# Unpacking The Scholarly Evolution of Gig Worker Satisfaction: A Bibliometric Exploration

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## Abstract

This study presents the first bibliometric review dedicated solely to gig workers' job satisfaction, offering a focused synthesis of global research trends. Using data extracted from the Scopus database, documents were analyzed through bibliographic coupling, citation metrics, and thematic clustering. The analysis produced four conceptually distinct clusters: algorithmic governance, psychological engagement, geographical well-being, and technostress. Author impact, source influence, and institutional contributions were mapped using citation-based indices and network metrics. Keyword construction was guided by an extensive literature review to ensure terminological inclusiveness. Figures such as thematic maps, trending topics, and co-authorship networks illustrate the evolution and structure of the field, while tables summarize the most influential documents, authors, and sources. By identifying conceptual overlaps, geographic gaps, and emerging themes, this study provides a comprehensive framework and strategic roadmap for future research. It serves as a foundational reference for academics, policymakers, and platform designers seeking to enhance gig worker well-being and satisfaction.

*Keywords*: *Bibliometric Analysis; Gig Economy; Gig Workers; Job Satisfaction; Research Trends.*

## 1. Introduction

The gig economy has rapidly transformed the landscape of labour, prompting researchers to explore various factors influencing worker satisfaction and well-being in this unique employment model. The growing prevalence of gig work has raised important questions about job security, income stability, and the overall quality of work life for these individuals. The gig economy, characterized by short-term contracts or freelance work as opposed to permanent jobs (De Stefano, 2015), has experienced exponential growth in recent decades, fundamentally reshaping labour markets globally (Sundararajan, 2017). Fuelled by technological advancements, particularly the proliferation of online platforms, it connects individuals seeking work with tasks or projects offered by companies or individuals on a flexible, often temporary basis (Codagnone et al., 2018). This burgeoning sector encompasses a diverse range of activities, from ride-hailing and food delivery to freelance writing, software development, and virtual assistance (Manyika et al., 2016).

The allure of the gig economy lies in its promise of flexibility and autonomy for workers, offering control over their schedules and the types of work they undertake (Friedman, 2014). For businesses, it provides access to a readily available and often specialized workforce without the overhead costs associated with traditional employment (Hall & Krueger, 2018). However, this novel mode of work also presents significant challenges, particularly concerning worker rights, social protections, and income security (Aloisi, 2016; Prassl, 2018).

Understanding the experiences and well-being of individuals participating in the gig economy is crucial for policymakers, platform providers, and the workers themselves. Among the key aspects of worker experience is their level of satisfaction, which can influence their engagement, productivity, and retention within the gig ecosystem (Lambert et al., 2020). Exploring the factors that contribute to or detract from gig worker satisfaction is therefore essential for fostering a sustainable and equitable future for this evolving form of work. This systematic literature review aims to examine the evolution of research on gig worker satisfaction over time, identify key trends in the existing literature, and highlight significant gaps that warrant further scholarly attention.

## 2. Literature Review on Gig Economy

### 2.1. Background on Gig Economy

After three industrial revolutions, the world seems to be facing 4th industrial revolution with gig economy (Chandra S., 2020). Today the workforce is varied like never before with full-time & part-time employees, contingent and gig workers and crowdsourced workers (Deloitte, 2018). Technology is one of the strongest forces reshaping business models & nature of work. It is bringing changes majorly in socio-economic trends and types of jobs needed, bringing skill churn and lastly, it is changing how work is organized (WEF, 2016). As the

technology becomes inevitable to use, the traditional form of employment is fast taking backseat and giving a way to the non-traditional, a more sustainable, on demand, contractual and short-term employment known as 'gig work'. More and more contractual workers, freelancers – also known as 'gig workers' are joining in the workforce with the help of improved digital and technological platforms. COVID-19 pandemic has fuelled the growth of gig work (Forbes, 2020). These types of work arrangements form a new type of economy – known as 'gig economy'. Gig means temporary or contingent. According to Cambridge Dictionary, 'Gig economy is a way of working that is based on people having temporary jobs or doing separate pieces of work, each paid separately, rather than working for an employer'. Gig workforce includes all those working on a temporary basis or on demand basis. The gig economy is supported and accelerated by the rise of technology and customers who expect goods and services to arrive faster and more flexibly than ever before (Ernest & Young, 2016). Online food delivery platforms like Zomato, Swiggy, platforms for taxi rides such as Uber, Lyft, Ola etc. are some of the famous examples of the type of organization that gig economy functions around.

Gig economy model gives opportunity to all age groups an opportunity to get self-employed by getting temporary jobs. Furthermore, this type of economy is also helping in social inclusion policies, breaking stereotypes based on age, gender, mobility etc. (Ungureanu, 2019).

## 2.2. Definition of Gig Economy

The extant literature reveals a lack of consensus regarding a singular definition of the gig economy. The term "gig economy" represents one of several designations employed to characterize diverse forms of 'gig' employment, or freelance work involving short-term projects. Alternative terminologies include the 'on-demand economy,' 'collaborative consumption,' and 'sharing economy' (SIA, 2016). According to the McKinsey Global Institute (2016), engagement in the gig economy may arise from necessity or volition. A comprehensive definition of the gig economy, as posited by Gallup (2018), encompasses alternative work arrangements such as independent contractors, online platform workers, contract firm workers, on-call workers, and temporary employees. From a more focused and restricted perspective, it is delineated as a constellation of markets that link workers with employers via internet-based technological platforms or mobile applications to execute tasks that may be either digital or physical (Donovan et al., 2016; Heeks, 2017). This economy facilitates the connection between freelancers and individuals or businesses seeking short-term services or asset sharing (MasterCard & Kaiser Associates, 2019). It is characterized by less structured work arrangements that provide flexible employment opportunities through various online platforms (Arbaham et al., 2018). The framework comprises two-sided digital platforms that match workers on one side of the market with customers on the other side on a per-service 'gig' basis (Schwellnus et al., 2019). It represents a type of economy propelled by technological advancements that have enhanced employee mobility. The contemporary gig economy consists of three principal constituents or stakeholders. Istrate & Harris (2017) identify three integral components of the gig economy, namely organizations that provide gig work, customers, and gig workers. Organizations facilitate the connection between gig workers and customers through a digital platform. Such arrangements yield mutual benefits for all three parties involved.

## 2.3. Rise of Gig Economy and Its Growth Prospects

The rapid expansion of gig economy is fuelled by technological advancements and evolving consumer expectations for speed and flexibility (EY, 2016). In US, gig work has rapidly grown from 10% in 2005 to 15.8% (National Association of Counties Futures Lab, 2017) and 38% of the American workforce comprises of freelancers in the gig economy (Upwork, 2025). Furthermore, the global gig transactions was projected to reach USD $455 billion by 2023, growing at a CAGR of 17% (MasterCard & Kasier Associates, 2019). This is driven by rising living costs, digital adaptation in developing countries, and a cultural shift toward flexible work environments. The number of freelancers in European Union has nearly doubled between 2000 to 2014, making them the fastest growing labour group (Morgan Stanley, 2018). Similarly, the US contingent workforce has grown by 66% in the last decade, as firms increasingly rely on alternative work arrangements (EY, 2016; Gallup, 2018). As per Gallup study conducted in 2018, 36% of American workers participate in gig work, with 29% identifying it as their primary employment. Globally, 20-30% of the working age population in the US and EU is engaged in independent work (Mckinsey, 2016) Developing economies like India, China, Indonesia, and Brazil contribute a significant share of gig labour (Boston Consulting Group, 2019). In India, one of the youngest and fastest growing labour economies, the gig economy sector hired more than 10 million gig workers in the year 2024-25 and the number is expected to grow to more than 20 million by 2029-30 (NITI Aayog, 20 BCG also forecasts that sectors such as construction, manufacturing, retail, and logistics will generate up to 70 million gig jobs, including 37 million unskilled roles. While the gig economy has become an integral part of the global workforce, it is expected to boom to be worth USD 2,1450 billion by 2023. (Jacquard, 2025).

## 2.4. Importance of Worker Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has long been a central theme in work psychology, with over 80 years of scholarly exploration into various dimensions (Weiss & Merlo, Kelsy 2015). Most definitions emphasize the affective response an employee has toward aspects of their job- such as coworkers, pay or work conditions. According to Locke's (1976), satisfaction arises from the gap between what one desires and what one receives in a job. Several theories have helped shape the understanding around job satisfaction such as Herzberg's two factor theory, Maslow's Hierarchy Theory, Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics model, Vroom's expectancy theory and the Job demands-resources model. These theories and models collectively furnish a blueprint for understanding the multifaceted dynamics of job satisfaction (Robbins & Judge, 2021). However, there has been no consensus on a single measurement instrument of job satisfaction due to the complexity of measuring the human feelings are involved (Wanous & Lawler III, 1972). Review of literature showcases that different methods have been used to assess job satisfaction such as asking supervisors or observers, through questionnaires, interviews and critical incident analysis (Greenberg & Baron, 2000). Among all the techniques used to measure job satisfaction, the questionnaire method is largely used technique compared to other data collection techniques (Spector P., 2008). Likert scale is the most used tool to measure job satisfaction through questionnaires (Locke E. A., 1976; Arnold, Silvester, Patterson, & Robertson, 2005).

## 2.5. Job Satisfaction of Gig Workers

An extensive review of literature on factors affecting satisfaction and motivation of gig workers was performed. A number of factors emerged from this. Most freelancers today are not choosing gig economy or gig work due to unavailability of better options. In addition to full time employment, gig platforms are helping in fulfilling of goals, preferences and needs beyond compensation. Essentially new freelancers are embracing the gig economy trend as a way to achieve greater autonomy, flexibility and meaningful work along with higher

wages which results in higher happiness and satisfaction levels (Boston Consulting Group, 2017). However, contrary to this view that gig workers join gig work due to unavailability of full-time jobs, Ernest & Young, 2016 survey titled 'Is gig economy a fleeting fad, or an enduring legacy?' highlights that as much as 80% of gig workers surveyed considers flexibility and 49% considers control as the top benefits of opting for gig work and only 20% said they opt for gig work due to non-availability of suitable full-time employment and more than half of them look forward to working with gig economy (EY, 2016). While millennial gig workers prefer gig work in order to have work life balance and pursuing their passions, genX and baby boomer gig workers do gig work to earn money and make ends meet (Prudential Insurance Company of America, 2019). In another study on Gen Y and Gen Z, it is found that both the motivation positively impacts both quality of life and overall well-being in both the set of generations of gig workers. While the challenges faced by gig workers such as job insecurity, irregular hours, poor social support increase the stress and negatively affect the well-being (Kurian & Madhavi, 2024). This negative effect may result in dissatisfaction which could prompt retraining, sectoral shifts or pursuit of traditional employment (Javdan & Rostamkalaei, 2025). Independence and autonomy to do your work and take your decisions, building and maintaining relationships and networks, developing oneself and learn new things while doing tasks which are challenging to some degrees are some of the motivators found amongst IT and business consulting gig workers (Karlsson & Wranne, 2019). Additionally, it was found that job autonomy positively strengthens the relationship between decent work & job satisfaction in new age workforce (Wan & Duffy, 2022). Decision to remain in gig economy is found to be influenced by factors such as task autonomy, social interaction and intrinsic fulfilment (Nalini & Munda, 2024). In another survey conducted on UBER drivers by INSEAD in UK, it was found that those working as gig workers were found to be having better mental health, drinking less and have higher confidence levels with low stress compared with those engaged in full time traditional jobs (Apouey & Stabile, 2019). Overall job satisfaction with low stress levels were also found in another research on 400 digital nomads in Bali, Indonesia (Haking, J., 2017). However, Independent workers who chose to work in gig economy by choice than necessity were found to be having higher satisfaction with their work (McKinsey, 2016). Moreover, gig economy is not merely reshaping worker roles but also fundamentally mutating the core dimensions of entrepreneurship. Platform-mediated labour is believed to be disrupting the distinction between opportunity-driven and necessity-driven entrepreneurs by transferring risk and responsibility from owners to gig workers, limiting workers' profit prospects (Hägg et. al., 2025). Factors from Herzberg and Taylor's theories such as a greater number of orders, salary and benefits, company's safety policy, possibility of growth and advancement, opportunities for job rotation & evolvement, rewards, sense of worth, flexibility to choose work hours, performance linked pay and customer satisfaction were highlighted to have an impact on satisfaction of workers in gig economy of China (Mukopadhyay & Chatwin, 2020). Apart from this, personality traits, characteristics, personal values and autonomy were found to be having impact on work satisfaction & life satisfaction of self-employed workers (Lange, 2012). Unique factor like 'higher platform quality' – quality of application or platform used by gig worker is also found to be having significant positive impact on job satisfaction (Kim et.al., 2018). However, it is found that algorithmic management in gig platforms reduces worker autonomy, creates unstable working conditions, and reinforces social inequalities. Long term effects of this could mean stress, insecurity, and uncertain career paths (Shyamini & Rejuna, 2025).

It is evident through literature review that there exists no single desirable instrument to measure job satisfaction as it is related directly to the complexity of human emotions and feelings (Wanous & Lawler III, 1972). The review of literature makes it clear that there are different methods used to assess job satisfaction such as asking supervisors, using structured questionnaires, conducting interviews and performing critical incident analysis (Greenberg & Baron, 2000). However, researchers in general seem to have favoured questionnaire techniques to measure job satisfaction rather than other data collection methods due to time limitations (Spector, P., 2008). Likert scale is most commonly used technique of measurement used for job satisfaction (Arnold, Silvester, Patterson & Robertson, 2005). Most commonly used scales used in job satisfaction surveys are Job In General (JIG) scale developed by Brayfield & Rothe (1951), Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) developed by Weiss et.al. (1967) and Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) developed by Spector (1985) are commonly used instruments developed after careful validity and reliability. JIG is an 18-item scale used to measure global job satisfaction on 5-point Likert scale focused on facet-specific job satisfaction measure involving facets that make up a particular job such as pay, supervision and promotion. MSQ on the other hand has 20 different facets or aspects of work environment which measures employee satisfaction. These 20 aspects include activity, independence, variety, social status, supervision (human relations), moral values, security, social service, authority, ability, utilization, company policies and practices, compensation, advancement, responsibility, creativity, working conditions, co-workers, recognition and achievement. JSS has 9 facet specific scores based on pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, co-workers, nature of work, and communication. Many job satisfaction instruments exist, only a few meet several criteria for a high level of reliability and construct validity, MJS included most of the work factors that were considered necessary for good content validity (Saane, Sluiter, Verbeek & Frings-Dresen, 2003).

## 2.6. Lack of Bibliometric Study on Gig Workers' Job Satisfaction: An Existing Research Gap

In recent years, several bibliometric studies have examined job satisfaction across different organizational contexts, yet a focused analysis within the gig economy remains noticeably absent. For instance, Mukherjee and Gopal (2024) conducted a bibliometric analysis of digital transformation and its impact on employee job satisfaction in management and social sciences, identifying conceptual linkages but not contextualizing gig-based employment. Similarly, Saha and Dutta (2025) analysed global research trends on job satisfaction and turnover intention, offering insights into author networks and thematic evolution, but without specific focus on gig workers. Judijanto (2024) explored job satisfaction in relation to work environment factors such as stress and leadership, while Barreiro Ribeiro et al. (2021) investigated job satisfaction and organizational commitment within the healthcare sector. Hastuti et al. (2023) studied the intersection of competency and job satisfaction across a decade of literature, yet did not disaggregate findings by employment type. While these studies provide valuable thematic and methodological insights, none of them isolate job satisfaction within the context of gig-based work, nor do they offer a targeted bibliometric mapping of this domain. This represents a clear gap that the present study seeks to address by systematically analysing the global research landscape on gig workers' job satisfaction—a growing yet underexplored area in both academic and policy discourses.

Given the unique characteristics of gig work—such as autonomy, precarity, and non-traditional work arrangements—there is a pressing need to map and analyse global research trends specific to gig workers' job satisfaction. Despite a growing number of bibliometric studies on the gig economy, a critical thematic gap remains concerning the focused analysis of gig workers' job satisfaction. For instance, Batmunkh, Fekete-Farkas, and Lakner (2022) and Ishak et al. (2021) offer broad mappings of the gig economy landscape, highlighting themes such as digital platforms, employment flexibility, and labour structures. However, these studies do not delve into psychological constructs or job-related outcomes such as satisfaction or well-being. Keywords like "human resource management" or "motivation" appear only peripherally, with no thematic or temporal analysis of satisfaction trends. Similarly, studies by Balcı and Eraslan (2023), Idris et al. (2025), and Vadavi and Sharmiladevi (2024) remain macro-focused and overlook worker-specific experiences, failing to incorporate "job

satisfaction" as a central term in their co-occurrence or cluster analyses. Even when job satisfaction is mentioned, as in Faizah and Agustina (2025) and Gürsoy (2023), it appears only as a low-frequency keyword and is not explored conceptually or mapped across time or context. Chigori's (2024) work on worker well-being and Chaudhary and Niroula's (2024) analysis of global gig dynamics both contribute important overviews but do not isolate gig workers nor address job satisfaction in a focused bibliometric manner. These collective omissions underscore a clear and pressing research gap: the absence of a targeted bibliometric analysis that maps the intellectual structure, temporal evolution, and thematic development of job satisfaction within gig work literature. The above table reveals a significant scholarly gap of not having any study performed before on bibliometric study of gig worker's job satisfaction.

**Table 1:** Comparison of Existing Bibliometric Studies and the Present Study on Gig Workers' Job Satisfaction

| Study | Scope | Job Satisfaction Focus | Thematic/Temporal Mapping | Psychosocial Constructs | Contribution |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Batmunkh et al. (2022) | Broad gig economy trends (2014–2022) | Not included | No | Not addressed | Macro-level overview of gig work literature |
| Ishak et al. (2021) | Gig economy mapping using VOSviewer | Mentioned marginally | No | Keywords like motivation, HRM appear | Geographic and thematic keyword mapping |
| Balcı & Eraslan (2023) | Platform and sharing economy focus | Not explored | No | Not included | Focus on structural gig trends |
| Idris et al. (2025) | Macro-level gig trends and keyword analysis | Not addressed | No | Not included | General mapping of gig economy evolution |
| Vadavi & Sharmiladevi (2024) | Gig economy evolution and labor dynamics | Not included | No | Flexibility, autonomy noted | Broad conceptual clusters |
| Chaudhary & Niroula (2024) | Global gig research dynamics | Not included | No | Not included | Socioeconomic and regulatory themes |
| Faizah & Agustina (2025) | Gig worker bibliometric analysis | Low-frequency keyword | No | Not explored | Keyword clustering and publication trends |
| Gürsoy (2023) | Scientometric analysis of gig economy | Mentioned, not mapped | No | Acknowledges motivation, satisfaction gaps | High-level co-citation and trend mapping |
| Chigori (2024) | Worker well-being in digital economy | Not gig-specific | No | Well-being, engagement broadly discussed | Worker-oriented, but not gig-focused |
| Your Study (Proposed) | Gig workers' job satisfaction | Central focus | Yes – thematic and temporal mapping | Yes – satisfaction, well-being, autonomy | First focused bibliometric study on gig workers' job satisfaction |

This consistent omission across both gig economy literature and job satisfaction studies highlights a substantial and timely research gap. Therefore, the current study aims to bridge this disconnect by providing the first focused bibliometric investigation into gig workers' job satisfaction, capturing its intellectual evolution, thematic structure, and global research patterns. Therefore, the present study addresses this lacuna by offering a focused bibliometric investigation into global\ research trends specifically related to gig workers' job satisfaction, thereby extending and deepening existing bibliometric insights within the domain of gig economy research.

# 3. Research Questions

The study aims to identify and analyse the determinants and factors of job satisfaction in gig workers evolved over time through comprehensive bibliometric analysis and systematic literature review. It aims to analyse the trends, authorship, regional distribution through Bibliometric Analysis and analysis of themes, theories and methods through Systematic Literature Review of the study.
1) What are the most frequently explored themes and conceptual areas related to gig worker's job satisfaction in existing literature?
2) Who are the most influential authors, and what are the seminal works shaping the discourse on gig worker satisfaction determinants?
3) How has scholarly research on the factors influencing gig worker satisfaction evolved over time in terms of publication volume, thematic focus, and key trends?
4) What research gaps and future directions can be identified in the study of factors affecting gig worker satisfaction?
5) What are the dominant research themes and emerging trends in the literature on gig worker satisfaction determinants?
By answering these questions, this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of job satisfaction of gig workers, identifying key factors affecting it, thematic trends, and future research directions. This will offer valuable insights for researchers, policy-makers and HR professionals and employers involved in managing gig workers in gig economy.

# 4. Research Objectives

This paper aims to systematically analyse the existing literature on gig worker satisfaction to understand its evolution over time, identify key trends in research focus and methodology, and delineate significant gaps for future inquiry.
1) To identify and analyse the most frequently studied themes and conceptual areas related to gig worker satisfaction in the existing scholarly literature.
2) To map and analyse the most influential authors, institutions, documents and sources shaping the academic discourse on gig worker satisfaction using citation metrics and bibliometric indicators.
3) To examine the evolution of research on gig worker satisfaction over time, highlighting changes in publication trends, thematic focus and keyword usage.
4) To uncover research gaps and propose future directions by interpreting the thematic distribution and positioning of clusters within the literature.
5) To categorize and interpret the dominant and emerging research themes through bibliometric coupling, co-authorship networks, and science mapping techniques.

# 5. Methodology

## 5.1. Selection of Database

The study relies on the Scopus database to conduct a comprehensive bibliometric analysis. Scopus was selected as the primary database for this bibliometric and systematic literature review due to its comprehensive coverage, structured metadata, and suitability for science mapping and citation analysis. Scopus provides access to a wide array of peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, and book chapters across multiple disciplines, making it particularly advantageous for interdisciplinary topics such as gig economy research (Donthu et al., 2021). Compared to alternatives like Web of Science or Google Scholar, Scopus offers broader journal coverage and more consistent citation indexing, which enhances the reliability of bibliometric outputs (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016). Furthermore, Scopus supports advanced export features and compatibility with visualization tools such as VOSviewer and Biblioshiny, facilitating keyword co-occurrence analysis, citation networks, and thematic clustering (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). Given these advantages, Scopus is widely recognized as a robust and reliable source for bibliometric research in management, social sciences, and information systems (Zupic & Čater, 2015).
In addition to peer-reviewed articles, several influential industry and policy reports—such as those from Boston Consulting Group (2017, 2019), Morgan Stanley (2018), Deloitte (2018), the World Economic Forum (2016), EY (2016), and McKinsey Global Institute (2016)—have highlighted the scale, challenges, and policy implications of gig work. While these reports provide valuable practitioner and policy-oriented insights, they were not included in the bibliometric dataset in order to maintain methodological consistency and ensure comparability across peer-reviewed scholarship. However, these reports have been studied to strengthen the literature review of the present study.

## 5.2. Search Strategy

At this stage, careful selection of keywords and are selected. This selection of keywords is one of the most crucial steps in bibliometric analysis as it is on these keywords, the search is conducted and results are obtained. Wrong or inappropriate selection of keywords may lead to faulty results and non-achievement of quality results of bibliometric analysis.
For a study on gig worker satisfaction, keyword construction must encompass both the conceptual dimensions of gig work and the notion of satisfaction. To ensure inclusiveness, synonyms and related terms such as "gig economy," "platform work," "freelance work," "on-demand work," and "independent work" are frequently combined with terms like "job satisfaction," "worker satisfaction," and "work satisfaction" (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015). Using Boolean operators (e.g., AND, OR) and wildcards (e.g., worker* to capture both worker and workers) allows for broader retrieval while maintaining precision (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). Furthermore, keyword selection is often guided by preliminary scoping searches to identify commonly used terminology in the field, which helps reduce the risk of overlooking influential studies due to terminological variation (van Eck & Waltman, 2014). Thus, a well-designed keyword strategy not only ensures comprehensive data collection but also enhances the validity of subsequent bibliometric mapping and thematic analysis. A search strategy here was devised based on various definitions of gig worker provided in literature.
The 'title, abstracts and keywords' search fields were used and Boolean operators 'AND/OR' were applied to the identified keywords. It led to the following final search formula: (TITLE-ABS-KEY("gig work er*" OR "gig economy" OR "platform worker*" OR "freelance worker*" OR "on-demand worker*" OR "digital labour" OR "crowd worker*" OR "independent contractor*") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY("job satisfaction" OR "worker satisfaction" OR "employee satisfaction" OR "work satisfaction" OR "well-being" OR "happiness at work" OR "job engagement" OR "work engagement")).
The keywords used in this bibliometric analysis were selected through an extensive review of existing literature on gig work and job satisfaction. Prior studies in the field were closely examined to identify commonly used terms and conceptual framings of both "gig work" and "worker satisfaction." Seminal and recent papers were consulted to trace the terminological evolution of the gig economy, which informed the inclusion of diverse expressions such as "platform work," "freelance work," "on-demand work," and "digital labour." Similarly, the satisfaction dimension was broadened to include constructs like "job satisfaction," "employee satisfaction," "work engagement," and "well-being"—ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive search. This approach, grounded in scholarly precedent, helped to minimize terminological bias and ensured that the final search formula captured both foundational and emerging discourse across disciplines. The final set of keywords thus reflects a deliberate and literature-informed effort to construct a valid and exhaustive search strategy.
In line with bibliometric practice, the terminology used in this review reflects the original language of cited authors (e.g., gig work, platform work, on-demand work). However, for consistency, the overarching analysis adopts gig work/gig workers as the standard term.

## 5.3. Data Collection and Retrieval

In the present study, a relatively narrow inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to ensure the relevance and quality of the selected literature. Only journal articles and reviews published in Scopus-indexed journals between 2005 to 2025 were included. The above search formula initially identified 243 documents. While screening of documents, all the documents belonging to Business, Management and Accounting, Social Sciences, Computer Science, Psychology, Economics, Econometrics and Finance, Medicine, Engineering, Decision Sciences, Environmental Science, Mathematics, Arts & Humanities, Nursing, Energy, Biochemistry, Genetics & Molecular Biology, Neuroscience, Multidisciplinary, Agriculture & Biological Sciences, Physics & Planetary Sciences, Dentistry and Chemical Engineering were retained. Since gig economy is a distinct type of work set up, it is widespread among all the different industries and sectors. It is not subjected to a specific type of field.
While refining the database, recommendations of Donthu et al. (2021), Saini et al. (2022), and Ramos-Rodríguez and Ruíz-Navarro (2004) were adhered, who emphasize the inclusion of peer-reviewed journal articles and review papers, as these sources undergo rigorous scholarly evaluation and are indicative of well-established contributions to the field. As suggested, we removed non-article documents such as conference papers, books and book chapters. This resulted in getting 172 papers as a result. To maintain a focus on high-quality, peer-reviewed academic research, the selection was further restricted to journal articles, thereby excluding other document types such as conference proceedings and book chapters. Additionally, only articles published in English were retained to ensure linguistic consistency in the analysis.
Main techniques of bibliometric analysis as suggested by Donthu et al. (2021) were adopted to carry out the present study. The two main techniques such as performance analysis and science mapping were used along with network analysis. The below table 2 shows distribution of various techniques used.

**Table 2:** Methods of Bibliometric Used in Study (Source: Author)

| Performance Analysis | Science Mapping | Network Analysis |
|---|---|---|
| Annual Scientific Production | Most relevant words | Co-authorship analysis |
| Top 10 most cited documents | Word frequency over time | |
| Top 10 most cited authors | Treemap | |
| Author-impact (h-index, m-index, TC, NP, PY Start etc.) | Trending topics | |
| Top 10 most cited sources | Thematic map | Bibliometric coupling |
| Sources' local impact | Three-field plot | |
| | Key authors by cluster/theme | |
| Most influential organisation | Cluster analysis | |
| | Thematic distribution of clusters | |

## 5.4. Performing The Analysis

Once the dataset was achieved after carefully applying relevant filters, there was a manual review of titles and abstracts conducted to achieve thematic relevance, following inclusion criteria based on gig work and job satisfaction (Donthu et al., 2021; Kitchenham & Charters, 2007). After initial automated filtering for language, document type and source type, a manual review of titles and abstracts was conducted to ensure thematic relevance, following inclusion criteria based on gig worker job satisfaction (Donthu et al., 2021; Kitchenham & Charters, 2007). After this screening, a final dataset of 166 documents was retained for bibliometric and qualitative synthesis. This process aligns with established guidelines for systematic literature reviews and is documented using a PRISMA-style flow diagram (Donthu et al., 2021; Moher et al., 2009; Zupic & Čater, 2015). The presentation of the main information summary chart is adopted by Tanna & Mandavia (2024).
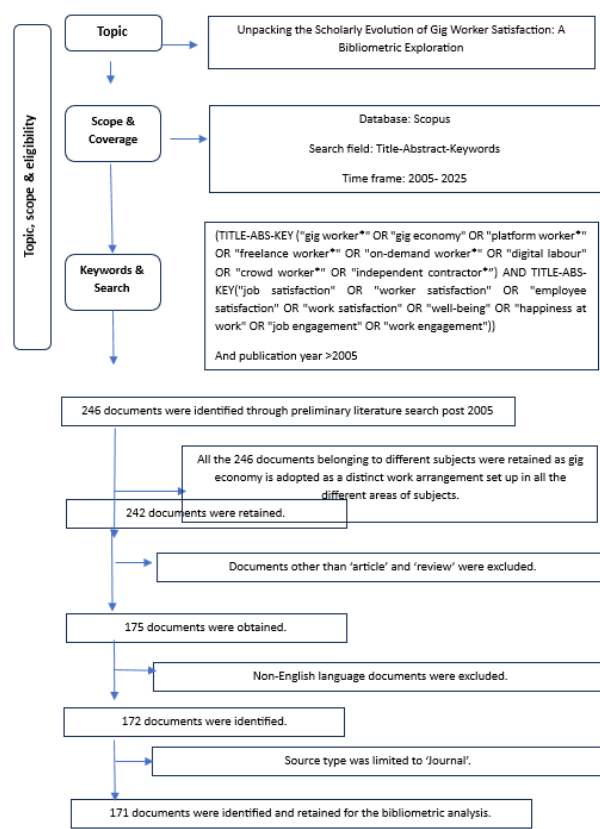


**Fig. 1:** Main Information Summary.

Source: Author. (Framework adopted from Tanna & Mandavia, 2024).

To ensure a high-quality and thematically focused dataset, both automated and manual review processes were employed. Initially, an automated screening was conducted using the Scopus database. The search was limited to peer-reviewed documents by applying filters to include only journal articles and reviews. This reduced the initial pool from 243 to 172 documents. A language filter was then applied to retain only English-language publications, yielding 169 documents. Subsequently, the dataset was further refined by excluding all non-journal source types, resulting in 168 records. Following automated screening, a manual review of titles and abstracts was conducted to assess the thematic relevance of each document, specifically focusing on studies addressing factors influencing gig worker satisfaction. Based on this review, two papers were excluded for not aligning with the study scope, resulting in a final dataset of 166 documents. This process aligns with established guidelines for bibliometric and systematic literature reviews (Donthu et al., 2021; Moher et al., 2009; Zupic & Čater, 2015).

In order to achieve the defined objective, two types of analysis were conducted, namely comprehensive and main enrichment analysis (Donthu et al., 2021). The main analysis consists of performance analysis and science mapping and enrichment analysis consists of advanced visualisation techniques. This study utilized Biblioshiny and various functions from the bibliometrix package within RStudio to perform the bibliometric analysis. RStudio is a free, open-source integrated development environment (IDE) for R, available for download at https://rstudio.com/products/rstudio/download/ (accessed on 21 February 2025). It supports a wide range of open-source packages tailored for various types of analysis. Among these, the bibliometrix package—available at http://www.bibliometrix.org (accessed on 21

February 2025)—is one of the most comprehensive tools for conducting bibliometric analyses (Abdallah et al., 2021). Additionally, co-occurrence analysis was performed using VOSviewer, an open-source software tool designed for constructing and visualizing bibliometric networks. The software is available for download at https://www.vosviewer.com/ (accessed on 21 February 2025). Biblioshiny offered a comprehensive suite of bibliometric techniques, while VOSviewer contributed advanced capabilities for network visualization. By integrating the strengths of both tools, this study was able to conduct a more nuanced analysis—facilitating the identification of key documents, influential authors, prominent organizations, and enabling bibliographic coupling.

To conduct the citation analysis, we utilized both direct citation counts and co-citation network analysis to identify the most influential papers, authors, and journals (Saini et al., 2022). Bibliographic coupling was employed to examine relationships among publications based on shared references, enabling the identification of research clusters that exhibit thematic or methodological commonalities (Perianes-Rodriguez et al., 2016).

Keyword co-occurrence maps, co-citation networks and bibliometric coupling visualisations were made using VOSviewer. Using these, we were able to identify main research themes and clusters in the area of gig workers' job satisfaction (Batmunkh et al., 2022). Citation frequency and trend analysis were performed using Biblioshiny software. This led to in-depth understanding of the bibliometric data. Three-field plot was also created in Biblioshiny to explain the relationships between 'countries' on the left side, 'keywords' in the middle field and 'journals' on the right side of the field. Keyword analysis was performed to extract the most frequently occurring terms and visualize emerging research trends and themes using graphical representations such as a treemap and a thematic map.

### 5.5. Present Themes and Future Trends of Research

It is important to find out various themes/clusters in the research area using bibliometric coupling, which was performed using VOSviewer. Donthu et al., (2021) recommends this analysis helps in finding out evolving themes and developments. Further, keyword analysis, cluster analysis and content analysis were performed to find out unexplored future research directions (Donthu et al. 2021).

## 6. Key Findings & Interpretation

### 6.1. Performance and Citation Analysis

The annual production of 171 documents from 2005 to 2025 are presented in fig.2. The annual scientific production on gig workers' job satisfaction has shown a gradual yet significant increase over time. It is noteworthy that no article was published in 2005. From 2006 to 2016, publication activity remained minimal, with no more than one article per year and several years recording zero publications. A notable upward trend begins in 2017, with a moderate increase to 4 articles, followed by a more consistent growth: 9 in 2019, 10 in 2020, and 14 in 2021. The field witnessed a sharp surge in research interest in recent years, with 27 articles in 2022, 28 in 2023, and a peak of 48 articles in 2024. Although the number slightly declined to 22 articles in 2025. This could also be because the dataset includes publications up to April 2025. As the year has not yet concluded, the figures for 2025 may not represent the full annual output and should be interpreted accordingly. The overall trend reflects a rapidly growing scholarly attention to the topic, especially post-2020 — likely influenced by the rise of the gig economy and changing labour dynamics during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

An article wise analysis resulted in 85 articles or documents with a minimum of five citations. Table 3 outlines the top 10 most cited scholarly documents, each with a minimum of five citations, identified through bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer. These references represent the most influential works within the analysed corpus on platform labour, gig economy dynamics, and digital work environments. Leading the list is Kuhn (2017), with 295 citations, which presents a foundational typology of gig workers—namely micro-entrepreneurs, dependent contractors, and so-called "instaserfs"—providing a structural lens for interpreting the evolving nature of labour on digital platforms. This work is widely regarded for its conceptual clarity in mapping platform-mediated labour roles. Abidin (2017) follows with 238 citations, offering critical insights into digital labour among family influencers, and introducing the concept of "calibrated amateurism." This paper is notable for its cultural lens on youth participation in platform economies. Jabagi (2019) with 216 citations contributes a psychological perspective on gig worker motivation, challenging traditional extrinsic/intrinsic motivation paradigms through the application of self-determination theory.
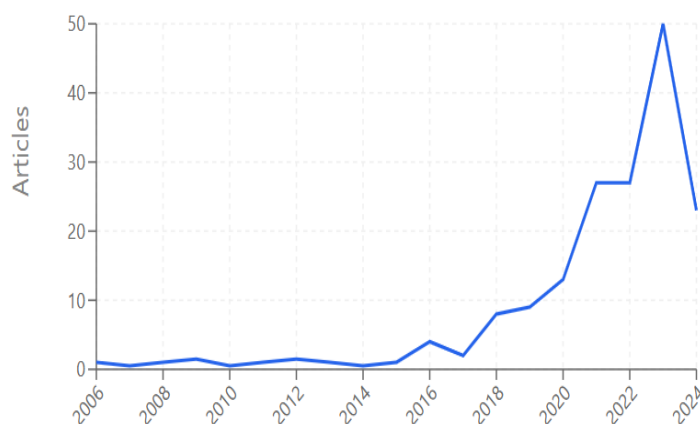


**Fig. 2:** Annual Scientific Production.

Note: Data for 2025 is partial and reflects publications available as of April 2025.

**Table 3:** Top 10 Most Cited Documents (Minimum Five Citations) from Selected Database Source Vosviewer

| Document | Title | Citations |
|---|---|---|
| Kuhn (2017) | Micro-entrepreneurs, Dependent Contractors, and Instaserfs: Understanding Online Labor Platform Workforces | 295 |
| Abidin (2017) | #familygoals: Family Influencers, Calibrated Amateurism, and Justifying Young Digital Labor | 238 |
| Jabagi (2019) | Gig-workers' motivation: thinking beyond carrots and sticks | 216 |
| Prottas (2006) | Stress, satisfaction, and the work-family interface: A comparison of self-employed business owners, independents, and organizational employees. | 178 |
| Berger (2019) | Uber happy? Work and well-being in the 'Gig Economy' | 117 |
| Ravenelle (2019) | "We're not uber:" control, autonomy, and entrepreneurship in the gig economy | 114 |
| Cram (2022) | Examining the impact of algorithmic control on Uber driver's technostress | 102 |
| Gleim (2019) | Sharers and sellers: A multi-group examination of gig economy workers' perceptions | 97 |
| Apouey (2020) | Gig workers during Covid-19 crisis in France: Financial precarity & mental well-being | 91 |
| Keith (2019) | Mechanical Turk and Gig Economy: exploring differences between gig workers | 78 |

Prottas (2006), cited 178 times, provides a comparative study of job stress and work-life balance across different employment categories, making it relevant for understanding the implications of self-employment and independent work. In a similar vein, Berger (2019) with 117 citations investigates the impact of gig work—particularly ride-hailing—on employee happiness and well-being, offering empirical data on job satisfaction and emotional outcomes.

Ravenelle (2019) cited 114 times, critiques the entrepreneurial narrative promoted by gig platforms, focusing on worker autonomy and control. This qualitative analysis underscores the tension between perceived freedom and platform-imposed constraints. Cram (2022), with 102 citations, examines algorithmic management and technostress among Uber drivers, emphasizing the psychological costs of automated decision-making systems.

Gleim (2019) with 97 citations explores identity differences between "sharers" and "sellers" in the gig economy, contributing to the understanding of how personal values and self-concepts shape work experiences. Apouey (2020), cited 91 times, evaluates the impact of COVID-19 on gig workers in France, revealing heightened financial vulnerability and mental health challenges during the crisis. Rounding out the list is Keith (2019) with 78 citations, which compares Mechanical Turk workers to other gig workers, highlighting important distinctions in task type, autonomy, and platform governance.

Collectively, these top-cited works form a core body of literature that significantly shapes current understanding of labor conditions, worker agency, motivation, and structural inequalities in the gig economy. Their frequent citation underscores their role as key reference points for scholars and practitioners engaged in the study of digital labour ecosystems.

Table 3 highlights the top 10 most cited authors in the field of gig economy research, specifically within the context of job satisfaction, based on bibliometric analysis conducted using VOSviewer. The selection criteria included a minimum of two documents and five citations per author, ensuring that only consistent and impactful contributors are represented. Of the 497 identified authors in the dataset, 21 met the inclusion threshold of contributing at least two documents and receiving a minimum of five citations. While this may appear selective, such thresholds are aligned with established bibliometric practice (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015), particularly for focused and emerging topics such as gig workers' job satisfaction. These 21 authors can thus be regarded as core contributors whose research significantly shapes the discourse in this domain.

**Table 4:** Top 10 Most Cited Authors (Minimum 3 Documents and 25 Citations) from Selected Database (Source: Vosviewer)

| Top 10 Most Cited Authors | | |
|---|---|---|
| Author | No of Document | Citations |
| Marsan, Josianne | 2 | 216 |
| Jabagi, Nura | 2 | 216 |
| Croteau, Anne-marie | 2 | 216 |
| Audebrand, Luc K. | 2 | 216 |
| Stabile, Mark | 2 | 95 |
| Apouey, Benedicte | 2 | 95 |
| Fieseler, Christian | 2 | 63 |
| Oviedo-trespalacios, Oscar | 2 | 50 |
| Nguyen, Minh Hieu | 2 | 50 |
| Chin, Tachia | 2 | 48 |

The authors Marsan, Josianne; Jabagi, Nura; Croteau, Anne-Marie; and Audebrand, Luc K. each have 2 documents and 216 citations, positioning them as the most influential researchers in the dataset. Their high citation counts, despite a relatively small number of publications, indicate that their work is highly valued and frequently referenced within the scholarly discourse.

Following them, Stabile, Mark and Apouey, Bénédicte also stand out with 95 citations each, suggesting strong scholarly impact, particularly in the area of gig workers' economic and mental well-being. Meanwhile, Fieseler, Christian and Oviedo-Trespalacios, Oscar demonstrates notable influence with 63 and 50 citations, respectively, possibly reflecting their work on technology-driven labour dynamics and worker experiences in digitally mediated environments.

Authors Nguyen, Minh Hieu and Chin, Tachia round out the list, with 50 and 48 citations, respectively. Their inclusion emphasizes the growing attention toward interdisciplinary and international perspectives on platform labour. This author-level analysis supports the identification of core thought leaders in the academic conversation around gig work and job satisfaction, which is essential for understanding theoretical development, research gaps, and future directions in this evolving field.

To assess the scientific impact and productivity of authors contributing to the field of gig workers' job satisfaction, bibliometric indicators such as the h-index, g-index, and m-index were employed. Table 5 shows h-index, g-index, m-index, total citations (TC), the number of publications (NP), and the start year of the publication (PY start). The h-index reflects both the number of publications and the number of citations per publication, providing a balanced measure of an author's influence. The g-index enhances this by giving more weight to highly cited articles, thus capturing the impact of particularly influential works. Meanwhile, the m-index—which is calculated as the h-index divided by the number of years since the first publication—accounts for the career length of an author, allowing comparisons between early-career and senior researchers. Together, these indices offer a nuanced understanding of scholarly performance within the domain and help identify key contributors shaping the literature on gig worker's job satisfaction. Table 3 presents a comparative assessment of author-level research impact, based on key bibliometric indicators calculated using the Bibliometrix R-package. The parameters include h-index,

g-index, m-index, total citations (TC), number of publications (NP), and publication year start (PY_start). These metrics offer a nuanced view of both quantity and influence of an author's scholarly output.

**Table 5:** Author Impact (H-Index, G-Index, M-Index, Total Citations (TC)), the Number of Publications (NP), and the Start Year of Publication (PY Start) Using Bibliometrix

| Author Impact | Parameter | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Author | h_index | g_index | m_index | TC | NP | PY_start |
| APOUEY B | 2 | 2 | 0.333 | 95 | 2 | 2020 |
| BOZZON A | 2 | 2 | 0.333 | 39 | 2 | 2020 |
| CHIN T | 2 | 2 | 0.5 | 48 | 2 | 2022 |
| FIESELER C | 2 | 2 | 0.286 | 63 | 2 | 2019 |
| GADIRAJU U | 2 | 2 | 0.333 | 39 | 2 | 2020 |
| HEINÄNEN S | 2 | 2 | 0.333 | 46 | 2 | 2020 |
| KHAN TH | 2 | 2 | 0.667 | 13 | 2 | 2023 |
| LI Y | 2 | 2 | 0.5 | 35 | 2 | 2022 |
| MACEACHEN E | 2 | 3 | 0.5 | 18 | 3 | 2022 |
| NGUYEN MH | 2 | 2 | 0.667 | 50 | 2 | 2023 |
| h-index, g-index, m-index, total citations (TC), number of publications (NP), and the start year of publication (PY start) | | | | | | |

Among the listed authors, Apouey, B. stands out with the highest total citation count (TC = 95), despite a modest h-index and g-index (both = 2). This suggests that while their number of highly cited papers is limited, at least one of their publications has garnered substantial academic attention—indicating a high-impact individual work. Authors such as Fieseler, C. (TC = 63), Chin, T. (TC = 48), and Heinänen, S. (TC = 46) also show strong influence relative to their small number of publications (NP = 2), reflecting consistent citation performance across their works. Their h-index and g-index values of 2 suggest that both of their publications are consistently cited.

The m-index, which adjusts the h-index based on years since the first publication, gives further context on early-career productivity. For instance, Zhang, L. and Khan, T.H. have the highest m-index values (0.667), indicating a rapid citation accumulation since beginning to publish in 2023—a promising sign of emerging influence. Similarly, MacEachen, E. shows solid productivity (m-index = 0.5) over a short publishing window starting in 2022.

Overall, this analysis reveals a group of emerging and moderately established researchers whose works are gaining traction in the field of gig economy and digital labor studies. Their consistent h-index values and rising citation counts suggest they are key contributors to current discourse, and may be positioned for increased impact in future bibliometric evaluations.

Table 6 presents the top 10 most cited academic sources, each with a minimum of two publications and twenty total citations, as identified through VOSviewer. These sources reflect the scholarly journals and proceedings most active and impactful in publishing research related to gig economy, platform labour, and worker well-being.

The Journal of Managerial Psychology stands out as the most influential source, with 5 publications accumulating 447 citations. This highlights its central role in advancing psychological perspectives on work and employment in non-traditional labour settings. Its high citation count suggests that it has published landmark or foundational articles in the field.

**Table 6:** Top 10 Most Cited Source from Selected Database (Minimum 02 Documents, 20 Citation) Source Vosviewer

| Top 10 Most Cited Source | | |
|---|---|---|
| Source | Documents | Citations |
| Journal of Managerial Psychology | 5 | 447 |
| Journal of Occupational Health Psychology | 2 | 200 |
| Safety Science | 4 | 71 |
| Journalism | 2 | 63 |
| Information Technology and People | 3 | 50 |
| Personal Review | 3 | 45 |
| Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction | 3 | 49 |
| International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health | 6 | 37 |
| International Journal of Information Management | 2 | 34 |
| International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management | 4 | 33 |

Next, the Journal of Occupational Health Psychology contributes 2 documents with 200 citations, indicating exceptionally high impact per article. This journal's prominence suggests strong scholarly interest in the psychological health and occupational stress of gig and platform-based workers. Safety Science, with 4 documents and 71 citations, also ranks prominently. It shows a focus on the occupational and physical safety dimensions of gig work—such as those faced by delivery riders or rideshare drivers. Similarly, Journalism appears with 2 documents and 63 citations, suggesting that media and communication scholars are actively examining gig work's representation and implications in public discourse.

Among management and information systems journals, Information Technology and People (3 documents, 50 citations) and Personal Review (3 documents, 45 citations) demonstrate relevance by exploring the intersection of technology, labour platforms, and workforce behaviour. The Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction also contribute meaningfully (3 documents, 49 citations), under-scoring the importance of human-computer interaction and algorithmic management in gig economy research. This indicates a strong technological orientation in current discourse.

Interestingly, the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, despite publishing 6 documents, has a relatively modest citation count (37), suggesting broad topical coverage but lower per-article impact. Nonetheless, it shows that public health per-spectives on gig work are gaining traction. Lastly, the International Journal of Information Management and the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management also feature in the top 10, reflecting growing attention to platform-mediated service delivery and hospitality-related gig work.

These sources collectively represent a multidisciplinary engagement with the gig economy, spanning psychology, management, technology, public health, safety, and media studies. Their frequent citation and multiple contributions indicate their importance as core publication venues for future researchers exploring job satisfaction, worker well-being, and structural dynamics in digital labour platforms.

The metrics provided for each journal include the h-index, g-index, m-index, total citations (TC), number of publications (NP), and the start year of publication (PY start) is shown in Table 5. The Journal of Managerial Psychology emerges as the most locally impactful source, boasting the highest h-index of 4, g-index of 5, and total citations of 447 with 5 publications since 2019. Its M-index of 0.571 also reflects

consistent scholarly output and citation accumulation over time. The International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health shows high productivity with 6 publications, the most among all sources listed. Despite a modest citation count of 37, its h-index of 3 and m-index of 0.6 indicate sustained relevance in applying public health lenses to platform work, particularly since its contributions began only in 2021. Sustainability (Switzerland) demonstrates a strong early trajectory with 5 publications and an m-index of 0.75, the highest in the table. This suggests that although its total citation count of 19 is currently low, the journal shows rapid influence growth and has potential to become a key outlet for socio-environmental perspectives on gig work.

**Table 7:** Sources Local Impact using Bibliometrix

| Source Impact Element | H Index | G Index | M Index | Tc | Np | Py Start |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Journal Of Managerial Psychology | 4 | 5 | 0.571 | 447 | 5 | 2019 |
| International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health | 3 | 6 | 0.6 | 37 | 6 | 2021 |
| Sustainability (Switzerland) | 3 | 4 | 0.75 | 19 | 5 | 2022 |
| Bmc Public Health | 2 | 2 | 0.667 | 13 | 2 | 2023 |
| Cambridge Journal Of Economics | 2 | 2 | 0.4 | 22 | 2 | 2021 |
| Frontiers In Psychology | 2 | 3 | 0.667 | 14 | 4 | 2023 |
| Information Technology And People | 2 | 3 | 0.333 | 50 | 3 | 2020 |
| International Journal Of Contemporary Hospitality Management | 2 | 4 | 0.667 | 33 | 4 | 2023 |
| International Journal Of Information Management | 2 | 2 | 0.5 | 34 | 2 | 2022 |
| Journal Of Occupational Health Psychology | 2 | 2 | 0.1 | 200 | 2 | 2006 |
| H-Index, G-Index, M-Index, Total Citations (Tc), Number of Publications (Np), and the Start Year of Publication (Py Start) | | | | | | |

Frontiers in Psychology and BMC Public Health, both newer contributors starting in 2023, already show m-index values of 0.667, signalling early momentum in publishing relevant, timely research in psychology and public health contexts respectively. However, their total citation numbers of 14 and 13 remain limited due to recency. The Journal of Occupational Health Psychology stands out with a high total citation count (200) from just 2 documents, but its m-index of 0.1 is low due to its early publication start in 2006. This suggests its influence stems from a few highly foundational publications rather than continuous contribution to recent discourse. Journals like Information Technology and People, International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, and International Journal of Information Management also contribute meaningfully with solid M-index scores and moderate citations, emphasizing interdisciplinary interest from the fields of technology, management, and hospitality. These results highlight a multidisciplinary spread across psychology, public health, technology, and sustainability—indicating that gig economy research draws from diverse but converging scholarly domains.

Table 8 highlights the top contributing organizations based on bibliometric analysis of gig economy literature. Each institution listed has produced at least two publications, with citation counts serving as an indicator of research impact in the field. The analysis of top contributing institutions reveals a global and interdisciplinary research landscape. The Department of Sociology at the National University of Singapore stands out with the highest impact, garnering 267 citations from 2 publications, highlighting its leadership in sociological analysis of platform work. INSEAD and CEPR (France) follow with 95 citations, reflecting strong contributions from economics and business management perspectives.

Institutions such as BI Norwegian Business School, and LUT University (Finland) showcase the role of communication, culture, and management studies in shaping gig economy discourse. Vietnamese universities contribute notable research focused on transportation and infrastructure, while emerging contributors from Bangladesh, Canada, and Turkey signal increasing regional diversity and sectoral specialization, particularly in public health and tourism.

**Table 8:** Most Influential Organization (Minimum Two Documents and Five Citations) from Selected Database Source Vosviewer

| Organisations | Documents | Citations |
|---|---|---|
| Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore, Singapore | 2 | 267 |
| INSEAD and CEPR, Fontainebleau, France | 2 | 95 |
| Department of Communication and Culture, BI Norwegian Business School, Oslo, Norway | 2 | 63 |
| Faculty of Road and Bridge Engineering, The University of Danang - University of Science and Technology, Vietnam | 2 | 50 |
| Faculty of Transport - Economics, University of Transport and Communications, Hanoi, Vietnam | 2 | 50 |
| LUT School of Business and Management, LUT University, Lappeenranta, Finland | 2 | 46 |
| Delft University of Technology, Delft, Netherlands | 2 | 39 |
| Department of Sociology, Jagannath University, Dhaka, Bangladesh | 2 | 13 |
| School of Public Health Sciences, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, ON, Canada | 2 | 13 |
| Faculty of Tourism, Eastern Mediterranean University, Famagusta, Turkey | 2 | 8 |

This distribution underscores the growing international and cross-disciplinary engagement with the gig economy, driven by institutions spanning sociology, engineering, public health, and business studies.

## 6.2. Results of Science Mapping and Visualisation

The 'Most Relevant Words' in the research of gig workers' job satisfaction over the given period shows a strong focus on core concepts in the field. 'Gig economy' appears as the most prominent term, which is not surprising given the topic of the research. This is closely followed by 'well-being' and 'job satisfaction', highlighting a strong scholarly focus on the psychological and emotional dimensions of gig work. Keywords 'gig work' and 'platform work' further underscore the subject's population and employment structure. Additionally, the presence of 'algorithmic management' reflects growing concern with the digital control systems used in platform-based employment. Themes like 'work engagement', 'job autonomy' and 'Covid-19' suggest a broader interest in how autonomy, motivation and external crisis impact on gig workers' experiences. In nutshell, the keyword distribution suggests a research landscape focused on worker well-being, platform governance, and changing labour dynamics, particularly in the post-pandemic digital economy. Figure 5 indicates a tree map validating these findings with the proportional representations of terms like 'gig economy', 'well-being', 'job satisfaction' and 'gig workers. Each block in the tree map represents a different aspect of gig worker's job satisfaction, with varying degrees of emphasis as indicated by their size. Terms like 'gig work' and 'platform work' represents the variations in how researchers conceptualize labour in digital economy. 'Algorithmic management' highlights the interest in digital control and surveillance system imposed by platforms. Lesser used but still significant terms such as 'digital labour', 'freelancers', 'self-employment' and 'COVID-19' indicate emerging sub-themes around precarity, identity and pandemic's influence on gig work. The inclusion of 'gender', 'employment', and 'algorithmic control' also suggests

intersections with social justice, governance, and automation. This treemap not only confirms dominant themes but also reveals the inter-disciplinary reach and evolving focal points in gig economy research.

Figure 3 and figure 4 represents 'the most relevant words' and 'word frequency over time' respectively.

The 'Trending Topics' graph outlines the frequency of key terms over time within the domain of gig worker's job satisfaction, providing a temporal perspective on the evolution of research interests and focus areas (figures 5 & 6). As illustrated in Figure 6, the term gig economy has maintained consistent prominence since 2021, reflected in both its large node size and broad temporal span. This indicates enduring academic interest in the overarching concept. Closely associated themes such as well-being and job satisfaction also show strong represen-tation, pointing to a growing scholarly emphasis on the psychological and emotional outcomes of gig work.

More recently, terms like gig workers, algorithmic management, and platform work have emerged with increasing frequency. These suggest a shift in the literature toward examining the structural and managerial aspects of gig employment, especially in digitally mediated contexts. Topics such as job autonomy and mental health further underscore the focus on worker experiences and the implications of algorithmic oversight. Interestingly, COVID-19 appears as a significant but time-bounded topic, indicating a surge in publications around 2021 and 2022 that examined the pandemic's impact on nonstandard employment arrangements. The presence of self-employment—with a broader temporal range but smaller bubble size—suggests a relatively stable, though less dominant, line of inquiry.
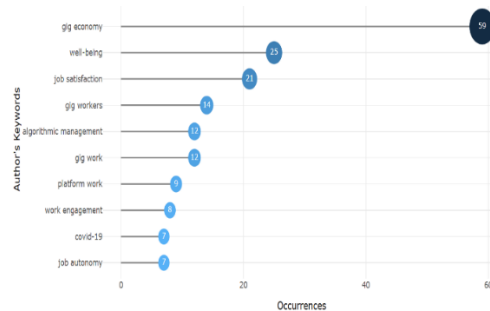


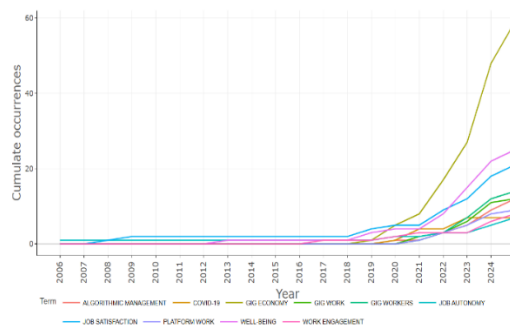**Fig. 3:** Most Relevant Words Source Bibliometrix.



**Fig. 4:** Word Frequency Over Time Source Bibliometrix.

In sum, the trending topics analysis highlights an evolving research landscape that has intensified post-2020, reflecting a diversification of focus from macro-level economic trends to micro-level worker experiences and digital governance mechanisms.
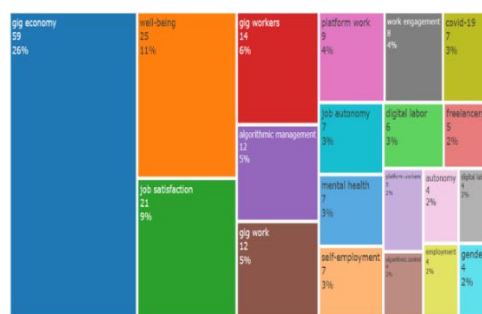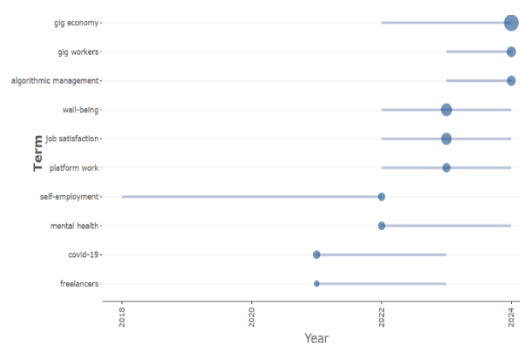


**Fig. 5:** Tree Map Source Bibliometrix.



**Fig. 6:** Trending Topics (Source: Bibliometrix).

The strategic diagram (Figure 7) maps the thematic landscape of research concerning gig workers' job satisfaction. The analysis reveals the interconnectedness and maturity of various themes within this domain. The Motor Themes quadrant highlights 'algorithmic management' alongside 'gig work' and 'platform work' as central and well-developed areas. This suggests that the ways in which algorithms manage and organize work within the gig and platform economy are critical and extensively studied contextual factors that likely have significant implications for gig workers' experiences and, consequently, their job satisfaction. The Niche Themes quadrant includes 'platform workers' and 'digital labour.' While these themes possess a high degree of development, indicating substantial research into the characteristics and nature of gig work, their lower centrality in the context of job satisfaction suggests they might represent foundational but more specific areas that indirectly influence satisfaction levels Notably, the Emerging or Declining Themes quadrant lacks significant clusters, indicating a relatively stable thematic structure without prominent underdeveloped and peripheral topics directly related to gig workers' job satisfaction. While the thematic map (Figure 7) provides an overview of these themes, a more consolidated visualisation of the thematic distribution of clusters is presented later in Figure 11 (Section 6.3.2).

Crucially, the Basic Themes quadrant features the 'gig economy' alongside 'well-being' and, directly, 'job satisfaction.' The high centrality of this cluster confirms that job satisfaction is a fundamental concern within the research on the gig economy. However, the lower density, especially with 'job satisfaction' explicitly present, suggests that while the importance of this outcome is recognized, dedicated and in-depth research specifically focused on understanding its drivers, consequences, and potential interventions for gig workers might be a comparatively less mature area. The co-occurrence of 'well-being' further underscores the importance of considering broader worker outcomes alongside job satisfaction in this context. This quadrant points to potential avenues for future research to deepen our understanding of how to enhance job satisfaction among gig workers.

The three field plot also known as Sankey diagram showcases the relationship between authors' countries of affiliation (AU_CO), the author keywords (ID) and the sources of publication (SO). The Sankey diagram (Figure 8) provides a visual representation of the relationships between the countries of the authors, the key terms used in the research, and the primary publication sources in the field of gig workers' job satisfaction. The analysis reveals that the United States, China, and India are the leading contributors to the literature. The most frequently used keywords, besides 'job satisfaction' itself, include 'gig economy,' 'well-being,' 'gig workers,' 'algorithmic management,' 'gig work,' and 'platform work,' indicating the central themes explored in this research domain. Furthermore, the diagram highlights key publication outlets such as the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, journals focusing on the Gig Economy, and others like the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management and Sustainability (Switzerland) as important sources for research on this topic. The interconnected flows illustrate the associations between specific countries, keywords, and the journals where related studies are published, providing valuable insights into the structure and focus of the existing literature."
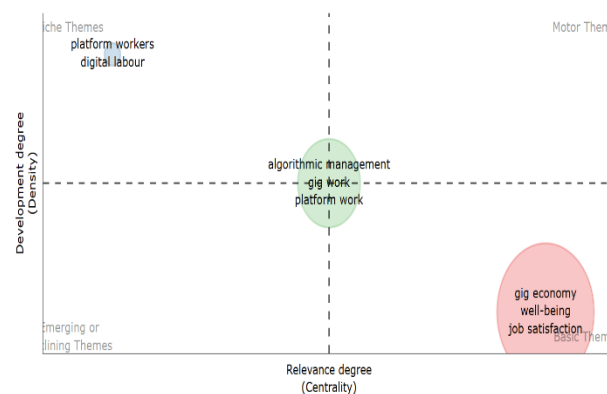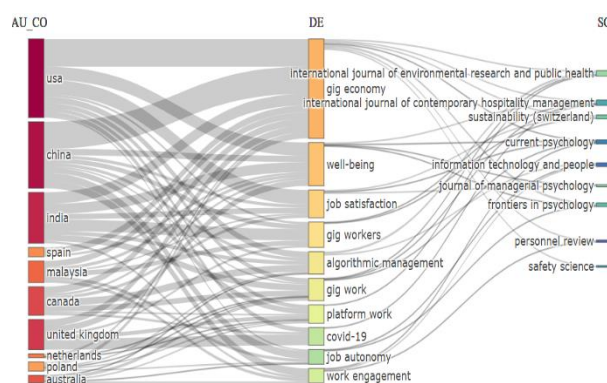


**Fig. 7:** Thematic Map.



**Fig. 8:** Three Field Plot.

## 6.3. Bibliometric Coupling

The bibliometric coupling analysis reveals distinct research clusters within the gig worker job satisfaction literature, indicating well-defined thematic communities based on shared theoretical foundations and reference patterns. The network visualization displays several prominent coupling clusters, with the central red cluster anchored by influential works including Kuhn and Maleki (2017), which appears to serve as a foundational study given its strong coupling connections to multiple other publications. This central cluster demonstrates high interconnectivity, suggesting a core body of literature that draws from similar theoretical frameworks and empirical approaches in gig economy research. The temporal distribution of coupled publications spans from 2009 to 2024, with notable clustering of recent works (2021-2024) in the blue and green clusters, indicating emerging research directions that build upon distinct theoretical foundations compared to earlier studies. The peripheral positioning of certain author groups, such as the yellow cluster containing Kim, Chung, and Woo, suggests specialized research niches within the broader gig worker satisfaction domain that may focus on specific aspects like cultural contexts or particular

gig economy sectors. The varying cluster sizes and coupling strengths, as represented by node sizes and connection densities, highlight the heterogeneous nature of research approaches in this field, with some studies serving as bridge publications that connect different theoretical perspectives while others represent more specialized contributions within specific research streams.

### 6.3.1. Co-Authorship Analysis

The co-authorship analysis reveals how studies on gig worker job satisfaction are intellectually linked via shared references. In this study, the bibliometric coupling with unit of analysis as 'author' was conducted using fractional counting method, with minimum 05 number of citations of an author. This led to selection of 84 authors and the largest connected set of items consisted of 66 items. This co-authorship network analysis reveals a sophisticated collaborative ecosystem within gig economy and job satisfaction research, characterized by distinct scholarly communities with varying degrees of interconnectedness. Central to this network are prominent researchers including Croteau, A. M., Jabagi, N., and Aude, who occupy strategic positions within a densely connected orange cluster, indicating sustained collaborative relationships and significant research output within their specialized domain. The network structure demonstrates clear thematic clustering, with each color-coded community representing scholars united by shared research interests and methodological approaches. The green cluster, featuring Chatterjee, A., Brou, D., and Coakle, appears to concentrate on human resource management and organizational frame-works within the gig economy context. Meanwhile, the red cluster, comprising Berger, T., Frey, C. B., and Levin, G., continues to emphasize macroeconomic implications and policy dimensions of gig work. Emerging research directions are evident in the blue and purple clusters, where scholars such as Wu, J., Zhou, J., and Behl, A. explore the intersection of digital platform dynamics and worker psychological well-being. The presence of inter-cluster connections signals expanding interdisciplinary dialogue, particularly bridging gig economy research with human resource management and organizational psychology perspectives. While some researchers like Apouey, B. and Alsobahi, G. maintain more isolated positions, this may reflect either highly specialized research niches or emerging scholarly contributions yet to be fully integrated into the broader collaborative network. This network configuration suggests a dynamic and evolving field with substantial potential for enhanced cross-disciplinary collaboration and knowledge synthesis across geographical and institutional boundaries.
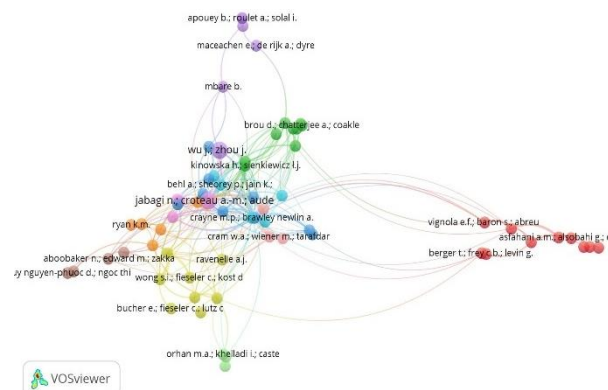


**Fig. 9:** Co-Authorship Analysis (Source: Vosviewer).

**Table 9:** Key Authors by Cluster and Thematic Focus (Source: Author)

| Author(s) | Cluster Color | Thematic Focus |
|---|---|---|
| Croteau, A. M. | Orange | Organizational behavior / HRM |
| Jabagi, N. | Orange | Gig worker experience and autonomy |
| Aude | Orange | Digital labor and motivation |
| Berger, T. | Red | Gig economy and public policy |
| Frey, C. B. | Red | Labor economics / automation |
| Levin, G. | Red | Socioeconomic impacts of gig work |
| Chatterjee, A. | Green | Human capital / workplace transformation |
| Brou, D. | Green | Organizational collaboration |
| Coakle | Green | Corporate HR and platforms |
| Wu, J. | Blue | Platform-based labor systems |
| Zhou, J. | Blue | Technology and gig structures |
| Behl, A. | Blue | Digital work and innovation |
| Apouey, B. | Purple | Health and gig work |
| Roulet, A. | Purple | Sociology of labor |
| Alsobahi, G. | Red | Emerging regional perspectives |

Table 9 presents the most influential authors within the co-authorship network, categorized by cluster colour and their primary thematic focus. Each cluster reflects a distinct research orientation—ranging from organizational behaviour and digital labour (orange) to policy and economic perspectives (red), and technological or sociological framings of gig work (blue, green, and purple). This thematic segmentation offers a clearer understanding of how scholarly collaborations are structured around specific dimensions of gig workers' job satisfaction.

### 6.3.2. Cluster Analysis

A bibliometric coupling analysis was conducted using VOSviewer to examine the intellectual connectivity among research papers focusing on gig workers' job satisfaction. The analysis used documents as the unit of analysis, applying a minimum citation threshold of 5. From an initial dataset of 171 documents, 85 met the threshold, and the largest connected component included 67 documents. The weight metric was set to total link strength (TLS), which measures the degree of shared references between documents—making it particularly appropriate for identifying thematic similarity and intellectual proximity, as recommended in bibliometric literature (Zupic & Čater, 2015; Donthu et al., 2021). VOSViewer grouped these 67 documents in 10 different clusters.

The resulting network visualization given in Figure 10 reveals several densely connected clusters, each representing a coherent body of work. For example, the pink and blue clusters feature prominent documents by authors such as Umair A., Conboy K., and Whelan E., indicating a strong coupling around themes of digital labour and agile work practices. The green cluster, including Berger T., Frey C. B.,

and Levin G., suggests a policy- and macroeconomics-oriented subfield. Smaller clusters, such as those led by Chan N.K. or Wang S., reflect emerging or specialized niches within the literature. The map illustrates that while a core network of highly coupled documents exists, the overall landscape also contains some degree of fragmentation, reflecting the interdisciplinary and evolving nature of gig economy research.

The 10 clusters derived from the software were manually checked for their face validity and parsimony. This led to emergence of four clusters by author. This entire process started with VOSViewer identifying ten distinct clusters based on bibliometric coupling with minimum threshold of 5 documents, resulting in 67 connected set of documents. The highly cited document in the dataset is of Kuhn & Maleki (2017) with 295 citations but very low total link strength of 2. This paper focuses on gig worker's categorization. It can be interpreted as a foundational and introductory one which many later studies would have referenced to frame their discussions. Tightly coupled cluster: Cram et al., (2022) has both highest link strength of 19 with high citations count of 102.

This shows that it shares many references with other documents and that it is influential and respected. Though not being a central cluster overall, this is tightly coupled, meaning it contains conceptually consistent work. Peripheral papers: Papers by Kim et al. (2023) and Vučeković et al. (2022), have lower link strength of 1 and 2 and comparatively low citation count of 8 and 7, respectively. These works, while thematically relevant, showed limited interconnection with other studies in the dataset, suggesting niche, localized, or early-stage explorations. Citation count: documents with a highest citation count such as Kuhn & Maleki (2017) are considered influential in their field. However, its low total link strength indicates that while the paper is highly cited, it is referenced across a broad array of studies rather than being embedded within a concentrated research niche. Total link strength: Although Umair et al. (2023) does not have the highest number of citations in the dataset, it holds the highest total link strength of 34, highlighting its structural significance within the bibliometric network. This suggests the paper plays a pivotal role in connecting related studies. The fact that its link strength surpasses its citation count indicates that it shares a substantial number of references with other documents, positioning it as a key integrative work in the ongoing discourse on technostress and gig worker productivity. Li et al. (2024) holds the second highest total link strength of 24 in the bibliometric network, positioning it as a structurally significant document despite having a moderate citation count of 10. This high level of linkage indicates that the paper shares numerous references with other works in the dataset. It centres on gig worker engagement and well-being. Its strong integration suggests that the study aligns closely with dominant theoretical and methodological frameworks, making it an important anchor in the ongoing scholarly dialogue on work engagement in platform-based labour.
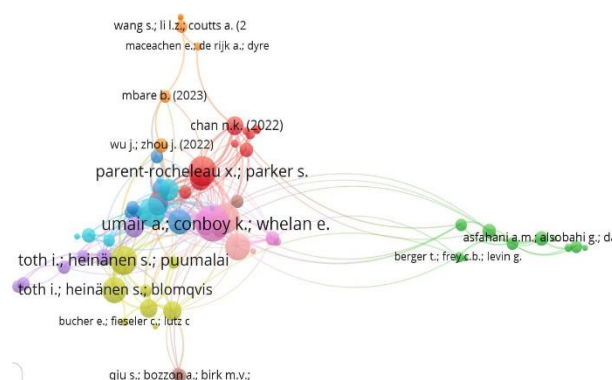


**Fig. 10:** Bibliometric Coupling (Source: VosViewer).

To enhance interpretability, cluster reduction was carried out on 67 documents based on thematic overlap, parsimony, and face validity, consistent with bibliometric mapping practices recommended by Van Eck & Waltman (2010) and Zupic & Čater (2015).

Rationale for Cluster Reduction (Parsimony & Interpretability):

The primary motivation for reducing the number of clusters was to achieve greater parsimony in the analytical framework. A larger number of fine-grained clusters, while potentially capturing minute distinctions, can often obscure overarching themes and make comprehensive interpretation challenging. By consolidating 10 clusters into 4, the aim was to identify broader, more robust research fronts and sub-domains, facilitating a more streamlined narrative for the bibliometric review. This approach aligns with the objective of providing a clear, high-level understanding of the research landscape relevant to gig worker satisfaction.

Although interpretive judgement is unavoidable in consolidating clusters, the reduction was systematically guided by parsimony, thematic overlap, and the face validity to ensure that broader themes were representative without oversimplifying the underlying research landscape. This approach balances methodological rigor with analytical clarity, consistent with best practices in bibliometric mapping (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010; Zupic & Čater, 2015).

**Table 10:** Revised Clusters

| Revised cluster | Clusters Combined | No. of documents | Theme | Influential Work |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1, 3, 4, 6 | 19 | Algorithmic Management, Metrics, and Governance | Parent-Rocheleau et al. (2024); Jabagi et al. (2019) |
| 2 | 2, 5 | 14 | Worker Satisfaction, Psychological Engagement and Typology | Kuhn & Maleki (2017); Tóth et al. (2021); Wong et al. (2020) |
| 3 | 9, 8 | 21 | Geographical Contexts of Gig Worker Well-being and Autonomy | Berger et al. (2019) |
| 4 | 7, 10 | 13 | Gig Worker's Well-being, Engagement, Safety & Technostress | Umair et al. (2023); Li et al. (2024); Cram et al. (2022) |

Figure 11 illustrates the thematic distribution of documents across the four reduced clusters. The largest share of publications falls under Cluster 1, Algorithmic Management, Metrics, and Governance, highlighting the academic focus on how digital platform's structure, monitor, and govern gig work. Cluster 2, centered on Worker Satisfaction, Psychological Engagement, and Typology, also comprises a

significant portion of the dataset, indicating sustained interest in understanding gig workers' motivational orientations, job satisfaction, and role identities.

Cluster 4, Gig Worker Well-being, Engagement, Safety, and Technostress represents another prominent area, reflecting the growing concern over the psychological toll and occupational hazards faced by platform workers. Lastly, Cluster 3, titled Geographical Contexts of Gig Worker Well-being and Autonomy, constitutes a smaller but important segment. Its relatively lower share indicates that while region-specific studies offer valuable localized insights, they remain less integrated into the dominant discourse — possibly due to limited cross-referencing or nascent research in non-Western contexts.
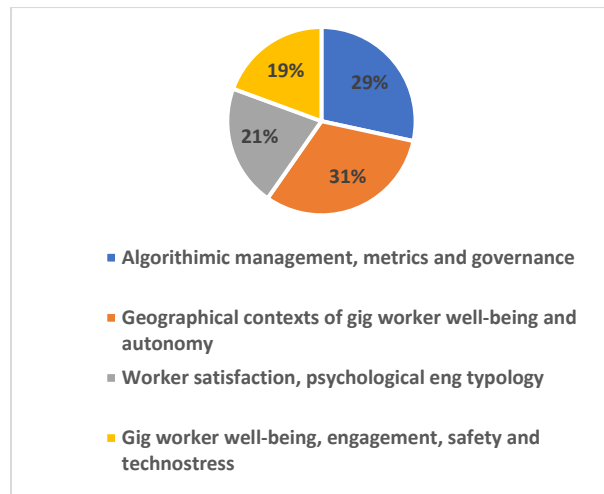


**Fig. 11:** Thematic Distribution of Clusters (Based on Document Count).

This distribution underscores the interdisciplinary and evolving nature of gig economy research, with algorithmic governance and worker psychology emerging as central themes, while geographic and contextual analyses represent growing, yet underlined, areas of inquiry.

Cluster 1: Algorithmic Management, Metrics, and Governance:

Cluster 1 forms a tightly coupled research stream centered around the technological structuring and algorithmic governance of gig work. This cluster aggregates studies that critically examine the growing influence of digital platforms in managing labour, with a particular emphasis on algorithmic control, performance metrics, worker autonomy, and digital surveillance. Its thematic focus is on algorithmic management and monitoring, gig workers' perceptions of fairness, transparency, and autonomy. It focuses on managerial and policy level implications of metric-based control.

One of the key and influential work in this cluster is of Parent- Rocheleau et al. (2024), introducing Algorithmic Management Questionnaire (AMC) through rigorous scale development process. It is one of the most significant methodological contributions to the measurement of algorithmic control. Another paper by Jabagi et al. (2019) explores gig workers' motivation under algorithmic conditions, offering a conceptual model that challenges traditional incentive frameworks like 'carrots and sticks.' Papers by Kinowska & Sienkiewicz (2020) and Chan (2022) further unpack the consequences of digitally mediated labour processes, highlighting how gig workers adapt to opaque, constantly shifting evaluation systems that govern pay, availability, and work opportunities.

This cluster shows high internal link strength, with strong thematic cohesion and frequent co-citation among documents. These papers often cite each other or draw on a shared set of foundational literature related to algorithmic management, control theory and labour process theory.

Cluster 1 represents a conceptually mature and growing field of inquiry. The high level of coupling and the presence of methodological innovations (e.g., validated scales) suggest that Cluster 1 is driving much of the empirical sophistication in the study of gig work dynamics. Its implications extend to both academic theory and platform governance policies.

**Table 11:** Cluster 1: Theme - Algorithmic Management, Metrics, and Governance

| Title | Source | Authors | Year | Citations | Total Link Strength |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Creation of the algorithmic management questionnaire: a six-phase scale development process | Human Resource Management, 63(1), 25-44. | Parent-Rocheleau X.; Parker S.K.; Bujold A.; Gaudet M.-C. (2024) | 2024 | 23 | 24 |
| The well-being of gig workers in the sharing economy during Covid-19 | International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 35(4). | Li Y.; Xu S.; Yu Y.; Meadows R. (2023) | 2023 | 25 | 9 |
| Basic psychological need satisfaction and well-being for gig workers: a fuzzy set QCA approach in DiDi of China | Current Psychology, 42(32). | Wu j.; Zhou j. (2023) | 2023 | 12 | 5 |
| Gig workers perceived algorithmic management, stress appraisal, and destructive deviant behaviour | Plos One, 18(11-nov) | Zhang L.; Yang J.; Zhang Y.; Xu G. (2023) | 2023 | 7 | 2 |
| Is the well-being of gig workers in Malaysia better? the reality of pain and gain | International Review of Applied Economics, 37(4), 518-531. | Abd Samad K.; Abd Rahman N.H.; Ismail S.; Marmaya N.H. (2023) | 2023 | 5 | 5 |
| Sharers and sellers: a multi-group examination of gig economy workers' perceptions | Journal of Business Research, 98, 142-152. | Gleim M.R.; Johnson C.M.; Lawson S.J. (2019) | 2019 | 97 | 5 |
| Corporate governance and wealth and income inequality | Corporate Governance: An International Review, 29(6), 612-629. | Brou D.; Chatterjee A.; Coakley J.; Girardone C.; Wood G. (2021) | 2021 | 19 | 2 |
| Happy riders are all alike? Ambivalent subjective experience and mental well-being of food-delivery platform workers in China | New Technology, Work and Employment, 37(3), 425-444. | Wu P.F.; Zheng R.; Zhao Y.; Li Y. (2022) | 2022 | 10 | 16 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Analysing the gig economy in India and exploring various effective regulatory methods to improve the plight of the workers | Journal of Asian and African Studies, 57(7). | Choudhary V.; Shireshi S.S. (2022) | 2022 | 10 | 2 | |
| Algorithm sensemaking: how platform workers make sense of algorithmic management | Journal of the Association for Information Systems, 24(1), 35-64. | Möhlmann M.; Alves De Lima Salge C.; Marabelli M. (2022) | 2022 | 49 | 3 | |
| Algorithmic precarity and metric power: managing the affective measures and customers in the gig economy | Big Data and Society, 9(2). | Chan N.K. (2022) | 2022 | 18 | 9 | |
| education, inequality and use of digital collaborative platforms: the European case | Economic and Labour Relations Review, 31(3), 364-382. | Artero J.M., Borra C., Gómez-Alvarez R. (2020) | 2020 | 11 | 6 | |
| Development and validation of a career sustainability scale | Journal Of Career Development, 49(4), 769-787. | Chin T.; Jawahar I.M.; Li G. (2022) | 2022 | 42 | 4 | |
| Influence of algorithmic management practices on workplace well-being – evidence from European organisations | Information Technology and People, 36(8), 21-42. | Kinowska H.; Sienkiewicz Ł.J. (2020) | 2020 | 40 | 13 | |
| Trust or self-determination: understanding the role of tenured faculty empowerment and job satisfaction | Journal of Higher Education, 93(1), 137-161. | Mcnaughtan j.; Eicke d.; Thacker r.; Freeman s. (2022) | 2022 | 13 | 4 | |
| Gig-Workers' Motivation: Thinking Beyond Carrots and Sticks | Journal Of Managerial Psychology, 34(4), 192-213. | Jabagi N.; Croteau A.-M.; Audebrand L.K.; Marsan J. (2019) | 2019 | 216 | 10 | |
| Covid-19 and the new forms of employment relationship: implications and insights for Human Resource Development | Industrial And Commercial Training, 53(4), 366-379. | Hamouche S.; Chabani Z. (2021) | 2021 | 26 | 2 | |
| Chasing rainbows: how many educational qualifications do young people need to acquire meaningful, ongoing work? | Journal Of Sociology, 55(4), 670-688. | Chesters J.; Wyn J. (2019) | 2019 | 25 | 1 | |
| Adapting to a jolt: a mixed methods study identifying challenges and personal resources impacting professional gig workers' well-being during covid-19 | Journal Of Vocational Behavior, 138. | Granger S.; Barker Caza B.; Ashford S.J.; Reid E.M. (2022) | 2022 | 14 | 12 | |

Cluster 2: Worker Satisfaction, Psychological Engagement and Typology:

Cluster 2 captures a growing body of research that blends psychological perspectives and structural understandings of gig work. At its core, this cluster examines how digital labour platforms shape worker satisfaction, motivation and identity, while also engaging with broader debates on the classification and positioning of gig workers in modern labour systems.

The thematic focus of this cluster is on worker satisfaction, well-being and psychological constructs e.g. engagement, passion and autonomy. Further it focuses on freelancer's identities and proactive behaviour in platform settings. Distinguishing between micro-entrepreneurs, dependent contractors and other digital labour roles are also part of the main theme of this cluster.

A foundational paper from this cluster is of Kuhn & Maleki (2017), which presents a widely cited typology of gig workers and has shaped much of the structured discourse in this area. Another paper with low link strength but good number of citations is of Ravenelle (2019), which offers qualitative insights into how gig workers perceive their entrepreneurial status, autonomy and control. Tóth et al. (2020, 2021), focussed the experiences of freelancers and the role of professional identity and passion in platform work. Wong et. al (2020) examines how proactive attitudes influence worker outcomes in digital labour settings, while newer contributions like Snigdha & Saikia (2024) explore satisfaction dynamics in specific regional contexts.

**Table 12:** Cluster 2- Worker Satisfaction, Psychological Engagement and Typology

| Title | Source | Authors | Year | Citations | Total Link Strength |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Assessment of worker satisfaction with special emphasis on gig economy: a review for potential research paradigm | International Journal of Community Well-Being, 7(3), 541-568. | Singha S.; Saikia M. (2024) | 2024 | 6 | 6 |
| Digital labourers' proactivity and the venture for meaningful work: fruitful or fruitless? | Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 93(4), 887-911. | Wong S.I.; Fieseler C.; Kost D. (2020) | 2020 | 24 | 4 |
| Passionate and engaged? passion for inventing and work engagement in different knowledge work contexts | International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research, 27(9), 1-25. | Toth I.; Heinänen S.; Puumalainen K. (2021) | 2021 | 28 | 22 |
| Freelancing on digital work platforms- roles of virtual community trust and work engagement on person-job fit | Vine Journal of Information and Knowledge Management Systems, 50(4), 553-567. | Toth I.; Heinänen S.; Blomqvist K. (2020) | 2020 | 18 | 17 |
| Micro-entrepreneurs, dependent contractors, and Instaserfs: understanding online labour platform workforces | Academy Of Management Perspectives, 31(3), 183-200. | Kuhn K.M.; Maleki A. (2017) | 2017 | 295 | 10 |
| The gig economy comes to academia: job satisfaction among adjunct faculty | Cogent Education, 7(1). | Nelson G.; Monson M.J.; Adibifar K. (2020) | 2020 | 21 | 4 |
| From zero to hero and back to zero: the consequences of status inconsistency between the work roles of multiple jobholders | Journal of Applied Psychology, 107(8). | Sessions H.; Nahrgang J.D.; Baer M.D.; Welsh D.T. (2022) | 2022 | 14 | 1 |
| Employment arrangement, job stress, and health-related quality of life | Safety Science, 100, 46-56. | Ray T.K.; Kenigsberg T.A.; Pana-Cryan R. (2017) | 2017 | 32 | 1 |
| Mechanical Turk and the gig economy: exploring differences between gig workers | Journal of Managerial Psychology, 34(4), 286-306. | Keith M.G.; Harms P.; Tay L. (2019) | 2019 | 78 | 9 |

| Title | Source | Authors | Year | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mattering in digital labour | Journal of Managerial Psychology, 34(4), 307-324. | Bucher E.; Fieseler C.; Lutz C. (2019) | 2019 | 39 | 2 |
| "we're not uber": control, autonomy, and entrepreneurship in the gig economy | Journal of Managerial Psychology, 34(4), 269-285. | Ravenelle A.J. (2019) | 2019 | 114 | 4 |
| Observation or interaction? impact mechanisms of gig platform monitoring on gig workers' cognitive work engagement | International Journal of Information Management, 67. | Wang C.; Chen J.; Xie P. (2022) | 2022 | 26 | 22 |
| Gamifying the gig: transitioning the dark side to bright side of online engagement | Australasian Journal of Information Systems, 25, 1-34. | Behl A.; Sheorey P.; Jain K.; Chavan M.; Jajodia I.; Zhang Z.J. (2021) | 2021 | 36 | 13 |
| The performative journalist: job satisfaction, temporary workers and American television news | Journalism, 10(5), 647-664. | Ryan K.M. (2009) | 2009 | 41 | 1 |

Overall, cluster 2 is characterized by moderate link strength and high citation counts, indicating a set of influential but topically diverse papers. Together, these themes show that Cluster B is conceptually situated at the intersection of psychology, identity studies, and labour classification, making it a diverse but cohesive body of scholarship.

Cluster 3: Geographical Contexts of Gig Worker Well-being and Autonomy

The third cluster is region-specific and focuses on gig worker's experiences with emphasis on well-being, autonomy and psychological health. These studies are conducted on the national and cultural contexts. It further draws attention to how local environments; labour policies and societal norms shape the quality of life and work satisfaction of gig workers.

The main themes of this cluster emerge as Quality of Life (QoL) and psychological outcomes in specific countries like Saudi Arabia, Serbia, South Korea and China. Other themes are autonomy and gig work's impact on mental and emotional health, role of policy, regulation and labour conditions.

**Table 13:** Cluster 3- Geographical Contexts of Gig Worker Well-Being and Autonomy

| Title | Source | Authors | Year | Citations | Total Link Strength |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Navigating the Saudi gig economy: the role of human resource practices in enhancing job satisfaction and career sustainability | Sustainability (Switzerland), 15(23). | Asfahani A.M.; Alsobahi G.; Dahlan D.A. (2023) | 2023 | 5 | 6 |
| Workers' health under algorithmic management: emerging findings and urgent research questions | International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 20(2). | Vignola E.F.; Baron S.; Abreu Plasencia E.; Hussein M.; Cohen N. (2023) | 2023 | 12 | 4 |
| Gig workers' quality of life (QOL) and psychological well-being in service delivery platform | Sustainability (Switzerland), 15(11). | Kim Y.G.; Chung Y.K.; Woo E. (2023) | 2023 | 8 | 1 |
| The relationship between working in the "gig" economy and perceived subjective well-being in Western Balkan countries | Frontiers in Psychology, 14. | Vučeković M., Avlijaš G., Marković M.R., Radulović D., Dragojević A. and Marković D. (2023) | 2023 | 7 | 2 |
| Navigating autonomy: unravelling the dual influence of job autonomy on workplace well-being in the gig economy | Frontiers In Psychology, 15 | Wan Z.; Zhang L.; Wang L.; Zhang F. (2024) | 2024 | 5 | 6 |
| National survey of mental health and life satisfaction of gig workers: the role of loneliness and financial precarity | BMJ open, 12(12). | Wang S.; Li L.Z.; Coutts A. (2022) | 2022 | 29 | 4 |
| Gender differences in job satisfaction among gig workers in Bangladesh | Scientific Reports, 14(1). | Sarker M.R.; Taj T.A.; Sarkar M.A.R.; Hassan M.F.; Mckenzie A.M.; Al Mamun M.A.; Sarker D.; Bhandari H. (2024) | 2024 | 6 | 4 |
| Psychosocial work environment and mental wellbeing of food delivery platform workers in Helsinki, Finland: a qualitative study | International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being, 18(1). | Mbare b. (2023) | 2023 | 14 | 4 |
| Work experience on algorithm-based platforms: the bright and dark sides of Turking | Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 183. | Orhan M.A.; Khelladi I.; Castellano S.; Singh S. (2022) | 2022 | 14 | 4 |
| How the configurations of job autonomy, work family interference, and demographics boost job satisfaction: an empirical study using FSQCA | Asian Business and Management, 21(4), 547-568. | Wu J.; Zhou J. (2022) | 2022 | 13 | 6 |
| Mapping themes for the well-being of low-skilled gig workers: implications for digital platform design | Transitions: Journal of Transient Migration, 5(1), 55-75. | Arnoldi E.; Bosua R.; Dirksen V. (2021) | 2021 | 9 | 5 |
| Gig workers during the covid-19 crisis in France: financial precarity and mental well-being | Journal of Urban health, 97(6), 776-795. | Apouey B.; Roulet A.; Solal I.; Stabile M. (2020) | 2020 | 91 | 1 |
| How does the paradoxical leadership of cross-border e-commerce (CBEC) gig workers influence Chinese company performance: the role of psychological well-being | Sustainability (Switzerland), 14(19). | Li C.; Lin C.-L.; Chin T. (2022) | 2022 | 6 | 4 |
| Uber happy? work and wellbeing in the "gig economy" | Economic Policy, 34(99), 429-477. | Berger T.; Frey C.B.; Levin G.; Danda S.R. (2019) | 2019 | 117 | 3 |

| The rise of self-employment in the UK: entrepreneurial transmission or declining job quality? | Cambridge Journal of Economics, 45(3), 457-486. | Henley A. (2021) | 2021 | 19 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Estimating conversational styles in conversational microtask crowdsourcing | Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction, 4(CSCW1). | Qiu S.; Gadiraju U.; Bozzon A. (2020) | 2020 | 17 | 1 |
| Dependency and hardship in the gig economy: the mental health consequences of platform work | Socius, 8. | Glavin P.; Schieman S. (2022) | 2022 | 44 | 6 |
| Using worker avatars to improve microtask crowdsourcing | Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction, 5(CSC2). | Qiu S.; Bozzon A.; Birk M.V.; Gadiraju U. (2021) | 2021 | 22 | 5 |
| Measuring well-being of migrant gig workers: exampled as Hangzhou city in China | Behavioral Sciences, 12(10). | Chen T.; Song W.; Song J.; Ren Y.; Dong Y.; Yang J.; Zhang S. (2022) | 2022 | 11 | 1 |
| The impact of occupational stigma on gig workers' workplace well-being: a cross-sectional study based on the platform-based food-delivery sector in China | Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 64(9), E527-E534. | Liu B.; Guo Y.; Fu Y. (2022) | 2022 | 6 | 1 |
| Laws, policies, and collective agreements protecting low-wage and digital platform workers during the Covid-19 pandemic | New Solutions, 32(3), 201-212. | Maceachen E.; De Rijk A.; Dyreborg J.; Fassier J.-B.; Fletcher M.; Hopwood P.; Koivusalo M.; Majowicz S.; Meyer S.; Ståhl C.; Welti F. (2022) | 2022 | 5 | 2 |

While Cluster 3 is relatively peripheral in terms of network connectivity with lower total link strengths, it addresses crucial emerging perspectives. Vignola et al. (2023) explores gig worker's health under algorithmic control in Spain, while Wan et al. (2024) discusses the dual influences of autonomy in the Chinese platform economy. Vućeković et al. (2023) and Kim et al. (2023) investigate the psychosocial impacts of gig work in Serbia and South Korea, respectively. Asfahani et al. (2023) focuses on enablers of success in the Saudi Gig Economy- linking platform strategy to labour outcomes.

The low link strength across documents suggests that these papers, while thematically rich, are not yet deeply integrated into the core discourse. This could be due to their regional specificity, novelty, or emerging status. However, they serve vital role in broadening the global perspective on gig worker experiences.

Cluster 4: Gig Worker's well-being, engagement, safety & technostress:

Cluster 4 encompasses research examining how gig workers experience psychological well-being, manage digital and emotional stressors and adapt behaviourally to the unique pressures of platform-based work. Thematically, this cluster integrates literature on work engagement, mental health, health and safety concerns and technostress. At the same time, there are few studies emphasizing the role of self-leadership and adaptive strategies in navigating this complex environment.

The paper with the highest link strength among all the clusters, by Umair et al. (2023) belongs to cluster 4, which offers multilevel model of technostress and its effect on productivity. Li et al. (2024) further examines engagement among ride-hailing drivers, while Wang et al. (2023) and Apouey et al. (2020) investigate financial precarity, loneliness, and mental well-being. Studies by Shukla & Shaheen (2024) and Saydam et al. (2024) explores self-leadership and emotional coping and explains how gig workers maintain performance and psychological balance.

**Table 14:** Cluster 4- Gig Worker's Well-Being, Engagement, Safety & Technostress

| Title | Source | Authors | Year | Citations | Total Link Strength |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| An exploration of employees' experiences of online food delivery: evidence from employee reviews | International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 36(9). | Saydam M.B.; Borzyszkowski J.; Karatepe O.M. (2024) | 2024 | 8 | 6 |
| When gig workers become essential: leveraging customer moral self-awareness beyond Covid-19 | Business Horizons, 66(2), 181-190. | Friedland J.; Balkin D.B. (2023) | 2023 | 22 | 2 |
| Work engagement of online car-hailing drivers: the effects of platforms' algorithmic management | Information Technology and People, 37(3). | Li W.; Lu Y.; Hu P.; Gupta S. (2024) | 2024 | 10 | 24 |
| I am my own boss: effect of self-leadership on gig worker's work engagement and performance | Leadership And Organization Development Journal, 45(1), 35-50. | Shukla K.; Shaheen M. (2024) | 2024 | 11 | 5 |
| Examining technostress and its impact on worker well-being in the digital gig economy | Internet Research, 33(7), 206-242. | Umair A.; Conboy K.; Whelan E. (2023) | 2023 | 17 | 34 |
| Workplace spirituality, well-being at work and employee loyalty in a gig economy: multi-group analysis across temporary vs permanent employment status | Personnel Review, 51(9) | Aboobaker N.; Edward M.; Zakkariya K.A. (2022) | 2022 | 23 | 5 |
| What factors contribute to in-role and extra-role safety behavior among food delivery riders? | Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour, 102, 177-198. | Nguyen-Phuoc D.Q.; Mai N.X.; Ho-Mai N.T.; Nguyen M.H.; Oviedo-Trespalacios O. (2024) | 2024 | 12 | 5 |
| Driven to succeed, or to leave? The variable impact of self-leadership in rideshare gig work | International Journal of Human Resource Management, 35(1), 98-120. | Crayne M.P.; Brawley Newlin A.M. (2023) | 2023 | 27 | 17 |
| Deadly meals: the influence of personal and job factors on burnout and risky riding behaviours of food delivery motorcyclists | Safety Science, 159. | Quy Nguyen-Phuoc D.; Ngoc Thi Nguyen L.; Ngoc Su D.; | 2023 | 38 | 4 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Independent professionals and the potential for HRM innovation | Personnel Review, 46(7). | Nguyen M.H.; Oviedo-Trespalacios O. (2023) Mckeown T.; Cochrane R. (2017) | 2017 | 22 | 7 |
| Online communities and discontinuance of information technology-enabled on-demand workers: impacts of informal social interactions through dual commitments | International Journal of Information Management, 66. | Nwafor O.; Ma X.; Hou J.J.; Johnson N. (2022) | 2022 | 8 | 11 |
| Examining the impact of algorithmic control on uber drivers' technostress | Journal of Management Information Systems, 39(2), 426-453. | Cram W.A.; Wiener M.; Tarafdar M.; Benlian A. (2022) | 2022 | 102 | 19 |
| Precarious job makes me withdraw? The role of job insecurity and negative affect | International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18(24). | Zheng S.; Ding T.; Chen H.; Wu Y.; Cai W. (2021) | 2021 | 9 | 1 |

This cluster is tightly coupled with high internal connectivity and shared reference patterns. It contributes richly in understanding the psychological realities of platform labour, making this cluster crucial for future research on health, resilience and digital work systems.

### 6.3.3. Handling of Conceptual Overlaps

In the process of reducing the original ten bibliometric clusters to four more interpretable thematic groups, it became evident that several key constructs—such as engagement, well-being, autonomy, and satisfaction—appeared across multiple clusters. While such overlap might initially suggest redundancy, a closer examination reveals that these concepts are treated through distinct theoretical lenses and contextual applications in different parts of the literature.

For instance, engagement is addressed in Cluster 2 through a psychological lens, emphasizing self-determination, identity, and motivation in gig workers who navigate flexible yet precarious work arrangements (e.g., Wong et al., 2020; Tóth et al., 2021). In contrast, Cluster 4 situates engagement in the context of emotional labour and technostress, where platform demands and occupational strain shape the ability of gig workers to remain productively involved (e.g., Li et al., 2024; Umair et al., 2023).

Similarly, well-being features prominently in both Clusters 3 and 4, but with different focal points. In Cluster 3, well-being is influenced by geographical, cultural, and policy-related factors, often explored through country-specific case studies (e.g., Berger et al., 2019; Vućeković et al., 2023). Conversely, in Cluster 4, well-being is often examined as an outcome of psychosocial stressors, including financial precarity, occupational isolation, and lack of institutional support.

Autonomy, too, is conceptualized differently across clusters. In Cluster 3, it is framed in terms of structural constraints and freedoms provided by local labour markets and platform regulations (e.g., Wan et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Cluster 2 touches on autonomy more implicitly, relating it to worker typologies and degrees of control in self-managed work.

These conceptual overlaps are not analytical flaws, but rather reflect the multidimensional nature of gig work research. Their recurrence across clusters demonstrates the centrality of these constructs in understanding gig worker experiences from various disciplinary, geographic, and methodological perspectives. Recognizing these overlaps enhances interpretive depth and underscores the need for an integrated yet nuanced approach to mapping the evolving scholarship in this domain.

# 7. Strengths & Limitations of The Study

## 7.1. Strengths of The Study

This study makes a significant and timely contribution to the growing body of literature on gig work by offering a comprehensive bibliometric perspective on job satisfaction among gig workers—an area gaining increasing scholarly and policy attention in the digital labour era. One of the key strengths this study draws upon is a robust dataset derived from Scopus-indexed publications, enabling a comprehensive mapping of global research trends related to gig worker satisfaction. Using of parsimony, conceptual coherence and face validity is another strength of the study which improved the thematic clarity without compromising the integrity of the bibliometric structure.

By employing robust bibliometric techniques such as bibliographic coupling, cluster reduction, and network mapping, this study offers a systematic and replicable framework for understanding the intellectual structure of research on gig workers' job satisfaction. The method allows for objective identification of dominant research streams, influential authors, and conceptual linkages across diverse scholarly contributions. Moreover, the use of temporal metrics such as citation trajectories and publication trends enhances the study's explanatory power by revealing how scholarly focus has shifted—from early concerns with worker identity and intrinsic motivation to more recent emphases on algorithmic management, psychosocial well-being, and digital labour governance. This dynamic perspective contributes not only to theory-building but also to practical policy-making by highlighting the evolving priorities and tensions within the gig economy discourse. Another key strength of this study lies in its novel contribution to a previously uncharted niche. While bibliometric reviews have been conducted on the gig economy more broadly, no existing study has systematically mapped the literature specifically related to gig workers' job satisfaction. By narrowing the thematic lens to this crucial dimension, the study provides a targeted synthesis that uncovers overlooked research patterns, influential works, and theoretical foundations. This makes the paper a first-of-its-kind reference in an emerging but under-researched domain.

## 7.2. Limitations of The Study

While the author acknowledges the strengths of the study, it is pertinent to discuss the limitations that the study suffers from. One of the key limitations of the study is that it limits its source selection to the Scopus database only. The Scopus database has quite an extensive reach but it may still fail to include many other influential contributions from other scholarly repositories such as Web of Science or Google Scholar. This may lead to geographic or disciplinary underrepresentation, specifically for literature from other interdisciplinary fields. Another limitation is with respect to solely focusing on peer-reviewed journal articles, while excluding other quality literature such as government or policy reports, working papers, etc., which offer valuable insights on the fast-evolving topic of the gig economy and gig workers.

Nevertheless, Scopus was deliberately chosen because it provides the most comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed journals in management, social sciences, and economics, ensuring methodological consistency with bibliometric tools such as VOSviewer and Biblioshiny. This enhances replicability and reduces the inclusion of non-peer-reviewed or lower-quality sources, making Scopus an appropriate and defensible choice for the present study. To complement this academic focus, the relevance of grey literature such as reports from McKinsey Global Institute (2016), Boston Consulting Group (2017 & 2019), Deloitte (2018), World Economic Forum (2016), Ernest & Young (2016) is acknowledged in literature, as they provide policy-oriented insights beyond peer-reviewed research. However, future studies could benefit from integrating such grey literature to capture a more holistic picture of gig work and worker satisfaction.

Although clustering techniques and keyword co-occurrence analyses help identify dominant themes and trends, these methods rely heavily on author-supplied keywords and abstracts, which might not fully represent the article's conceptual contributions. In addition, the reduction of ten initial clusters into four broader themes, though guided by parsimony, link strength, and thematic coherence, inevitably involved a degree of subjectivity. Such consolidation may risk overlooking fine-grained sub-themes, even as it enhances interpretability at a higher level of abstraction. The interpretation of clusters, despite efforts to maintain face validity and methodological rigor, therefore remains partly dependent on researcher judgment. Finally, given the dynamic and fast-evolving nature of the gig economy, especially with technological disruptions and policy shifts, bibliometric insights can quickly become time-sensitive. Emerging models of work, post-pandemic labour dynamics, and evolving regulatory landscapes may require continuous updates to remain relevant. Future research may benefit from integrating systematic reviews, meta-analyses, or qualitative evidence syntheses to complement bibliometric findings and offer deeper theoretical and contextual understanding.

## 8. Policy Recommendations

The findings of this bibliometric review underscore the policy relevance of research on gig worker satisfaction, particularly in relation to algorithmic governance, technostress, worker autonomy, and geographical well-being. Addressing these themes requires inclusive and context-sensitive strategies that balance global frameworks with local realities.

### 8.1. Algorithmic Governance & Transparency

Emerging research highlights the need for context-sensitive interventions in algorithmic management. Hsieh et al., (2023) emphasize that one-size-fits-all approaches are inadequate and propose personalized policy and technology designs tailored to distinct categories of gig workers. In parallel, transparency is a pressing concern. Rao et al. (2024) identify a critical transparency gap in ride hailing platforms, where workers lack visibility into algorithmic processes like fare calculation, promotion allocation, and deactivation decisions. They recommend mandating public algorithmic transparency reports, similar to financial disclosures, to empower workers and ensure fairness. The European Union's Platform Work Directive (European Commission, 2021) offers a regulatory model that could be adapted globally, while in India, the Code on Social Security (2020) provides a framework for incorporating gig workers into national welfare schemes (Mehrotra, 2021).

### 8.2. Technostress and worker well-being

The cluster on technostress reflects the psychological costs of gig work, particularly constant surveillance and digital overload. In China, new regulations require delivery platforms to adjust algorithms to prevent excessive workloads and ensure rest breaks (China Labour Bulletin, 2021). In western contexts, governments and worker groups are piloting digital wellness programs and mental health support. In emerging economies, partnerships between government and NGOs could expand digital literacy and resilience training, building on initiatives like Digital India (NITI Aayog, 2022). Such interventions, if integrated with welfare boards and platform funding models, can reduce technostress and enhance long-term worker well-being.

### 8.3. Autonomy, Flexibility and Income Security

Flexibility is both the greatest strength and vulnerability of gig work. To balance autonomy with income stability, policymakers can look to examples such as New York city's minimum pay standards for ride hailing drivers (Parrott & Reich, 2018) and Spain's 'Riders Law' which reclassifies delivery riders as employees (Prassl, 2018). In India & Indonesia, hybrid approaches are being explored, recognizing gig workers as a digital labour category with partial protections (International Labour Organization, 2021). Portable benefits, fair scheduling, and minimum pay thresholds represent practical tools that can be adapted across contexts.

Unpredictable nature of gig workers' income is one of the most serious financial challenges faced by gig workers. Barriers like seasonal workloads, inconsistent client payments and short-term contracts etc. bars them from future planning or maintaining financial stability. Developing inclusive financial products and services for gig workers, promoting financial literacy and education programs for lower income group gig workers, establishing government supported social safety nets or simply recognizing and formalizing freelancing or gig work as a career path could be adopted to address the financial challenges faced by freelancers in gig economy (Casalhay et. al., 2025).

### 8.4. Geographical Well-Being and Localised Interventions

Geographical context significantly shapes gig worker experiences. In India, Fairwork ratings highlight gaps in pay, conditions, and safety (Fairwork India, 2022). In Latin America, platform cooperatives in Argentina and Brazil demonstrate how worker-owned models can reduce dependence on multinational platforms (Scholz, 2017). In Africa, platform work is concentrated in urban centres with weak labour regulation, raising risks of informalization (Anwar & Graham, 2020). Policies could therefore include insurance subsidies, safe work zones, and cooperative models that are tailored to regional conditions while aligning with global labour standards.

### 8.5. Implementation Challenges

Despite these opportunities, implementing reforms remains challenging. Platforms often resist regulatory oversight, citing cost and competitiveness concerns. Emerging economies may also face resource and enforcement constraints. Overcoming these barriers requires multi-stakeholder governance, including worker participation, platform accountability, and international coordination through bodies such as the

International Labour Organisation. Inclusive frameworks must be both globally informed and locally adaptable to ensure that algorithmic governance and platform work evolve in ways that enhance, rather than undermine, worker satisfaction.

## 9. Future Scope & Conclusion

### 9.1. Future Scope of Study

Based on the identified gaps and thematic trends, future research should explore intersectional dimensions of job satisfaction, including how factors such as gender, class, age, and migration status interact with gig work experiences. More longitudinal studies are needed to trace how constructs like engagement, autonomy, and well-being evolve over time as gig economy restructure their algorithms, rating systems, and labour models. Methodologically, there is a need for greater integration of qualitative insights and mixed-methods designs to complement bibliometric findings and unpack deeper contextual meanings. Additionally, while this study focused on peer-reviewed articles, subsequent research could integrate grey literature, industry reports, and platform policy documents to develop a more practice-oriented understanding of satisfaction dynamics.

### 9.2. Conclusion

This study offers the first of its kind bibliometric synthesis focused specifically on the evolving literature surrounding gig worker's job satisfaction. It provided a structured overview of research trends, influential works, and thematic clusters. Using bibliographic coupling and cluster mapping, the analysis revealed how scholarly attention has evolved from foundational constructs to more complex challenges related to platform governance, well-being, and digital work dynamics. The reduced cluster framework enhances interpretability while preserving the depth of thematic diversity. Despite limitations related to database scope and citation-based bias, the study showcases a replicable approach for mapping intellectual developments in this domain. It also identified clear gaps and emerging directions that can inform future, more inclusive and context-sensitive investigations into the lived experiences of gig workers worldwide.

Alongside its scholarly contribution, this review highlights actionable directions for policy and practice. Addressing algorithmic transparency, technostress, and fair scheduling requires both global frameworks and local adaptations. While advanced economies have piloted regulations such as minimum pay standards and algorithmic accountability, emerging regions are experimenting with hybrid protections and cooperative models. Taken together, these experiences point to the need for inclusive, context-sensitive policies to strengthen gig worker satisfaction worldwide.

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