of working through Upwork as satisfactory due to connections to international clients and flexible, remote working opportunities, even though they expressed concerns about their payment security, market, and platform fees (Lehdonvirta, 2018).

The narratives above demonstrate to us that the experiences of gig work are extremely differentiated by experience, location, platform type, and worker characteristics, which reveals a complex of at once flexibility, precarity, empowerment, and exploitation. Therefore, adding the voices of workers provides a more grounded, human-centred conception of the promises and perils of the gig-economy than purely quantitative analyses.

These discussions point out that in the context of the gig economy, management practices would balance operational efficiency and ethical considerations regarding fair pay and career advancement for the gig workers. It presents an overview of existing knowledge on the topic, points out gaps, and gives direction to academics and practitioners engaged in the complexity of management in the gig economy by providing actionable insights.

Table 2: Main Information About the Bibliometric Data on Academic Contributions in Gig Economy

Information	Details
Timespan	2017:2024
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	50
Documents	77
Annual Growth Rate %	12.87
Document Average Age	2.94
Average citations per doc	32.32
References	5271
Document Contents	
Keywords Plus (ID)	88
Author's Keywords (DE)	271
Authors	
Authors	164
Authors of single-authored docs	14
Authors Collaboration	
Single-authored docs	16
Co-Authors per Doc	2.68
International co-authorships %	39.29
Document Types	
Article	48
Book	7
Book chapter	22

Note. The table provides a comprehensive overview of bibliometric data on academic contributions in gig economy research.

The bibliometric analysis on "Gig Economy Management," covering the period 2017 to 2024, comprises 77 documents sourced from 50 journals, books, and other publications, reflecting an annual growth rate of 12.87% (see Table 2). The average age of the documents was 2.94 years, and they had achieved an average of 32.32 citations per document, which is a high amount of scholarly impact. The dataset included 5271 references and reflected the depth of the research in this area. Authors framed their work by using 88 Keywords Plus and 271 specific author keywords. Contributions came from 164 authors who have produced 16 single-authored documents with an average of 2.68 co-authors per document. It showed that the research efforts were collective. Besides, 39.29% of works included international co-authorship, hence concentrating on global collaboration. Document types include 48 articles, 22 book chapters, 7 books, 5 conference papers, and one each of editorial and review articles, thus showing the variety of formats of scholarly output.

**Fig. 1:** TCCM (Theory, Context, Characteristics, and Methodology) Model.

The key aspects of gig economy research are charted in two different categories: existing and new theories, respective contexts, methods, and characteristics. Some of the older theories include Algorithmic Management Theory, Human Capital Theory, and Social Network Theory, while newer frameworks such as Platform Capitalism and Digital Transformation look into emerging trends. It has moved across various contexts, as has been seen in the studies of countries such as the United States, India, and Kenya. New regional frontiers have emerged in places like China and Malaysia. Research methods will vary from perhaps conducting nothing beyond simple case studies and ethnographic research to more advanced data tools such as NVivo, Python, and Tableau, and interesting newer methods employing co-authorship mapping and machine learning models. The range of variables commonly focuses on how the worker can operate with autonomy, have job security, and what type of algorithmic control permeates the gig economy more broadly than sites or apps. Future research will zero in on AI's role, the challenges of sustainability, mental health, and regulatory challenges, with each dissertation befitting the wide range and evolving importance of this branch.

5.1. Annual scientific production

Table 3 Annual scientific output from 2017 to 2024 in "Gig Economy Management" or "Freelance Workforce". Production trend: There is an initial fall in 2018, followed by a steep rise in 2019, and reaching a peak in 2020. It reflects an upward trend in academic interest, which may be related to the growth in platform-based work and the gig economy during this period.

Table 3: Annual Scientific Production of Academic Contributions in the Gig Economy

Year	Articles	Year-Wise Most Relevant Paper	Citation
2017	6	Stewart, A., & Stanford, J. (2017). Regulating work in the gig economy: What are the options? <i>The Economic and Labour Relations Review</i> , 28(3), 420–437. https://doi.org/10.1177/1035304617722461	322
2018	3	Nguyen, D. (2018). The university in a world of digital technologies: Tensions and challenges. <i>Australasian Marketing Journal</i> , 26(2), 79–82. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ausmj.2018.05.012	28
2019	12	Goods, C., Veen, A., & Barratt, T. (2019). "Is your gig any good?" Analysing job quality in the Australian platform-based food-delivery sector. <i>Journal of Industrial Relations</i> , 61(4), 502–527. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022185618817069	232
2020	13	Veen, A., Barratt, T., & Goods, C. (2020). Platform-capital's 'app-etite' for control: A labour process analysis of food-delivery work in Australia. <i>Work, Employment and Society</i> , 34(3), 388–406. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017019836911	372
2021	14	Ratten, V., & Usmanij, P. (2021). Entrepreneurship education: Time for a change in research direction? <i>International Journal of Management Education</i> , 19(1), 100367. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2020.100367	
2022	11	Hall, C. M., Prayag, G., Safonov, A., Coles, T., Gössling, S., & Naderi Koupaei, S. (2022). Airbnb and the sharing economy. <i>Current Issues in Tourism</i> , 25(19), 3057–3067. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2022.2122418	22
2023	11	Riordan, T., Robinson, R. N. S., & Hoffstaedter, G. (2023). Seeking justice beyond the platform economy: Migrant workers navigating precarious lives. <i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i> , 31(12), 2734–2751. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2022.2136189	13
2024	14	Khan, M. H., Williams, J., Williams, P., & Mayes, R. (2024). Caring in the gig economy: A relational perspective of decent work. <i>Work, Employment and Society</i> , 38(4), 1107–1127. https://doi.org/10.1177/09500170231173586	11

Note. The figure illustrates the annual scientific production of academic contributions in the gig economy, showcasing the growth trajectory and trends in research output from 2017 to 2024.

The most cited papers in Table 3 are extremely useful for understanding the gig economy. Kaine and Josserand (2019) have been cited 138 times, talking about organizational dynamics and worker experiences in the gig economy and the difficulties that workers face when adapting to such a precarious work model. McDonald, Williams, and Mayes (2021), cited 24 times, discuss control mechanisms in digitally intermediated care work, which focuses on how algorithmic management influences worker autonomy and job conditions. Penter et al. (2020) cited 2 times, discuss designing a strategic sourcing ecosystem by using big data applications, which creates an innovative advantage. Shi et al. (2024), who have been cited only once, discuss how algorithmic control creates a sense of thriving in gig workers and connect this to broader organizational and individual factors. Macdonald (2021) discusses the individualization of risk in paid care work and broader implications for the gig economy with 19 citations. Ratten and Usmanij (2021), with 213 citations, argue for a shift in entrepreneurship education that would reflect the gig economy and digital trends. Veen, Barratt, and Goods (2020) are the most cited, with 372 citations, in a discussion on labour process dynamics in platform-based food delivery work and how control mechanisms influence worker experiences and outcomes.

5.2. Annual citation per year

Table 4 shows average citations per year for scholarly studies on "Gig Economy Management" or similar topics. There is a sharp peak in 2017, which reflects high initial rates of citation for foundational work in the field. Nonetheless, a marked decline unfolds in 2018, potentially reflecting either a reduction in scholarship impact or relatively few new publications during that period. The average citations recovered in 2019 and stayed at moderate levels through 2021, representing a continued interest in the field as researchers were constructing upon what was already laid out. A sharp drop off happens after 2021 and reaches the lowest point in 2022. The decline may represent a shift in research focus or saturation in foundational studies.

Table 4: Annual Citation Per Year for Academic Contributions in Gig Economy

Year	Articles	MeanTCperYear	Citable Years
2017	6	14.5	8
2018	3	2.14	7
2019	12	9.62	6
2020	13	7.88	5
2021	14	9.66	4
2022	11	2.58	3
2023	11	2.37	2
2024	14	6.50	1

Note. The table depicts the annual citation trends for academic contributions in the gig economy, reflecting the impact and relevance of research published from 2017 to 2024.

5.3. Sankey's plot analysis

Figure 2 provides an interrelated network between countries (AU_CO), research keywords (DE), and the journals or sources (SO) publishing studies on "Gig Economy Management" and related topics. Australia, the United Kingdom, and the USA are highly represented, suggesting their dominance in the field of research contributions. Other contributors include emerging economies such as Brazil, India, and China. Key terms or focus areas include "non-standard work," "platform economy," "algorithmic management," "technology," and "digital platforms," reflecting various aspects of the gig economy, including flexibility and precariousness of work, especially about how technologies influence the dynamics of work (Barratt et al., 2020; Goods et al., 2021). Major publication outlets such as *Work, Employment and Society*, *Economic and Labour Relations Review*, and *Journal of Industrial Relations* prominently feature research in this area (Goods et al., 2021). The research tends to focus on social, economic, and managerial dimensions, emphasizing global collaborative work in understanding gig economy management, particularly technology-driven work platforms and their socio-economic implications (Barratt et al., 2020; Goods et al., 2021). This map also highlights specific journals and regions that may be focal points for future research or collaboration.

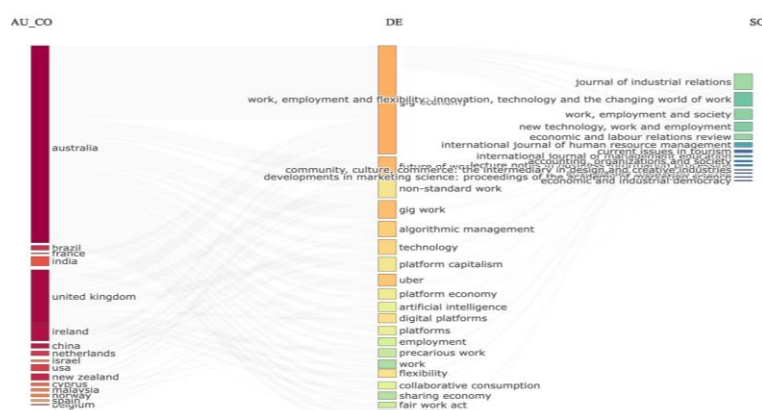


Fig. 2: Result of Sankey's Plot Analysis of Academic Contributions in the Gig Economy. the Figure Presents the Results of Sankey's Plot Analysis, Visualizing the Flow and Relationships Among Key Themes, Keywords, and Research Areas within Academic Contributions to Gig Economy Studies.

5.4. Most relevant sources

The analysis of sources in Table 5 shows great contributions from a wide variety of journals and publications, which influence the scholarly landscape of gig economy research. "Journal of Industrial Relations" stands out with the highest contribution by publishing 11 articles, indicating its centrality in exploring labour relations and the dynamics of gig work. The "Economic and Labour Relations Review" and "Work, Employment and Society" followed closely with 5 articles each, reflecting their thrusts on labour economics and transformations in employment in the new platform-based work setting. Some important contributors in this regard are "New Technology, Work and Employment", "The Future of Work and Employment", and "Work, Employment and Flexibility: Innovation, Technology and the Changing World of Work", each consisting of 4 articles and stressing the relationship between technology and labour in this nascent gig economy. The presence of niche sources like "Community, Culture, Commerce" and "Economic and Industrial Democracy" indicates an interdisciplinary interest in understanding creative industries, organizational psychology, and the socio-economic impact of gig work. Collectively, these sources comprise a valuable knowledge bank to inform discussions on gig economy management from policy, academic, and practical perspectives.

Table 5: Most Relevant Sources of Academic Contributions in the Gig Economy

Journals	Articles
Journal of Industrial Relations	11
Economic and Labour Relations Review	5
Work, Employment and Society	5
New Technology, Work and Employment	4
The Future of Work and Employment	4
Work, Employment and Flexibility: Innovation, Technology and the Changing World of Work	4
The Routledge Handbook of the Gig Economy	3
Contemporary Work and the Future of Employment in Developed Countries	2
International Journal of Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations	2
International Journal of Human Resource Management	2
International Journal of Management Education	2
Lecture Notes in Business Information Processing	2

Note. The table highlights the most relevant sources of academic contributions in the gig economy, showcasing key journals, books, and other publications that have significantly shaped research in this field.

5.5. Most relevant authors

The bibliometric analysis of gig economy management shows prominent contributions by top authors, indicating the shifting trend of academia towards interest in such topics as platform-based work, algorithmic management, and freelance workforce dynamics (see Table 6). Key contributors who have made six publications are Barratt, Goods, and Veen. Their work, appearing quite frequently in journals like Journal of Industrial Relations and Work, Employment, and Society, examines the implications of gig work for labour relations and employment structures (Barratt et al., 2020; Goods et al., 2021; Veen et al., 2019). On top of this, Brewster, Healy, and Holland also have five publications each where they discuss issues on regulation, organizational behaviour, and socio-economic impact of gig work. In most cases, their works are related to journals like Economic and Labour Relations Review and New Technology, Work and Employment (Brewster et al., 2020; Healy et al., 2022). For instance, Flanagan, Kaine, and Kougiannou have published three articles each with niche research topics, such as studies on collaborative consumption, ethical considerations, and regional disparities, thus giving more depth to the field's discourse (Flanagan et al., 2021; Kaine et al., 2020; Kougiannou, 2021). The collaboration patterns reflected in these works indicate that the management of gig economies is highly internationalized, adopting a global approach to address such challenges and opportunities. This is an interdisciplinary and multifaceted output of research into this domain.

Table 6: Most Relevant Sources and Authors of Academic Contributions in the Gig Economy

Sources	N	Authors	N	AF
Journal of Industrial Relations	11	Barratt T.	6	1.75
Economic and Labour Relations Review	5	Goods C.	6	1.75
Work, Employment and Society	5	Veen A.	6	1.75
New Technology, Work and Employment	4	Brewster C.	5	2.00
The Future of Work and Employment	4	Healy J.	5	2.17
Work, Employment and Flexibility: Innovation, Technology and The Changing World of Work	4	Holland P.	5	2.00
The Routledge Handbook of The Gig Economy	3	Pekarek A.	5	2.17

Contemporary Work and The Future of Employment in Developed Countries	2	Flanagan F.	3	2.33
International Journal of Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations	2	Kaine S.	3	1.08
International Journal of Human Resource Management	2	Kougiannou N. K.	3	1.00
International Journal of Management Education	2	Mayes R.	3	0.92
Lecture Notes in Business Information Processing	2	McCrystal S.	3	1.33
		Williams P.	3	0.92
		Wright C. F.	3	0.60
		Bamber G. J.	2	0.50
		Bankins S.	2	0.40
		Hardy T.	2	1.00
		Lansbury Rd	2	0.50
		Macdonald F.	2	1.50
		McDonald P.	2	0.67
		Donnell A.	2	0.50
		Peetz D.	2	2.00
		Ratten V.	2	0.64
		Rawling M.	2	1.00
		Schofield-Georges E.	2	1.00
		Sherman U.	2	0.45
		Stanford J.	2	1.00
		Stewart A.	2	1.00
		Wailles N.	2	0.50
		Walker M.	2	1.33

Note. The table displays the most relevant authors contributing to academic research in the gig economy, illustrating key scholars who have significantly influenced the field through their publications. N Number of Articles; AF Articles Fractionalized.

5.6. Most relevant affiliations

In the review of universities that significantly contributed to gig economy management research, the University of Technology Sydney was the most represented institution with 11 articles, indicating active engagement in this field (Brewster, Chung & Sparrow, 2021). Other institutions that featured highly were the Queensland University of Technology with seven articles and Curtin University with six, which demonstrated Australia's dominance in gig economy research (Goods, Veen & Barratt, 2019). Institutions such as the University of Melbourne and RMIT University contributed five articles each, focusing on the algorithmic management and worker autonomy in platform-based work, according to Healy, Pekarek, & Kaine (2020). Furthermore, Beijing Normal University and other Chinese universities are also producing more, which means there is a global interest in this field (Flanagan & Kaine, 2021). Interestingly, the University of Sydney Business School has specialized by researching labour market dynamics, which is proof that academics are keen on gig economy regulation and exploitation of workers (Kougiannou & Pekarek, 2019). These contributions indicate a concentrated focus by Australian and global universities to deal with the problems and opportunities of platform capitalism in various work environments (Veen, Barratt, & Goods, 2020). Institutional diversity and interdisciplinarity for gig economy management underline the international cooperation and developing aspects of regulatory, technological, and social dimensions in the area of research (see Table 7).

Table 7: Most Relevant Affiliations of Academic Contributions in Gig Economy

Affiliation	N	Highest highest-cited paper based on affiliation	C
University of Technology Sydney	11	Kaine, S., & Josserand, E. (2019). The organisation and experience of work in the gig economy. <i>Journal of Industrial Relations</i> , 61(4), 479–501. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022185619865480	138
Queensland University of Technology	7	McDonald, P., Williams, P., & Mayes, R. (2021). Means of control in the organization of digitally intermediated care work. <i>Work, Employment and Society</i> , 35(5), 872–890. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017020969107	24
Curtin University	6	Penter, K., Perrin, B., Wreford, J., & Pervan, G. (2020). Designing a sourcing ecosystem for strategic innovation through “big data” applications. In <i>Lecture Notes in Business Information Processing</i> (Vol. 410, pp. 162–192). Springer Science and Business Media Deutschland GmbH. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-66834-1_10	2
Beijing Normal University	5	Shi, Y., Yu, H., Gao, L., Yang, M., & Song, S. (2024). Can algorithms ignite the flame of thriving? Exploring how and when gig workers perceived algorithmic control leads to thriving at work. <i>Journal of Service Theory and Practice</i> . https://doi.org/10.1108/JSTP-11-2023-0297	1
RMIT University	5	Macdonald, F. (2021). Individualising risk: Paid care work in the new gig economy. Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-33-6366-3	19
The University of Melbourne	5	Ratten, V., & Usmanij, P. (2021). Entrepreneurship education: Time for a change in research direction? <i>International Journal of Management Education</i> , 19(1), 100367. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2020.100367	213
The University of Sydney	5	Veen, A., Barratt, T., & Goods, C. (2020). Platform-capital's ‘app-etite’ for control: A labour process analysis of food-delivery work in Australia. <i>Work, Employment and Society</i> , 34(3), 388–406. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017019836911	372

Note. The figure highlights the most relevant affiliations associated with academic contributions to the gig economy, showcasing the institutions and organizations that have been central to research in this field. N Number of Articles; C Number of Citations.

Most cited papers from Table 7 with a deep insight into the gig economy based on affiliation are Kaine and Josserand (2019) with 138 citations. The paper deals with the organizational structures and worker experiences in the gig economy, focusing on the precarious nature of this form of work and its implications for workers' rights. McDonald, Williams, and Mayes (2021), cited 24 times, explain the mechanisms of control within digitally intermediated care work, depicting how algorithmic management impacts worker autonomy and working conditions. Penter et al. (2020) have been cited two times; they write about designing an ecosystem for strategic sourcing through applications of big data, with all its innovation potential. Shi et al. (2024) are referred to only once to explain how algorithmic control impacts the sense of thriving among gig workers regarding personal and organizational factors. Macdonald (2021) is referenced 19 times for a full-length discussion on the social and economic implications of risk individualization in paid care work in the gig economy. Ratten and

Usmanij (2021), with 213 citations, call for the reorientation of entrepreneurship education towards emerging trends, such as the gig economy and digital transformation. Veen, Barratt, and Goods (2020), with 372 citations, analyze labor control in platform-based food delivery work, unveiling complex power dynamics and their consequences for workers.

5.7. Country scientific production

The country-wise scientific map of "Gig Economy Management" in Table 8 reveals that Australia leads in this regard, which denotes that there is considerable output of research in this space. Australia's dominance corresponds with the strong representation of universities in Australia, such as the University of Technology, Sydney, and RMIT University, which together contributed to many papers on gig economy themes. Other notable contributors include the United States, United Kingdom, China, and India, represented by institutions actively researching the impact of the gig economy on labour dynamics, technology, and management practices.

From the extracted data, the key contributions of Australian researchers are on algorithmic management, platform work ethics, and employment flexibility. The United States and the United Kingdom focus on policy implications and socio-economic dynamics. India and China focus on labour transitions in their rapidly expanding gig economies. This global spread of contributions highlights the interdisciplinary nature of gig economy research, blending management, sociology, and technology perspectives. It highlights the emergent need for understanding how gig work affects labour markets and corporate strategies, both in transformational ways.

Table 8: Most Prominent Countries with Academic Contributions in the Gig Economy

Region	Frequency	Article Range	Authors
Australia	145	> 50	6
Uk	22	≤50 to >40	9
Ireland	9	≤40 to >30	4
China	7	≤30 to >20	12
New Zealand	6	≤20 to >10	26
Brazil	5	≤10 to >5	37
Netherlands	5	= 5	42
Usa	5	= 4	29
Canada	3	= 3	78
France	2	= 2	84
India	2	= 1	156
Belgium	1		
Cyprus	1		
Israel	1		
Japan	1		
Malaysia	1		
Norway	1	Total	483
Pakistan	1		
Spain	1		
Sweden	1		
Switzerland	1		

Note. The figure illustrates the most prominent countries contributing to academic research on the gig economy, highlighting the nation's leading the discourse through scholarly publications and collaborations.

5.8. Word cloud

The word cloud highlights key themes and areas of focus in research on the gig economy, emphasizing its multidisciplinary nature (see Figure 3). Dominant keywords such as "employment", "Australia", "human resource management", and "consumption behaviour" reflect the primary areas of study. Australia's prominence underscores its leading role in gig economy research, often examining employment structures, labour dynamics, and the impact of digital platforms.

Terms like "vulnerability", "gender disparity", and "immigration policy" indicate concerns regarding socio-economic inequalities and labour market challenges faced by gig workers. Keywords such as "digital storage", "big data applications", and "future of works advocacy" reflect the technological backbone enabling gig work and its potential for shaping future labour markets.

The "accident prevention", "job demands", and "job strains" indicate that occupational risks and stress factors exist in the platform-based work. The keywords like "governance systems", "compliance control", and "key success factors" indicate that there exists a policy and managerial framework for the enhancement of the gig economy operations. Some emerging trends include "autonomy", "collaborative approaches", and "capitalism" that describe the broader socio-economic implications of the gig economy. In short, the word cloud reflects the general scope of research in the gig economy which spans technological and social and economic dimensions but focuses basically on the Australian context within global labour trends.



Fig. 3: Word Cloud in Academic Contributions on Gig Economy. The Figure Displays A Word Cloud Representing Key Themes and Areas in Academic Contributions to the Gig Economy, with Prominent Terms Visualized Based on Their Frequency and Relevance in the Research Literature.

5.9. Network analysis

Figure 4 depicts the keyword co-occurrence network of gig economy research. This represents the multiple fields that are related through shared topics. The keyword here is "employment," which serves to connect the key fields that include "gig economy," "Australia," and "vulnerability." In other words, most research focuses on the employment relationship within the gig economy with regard to the vulnerability of work and the consequences of these for varying contexts, including Australia. Relationships between "Australia" and words like "conceptual framework" and "immigration policy" are strong and indicate that there are more implications of policies as well as theoretical changes related to the gig economy with a major geographical focus.

Distinct clusters reveal specialized areas of research. For instance, a green cluster explores "gig economy," "vulnerability," and "accident prevention," which indicates concerns related to worker safety and socioeconomic risks. The blue cluster relates to "human resource management" and "industrial research," meaning an organizational as well as an operational perspective regarding gig work. The orange cluster, containing "future changes" with "policy systems," indicates the focus on forward-looking studies that respond to systemic change. These thematic clusters disclose a multidisciplinary approach toward understanding the gig economy, including policy, management, and the impacts of gig work on society. This visualization emphasizes a diversified but cohesive effort around the research on the complexity of gig work.

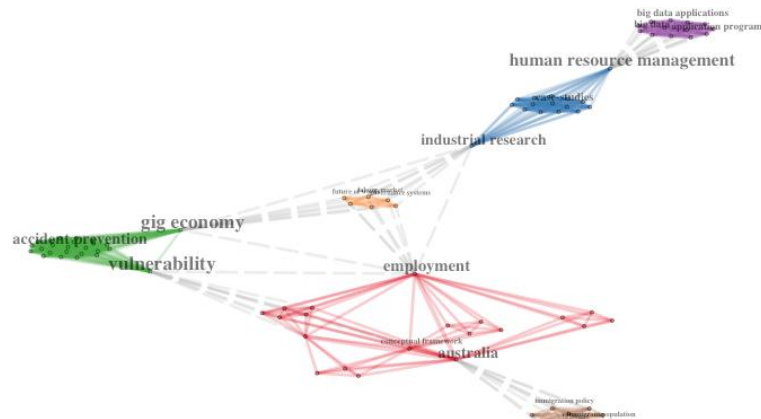


Fig. 4: Keyword Co-Occurrence Network. the Figure Presents the Co-Occurrence Network of Academic Contributions in the Gig Economy, Visually Mapping the Relationships and Clusters of Key Research Topics, Themes, and Areas within the Field.

5.10. Themes identified through co-occurrence network

Table 9: Themes Identified Through Co-Occurrence Network

Theme	Keywords
Employment and Vulnerability	Employment, Gig Economy, Vulnerability, Precarity
Geographical and Policy Focus	Australia, Immigration Policy, Gig Work Regulation, Labor Policies
Worker Safety and Well-being	Accident Prevention, Worker Safety, Job Security
Human Resource Management in Gig Work	Human Resource Management, Algorithmic Management, Worker Autonomy
Future of Work and Policy Changes	Future Changes, Policy Systems, Technological Disruption
Digital Platforms and Labor Dynamics	Platform Work, Digital Labor, Work Organization, Control Mechanisms

Figure 3, Network Analysis Identifies Six Key Themes Closely Tied to the Gig Economy. The "Employment and Vulnerability" theme (green) highlights precarity and the arduous challenge of achieving stability in employment. "Geographical and Policy Focus" (red) places analyses at the Australian level, emphasizing labor policies and regulation of gig work, indicating a strong regional focus. "Worker Safety and Well-being" (green) engages with issues regarding injury prevention and job security. The "Human Resource Management in Gig Work" theme (blue) investigates the algorithmic management and its effects on worker autonomy. "Future of Work and Policy Changes" (orange) is more about technological disruption and the way policy systems change, while "Digital Platforms and Labor Dynamics" (purple) goes deep into platform work, digital labour, and the control mechanisms that shape gig work organization. Taken together, the themes represent all the multidimensional aspects of the gig economy and its broader implications.

5.11. Factorial analysis

The factorial analysis (Figure 5) provides a visual for the principal themes that are relevant to gig economy research. In the centre of the triangle is a cluster of topical areas, including 'gig economy' and 'vulnerability', that are co-occurring, suggesting that most of the current research is centralized on job instability or worker risks. The outer edges of the triangle show a more clustered group of topical areas, such as 'human resource management' and 'industrial research', which suggests more focused study areas. The research framing outlined here provides an overview of two major clusters of worker study areas in the gig economy research, which are more generalized work concerns of the worker and some more technical areas focused on the management of workplace concerns. It also provides a shift in focus of the gig economy discourse, where traditionally the gig economy focus has been around job flexibility or employment opportunities, to more recent discussions around platform coercion, workers' rights, and government policy changes. Thus, the (triangular) map provides an overview of which areas researchers agree on and, to some extent, where new questions are being raised.

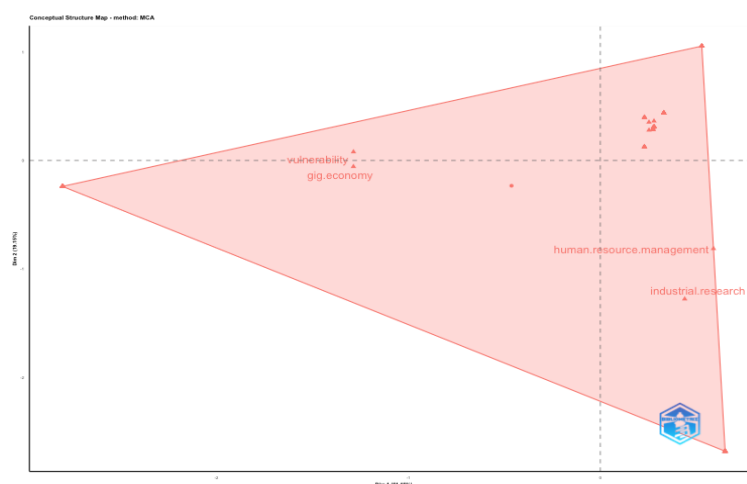


Fig. 5: Triangular Visualization of Academic Contributions in Gig Economy. the Figure Shows the Triangular Visualization from the Factor Analysis of Academic Contributions to the Gig Economy, Illustrating the Relationships and Influence Between Key Factors and Research Areas within the Field.

6. Conclusion

The management of gig economy research analysis gives an interesting overview of the dynamics within the evolving field. Using techniques of bibliometrics and visual mapping, it was possible to explore critical themes, key authors, leading institutions, and geography contributions in the academic discussion on gig economy management, platform-based work, and freelance labour. With 84 articles sourced from Scopus, ranging from 2017 to 2024, an annual growth rate of 12.87% reflects the increasing academic interest in the domain. Employment, conceptual frameworks, human resource management, and vulnerability are focus areas that reflect the interdisciplinary nature of gig economy research. Institutions such as the University of Technology, Sydney, and Queensland University of Technology played very key roles. Authors such as Goods, Barratt, and Holland have considerably contributed to the literature through works that highlight employment relations, algorithmic management, and workforce vulnerability. These highly cited journals include the Journal of Industrial Relations and Economic and Labour Relations Review to prove the importance of these contributions for labour economics and organizational studies.

Keyword analysis and thematic mapping revealed that the theme is dominated by employment, industrial research, and human resource management, indicating that labour practices and workforce dynamics in gig work are given significant attention. Some of the basic themes identified in the thematic analysis include "employment" and "Australia". Some cross-cutting topics identified were vulnerability and the gig economy, representing an unfolding debate concerning worker protection concerns, regulatory frameworks, and labour rights. The rate of international co-authorship, according to collaboration analysis, was 39.29%. This is a good reflection of the global nature of gig economy research. The emerging themes of technology, artificial intelligence, and platform capitalism reflect the impact of digital transformations on gig work. Overall, this study displays rich diversity in gig economy management research and underlines the critical need for further interdisciplinary studies. Future research could focus in greater depth on areas like regulatory frameworks, worker well-being, and sustainable gig practices to fill gaps and ensure that academic inquiry follows real-world challenges.

7. Implications

This research highlights several implications for the academic, policy-making, and practical management domains. Academically, the interdisciplinary nature of gig economy research highlights the necessity for integrating diverse fields such as labour economics, organizational studies, and digital innovation to address complex, multi-faceted challenges. For policymakers, the dominance of themes like worker vulnerability and regulatory frameworks underscores the urgency of creating robust policies that safeguard labour rights while balancing the growth of platform-based work. Practitioners and platform managers can leverage insights into algorithmic management and workforce dynamics to enhance fair employment practices and improve worker well-being. The emerging focus on technology and artificial intelligence calls for a proactive exploration of their ethical and operational impacts on gig workers, ensuring inclusive and equitable growth. Furthermore, the global collaboration rate indicates a need for cross-border regulatory harmonization to address the transnational nature of platform work effectively. Prioritizing sustainable gig practices and aligning research with real-world challenges can drive innovation, equity, and resilience within this evolving economic paradigm.

8. Limitations

The reliance on articles exclusively sourced from Scopus may have excluded relevant contributions from other databases, such as Web of Science or Google Scholar, potentially limiting the comprehensiveness of the analysis. Additionally, the bibliometric techniques employed are inherently quantitative and may not fully capture the nuanced, qualitative aspects of gig economy research, such as cultural or regional variations in worker experiences. The time frame of 2017 to 2024, while reflective of contemporary developments, may overlook foundational studies or earlier conceptual discussions that have shaped the field. Moreover, the focus on keywords and thematic mapping may result in the underrepresentation of emerging but less-cited topics or niche research areas. Finally, the international co-authorship rate, while indicative of global collaboration, does not account for disparities in contributions across regions or the potential dominance of certain countries or institutions in shaping the research agenda. These limitations suggest the need for complementary methodologies and broader data sources in future studies to provide a more holistic understanding of gig economy management.

9. Future directions

Future research on gig economy management should prioritize exploring under-researched areas and emerging challenges to provide a more comprehensive understanding of this dynamic field. Greater emphasis on regulatory frameworks and their efficacy in protecting gig workers' rights across diverse legal and cultural contexts is critical, especially as platform-based work expands globally. Confronting the challenges of regulating the gig economy requires global strategies that balance worker protections with platform innovation. One success story is Spain's "Rider's Law," which presumes that food delivery riders are employees (as opposed to independent contractors) so that companies like Glovo and Deliveroo must provide labor rights like paid leave and social security benefits (Prassl, 2022). Kind of like California's AB5, which attempted to relabel gig workers as employees as opposed to independent contractors based on a multi-factor "ABC Test," albeit faced major backlash and amendments (Dubal, 2019). Another interesting example is France's social dialogue model for platform workers. In this model, countries' legal framework opens space for the establishment of representative worker associations and allows gig workers to effectively bargain without being reclassified (Aloisi & De Stefano, 2021). In India, platforms like Urban Company have begun voluntarily offering food delivery workers health insurance and accident coverage to get in front of governments proposing stricter regulations (FICCI, 2022).

Thus, while there is tremendous occupational variation, principles such as creating worker representatives, minimum standards of protection, social insurance contributions, and clarifying the level of worker employment status are all increasingly becoming the essence of their globally adaptable regulatory strategies. Future frameworks must retain the flexibility to accommodate regional labor norms while continuing to uphold fundamental rights across forms of platform work. Investigating worker well-being, including mental health, job satisfaction, and long-term career sustainability, is essential to addressing the human aspects of gig work. The intersection of digital transformation with gig work warrants deeper exploration, particularly concerning the implications of artificial intelligence, algorithmic management, and platform capitalism on employment practices and worker autonomy. Furthermore, comparative studies across countries and regions can offer valuable insights into how contextual differences shape the gig economy. Future research should explore sustainable gig practices such as integrating eco-friendly delivery methods (e.g., e-bikes for couriers), ensuring fair wages to support workers' economic security, and promoting inclusive hiring to address social disparities (Rosenblat, 2018). Collaborative, interdisciplinary approaches that integrate perspectives from economics, sociology, technology, and ethics will be vital in aligning academic inquiry with real-world challenges and ensuring equitable growth in the gig economy.

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