12 Identification of Factors for Determining the Employee Contentment of Gig Workers through Job Satisfaction Index in Kolkata

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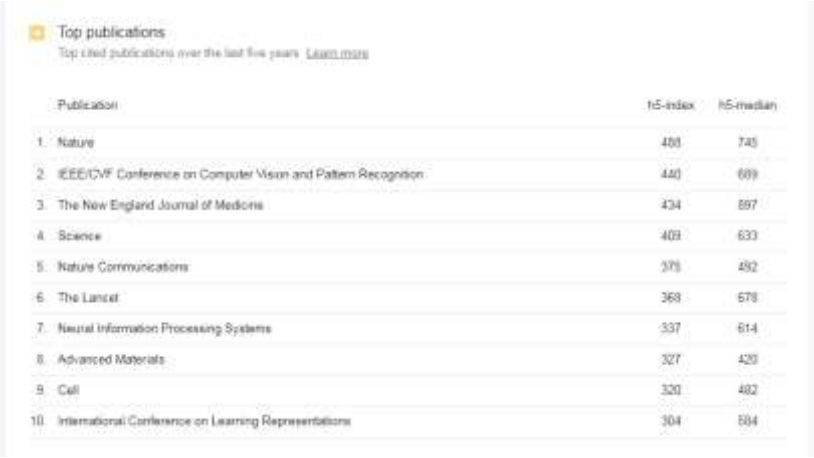
Abstract

With the growing prevalence of platform-based gig workers, particularly in urban centres, there is a need for a deeper understanding of job satisfaction among them. This study aims to identify the key factors influencing gig workers' employee contentment by constructing a job satisfaction index based on primary data collected from 216 platform workers across ride-hailing, food delivery, and e-commerce sectors. By using Exploratory Factor Analysis, ten critical factors were identified, including both financial dimensions—such as income stability and financial condition—and non-financial dimensions like respect from customers and families, tenure, gender, and access to social protection. The study also compares its findings with five recent systematic literature reviews who had analyzed over 1,000 global scholarly articles. This comparative synthesis discloses significant variation in the parameters used to define gig worker satisfaction across different regions, highlighting the influence of cultural, economic, and regulatory contexts. The findings emphasize that gig worker satisfaction is a context-specific construct, challenging the notion of a universally applicable index. The study recommends the development of an adaptable global satisfaction framework and encourages future longitudinal and platform-specific research to better capture the evolving dynamics of gig work and worker well-being.

Keywords: *Gig Worker, Platform-Based, Job Satisfaction Index, Contentment*.

Introduction

"The world is more interconnected than ever, your talent increasingly doesn't carry an employee ID," showing the paradigm shift towards valuing skills and contributions over traditional employment structures.



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	Publication	h5-index	h5-median
1.	Nature	488	745
2.	IEEE/CVF Conference on Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition	440	689
3.	The New England Journal of Medicine	434	697
4.	Science	409	633
5.	Nature Communications	375	492
6.	The Lancet	368	678
7.	Neural Information Processing Systems	337	614
8.	Advanced Materials	327	420
9.	Cell	320	482
10.	International Conference on Learning Representations	304	584

Figure 1

Source:https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=metrics_intro&hl=en

Before moving in detail about the paper, lets clear the differences between traditional and gig worker first. A traditional worker works for a single organisation, has a definite job role, follows organisation rules and policies, receives a consistent salary, salary is not subjected to completion of work, and has access the benefits like weekly off, health insurance, paid time off, and retirement plans. The term "gig", which was first used in 2009 by Tina Brown, a former editor of the New Yorker cite" workers taking on an assortment of freelance jobs, consulting gigs or part-time jobs while engaging in transactions for various clients" (Thomas & Baddipudi, 2022). Has no fixed working hours they can work physically or remotely. Doesn't avail the benefits like promotion, weekly off, health insurance, paid time off, and retirement plans. Their income can fluctuate.

Research on employee job satisfaction and its analysis has been carried on for a long time. Google Scholar Metrics with key word search "traditional employee job satisfaction index" shows the journal like Nature alone has published 488 articles in last 5 years from 2021, which are highly cited. Followed by the other reputed journals like IEEE, New England Journal of Medicine and may more. Most of these publications are funded by the organizations like National Natural Science Foundation of China, US National Institutes of Health, European Commission, German Research Foundation, Department of Science & Technology, India. Even Google scholar search result shows there are 17,600 cited article in the same time period from different discipline of study. Which means enough research had been done on traditional employee satisfaction. While the search result of Gig workers job satisfaction index was limited. Contrary to the common belief that gig economy workers are simply a subgroup within the traditional workforce, many gig workers actually remain outside the conventional employment system due to features like flexible schedules, part-time

roles, and the use of digital platforms. Despite the growing relevance of this labor segment, there has been limited research on their job satisfaction and the methods to assess it (Baddipudi& Thomas 2022, Kim et al., 2018, Lepanjuuri et al., 2018;).As per Dunn, M. (2018), gig workers are grouped into several distinct categories based on the nature of their work, their relationship to platforms, and their skill levels. Watson et. Al (2021), while developing a framework identifies five main profiles: platform based gig (who perform tasks or services via digital platforms and where the platform controls key aspects of the work), Gig goods providers (selling products via platforms), Gig data providers (completing micro-tasks like survey in a region), agency based Gig workers (they are placed by staffing agencies), and traditional Gig Workers (freelancers or independent contractors working outside digital platforms).Dey, C (2022) showed in their research that in India, due to widespread internet access, smartphone usage, and continuous customer engagement have empowered platforms like Zomato, Ola, Swiggy, and Urban Company to empowered millions of workers with consumers, driving the rapid growth of the gig economy. More over a bibliometric analysis of SCOPUS papers from 2009 to 2022 through RStudio by Ramachandran (2024) showed that due to the shifting in the digital era 'platform-based Gig worker', 'employment', 'workers', and "HRM" have the highest frequency in the 'word cloud'. So based on the growing importance of platform-based gig workers our study focuses on the contentment level of platform-based gig employees through the job satisfaction index and suggests reforms for development.

Literature Review

In various types of advertisement in different media we are bombard with the flashy word like "10 mts delivery", "Deliveries at your doorstep", "instant delivery", "meals at your door step", "anywhere, anytime"— become the new normal for our everyday consumers. Have we ever stopped and wondered about the workers who make it possible? The NITI Aayog Report of 2023 shows the possibility of 200% growth in the number of workers, particularly young generations in cities engaged in the gig economy, within the next decade. The report also shows that with the present estimated number of 7.7 million workers to it may reach up to 23.5 million workers by 2029 -30.

Social Protection

As per the employment relationships classification by International Labour Organization's, gig workers are classified as a non-standard employment relationship in the form of dependent self-employment, which falls in a gray area between employee and independent contractor which makes them unable to be classified as employees, thus putting them in a precarious position without legal protection (Kadek, 2024). Moreover, the Theory of technology-institution innovation interaction used by Ran et.al (2023) failed to respond to work-related injury insurance and insufficient

occupational injury protection for gig workers. A vignette-based experimental study on the Malaysian labour market by Ghorpade (2023) highlights a significant unmet demand for social insurance among gig workers. The findings reveal a strong unwillingness among them to invest in various forms of protection, such as unemployment insurance, retirement savings, and insurance for work-related injuries, largely due to the distinct nature of these coverage options. However, the study also finds that gig workers already enrolled in retirement savings plans are less inclined to pay for unemployment insurance, while those with private medical coverage show a lower likelihood of contributing to public work-related injury insurance schemes. As occupational satisfaction acted as an arbitrator in the association between social and financial security and gig workers' well-being (Azim, 2024) so we have considered social protection as one of the factors for the satisfaction index of the gig workers.

Respect from Families and Work Place

Respect from families and workplaces has emerged as a critical, yet underexplored, dimension of gig workers' overall well-being and job satisfaction. Al. (2024) highlights the lack of structured work–life balance mechanisms for platform workers, despite the narrative that gig work enhances flexibility, especially for caregivers. Workers often navigate gig work within familial contexts during life events such as childbirth or separation (Negrey, 2012). Chen et al. (2022) found that family respect significantly contributes to gig workers' occupational satisfaction, which in turn fosters positive social interaction. Wu (2023) in his study found that respect and recognition as essential psychological needs which increases gig workers' well-being. Similarly, Tiwari et al. (2024) linked the absence of recognition, dignity, and job satisfaction to worker dissatisfaction, moderated by organisational policies. The findings of Wu and Tiwari was supported by Kim (2023) in his study by emphasising emotional and familial factors as a dominant indicator of the quality of life of gig workers. These findings establish familial and workplace respect as crucial components for framing employee contentment, supporting its inclusion as a parameter in job satisfaction index.

Stable and Predictable Income

In order to explore the conditions that influence gig workers' well-being, recent studies have progressively emphasized the role of stable and predictable income. Quality of life is widely regarded as a multidimensional construct, where economic security plays a dominant role along with emotional and social factors (Murata et al., 2008). Multiple literature reviews reported that individual with lower income levels experiences reduced quality of life, while financial stability associates with positive emotional outcomes. Wei et al. (2021), through Dunlop's systems framework, identified income as one of the most significant determinants of gig workers' perception of work quality. Similarly, Azim (2024) demonstrated that financial security,

mediated through occupational satisfaction, enhances overall well-being. Gursoy (2024) further found that wage stability moderates the impact of job insecurity on satisfaction. Though income does not guarantee happiness, satisfaction with income strongly predicts contentment (Easterlin et al., 2010). These findings affirm the importance of income stability in shaping employee contentment, warranting its inclusion in job satisfaction index models.

Gender

Recent literature highlights the growing complexity of income stability within the gig economy, particularly in the context of gender and job satisfaction. Sarker et al. (2024), in a survey of Bangladeshi gig workers, found that monthly income plays a significant role in increasing job satisfaction which is variable between male and female workers, especially when mediated by factors such as work-life balance and ease of payment systems. However, unstable networks and irregular payment structures negatively affect satisfaction levels. This aligns with findings by Katz (2022) and Lloyd (2018), who found that while women increasingly engage in gig work due to its flexibility and income predictability. Norwani (2022) recommended that income-related priorities differ form men to women based on motivation and satisfaction levels. Even the ANOVA and regression analyses from Norwani study confirm that age and motivation significantly impact satisfaction, reinforcing the economic dimensions. Based on the following studies, researchers have included gender as one of the parameters for measuring job satisfaction index of gig workers.

Types of Gig Work

In the present-day gig economy, workers engagements are increasingly governed by ‘platformization’, a shift in which traditional managerial roles are replaced by algorithmic management (Geoffrey, 2016). Mobile applications, apps and digital platforms now determine essential traits of gig work—such as task assignment, scheduling, and compensation—thus facilitating interactions between workers and clients (Kim, 2018). These algorithmic systems not only control work patterns but also influence the perceived independency of the workers, which has been linked to lower levels of job satisfaction. Prior studies indicate that job satisfaction among gig workers are shaped by flexibility and autonomy (Wheatley, 2020), the characteristics of the platform itself (Wang, 2022), and the nature of the specific tasks involved (Sarker, 2024). In order to evaluate the contentment of gig workers, it is necessary to consider the type of work performed as a significant factor influencing job autonomy and satisfaction.

Tenure in Gig and Quality of Life

Liu (2020) found that tenure regulates the impact of psychological contract fulfillment, with newer workers valuing transactional benefits and while the experienced ones value relational outcomes. Seshadrinath et al. (2022) noted that

only 20% of platform workers (app cab drivers) remained after 12 months in India, linking retention and income instability with job satisfaction. Similarly, Huđek (2021) stressed that experience improves subjective well-being more than income alone. Sirgy's (2002, 2011) bottom–up theory supports that life satisfaction arises from multiple domains—like work, finances, and mental well-being—which are influenced by tenure and experience in gig roles. These findings highlighted the importance of considering tenure and quality of life as the important variables in evaluating job satisfaction, as it affect both domain-specific and overall life satisfaction in gig work contexts.

Respect from Customers

Tiwari (2024) highlights that a lack of dignity in work workplace, recognition from employees, and career progression often lead to dissatisfaction among platform workers. Based on this, Jing (2022) found that gig workers who experience respectful interactions from customers and recognition from the platform tend to report higher well-being, with such respect operating as a key psychological need. The relationship between customer behaviour and worker outcomes is further explored by Xiongtao (2021), who interprets that disrespect from customers can reduce a worker's sense of purpose and trigger counterproductive responses, while respectful treatment strengthens emotional resilience. Their study also suggests that respect supports intrinsic motivation and buffers against burnout, aligning with principles from Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. Collectively, these insights point to customer respect as a significant factor in sustaining job satisfaction and psychological stability in gig roles.

Methodology

Data Collection

As the study is based on an identification of factors for determining the employee contentment of Gig workers through a job satisfaction index, a convenience sampling method was used to collect data from platform-based gig workers, which include ride-hailing, food delivery and e-commerce workers. As these workers rely for the job and get paid through online platforms.

- **Inclusion Criteria:** For ride-hailing we include workers engaged with Uber and Rapido bike service. For food delivery we surveyed workers engaged with Zomato and Swiggy and for e-commerce we have taken Blinkit. We have considered Salt Lake Sector 5, Bidhannagar and Dalhousi area of Kolkata as these localities have huge footfall of gig workers due to IT park, school, offices and colleges. The hard copy questionnaire was given to the respondent for data collection. In some cases, surveyor explained the meaning and the purpose of the questionnaire to the respondent.

Our initial target was 250 workers, finally we have received 232 responses. Out of which 16 were not considered for the study as they work on more than one platform at a time. Finally, we received 216 complete responses. As per Kline (2015), a model with medium complexity should have a respondent sample size of 200 to 300. Therefore, our sample size of 216 respondents is satisfactory to proceed with the analysis. The Cronbach's alpha for Reliability statistics was **0.764** which is quite acceptable**.**

Sample

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	216	1.00	5.00	1.9213	.78847
Gender	216	.00	1.00	.7148	.65935
Education	216	1.00	4.00	2.3704	.63382
Types	216	1.00	4.00	2.0602	.79011
Year	216	1.00	4.00	2.6481	.89770
Valid N (listwise)	216				

- **Age**

The mean age is 1.92, indicating that most participants are in the age group of 25 to 30 yrs. The standard deviation of 0.788 shows a moderate spread, suggesting some variation in ages but not extreme.

- **Gender**

71.5% of respondents are male. It's clear that the majority are male gig workers.

- **Education**

The mean education level is 2.37, which implies that most individuals have middle-range educational qualifications. A standard deviation of 0.634 suggests relatively low variation. 3.6% of the respondents are 10th standard pass out. 51.9% of the respondents are 12th-standard pass-outs and 39.8% of the respondents are graduates. The mean is 2.06, showing that a 12th-standard pass-out is the most common education level of the gig workers.

Number of Years as Gig Worker

The mean year is 2.65, indicating that most participants are in gig worker profession for two or third years 51.9% of the gig workers are continuing in the profession for 3 years. Followed by 19.4% are continuing in the profession for 2 years, 14.8% are in the profession for 1 year and 13.9% of the gig workers are continuing for 4 years.

To understand how much of each variable's variance is accounted for by the factor solution, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) as the extraction method was conducted. The result shows:

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.574
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	535.681
	df	276
	Sig.	.000

This shows KMO is quite significant .574

	Initial	Extraction
age	1.000	.725
gender	1.000	.685
edulevel	1.000	.588
typeofgig	1.000	.804
years	1.000	.700
incomefromgig	1.000	.751
stableandpredictableincome	1.000	.736
overallincome	1.000	.625
workmatcheducation	1.000	.448
unemployedbasedoneducation	1.000	.611
platformtreatsfairly	1.000	.601
platformsupportworkrealated problem	1.000	.607
fullcontroloverworkinghour	1.000	.717
improvequalityoflife	1.000	.686
socialsecurityinsurance	1.000	.684
socialprotection	1.000	.751
longtermcareer	1.000	.667
financialconditionimproved	1.000	.680
supportfamilyadequately	1.000	.385
overallsatisfiedwithlife	1.000	.407
income	1.000	.577
respectfromcustomers	1.000	.620
respectfromfamilies	1.000	.700
continueworking	1.000	.703

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

	Component									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Age	-.083	.202	-.138	.783	.074	.126	-.025	-.149	.024	.016
Gender	.016	-.043	-.147	-.069	-.029	-.083	.010	.803	-.022	.057
Edulevel	.346	.118	-.181	-.354	.193	.041	.005	-.239	-.390	.220
Typeofgig	.026	.032	.011	.037	-.062	.074	-.861	.154	-.111	.116
Years	.047	-.182	.210	.728	.024	-.133	.032	-.032	-.229	.133
Incomefromgig	.026	-.050	.575	.014	-.007	.006	.200	-.114	.394	.457
stableandpredictableincome	-.077	.038	-.077	.078	.006	-.130	-.130	.086	-.150	.808
Overallincome	.010	-.030	.763	.072	-.033	.143	-.060	-.026	-.099	-.023
workmatcheducation	.287	-.287	.248	.352	.131	.102	.089	.096	.129	-.190
unemployedbasedoneducation	.061	-.008	-.558	.005	-.085	.327	-.039	-.044	.275	.319
platformtreatsfairly	.105	-.021	.142	.167	-.005	.354	.470	.287	-.311	.130
platformsupportworkrelatedproblem	.235	-.477	.088	.136	.353	.167	.277	.253	.003	-.065
fullcontroloverworkinghour	.048	-.049	-.073	-.046	.727	.339	.118	-.049	-.202	-.060
improvequalityoflife	.013	-.014	.073	.081	.790	-.022	-.051	.024	.203	.063
socialsecurityinsurance	-.099	.586	-.099	.250	.432	-.210	.106	.093	-.042	-.084
Socialprotection	.114	.816	.093	-.087	-.030	.180	.021	.109	.093	.036
Longtermcareer	-.049	.194	.279	-.113	.109	.389	-.162	.588	.035	-.013
Financialconditionimproved	-.028	.054	.012	.064	.128	.786	-.012	.016	.029	-.191
supportfamilyadequately	.263	-.210	.066	-.122	.098	.385	.203	.011	-.031	.228
overallsatisfiedwithlife	.004	-.393	.231	-.086	.142	.077	.236	.222	.245	.007
Income	.035	.026	-.130	-.097	.063	.009	.035	-.019	.733	-.078
respectfromcustomers	.557	-.021	-.137	.086	-.047	.199	.448	.184	-.010	-.079
respectfromfamilies	.799	-.121	.074	-.121	.014	.138	.082	-.002	.025	-.015
continueworking	.775	.147	-.030	.076	.028	-.209	-.159	-.063	-.009	-.020

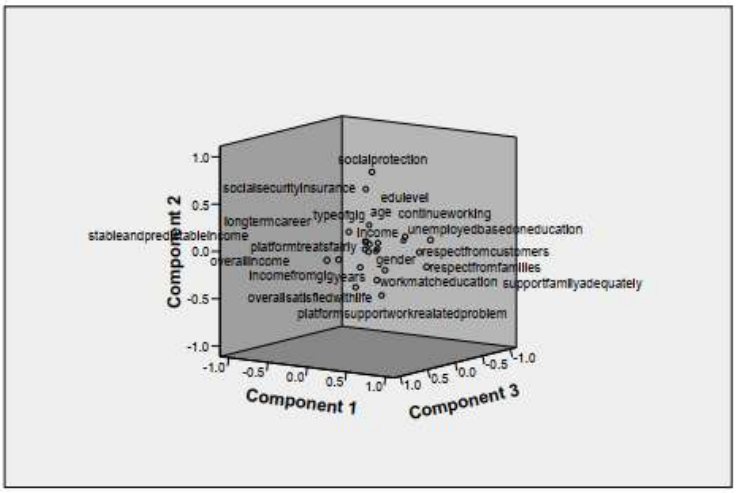
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 24 iterations.

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.908	12.116	12.116	2.908	12.116	12.116	1.938	8.073	8.073
2	1.924	8.018	20.134	1.924	8.018	20.134	1.694	7.060	15.133
3	1.785	7.439	27.573	1.785	7.439	27.573	1.645	6.854	21.987
4	1.653	6.886	34.459	1.653	6.886	34.459	1.612	6.716	28.703
5	1.461	6.086	40.545	1.461	6.086	40.545	1.605	6.686	35.390
6	1.272	5.299	45.845	1.272	5.299	45.845	1.573	6.553	41.943
7	1.199	4.995	50.840	1.199	4.995	50.840	1.497	6.236	48.179
8	1.132	4.719	55.559	1.132	4.719	55.559	1.384	5.767	53.946
9	1.086	4.526	60.084	1.086	4.526	60.084	1.287	5.365	59.311
10	1.036	4.318	64.403	1.036	4.318	64.403	1.222	5.092	64.403
11	.933	3.888	68.291						
12	.897	3.737	72.027						
13	.856	3.568	75.596						
14	.739	3.081	78.677						
15	.719	2.998	81.674						
16	.709	2.954	84.629						
17	.632	2.633	87.262						
18	.575	2.395	89.657						
19	.504	2.100	91.757						
20	.455	1.898	93.655						
21	.426	1.773	95.427						
22	.395	1.646	97.074						
23	.360	1.500	98.574						
24	.342	1.426	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	.485	-.346	.267	.100	.349	.433	.448	.224	.020	-.062
2	.524	.290	-.568	-.543	-.016	.150	-.012	-.004	-.021	.000
3	-.216	.602	-.151	.342	.559	.295	-.089	.154	-.127	-.065
4	.449	.001	-.186	.538	.070	-.370	.071	-.473	-.309	.088
5	.286	.241	.422	.022	-.308	.094	-.329	.338	-.473	.363
6	.288	.486	.519	-.050	-.048	-.109	-.023	-.272	.457	-.334
7	-.008	-.127	.220	-.349	.588	-.113	-.268	-.309	.079	.531
8	.033	.185	-.152	.270	-.198	.008	.267	.162	.553	.653
9	.264	-.201	-.135	.168	.213	-.395	-.486	.529	.306	-.180
10	.080	-.221	-.106	.251	-.182	.614	-.547	-.335	.223	-.015

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.



From component matrix ten factors have been identified which are quite significant.

Factor 1: Respect from families and continue working,

Factor 2: Social protection

Factor 3: Overall income

Factor 4: Years

Factor 5: Improve quality of life

Factor 6: Financial condition improved

Factor 7: Type of Gig

Factor 8: Gender

Factor 9: Respect from the customer

Factor 10: Stable and predictable income.

Discussions and Conclusion

The statistical analysis of the Gig Workers' satisfaction index reveals that ten core factors significantly influence employee contentment through job satisfaction. The findings suggest that job satisfaction among gig workers is shaped not solely by financial aspects—such as overall income, current financial condition, and the stability or predictability of earnings—but also by a range of non-monetary dimensions. These include respect from customers, gender, duration of engagement in gig work, respect from family members, and access to social protection, all of which play equally dominant roles.

To contextualise these findings within the global literature, five recent systematic literature review (SLR) papers were identified. Each of these reviews analyzed more than 50 scholarly articles sourced from reputable databases such as Scopus and Web of Science. The comparative synthesis is presented below:

The result shows:

Author name Year	**Result synthesised from No. of study**	**Factors identified gig worker job satisfaction index**
Singha and Saikia (2024)	77 research papers published in Scopus journals	wage, promotion and growth aspects, work intensity, nature of work
Pilatti, Pinheiro and Montini (2024).	SLR and bibliometric analysis of 59 scholarly articles	economic, technological, social, and regulatory factors
Omar and Jamil (2025)	31 studies retrieved from the Scopus and Web of Science databases	income instability, digitalisation, and policy gaps
Taneja (2024).	862 scholarly articles from Scopus data base	working conditions, wages, legal protections, social security benefits, bargaining power
Rahman & Sultana (2025)	143 research paper on digital labor published in between 2015 and 2024	Fair compensation, transparent and respectful treatment, working conditions, job security, regulation and representation

These studies span a range of geographic contexts including the USA, India, regions of the Global South, and Southern Africa. Upon comparing our findings with the global literature, it becomes evident that there is no single, universally accepted set of parameters for determining gig worker satisfaction. Although certain factors—such as fair wages, working conditions, and social protection—are more frequently cited, the overall picture remains highly variable.

This lack of uniformity can be attributed to several contextual influences, such as geographic diversity, platform-specific policies, regional labor regulations,

socioeconomic conditions, and cultural expectations. As such, employee contentment among gig workers is best understood as a context-specific construct, rather than one governed by a globally fixed set of satisfaction parameters.

By recognizing these limitations, future research should consider conducting longitudinal studies to examine how gig worker job satisfaction evolves over time, particularly in response to platform policy changes, economic fluctuations, or shifts in worker expectations. Further research needs to be done to find whether across countries, digital platforms, and diverse worker demographics affect job satisfaction index or not. Additionally, an investigation is required to analyse the role of algorithmic management, including rating systems and task allocation mechanisms, to understand how algorithmic decision-making or AI impacts workers' perceptions of fairness, autonomy, and respect—factors that are strongly tied to job satisfaction. Overall, future research should be more context-sensitive, intersectional, and platform-specific frameworks rather than a general perspective. That not only evaluates satisfaction levels but also explores their implications for worker well-being, productivity, and the effectiveness of labour policies.

Gig workers have emerged as silent facilitators of this reshaped digital economy by enhancing modern urban convenience—through delivering food, ferrying passengers, or ensuring same-day deliveries with little recognition of the structural challenges they face. This study tries to show the multi-layered dimensions of gig worker satisfaction, moving beyond the simplified view that income alone defines contentment. Our findings—which are drawn from real workers traversing the streets and screens of Kolkata—reveal that emotional needs such as respect from family, acknowledgement from customers, social protection, and a sense of security are just as critical as financial stability, which are often overlooked. By comparing our findings within the framework of global research, we affirm that no universal formula can fully capture what it means to be a "satisfied" gig worker. Cultural, geographic, and regulatory nuances shape experiences uniquely. Therefore, the research suggests that a more compassionate, inclusive, and responsive understanding of gig worker well-being is more urgent than ever. Only then can we hope to create a future for gig workers that is fair, fulfilling, and fundamentally human.

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