

A STUDY ON THE SCOPE AND IMPACT OF THE GIG AND PLATFORM ECONOMY IN AHMEDABAD

Anjali Pandit

B.K. School of Professional and Management Studies, Gujarat University

ABSTRACT

The gig and platform economy is expanding rapidly across India and globally, creating new livelihood opportunities in ridesharing, delivery, logistics, and professional services. Ahmedabad—historically known as the “Manchester of India”—is emerging as a major urban growth centre where gig and platform work is increasingly accessible. This study examines the status, scope, and impact of the gig and platform economy in Ahmedabad by analysing primary data collected from 100 gig and platform workers. The questionnaire captured responses across three dimensions: Money Matters, Social Indicators, and Nature of Job. Hypotheses were formulated for each construct and analysed using PLS-SEM in SmartPLS. The measurement model demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability and validity after refinement. The results reveal that Money Matters exert a significant negative influence on job satisfaction, indicating that income instability, variable payouts, and financial uncertainty reduce overall satisfaction levels. In contrast, Social Indicators, such as gender equality, respectful treatment, and inclusive work environments have a significant positive effect on job satisfaction. The Nature of Job, represented primarily by work flexibility, does not show a statistically significant impact. The model explains 16.2% of the variance in job satisfaction, consistent with exploratory research in emerging gig economy contexts. The findings suggest that while flexibility attracts workers to gig platforms, long-term job satisfaction depends more on financial stability and positive social conditions. These insights highlight the evolving character of gig work in the city. Overall, the study provides an exploratory understanding of how gig and platform work is perceived in Ahmedabad and identifies areas where worker experience can be strengthened through policy and platform-level interventions.

Keywords: *Gig and Platform Economy, Ahmedabad, Gig and Platform Workers, Social Security, PLS-SEM.*

1. Introduction

According to NITI Aayog, a gig worker is a person who engages in income-earning activities outside of a traditional employer–employee relationship, as well as in the informal sector (Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2020a). When gig workers use platforms—i.e., websites or apps like Ola, Uber, Dunzo, Zomato, Swiggy or Urban Company—to connect with customers, they are called platform workers (OECD, 2019). The gig and platform workers constitute what is known as a Gig and Platform Economy.

In today's time, there are myriad companies in the Gig and Platform Economy, namely Swiggy, Zomato, UberEats, Uber, Ola, Rapido, Urban Company, Behance and so on. Platform workers are one of the most visible groups of professionals in urban India today. Through the app, they could receive a work order which might involve ferrying passengers around in taxi-cabs, auto-rickshaws, bike-taxis and their electric vehicle variants, deliver food and groceries, or provide cleaning or wellness services at home. Even as this form of labour, i.e. platform work, gains currency in today's socio-political landscape, it did not start in the 2020s.

The gig economy in itself is expansive and undefined and can include a variety of workers outside of a traditional worker definition. India's gig workforce is projected to grow from 1 crore in 2024–25 to 2.35 crore by 2029–30 (PIB, 30-08-2025).

The nature of gig and platform work is yet to be explored completely, especially in India. As far as income and financial stability is concerned, gig and platform workers are still underperforming in comparison to their traditional counterparts. A 2025 state study in Telangana reported average monthly earnings of gig workers $\approx$ ₹20,000, with e-commerce delivery workers at the low end ($\sim$ ₹13,700) and some skilled trades at the higher end ($\sim$ ₹27,000). These figures are substantially lower than many formal salaried jobs in urban India (and incomes vary a lot by hours worked, city, and platform rules) (The Times of India Report).

Further, the social indicators for such workers are also in a dismal state. They lack access to social security benefits, have relatively lower women participation, and limited access to employer-funded healthcare or compensation (The Times of India Report). Thus it becomes important to study the nature, scope and impact of the Gig and Platform Economy. This paper aims to study this in the city of Ahmedabad as it is a growing city, evidencing rural-to-urban migration and experiencing development at a rapid pace. The study also aims to provide insights into policy recommendations to ameliorate the state of gig and platform workers.

2. Literature Review

The gig and platform economy has become a prominent aspect of modern labour markets, with diverse effects on workers' roles and experiences, especially in urban areas like Ahmedabad. Existing research highlights the complex nature of gig work, encompassing behavioural, economic, managerial, entrepreneurial, and socio-cultural dimensions.

Allon et al. offer insights into how gig workers make labour decisions, focusing on the influence of income shocks on their work hours and labour supply. This behavioural and economic perspective is essential for understanding how gig workers in Ahmedabad might respond to fluctuating income opportunities within the local platform ecosystem. Similarly, Chen et al. analyse how gig platforms strategically use bonuses to motivate workers and enhance platform performance, indicating that incentive structures are crucial in shaping worker engagement.

The managerial assumptions of gig platforms also significantly impact workers' perceptions and experiences. Ravenelle et al. apply McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y to examine how different management philosophies influence workers' entrepreneurial self-image. The study finds that platforms operating under Theory X assumptions may suppress workers' entrepreneurial identity, leading to negative psychological effects. This insight is relevant for Ahmedabad's gig economy, where management practices could either promote or hinder entrepreneurial attitudes among workers.

From a socio-cultural standpoint, Webster et al. investigate immigrant women involved in small-scale entrepreneurial activities through gig platforms in Nordic countries, emphasizing the role of gender norms and cultural factors in shaping gig work experiences. Although focused on a different context, this research suggests that gender and cultural norms could similarly influence the scope and impact of gig work among diverse populations in Ahmedabad.

The COVID-19 pandemic's impact on gig workers is explored by Polkowska et al., who study Glovo couriers in Poland. The pandemic's effects have been mixed—some workers view gig work as resilient, while others face economic hardships. This duality indicates that the pandemic's influence on Ahmedabad's gig economy could similarly vary, affecting workers' economic stability and perceptions of gig work as a sustainable livelihood.

Research by Sun et al. reveals a trend of de-flexibilization among Chinese food delivery workers, challenging the notion that gig work is inherently flexible. This trend suggests that gig workers in Ahmedabad might also experience increasing rigidity in their work patterns, which could reduce the perceived autonomy and flexibility traditionally associated with gig employment.

Silva et al. provide a comprehensive overview of the gig economy, identifying key themes such as entrepreneurship, digitalization, and platform strategies. Their bibliometric analysis highlights the importance of gig workers in developing social welfare strategies within the platform ecosystem. This perspective implies that in Ahmedabad, gig workers could play a significant role in local economic development and social policy if their entrepreneurial potential is effectively harnessed.

Zhou et al. expand the discussion to migrant workers in China, illustrating how state-led economic reforms and migration patterns can entrap workers in unstable, platform-based jobs. This ethnographic insight suggests that migrant populations in Ahmedabad might face similar structural barriers, resulting in job precarity and limited opportunities for upward mobility within the gig economy.

Sun et al. examine service innovation and platform strategies, focusing on how food delivery services optimize pricing and service quality in competitive markets. Their findings highlight the importance of network effects and strategic decision-making, which could influence the growth and competitiveness of gig platforms in Ahmedabad, thereby affecting workers' employment opportunities and earnings.

Lastly, Guo et al. present a longitudinal study on gig workers' dependence and mental health, finding that higher reliance on gig work is associated with increased psychological distress. This underscores the need to consider the mental health implications of gig work in Ahmedabad, where dependence on platform income may similarly impact workers' well-being over time.

Overall, the literature suggests that the scope of gig work in Ahmedabad could be shaped by behavioural factors, management practices, socio-cultural norms, and structural conditions. These elements have significant implications for workers' economic stability, entrepreneurial identity, and mental health. The complex impact of the gig economy calls for a nuanced understanding and targeted policy measures to maximize benefits while minimizing adverse effects.

3. Research Gap

After analysing the existing literature in the said field, it became apparent that the research in this aspect does not exist in a consolidated manner. In other words, the state of gig and platform workers in terms of income and financial stability, social security and nature of work has not been covered in a consolidated manner. The existing literature on this is scattered and does not give a comprehensive idea, and it very minimally covers the specific cities of India. Further, the impactfulness of this sector has not been reflected in its entirety. Not only this, but the field of study is still unexplored in the city of Ahmedabad. Therefore, it becomes necessary to carry out research in such an unexplored area.

Despite extensive international scholarship on the gig economy, there is a lack of localized empirical research examining how behavioural, managerial, socio-cultural, and digital factors collectively shape the scope and impact of gig work in Ahmedabad. Existing literature overlooks intersectional dimensions such as gender, caste, and migration, as well as mental health, entrepreneurial potential, and policy frameworks that influence worker experiences in emerging Indian urban centres. Consequently, there is a need for an

integrated, context-specific study that investigates the socio-economic realities, well-being, and developmental implications of the gig economy in Ahmedabad.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. A descriptive approach was used to understand the social and economic characteristics, perceptions, and working conditions of gig and platform workers in Ahmedabad. The analytical component involved performing statistical tests to study the perception-based constructs such as **Money Matters, Social Indicators, and Nature of Job**.

4.2 Nature of the Study

The research is quantitative in nature. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of both closed-ended (Likert scale) and open-ended questions.

4.3 Research Objectives

4.3.1 To examine perceptions of gig and platform workers regarding income, social indicators, and nature of work.

4.3.2 To assess the factors influencing job satisfaction among gig and platform workers.

4.3.3 To evaluate the overall scope and challenges of the gig and platform economy in Ahmedabad.

4.3.4 To study the impact of the growing Gig and Platform Economy on the economy as a whole (at the district level).

4.4 Sampling Design

4.4.1 Population

The target population is the individuals employed in the Gig and Platform Economy, comprising those engaged in various gig and platform-based occupations in Ahmedabad, including delivery personnel, ride-hailing drivers, freelancers, service-based platform workers, and part-time gig workers.

4.4.2 Sampling Technique

A non-probability convenience sampling method was employed due to the scattered and informal nature of gig workers in Ahmedabad. The respondents were approached at major marketplaces, transit hubs, and locations where gig workers operate (e.g., Zomato/Swiggy pick-up or delivery points, Ola/Uber stands, service hubs, etc.).

4.5 Sample Size

A total of 100 gig and platform workers were surveyed for this study. This sample size is considered adequate for basic hypothesis testing and for exploratory analysis of perception-based variables.

5. Data Collection Method

5.1 Primary Data

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised the following major sections:

1. Demographic characteristics (Gender, Age, Education, Income, Disability status)
2. Money Matters (financial stability, income volatility, discrimination, opportunities)
3. Social Indicators (gender representation, fairness, opportunities for PwD)
4. Nature of Job (flexibility, platform usage, overtime, job satisfaction)
5. Open-ended comments to capture qualitative aspects

The data were collected through face-to-face interactions and digital forms between January and April 2023.

6. Instrument Design

6.1 Likert Scale

In the questionnaire, the perception-based questions were measured using a five-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. Reverse-coding was done for the negative questions.

6.2 Constructs

Further, the items were grouped into three conceptual constructs: (1) Money Matters, (2) Social Indicators, and (3) Nature of Job. Each construct includes multiple indicators to measure latent perceptions of gig workers.

7. Instrument Development and Variable Measurement

Table 1. Survey Items and Codes

Code	Statement / Survey Item
MM1	Gig and platform workers have the potential to earn more money than traditional employees.
MM2	Gig and platform workers have less financial stability than traditional employees.
MM3	Gig and platform workers have to work longer hours to make the same amount of money as traditional employees.
MM4	Gig and platform workers are more likely to experience income volatility than traditional employees.
MM5	Gig and platform workers are more likely to face discrimination in their pay compared to traditional employees.
SI2	Gig and platform workers have fewer opportunities for career growth and advancement compared to traditional employees.
SI3	Gig and platform workers get social security benefits like Provident Fund, NPS, Insurance, etc.
SI4	Women are equally represented in the gig economy as men.
SI5	How easy do you think it is for women to find gig work opportunities compared to men?
SI6	Women are paid fairly for the work they do in the gig economy.
SI7	The gig economy has created new opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (PwD) to work and earn income.
NJ1	Gig and platform workers have the flexibility to earn income on their own schedule.
NJ2	What is your salary based on?
NJ3	On how many platforms do you work?
NJ4	How is your overtime compensated?
JS	Are you satisfied with your job?

Note: MM5 was earlier designated as SI1. However, due to errors in calculation in SmartPLS, the category of this indicator was changed and placed under the latent variable 'Money Matters'.

8. Hypothesis Formulation

The questionnaire naturally has three constructs: (1) Money Matters, (2) Social Indicators, and (3) Nature of Job. The hypotheses are as follows:

H1: Money Matters (MM), representing the financial aspects of gig work, has a positive and significant effect on Job Satisfaction (JS) among gig and platform workers in Ahmedabad.

H2: Social Indicators (SI), specifically reflecting perceptions of gender equality and inclusivity, have a positive and significant effect on Job Satisfaction (JS) among gig and platform workers in Ahmedabad.

H3: Nature of Job (NJ), particularly the flexibility associated with gig and platform work, has a positive and significant effect on Job Satisfaction (JS) among gig and platform workers in Ahmedabad.

9. Research Model

The conceptual framework of the study is based on the hypothesized relationships between the financial aspects of gig work (Money Matters), social indicators relating to gender equality, and the nature of gig work (flexibility), and their influence on job satisfaction among gig and platform workers in Ahmedabad. The model was developed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) and is depicted in Figure 1.

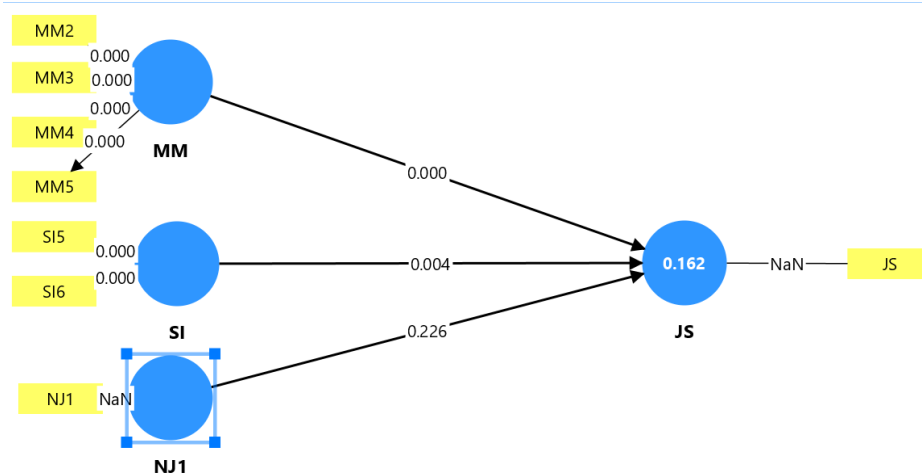


Figure 1. Proposed Research Model (SmartPLS Path Diagram)

10. Results and Discussion

10.1 Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model was evaluated using indicator loadings, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and multicollinearity diagnostics.

10.1.1 Indicator Reliability (Outer Loadings)

All item loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating good indicator reliability.

Table 2. Outer Loadings

Path	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Std. Dev. (STDEV)	T statistic	P value
JS <- JS	1	1	0	n/a	n/a
MM2 <- MM	0.857	0.835	0.096	8.877	0.000
MM3 <- MM	0.885	0.877	0.081	10.960	0.000
MM4 <- MM	0.905	0.896	0.075	12.094	0.000
MM5 <- MM	0.909	0.894	0.075	12.053	0.000
NJ1 <- NJ1	1	1	0	n/a	n/a
SI5 <- SI	0.911	0.882	0.144	6.332	0.000
SI6 <- SI	0.843	0.819	0.140	6.010	0.000

10.1.2 Internal Consistency (Construct Reliability)

Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, and composite reliability exceeded the recommended cutoffs ($\alpha > 0.70$; $\rho_c > 0.70$). Thus, internal consistency and reliability are established.

Table 3. Construct Reliability

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability (rho_c)
MM	0.913	0.929	0.938
SI	0.707	0.741	0.870
NJ	1.000	1.000	1.000
JS	1.000	1.000	1.000

10.1.3 Convergent Validity (AVE)

All AVE values were above 0.50, demonstrating adequate convergent validity.

Table 4. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Construct	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Std. Dev. (STDEV)	T statistic	P value
JS	1	1	0	n/a	n/a
MM	0.791	0.773	0.075	10.585	0.000
NJ1	1	1	0	n/a	n/a
SI	0.770	0.745	0.085	9.116	0.000

10.1.4 HTMT Ratio

All HTMT values were below 0.85, confirming discriminant validity.

Table 5. Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio

Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	2.50%	97.50%
MM <-> JS	0.240	0.242	0.066	0.439
NJ1 <-> JS	0.061	0.099	0.004	0.269
NJ1 <-> MM	0.308	0.310	0.122	0.482

Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	2.50%	97.50%
SI <=> JS	0.273	0.281	0.063	0.509
SI <=> MM	0.327	0.338	0.138	0.547
SI <=> NJ1	0.157	0.188	0.033	0.425

10.1.5 Outer Model Collinearity Statistics (VIF)

All VIF values were below the threshold of 5, indicating no multicollinearity concerns.

Table 6. Outer Model VIF

Indicator	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	2.50%	97.50%
JS	1	1	1	1
MM2	2.701	2.912	1.954	4.448
MM3	2.649	2.808	2.040	3.879
MM4	2.932	3.129	2.172	4.507
MM5	3.223	3.451	2.404	4.959
NJ1	1	1	1	1
SI5	1.426	1.477	1.121	2.064
SI6	1.426	1.477	1.121	2.064

Interpretation: Convergent validity was established as all constructs reported AVE values above the recommended threshold of 0.50 (MM = 0.791; SI = 0.770). Composite reliability values ranged between 0.870 and 0.938, confirming internal consistency reliability. Cronbach's alpha values were acceptable (MM = 0.913; SI = 0.707). Discriminant validity was confirmed through HTMT ratios, all of which were below 0.85. VIF values for both outer and inner models were below 3.3, indicating the absence of multicollinearity.

10.1.6 Model Fit Index

The overall model fit was assessed using SRMR, d_ULS, and d_G indices. The SRMR value of 0.061 was below the recommended threshold of 0.08, indicating a good fit. Furthermore, the d_ULS and d_G values of the estimated model were lower than their respective 95% bootstrap quantiles, confirming that the model fits the data adequately. These results suggest that the proposed PLS-SEM model demonstrates an acceptable overall fit.

Table 7. Model Fit Indices

Index	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	95%	99%
SRMR (Saturated)	0.061	0.048	0.066	0.157
SRMR (Estimated)	0.061	0.048	0.066	0.157
d_ULS (Saturated)	0.135	0.101	0.157	0.890
d_ULS (Estimated)	0.135	0.101	0.157	0.890
d_G (Saturated)	0.089	0.112	0.164	0.332
d_G (Estimated)	0.089	0.112	0.164	0.332

10.1.7 Latent Variable Correlations

The correlation analysis among latent variables revealed a significant negative association between Money Matters and Job Satisfaction ($r = -0.235$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that financial concerns reduce satisfaction among gig workers. Social Indicators showed a significant positive correlation with Job Satisfaction ($r = 0.233$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that inclusivity and fairness contribute positively to satisfaction levels. The relationship between Nature of Job and Job Satisfaction was not statistically significant, implying that flexibility alone does not drive satisfaction. Overall, the correlation results are consistent with the structural model findings and further validate the proposed theoretical framework.

Table 8. Latent Variable Correlations

Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Std. Dev. (STDEV)	T statistic	P value
MM <=> JS	-0.235	-0.247	0.096	2.446	0.014
NJ1 <=> JS	0.061	0.061	0.106	0.571	0.568
NJ1 <=> MM	0.290	0.282	0.092	3.137	0.002
SI <=> JS	0.233	0.248	0.101	2.299	0.022
SI <=> MM	0.268	0.246	0.105	2.552	0.011
SI <=> NJ1	0.138	0.138	0.119	1.159	0.247

10.2 Structural Model Assessment

10.2.1 Path Coefficients

There is a significant relationship for $MM \rightarrow JS$ and $SI \rightarrow JS$; however, for $NJ1 \rightarrow JS$ the relationship is insignificant.

Table 9. Path Coefficients

Path	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Std. Dev. (STDEV)	T statistic	P value
MM $\rightarrow$ JS	-0.353	-0.366	0.092	3.822	0.000
NJ1 $\rightarrow$ JS	0.120	0.121	0.099	1.212	0.226
SI $\rightarrow$ JS	0.311	0.321	0.107	2.914	0.004

10.2.2 Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The model explains 16.2% of the variance in Job Satisfaction (JS), which is considered a weak but acceptable value for exploratory studies in the social sciences.

Table 10. R Square and R Square Adjusted

Measure	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Std. Dev. (STDEV)	T statistic	P value
R Square (JS)	0.162	0.203	0.059	2.733	0.006
R Square Adjusted (JS)	0.136	0.178	0.061	2.222	0.026

10.2.3 Effect Size (f^2)

The effect size (f^2) was calculated to determine the contribution of each exogenous construct to the explanatory power of Job Satisfaction (JS).

Table 11. Effect Size (f^2)

Path	f^2 (Original Sample)	Interpretation (Cohen, 1988; Hair et al., 2019)
MM → JS	0.128	Small–moderate effect (close to medium threshold)
NJ1 → JS	0.016	Very small / negligible effect
SI → JS	0.106	Small effect

10.2.4 Inner Model Collinearity Statistics

Inner VIFs were below 3, confirming no multicollinearity among constructs.

Table 12. Inner Model VIF

Path	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	2.50%	97.50%
MM → JS	1.159	1.172	1.035	1.394
NJ1 → JS	1.096	1.124	1.019	1.306
SI → JS	1.082	1.104	1.009	1.271

Interpretation: The structural model was assessed using the standardized path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values derived through bootstrapping. As shown in Table 9, two of the three hypothesized relationships were statistically significant. **Money Matters (MM)** showed a significant negative effect on Job Satisfaction ($\beta = -0.353$, $t = 3.822$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that higher financial concerns, income instability, or perceived unfair earnings reduce overall job satisfaction among gig and platform workers in Ahmedabad. **Social Indicators (SI)** demonstrated a significant positive influence on Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.311$, $t = 2.914$, $p = 0.004$). This suggests that gender equality, social respect, and inclusive work environments positively contribute to satisfaction levels. **Nature of Job (NJ)**, representing flexibility of work, did not show a statistically significant impact ($\beta = 0.120$, $t = 1.212$, $p = 0.226$). This implies that flexibility alone does not determine job satisfaction for gig workers in this context.

The model explained 16.2% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.162$), which aligns with exploratory-level studies often conducted with early-stage constructs in emerging gig economies. Collinearity diagnostics confirmed no VIF-related issues, and all measurement model criteria (reliability, validity, discriminant validity) were satisfied.

According to Cohen's (1988) thresholds, MM → JS demonstrated a **small-to-moderate effect** ($f^2 = 0.128$), indicating that Money Matters (MM) contributes meaningfully to the variance in Job Satisfaction (JS). The effect of Social Indicators (SI) on Job Satisfaction (JS) showed a **small effect size** ($f^2 = 0.106$), suggesting that SI has a modest influence on job satisfaction in the gig and platform work context. The effect of Nature of Job (NJ1) on JS was **negligible** ($f^2 = 0.016$), indicating that NJ1 does not meaningfully contribute to explaining the variation in Job Satisfaction. These findings align with the path coefficient significance results, further emphasizing that MM and SI are more influential predictors of job satisfaction than NJ1.

10.3 Discussion

Initially, all the indicators under MM, SI and NJ (as indicated in Section 7, Instrument Development and Variable Measurement) were used and a model was prepared using SmartPLS, wherein all the indicators showed a reflective association with the respective latent variable. The impact of the latent variables MM, SI and NJ on JS was demonstrated through the model. However, upon bootstrapping, it was found that the outer loadings were negative for many indicators. These indicators were removed to ensure the reliability

and validity of the model. The indicators namely MM1, MM2 (originally coded differently), SI2, SI3, SI4 and SI7 were removed due to negative loadings, and NJ2, NJ3, NJ4 were removed as these were categorical variables. Further, SI1 was recategorised and placed under the more suitable category of MM as the indicator named MM5. NJ became a single-construct item and Job Satisfaction was kept as a single-construct item only. After these changes, the bootstrapping was run again and satisfactory results were obtained with no negative outer loadings.

The purpose of this study was to examine how money matters, social indicators, and the nature of job influence job satisfaction among gig and platform workers.

The findings indicate that financial-related perceptions have the strongest influence on job satisfaction, but the relationship is negative. This means that despite earning opportunities, gig workers experience dissatisfaction when income unpredictability, variable payouts, or fluctuating incentives become dominant concerns. This aligns with global gig economy studies where workers value earnings but are highly sensitive to instability.

In contrast, Social Indicators significantly increased job satisfaction. Gender inclusivity, equal-pay perception, and respectful treatment seem to play a crucial role in shaping overall satisfaction among gig workers in Ahmedabad. The positive effect suggests that when gig platforms provide non-discriminatory and inclusive environments, workers respond with higher satisfaction.

Interestingly, the Nature of Job—primarily flexibility—did not significantly predict job satisfaction. This indicates that while flexibility may attract individuals to gig work, it is not a strong driver of ongoing satisfaction once they are engaged in the system. Workers may appreciate flexibility, but financial stability and social respect matter more for their long-term satisfaction.

11. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that job satisfaction among gig and platform workers in Ahmedabad is shaped primarily by two key factors: financial perceptions and social indicators. Financial concerns exert a significant **negative** influence on satisfaction, indicating that fluctuations in earnings, incentives, or income uncertainty reduce workers' overall satisfaction. Conversely, strong and inclusive social indicators—such as gender equality, fair treatment, and social respect—were found to significantly enhance job satisfaction. The flexibility inherent in gig work, represented through the Nature of Job construct, did not significantly influence satisfaction, suggesting that flexibility alone is insufficient to maintain satisfaction without stable earnings and positive social experiences.

The findings highlight the need for gig platforms and policymakers to focus on improving financial stability mechanisms while strengthening inclusive and equitable labour practices.

12. Limitations

The current study has some limitations that should be noted, even though it offers insightful information about job satisfaction among gig and platform workers. First, only gig and platform workers in Ahmedabad are included in the study. The results may not be immediately applicable to other cities or areas with varied socio-economic situations, regulatory regimes, or platform penetration levels, even while this offers insightful context-specific information.

Second, if gig workers acquire experience, platforms alter their policies, or the economy shifts, job satisfaction and its determinants may change over time. Such dynamic impacts might be better captured by longitudinal designs.

Third, a number of indicators were eliminated during the measurement model assessment because of negative outer loadings and problems with categorical measurement. As a result, several constructs were assessed using fewer indicators and, in the case of Nature of Job and Job Satisfaction, as single-item constructs. This method may restrict the depth and multidimensional capture of these constructs, even though it guaranteed the final model's validity and reliability.

Fourth, the model's explanatory capacity ($R^2 = 0.162$) shows that a significant amount of the variance in job satisfaction cannot be explained, even though it is acceptable for an exploratory investigation. Other potentially important elements that could strengthen the explanation were left out, including algorithmic control, employment stability, labour intensity, psychological well-being, and platform governance.

13. Future Implications

The results of this study can be expanded upon in a number of significant ways by future research. First, broadening the geographic scope to encompass several cities, states, or nations would facilitate comparative analyses and enhance the results' applicability in other gig economy scenarios.

Second, to investigate how job satisfaction changes over time and how long-term exposure to income volatility or social treatment affects worker outcomes, future research may use longitudinal or panel data approaches. Stronger causal conclusions would also be possible as a result.

Third, other concepts, including perceived job stability, algorithmic transparency, platform responsibility, work–life balance, psychological stress, and access to social protection benefits, might be included by researchers. The prediction ability of structural models in gig work studies could be greatly increased by incorporating these variables.

Fourth, the use of mixed-method approaches combining PLS-SEM with qualitative interviews could provide richer insights into workers' lived experiences and help explain why flexibility, despite being a defining feature of gig work, does not significantly influence job satisfaction.

Finally, future studies could explore moderating and mediating mechanisms—for example, whether social indicators moderate the negative impact of financial instability on job satisfaction, or whether platform trust mediates the relationship between earnings perception and satisfaction.

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