



Beyond Traditional Employment: Exploring Opportunities and Challenges for Dutch Gig Economy Participation

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Abstract

The rise of the gig economy has significantly transformed the employment landscape, offering opportunities and challenges. This study explores these two dynamics among young gig workers aged between 19 and 24 in the Netherlands, aiming to contribute to the literature on the experiences that drive the younger generation to choose gig work. Data was collected through interviews, revealing key insights into the motivations, such as higher financial rewards and flexible scheduling, as well as challenges, including income instability and competition for gigs. The findings suggest that extrinsic motivation, particularly financial incentives, is dominant. This study provides valuable insights to support the young workforce better and adapt to emerging labor market trends. Addressing these insights can help foster a more resilient and adaptable labor market and identify improvement areas to enhance gig worker's working conditions.

Key words: gig economy, gig work, young generation, opportunities, challenges, extrinsic motivation.

Introduction

In the contemporary labor market, an increasing number of individuals opt for non-standard forms of employment, driven by necessity and choice (Cappelli & Keller, 2013; Spreitzer et al., 2017). Stable long-term employment within organizations is transforming. Nowadays, careers are defined by engagements centered around specific tasks, spanning multiple organizations, employers, and work environments (Hirschi, 2018; Abraham et al., 2017). A specific form of non-standard work is gig work, characterized by freelance engagements. Gig work has experienced exponential growth and now constitutes a significant portion of the global labor market. The gig economy is estimated to account for approximately twelve percent of the worldwide labor force (The World Bank, 2023).

As a result, the gig economy frequently makes headlines, representing an economic paradigm where digital platforms act as intermediaries between employers seeking employees, and employees seeking temporary work (Boerman, 2018). This phenomenon, often discussed in the context of labor conditions and regulatory frameworks, consistently attracts media attention. Accordingly, over the last years, there has been a change in the employment relationship, the emergence of digital platforms has facilitated a novel form of labor known contemporarily as gig work, distinguishing itself from traditional employment by its reliance on online platforms (Dunn, 2020). Flanagan (2017, p. 2) defines gig work as “Digital platforms facilitate employment by mediating the process of assigning, supervising, delivering, and compensating tasks performed by contingent workers on a piecework basis”. In alignment, the gig economy offers a flexible and non-traditional employment alternative (Dunn, 2020). This economy has become trending in many countries (Gandhi et al., 2018) and widely popular among young people (Sharma et al., 2023).

Regarding the total number of self-employed individuals in the labor force, the Netherlands ranks fifth in Europe, according to a benchmark by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) (Consultancy.nl, 2024). This positions the Netherlands as a genuine freelance economy on the European stage. Figures from the Central Bureau of Statistics (2023) show that around 1.2 million self-employed people were registered in the Netherlands in 2022. Six percent of these self-employed people are young people aged between 15 and 25, which works out to about 72.000 young people in total. The increase in active users on freelance platforms is partially attributed to the entrance of Generation Z into the labor market (Van Geet, 2020). Generation Z, born between 1998 and 2015, has been raised in a world characterized by digital efficiency and swiftness, where convenience is perpetually accessible. The gig economy is gaining traction among Generation Z, with 37 percent considering flexible work over a traditional job. In 2023, the Central Bureau of Statistics surveyed the reasons for individuals to engage in self-employment through the Independent Labor Survey in the Netherlands. The survey was conducted among self-employed individuals aged between 15 and 75 (CBS, 2023). Nearly half of the respondents indicated they desire flexibility in how much and when they work. Additionally, it is noteworthy that one-third of the respondents preferred to work freelance rather than for an employer.

Increased income (Kuek et al., 2015), varied work assignments (Kost et al., 2020), flexible working hours (Friedman, 2014), and the sense of autonomy that comes with being self-employed (Friedman, 2014), are drivers to choose for this type of work. Research by Van Geet (2020) demonstrates that gig workers, on average, exhibit higher levels of happiness compared to employees in traditional employment relationships. Nevertheless, while gig work offers flexibility, it additionally carries inherent drawbacks compared to traditional employment

(Gandhi et al., 2018). Due to being entirely self-reliant in the work, gig workers also assume responsibilities that are typically overseen by the employer they work for. These include managing turnover tax, securing insurance, establishing a pension scheme, and more. Substantial fines may be imposed if these aspects are not carefully managed (NOS Stories, 2022). So, what opportunities sufficiently outweigh the challenges associated with gig work? Therefore, the research question of this qualitative study follows: “*What are the opportunities and challenges experienced by Dutch gig workers?*”

Investigating such a topic is crucial since this has yet to be done in the Netherlands. Research into the experiences of Dutch gig workers can be valuable for several reasons. Insights can be gained into their work preferences by mapping out their opportunities and challenges regarding gig work. This understanding allows for better alignment with their needs and expectations. Furthermore, analyzing their choice of work type can contribute to a deeper understanding of their motivations. Understanding these opportunities and challenges can help employers make their work more attractive to this generation (Kässi & Lehdonvirta, 2018).

Additionally, the understanding can inform policymakers and educational institutions on better supporting the young generation, highlighting the broader socioeconomic trends and shifts within the labor market and providing a clearer picture of the future of work in the Netherlands (De Stefano, 2016). By addressing the unique needs and preferences of the younger generation, stakeholders can foster a more adaptable and resilient labor market (Berg et al., 2018). This study may identify gaps in the current labor policies and suggest improvements to enhance the work environment of gig workers (Wood et al., 2019).

Theoretical framework

Gig Economy

The gig economy is a trending and increasing sector within the labor market. Resch (2015) compares the gig economy to industrialisation as the most significant transformation of work since the rise of industrialisation. The gig economy creates a shift towards independence and self-management in open networks enabled by the technology of our time. It is a work environment that incorporates elements of contingent labor, independent contracts, short shifts, and freelance work (Schmidt et al., 2022).

Employers are connected to their workers, and therefore at least three parties are involved (Harris, 2017), the gig worker who wants to do a gig, the employer who offers gigs for whatever reasons, and the platform provider who acts as an intermediary and matches the parties to each other. Aguinis and Lawal (2013) consider a gig to be a small, single task or micro-task for which a gig worker is hired. Therefore, Dickson and Lorenz (2009) see gig workers as a specific type of worker within the broader context of non-standard work arrangements, including temporary workers, part-timers, and hired workers. Gig work is facilitated by online platforms that mediate the process of assigning, supervising, delivering, and compensating tasks performed by contingent workers on a piecework basis (Flanagan, 2017). In sum, gig work can be linked to three characteristics, it is task-based; term-limited; and, positioned outside organizational structures. Gig workers “Do specific tasks for specific periods rather than holding longer-term jobs and roles that contain multiple, ongoing tasks housed within organizations” (Caza et al., 2022, p. 2125). These defining characteristics mean that gig work is compensated on a piecemeal basis and is non-exclusionary as gig workers take on multiple gigs with multiple organizations (Katz & Krueger, 2019).

Gig work has several key features (Stanford, 2017). Companies outsource short-term tasks, gigs, to independent workers moving between assignments (Stanford, 2017). Gig work operates without a traditional employer-employee relationship, rendering gig workers as workers who are independent and self-employed (Stanford, 2017; Jansen, 2017). Online freelance platforms serve as intermediaries, connecting distant gig workers and employers in a triangular relationship, leveraging the internet and modern technology to facilitate matching (Moeller et al., 2013). Combining these features, platform-enabled gig work can be described as “Fixed-term activities which requesters (i.e. organizations or individual consumers) outsource on-demand to a self-employed gig worker with the help of an intermediary platform firm which installs an online platform that matches and manages gig workers and requestors, yet without actually employing gig workers and instituting an employment relationship with them” (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019, p. 217).

Gig work and Motivation

The gig economy offers a distinctive atmosphere for delving into the intricacies of work motivation. Rainey (2000) defines motivation as motivation pertains to the extent to which an individual is prompted or stimulated to invest effort in accomplishing a specific goal. In work, motivation signifies the level of endeavor someone exerts to perform tasks diligently and effectively. Motivation includes a multifaceted interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic factors that motivate individuals toward goal pursuit and enhance their overall well-being (Chen et al., 2019). Intrinsic motivation is self-determined and acts as a driver for an individual to undertake tasks for personal fulfillment. While extrinsic motivation is determined by external elements like rewards, recognition, and compensation, which encourage an individual’s work performance (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

Within the domain of gig work, these motivational drivers assume diverse manifestations. Moreover, the gig economy encompasses several job characteristics delineated in Hackman and Oldham's (1975) job characteristics theory, encompassing task identity, autonomy, skill variety, task significance, and job-based feedback. These characteristics increase the motivational efficacy of gig work by furnishing individuals with clear objectives, avenues for skill augmentation, and a sense of purpose stemming from meaningful engagement. Consequently, the gig economy accords with established frameworks of work motivation as well as furnishes a dynamic backdrop for further elucidating the motivational mechanisms inherent in contemporary work configurations (Autor, 2019).

The Opportunities for Gig Workers

Gig work offers numerous opportunities, one of the primary benefits is the flexibility it provides. The most commonly found opportunities in the literature are listed below. Flexibility and autonomy are significant reasons for entering the gig economy (Friedman, 2014; Lehdonvita, 2018). Studies have consistently highlighted gig workers' autonomy in setting their own schedules and choosing their own work (Lehdonvirta, 2018; Wood et al., 2019). Flexibility allows individuals to balance work with personal commitments and interests (Kässi & Lehdonvirta, 2018). These two aspects resonate particularly strongly with gig workers who seek greater control over their work lives. Friedman (2014) argues that the gig economy offers workers the flexibility to set their schedules, allowing them to balance work with personal commitments. This sentiment is repeated by Lehdonvirta (2018), who highlights the importance of managing time as a key aspect of flexibility in gig work. Although an accepted definition of work flexibility is lacking (Hill et al., 2008), it typically encompasses aspects related to the manner, location, timing, and duration of work (Hill et al., 2008), which has become a crucial

requirement for workers and employers alike. Job autonomy refers to the extent of freedom, independence, and discretion granted to individuals within their role, allowing them to schedule tasks and determine the procedures for their execution (Wu et al., 2023). It constitutes one of the key elements in job design alongside skill variety, task identity, task significance, and job feedback, as conceptualized by Hackman and Oldham (1975). According to their theory, autonomy fosters a crucial psychological state characterized by a sense of accountability for the outcomes of one's work.

Flexibility and autonomy inherent in gig work can facilitate work-life balance, a critical factor in today's fast-moving society (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010). Work-life balance encompasses organizational efforts to improve employees' experiences across work and personal spheres. Cascio (2000, p.166) defines work-life balance as "Employer-sponsored benefits or working conditions aiding employees in harmonizing work and non-work demands". Gig workers appreciate the ability to adapt their work schedules to accommodate personal responsibilities. This flexibility contributes to overall job satisfaction and can reduce work-related stress (Cheng & Chan, 2008), and in turn, correlates with favorable outcomes, including heightened work effectiveness and increased intrinsic work motivation (Hackman & Oldham, 1975).

Furthermore, money is a significant motivator too for individuals opting for gig work. Kuek et al. (2015) highlight the role of gig work in providing opportunities for income generation. Gig workers can command higher rates than traditional employment arrangements (Wood et al., 2019). Furthermore, the significance of money as a driving force in the economy varies among individuals, as discussed by Tang et al. (2005). Their study suggests that an individual's motivation for work spans a spectrum, from those primarily driven by the fulfillment

of basic needs to others for whom money serves as a primary goal. This spectrum reflects differing priorities regarding financial security, career advancement, and personal fulfillment.

Engagement in gig work offers opportunities for professional development and skill enhancement. By taking on diverse gigs across different industries, gig workers can broaden their expertise and build a versatile portfolio (Kost et al., 2020). A study by Kost et al. (2020), found that gig workers often leverage gig platforms to explore various career paths and acquire new skills. The flexibility and autonomy inherent in gig work allow gig workers to experiment with different roles and industries, enabling them to identify their strengths and interests while gaining valuable experience. This continuous learning and skill acquisition enhance individual employability as well as contribute to the overall dynamism of the labor market (Farrell, 2019).

The Challenges for Gig Workers

While gig work offers numerous opportunities and benefits, gig workers also face challenges. Studies by Butler and Stoyanova Russel (2018), Fleming (2017), and Kuhn & Maleki (2017) indicate that gig workers express concerns regarding their financial situation and the stability of their income. Unlike traditional employees who receive a consistent and predictable salary, gig workers must oversee different gigs across multiple employers to ensure a continuous stream of income sufficient to cover their costs (Faulkner, 1983).

Gig workers in addition need the support of administrative frameworks present in traditional employment settings to avoid the challenge of efficiently structuring their work and managing essential logistical tasks. Failure to effectively address these challenges can lead to setbacks. The constantly fluctuating nature of gig work often causes stress and encroaches upon non-working hours for gig workers (Wood et al., 2013).

Subsequently, gig workers lack clear reference points for their self-identity in relation to their work (Bennett & Hennekam, 2018). Additionally, they lack supportive organizational communities that affirm their identity (Panteli et al., 2020). These identity-related challenges stem from the precarious nature of gig work, which inhibits gig workers' ability to satisfy their needs for connection and personal growth (Alderfer, 1972). Without a clearly defined and stable role, gig workers lack access to an identity reinforced within an organizational setting (Caza et al., 2022).

A fourth challenge is the career path uncertainty experienced by gig workers, characterized as the inability to anticipate future work opportunities. While Ashford et al. (2018) have discussed career path uncertainty as a precursor to identity challenges, it is significant in relation to individuals' psychological well-being and growth needs (Alderfer, 1972). Careers typically offer a framework for responsibilities, earnings, relationships, and future aspirations (Barley, 1989). In organizational settings, workers often have a sense of their next career stage and prepare accordingly (Ibarra, 1999). However, for gig workers, careers are characterized by unpredictability, risk, and gradual development across various gigs, relationships, and environments (Faulkner, 1983).

Gig workers encounter emotional challenges that are distinct from those experienced by traditional workers. Managing and navigating these emotional fluctuations may be challenging and necessitate considerable investment in emotional labor (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). Goods et al. (2019) suspect that individuals' ability to cope with these challenges significantly influences their capacity to derive enjoyment from their work, a critical psychological aspect of job quality. This impact on enjoyment may arise from the potential inhibition of workers' personal growth experiences (Alderfer, 1972). Lastly, due to the independent nature of gig work and their position

outside traditional organizational structures, gig workers often need a more stable network of colleagues with whom they can interact regularly (Alderfer, 1972). Gig workers can suffer with feelings of loneliness and the absence of a regular network of colleagues (Tran & Sokas, 2017).

Gig Economy in the Netherlands

This study is situated within the context of the growing gig economy in the Netherlands, a phenomenon that has gathered increasing attention in recent years (Gandhi et al., 2018). While precise numbers are missing, several studies provide insights into the magnitude of the gig economy in the Netherlands. A report by SEO Economisch Onderzoek (2020) estimates that approximately 2.3 percent of the Dutch workforce was engaged in platform work in 2019, corresponding to around 334.000 individuals. This encompassed those primarily working through platforms and those using platforms as a secondary source of income. A study by McKinsey and Company (2018) indicated that 7 percent of the Dutch workforce in 2016 had been involved in platform work at some point, with expectations of this percentage increasing as the gig economy further develops.

In the Netherlands, there are several online freelance platforms. The platforms vary in the form of services they offer. For instance, platforms cater to highly educated individuals offering their services, while others cater to employers seeking low-skilled employees for short-term gigs. YoungOnes is the most well-known platform of all, primarily for the young generation (YoungOnes, n.d.). Because of the changing landscape of labor demand with the emergence of the gig economy online freelance platforms have identified a growing inclination among young individuals toward work characterized by freedom and flexibility (Tuerlings & Graafmans, n.d.). Through the application, gig workers have the autonomy to determine their work location and schedule to earn supplemental income. The platform offers a wide array of jobs in hospitality,

retail, logistics, and various other sectors, providing plenty of options catering to the preferences of each gig worker (Tuerlings, 2018).

Notably, the platforms are tailored for short-term job offerings, directly connecting supply and demand without intermediary involvement. As Tuerlings (2018) outlined, gig workers can promptly respond to job opportunities via a simple button click. Clients, in turn, receive these matches and choose the most suitable candidate based on criteria such as ratings, motivation, and experience, ensuring a tailored match for each job opportunity.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to find out the opportunities and challenges gig workers experience. This study was performed in the Netherlands, and fourteen interviews were conducted to answer the research question. Gig workers, who work for the biggest online freelance platform in the Netherlands, were asked about their experiences with gig work. Qualitative research is used to understand the experiences of young people better since it is suitable for obtaining more in-depth information (Tenny et al., 2017).

Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design, preferred since it facilitates the exploration of detailed insights regarding the needs and desires of a specific target demographic (Fossey et al., 2002). By examining the opportunities and challenges for the young generation in the Netherlands to choose gig work, this study uncovered the thought processes surrounding this subject matter and, significantly, the underlying reasons for those perspectives, thereby contributing to the understanding of the determinants that propel them toward embracing gig work. Qualitative research helps to examine respondents' viewpoints comprehensively and offer

a deeper understanding of the triggers that influence them (Vishnevsky & Beanlands, 2004). The richness of these qualitative insights, steeped in detail and context, surpasses the value of numerical data, contributing significantly to the understanding of the determinants that drive the younger generation towards gig work.

With their unique strengths, qualitative research methods offer a robust and in-depth understanding of intricate constructs (Black, 1994). These approaches delve into the depth of experience, theory, and culture, providing a more nuanced comprehension of the subject matter. This emphasis on experiential understanding, cultural context, and theoretical emergence contributes significantly to construct validity, ensuring the accuracy of descriptions and interpretations (Collingridge & Gantt, 2019). This robust approach is particularly valuable in the context of our study on the gig economy and the young generation's engagement with it.

Since this study is a qualitative study, in-depth and semi-structured interviews are conducted to obtain the necessary information. In-depth interviews are a method where interviewees were asked open-ended questions, followed by more detailed inquiries. The goal is to thoroughly understand participants' experiences, thoughts, opinions, feelings, and knowledge (Rosenthal, 2016). In addition, semi-structured interviews are designed to explore themes flexibly. Semi-structured interviews are optimal for gaining insights into the motivations underlying an individual's choices and behaviors, investigating their attitudes and beliefs, and assessing how specific policies and events impact their lives (Raworth et al., 2012).

This study relies on primary data obtained directly from the source, gathered firsthand (Rabianski, 2003). The raw data is curated through the utilization of semi-structured interviews. The interview inquiries are constructed based on the theoretical framework and aligned with the central research question. As these questions are original, other researchers have not previously

collected, established, or disseminated the resulting data. Nevertheless, literature within the gig economy domain has been reviewed to enhance contextual understanding. Literature collected by other researchers for their specific objectives could prove valuable in the comprehensive analysis of the gig economy (Rabianski, 2003).

Sample and Procedure

Using purposive and snowball sampling, fourteen respondents active in the gig economy were found. Respondents with the appropriate characteristics were sought and asked to participate because they were the most likely to possess the information that helps for this study (Kelly et al., 2010). Purposive sampling aligns with qualitative research since it aims to increase the depth of understanding (Palinkas et al., 2015). In order to find respondents who would best assist in exploring the research question, the research question was first searched in the researcher's network. Since the research is based on the younger generation, it is close to a student's own network. However, respondents also referred to other gig workers they knew from their network, which also recommended potential respondents. Snowball sampling took place where respondents shared contacts from their network, who also met the criteria set for this study (Parker et al., 2019). The criteria for participation in this study were that the respondent must be active on the most prominent online freelance platform and perform gigs regularly. The respondents are mainly active in the tertiary sector, this sector includes hospitality and cleaning jobs.

The sample of this study is about the younger generation, the respondents have an age range between 19 and 24. The male-female ratio of this study is 42.9 percent male, and 57.1 percent female. An almost equal distribution, male to female, was chosen to ensure heterogeneity based on gender. In terms of educational status, the sample is homogeneous, except for only one

respondent who graduated recently, all the other respondents are pursuing a college or university education. Additionally, the interviews solely involve Dutch-speaking gig workers, who are best positioned to represent their homeland, the Netherlands authentically. Many potential respondents were identified, thanks in part to other respondents, for their possible participation. Because of time issues, the respondents who were first approved for participation were chosen to participate. However, gender diversity was taken into account.

Before the interviews took place, respondents were contacted for approval of their participation and whether it was convenient in terms of time. All contact prior to the interview took place via WhatsApp. Participants received comprehensive information regarding the nature and purpose of the research, interview procedures, potential risks and benefits, and the use of their collected data. This process is formalized through obtaining written consent from each participant and emphasizing the voluntary nature of their participation in the research. The consent letter can be found in Appendix B.

Respondents were also told that they would enter the study entirely anonymously. Anonymity means that no name is mentioned in the study and that no information about the respondent in question is reported to identify the respondent (Walford, 2005). Demographic information was requested to distinguish between respondents without using their names anywhere. There are also no names in the transcripts, respondents are referred to by letters from A to M throughout the study. In addition, it is important that confidential information remains confidential and is not passed on to others (Walford, 2005). This is not entirely possible, but it is essential that respondents cannot be identified so that it cannot be found out who is saying what.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with respondents who met the criteria for this

study sample. The interviews lasted about 20 to 30 minutes and were conducted one-on-one via a call appointment or video call. An online method of conducting the interviews was chosen because it was challenging to arrange specific days to meet with the younger generation, mainly students, as they all have pretty active lives that are full of schedules.

The use of semi-structured interviews gave much flexibility to the interview structure. Respondents sometimes were already answering questions yet to be asked, which provided a dynamic flow of the conversation rather than informal questioning. All interviews were open-ended questions asking respondents about their experience with a type of question or their motive for a particular question. Open-ended questions allow the respondent and the interviewer to delve deeper into a topic and interrogate the underlying thoughts (Hancock et al., 2001). This also allows for further questioning when a given answer is unclear.

After the respondents' approval, all interviews were recorded so the collected data could be transcribed (Nascimento & Steinbruch, 2019). The transcripts included uhm's and laughter. However, these will not be included in possible quotes in the results. In addition, some parts of the interview cannot be properly heard in the recorded excerpts. What respondents sometimes say cannot be extracted. This is because all interviews were conducted online, so the respondents were present in different places than the interviewer. In the absence of parts in the transcripts, the best of the text is made by listening to the context of the rest of the answer or conversation.

Data Analysis

The analysis was conducted using the Gioia Methodology, which develops into a Data Structure (Magnani & Gioia, 2023). The first-order codes are based on color coding information, which focuses on the information obtained from the interviews. The second-order codes are concepts based on the merged first-order codes. The third-order codes are codes that are going to

be used in the results. The third-order codes combined with frequent references to the respondent's first-order quotes are used to represent the results of this study (Magnani & Gioia, 2023).

This study took an abductive approach, integrating elements of both inductive and deductive reasoning. Abductive reasoning involves the iterative process of moving back and forth between empirical observations and theoretical concepts (Blaikie, 2019), this approach allows the researcher to switch between theory and data in order to develop a new theory or possibly modify existing theories (Bryman, 2012). By adopting an abductive approach, this study benefited from the flexibility to adapt to the complex and dynamic nature of the research phenomenon. Abduction enabled a deeper understanding of young gig workers' motivations, experiences, and perceptions within the context of the Dutch gig economy. Moreover, abductive reasoning aligns with the qualitative nature of this study, allowing a rich exploration and interpretation of participants' experiences (Bryman, 2012). Through iterative data collection, analysis, and theory development cycles, abductive reasoning facilitated the refinement of conceptual frameworks and the generation of novel insights into the phenomenon under investigation (Blumer, 1956).

With the abductive approach in mind, the transcripts were coded. The goal of coding was to have the most helpful information clear to answer the research question. Coding is a fundamental process in qualitative data research, facilitating the development of conclusive insights (Deterding & Waters, 2021). Firstly, the coding process started with open coding. Open coding is done for five transcripts, only five transcripts were done to gain a beginning understanding of the information before further extending the coding process (Saldaña, 2021). "Open coding, that is, coding all his data in every possible way. The consequence of this open

coding is a multitude of descriptions for possible concepts that often do not fit in the emerging theory. Thus, in this case, the researcher ends up with many irrelevant descriptions for concepts that do not apply” (Glaser, 2016, p. 108).

Following the open coding phase, the next step was to merge the deemed proper labels for addressing the main research question. This process, known as axial coding, involves combining similar codes to create a more streamlined and coherent coding structure (Hak, 2007). Some codes were also renamed to reflect their content better or align with the emerging themes. All codes were color-coded to facilitate easy identification of these codes in the transcripts. The subsequent step was to group the color-coded fragments into sub-themes, which were then aggregated to form overarching themes. The results of the coding process of this study can be found in Appendix F, the Data Structure.

Results

The results are divided into two major themes, opportunities and challenges that gig workers experience. The opportunities are beneficial, and the reasons why gig workers choose this type of work. They consist of financial, scheduling, job-related, and relational opportunities that motivate gig workers. On the other hand, the challenges consist of job-related, employee-related, financial, and work-environment challenges, and deal with the obstacles experienced by gig workers. Appendix F, the Data Structure, shows two major themes and sub-themes.

Opportunities

Financial - It was apparent from the data that online freelance platforms were known among young people as places where they could earn more money per hour than if they have a

traditional side job: “It is a lot higher pay than working through a normal job usually”

(Respondent I). Only when the hourly rate reaches €15 or €16 do individuals begin to respond to gig postings, exceeding the average hourly wage in traditional employment. The availability of gigs offering €20 per hour instigates a desire for higher compensation among gig workers: “A luxury problem, because then suddenly €14 is little because there are also jobs for €20 on there” (Respondent D). Monetary rewards, constituting one of the primary motivators for engaging in gig work, are perceived as substantial incentives. Approximately three years ago, hourly wages surpassed current levels. During this upcoming phase of online freelance platforms and gig work, platform abundance outpaced gig worker participation, facilitating competitive bidding for gigs. This phenomenon is exemplified by, for example, respondent J’s experience: “So then I actually got €20, but then I saw that a day in advance nobody had signed up yet, and then I just went and bid €25 myself. And then they took me on”.

Scheduling - Respondents underscored the importance of self-scheduling inherent in this employment model. Self-scheduling aligns with flexibility and primarily manifests in the ability to tailor one’s work schedule: “It is just relaxed that you can schedule your times, that it is just nice and flexible” (Respondent A). It was apparent from the data that the respondents perceive self-scheduling as a highly advantageous concept, affording them the freedom to work on their terms without being tied to rigid constraints regarding time and location. The availability of self-scheduling options within the online freelance platform’s application is attributed to the abundance of employers operating on those platforms, offering a wide range of opportunities for selection. This diversity extends across various sectors, from warehouse operations to restaurant service: “Wherever I am, I can easily find a gig nearby” (Respondent F). Unlike traditional employment, this type of work transcends geographical limitations, enabling nationwide

participation. Notably, all respondents are either students or recent graduates, for whom managing academic commitments, particularly during exam periods, is a major consideration. The capacity to seamlessly integrate work commitments around such obligations is highly advantageous, avoiding the need to seek time off or utilize leave days: “You do not have to ask for time off or use leave days or anything” (Respondent H), and: “If you have an exam or are busy with deadlines, you can just say you are not working, and there are no hard feelings” (Respondent M). Such flexibility aligns seamlessly with the dynamic lifestyle characteristic of student life, facilitating effortless coordination with social engagements and mandatory activities. Central to this autonomy is the absence of hierarchical oversight, with gig workers enjoying unparalleled freedom in decision-making regarding work frequency, location, and remuneration. This autonomy fosters a sense of self-leadership, empowering individuals to chart their own course without the constraints of traditional managerial supervision.

Job-related - Given gig workers’ ability to work across diverse locations, specific skills cannot be developed. Gig workers appreciate the simplicity and ease of their work: “In my opinion, that is an advantage. I think you can learn quite a lot from it. You can discover what you like and so on” (Respondent F). Alongside the geographical flexibility, online freelance platforms afford gig workers a broad spectrum of job options within their application interface. This customizable feature enables gig workers to curate their feed, selecting gigs that align with their interests and preferences. For the younger demographic, this presents an opportunity for experiential learning and exploration of different work environments: “You gain experience, which helps you see what you like. Also for the future, of course” (Respondent B). It is not solely about the nature of the work itself but also about acquainting one’s self with various employers and the work environments. The multifaceted nature of online freelance platforms,

offering diverse opportunities, provides them highly appealing to the younger generation: “There are quite a lot of different gigs available” (Respondent N).

Relational - Through online freelance platforms, gig workers also have the opportunity to work together with friends. When an employer requires multiple gig workers, friends can apply together, provided both are hired for the gig. However, even when gig workers attend gigs individually there are sufficient opportunities for networking and bonding with gig workers working on the same gig: “And what I also find enjoyable is the colleagues, that you work with different people” (Respondent M). Networking tends to occur more readily at gigs requiring multiple workers, as working for the same platform fosters a sense of unity. Respondents appreciate the opportunity for small conversations with various individuals: “You keep meeting new people, so that is fun” (Respondent I). It was evident from the data that all respondents indicated that having different colleagues for each gig is acceptable during their student years. However, they foresee seeking a more permanent team once they graduate and begin full-time employment.

Challenges

Job-related - The trade-off associated with flexible working is the necessity for self-motivation and discipline to schedule oneself adequately, given the absence of fixed working days or a set number of hours per week: “One month I earn a lot. And then the next month, almost nothing” (Respondent N). Consequently, gig workers cannot depend on a steady income since the work is unpredictable: “Because you do not know if you will be chosen, and the gig can be canceled at the last minute” (Respondent E). Gig workers are often the first to be sent home if things slow down at a gig or if the work is completed faster than anticipated. In such a case, the gig worker earns less than expected beforehand.

Employee-related - A mismatch between supply and demand has emerged in the gig economy over the years. Initially, significantly more employers offered gigs than gig workers available to fill these gigs: “In the past, like three years ago, you would get hired everywhere. But now that is no longer the case” (Respondent D). Today, the platform’s popularity among gig workers has increased, resulting in a surplus of workers compared to available gigs. Consequently, securing a gig has become increasingly uncertain due to heightened competition. In some cases, at least 20 others are applying for the same gig, which can reach up to as much as 120 applications. This job insecurity is a common theme among respondents, as the lack of a fixed schedule brings uncertainty. The extent of this issue varies by city size: “But in Amsterdam, it is tough when forty people apply for a gig. It is quite uncertain. And that is the biggest downside I think, you do not know what to expect” (Respondent F). Not working translates to not earning money, despite having the availability to work. Therefore, overcrowding on the platform often results in gig workers not being chosen: “If you are not in a favorite pool and do not have reviews, it is difficult to get chosen” (Respondent I).

High ratings and positive reviews are crucial for gig workers to distinguish themselves from numerous other applicants: “And if you see someone who has done 200 gigs, they prefer them over someone who has only done twelve” (Respondent D). Respondents advise new gig workers about the competitive nature of these platforms: “There are many gig workers on it, so the chance of getting a gig is not very high, especially if you have no experience” (Respondent C). Those who began working on these platforms years ago now benefit from numerous reviews and high ratings, making them more likely to secure desirable gigs with higher pay. Conversely, without experience, gig workers often have to accept less desirable jobs, which likely offer lower payment. Gig workers invest time in searching for gigs, applying, and crafting motivational

texts, yet the likelihood of being selected among the multitude of applicants is minimal.

Financial - Working as a gig worker comes with financial responsibilities. Every quarter, gig workers must file both income and turnover tax returns. The hourly wage they receive includes VAT, a portion of which must be repaid. The taxes are not withheld at the time of payment, instead, gig workers are required to set aside a portion of their earnings to cover their tax obligations every quarter. Failure to file tax returns on time can result in a fine of around €5000. Although this can be contested, a fine may still be imposed. The financial responsibility inherent in freelance work is perceived as a disadvantage, apparent from the data, as it requires diligent financial tracking and management.

Work-environment - It was evident from the data that working as a gig worker, without a fixed team, involves joining various employers' teams, primarily composed of their permanent staff. Respondents occasionally had unpleasant interactions with permanent staff members: "And kind of they treat you like someone taking their job. I think, yes, your manager did put a job on it because apparently you do not have enough personnel. That is not my fault. And then you just expect people to kind of act normal. But that is not always the case" (Respondent N). Causing gig workers to be less likely to return to this gig. Additionally, gig workers sometimes earn more for easier tasks than permanent staff, leading to friction in the workplace: "We just earned €20 an hour there. And at Christmas, for example, we grabbed €25 an hour. And those people who work there permanently, I think they grabbed something like €15 an hour" (Respondent D). The respondents understand the source of this resentment, acknowledging that they might react similarly if the roles were reversed. However, they emphasize that this situation is beyond the control of gig workers.

Discussion

The rise of the gig economy has significantly transformed the contemporary employment landscape (Wu & Zhou, 2022), introducing many opportunities alongside inherent challenges. This transformative phenomenon has redefined traditional notions of work and presented individuals, particularly the younger generation, with a spectrum of alternative employment options (Smith & Dolores, 2018). This study delved into young gig workers' opportunities and challenges in the Netherlands. The research question central to this study aims to contribute to the literature on the experiences of Dutch gig workers. The findings of this study offer valuable insights into the opportunities experienced by young gig workers' and the challenges they encounter along the way.

Interpretation of the results

The labor market is changing, with many job options today for the younger generation (Smith & Dolores, 2018), ranging from traditional, stable jobs to more flexible and uncertain forms of work, such as gig work (Gusseck & Wiesche, 2021). Today's diversity in gigs allows gig workers to explore different career paths, gain diverse skills, and obtain insight into what young individuals want to achieve in their careers. For the young generation in the Netherlands, the sample of this study, their primary motivation for engaging in this type of work is clear. The data showed that both financial rewards and flexibility that gig work offers are the most frequently mentioned motives for the young generation to be active in the gig economy. Compared to traditional employment, gig work is characterized by its financial rewards and the ability to schedule one's schedule (Kelley & Allen, 2019), the financial rewards are higher compared to traditional employment (Wood et al., 2019) and are therefore seen as the driving force and primary goal (Tang et al., 2005). Both can be seen as drivers of extrinsic motivation, where

individuals are motivated by external rewards (Ryan & Deci, 2000). External elements like rewards determine the motivator for choosing gig work, encouraging an individual's work performance (Gagné & Deci, 2005). This is supported by Kunda et al. (2002), who repeat that gig workers are often motivated by external rewards that encourage their participation in this economy.

Furthermore, it appears that autonomy and skill variety are essential in considering gig work, both part of Hackman and Oldman's (1975) job characteristics theory. Gig work enables individuals to explore various career paths and acquire new skills (Kost et al., 2020). Since it is possible to be in a different place at every gig, gig workers get the opportunity to get acquainted with many different workplaces. Both autonomy and skill variety are related to flexibility, as they allow the young generation to balance work with personal commitments and interests (Kässi & Lehdonvirta, 2018), resulting in job satisfaction. The good experience with gig work may depend on whether the gig worker is chosen for the gig. The results showed that being active on the platform for a longer time is beneficial. Therefore, gig work can be divided into two cycles of how the work is perceived by gig workers, shown in Figure 1. The active cycle represents the gig workers who are active on the platform, and the not active cycle represents gig workers who are less active on the platform. Figure 1 shows the difference between the consequences experienced when gig workers are active on a platform and when they are not active. Being an active gig worker means gig workers do gigs regularly. After each gig they are reviewed by the employer, so if they do regular gigs, the gig worker automatically has reviews and stars going up. Therefore the gig worker will be hired faster than someone who has fewer reviews and stars, with the favorite pool also playing a role. If the gig worker works for the same employer more often, a gig worker will end up in such a pool, a pool for gig workers who have done the gig many times

before. The gigs those gig workers do will be more enjoyable than for gig workers who are less active. A not active gig worker experiences much difficulty getting gigs because competing gig workers have more ratings in most cases. As a result, these less active gig workers only get hired for the gigs that no one wants, which may also pay less well. If they choose to find the hourly wage too low or do not want to do the gig, they are left with the problem of having few to no ratings.

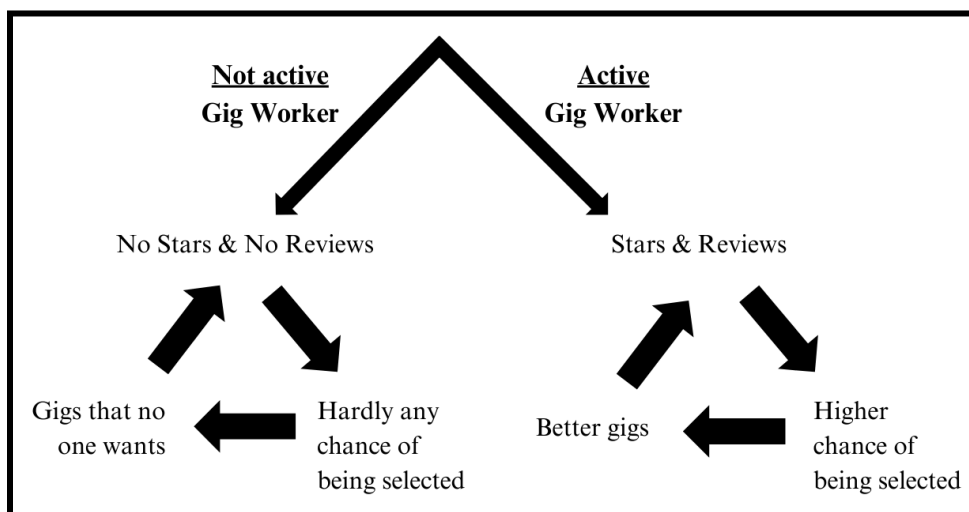


Figure 1: Not active Cycle vs. Active Cycle

Gig work goes along with some challenges, which, in the long run, may be the deciding factor as to why gig workers quit working through online freelance platforms. Being active on the platform, getting excellent reviews, and a maximum number of stars is essential. Due to the mismatch between supply and demand on the platforms, competition between gig workers for who will be chosen has started (Coughlan & Wilkins, 2018). The supply of gig workers is growing while demand from employers is decreasing (Coughlan & Wilkins, 2018). This leads to a decrease in gig hourly wages, and increases job insecurity (Smith & Doe, 2020). Gig workers are less likely to be hired because there are more applicants with them, see the Not active Cycle

in Figure 1, therefore, excellence is essential to be chosen. Doing so also helps gig workers to do the same gig more often, putting them in a favorite pool and familiarity with the employer. Gig workers who are not chosen for a gig more often and for more extended periods lose satisfaction working for an online freelance platform (Smith & Doe, 2020), making the work less attractive.

At the same time, gig workers motivating themselves is critical in this economy. As a gig worker, you do not have fixed work days or an hours contract, therefore gig workers are responsible for getting gigs themselves. Although autonomy and control over work are perceived as drivers, the lack of external structure can lead to procrastination behavior (Gordon et al., 2016). Thereby, it is the case that gig workers are the first on a gig to be turned away when there is less work than expected, yet they have to keep motivating themselves to sign up for a gig again. Even if the experience was perceived less positively the last time. Being self-motivated in the gig economy is of great importance (Gordon et al., 2016).

Finally, the workplace and permanent employees working simultaneously can be seen challenging. Indeed, gig workers are not received equally kindly in some places. This is due to feelings of inequity and injustice experienced by the permanent employees (Johnson & Thompson, 2019). These feelings are consequences of, in part, the higher pay that gig workers earn in many cases, compared to permanent employees, while performing the easiest work. This may lead to workplace tension experienced by both parties. As a result, in some cases, it is working to work and making money for gig workers. Although they can understand these feelings but cannot change themselves, it makes them think twice about whether they will ever return to that gig.

Theoretical Contribution

One of the most notable findings is the importance of having high ratings and numerous

reviews to succeed on online freelance platforms. Therefore, it is essential to identify the difference between an active gig worker and a not active gig worker. Since that has the influence of being chosen for a gig faster, and on the experience gig workers have with working in this economy. How active a gig worker is on a platform makes a significant difference. Having high stars and many reviews is essential in getting chosen for a gig faster, this is supported by research by Lin and Viswanathan (2016), who argue that reviews and ratings on online platforms plays a crucial role in building the likelihood of being selected for work. Because of the massive growth in sign-ups of gig workers on the platform and lower demand, it is fighting for the job. It can be compared to an ongoing cycle into which gig workers fall, see Figure 1. Thereby, it was examined that gig workers who are active on the platform are generally more satisfied with the work than not active gig workers. These not active gig workers experience more challenges finding new gigs (Keith et al., 2019).

The importance of reviews and stars is partly due to the increasing supply of gig workers signing up on the platform. Only the best gig workers with the highest stars and most reviews still stand a chance this way. This is due to the reviews and stars gig workers get from employers are aggregated on the platform's application and added to a reputation score. This is the information that employers face as input. This information affects the division of labor among gig workers and potentially a gig worker's earnings (Holtz et al., 2022). Algorithmic management plays an essential role in linking the importance of reviews and stars to being chosen, platforms use it to evaluate gig workers' performance (Veen et al., 2020). More importantly, it is used to assign gigs to gig workers, for which previous performance and assessments are of great importance (Veen et al., 2020), and is of influence on how quickly gig workers get gigs in the future. Comparatively, previous studies by Lee et al. (2015) and

Griesbach et al. (2019) have highlighted the impact of algorithmic management on gig workers. These studies emphasize that online freelance platforms use reputation scores to influence which gig workers are selected for jobs. These current study findings support these earlier conclusions, demonstrating that only the best gig workers with the highest ratings and most reviews stand a chance of securing desirable gigs. The active gig worker benefits from a positive feedback cycle where nice gigs and positive attitudes reinforce their market position. While not active gig workers are caught in a negative cycle where they end up with gigs that no one wants, and attitudes further diminish their opportunities. A negative cycle needs to be broken out for getting a positive experience with the gig economy.

Moreover, this study extends the work of Chen et al. (2019) by examining the motivational factors of gig workers in the Netherlands. Research by Chen et al. (2019), Nhamo et al. (2021), and Li et al. (2021) discussed the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, both influencing the motives for the younger generation to choose gig work. The data in this study shows that younger gig workers are primarily driven by extrinsic motivations, specifically, financial rewards and flexibility. This insight provides a new perspective on the motivational dynamics within the Dutch gig economy. Some researchers confirm that gig workers are only driven by extrinsic motivation (Silva et al., 2020), yet not all confirm. Additionally, the results reveal a strong preference among young gig workers for gig work's flexibility. Many respondents noted that the ability to schedule their work around personal activities was a significant motivator. This finding resonates with Schippers and Ziegler's (2019) concept of life crafting, where individuals take control of their schedules to optimize happiness and performance and create a good work-life balance.

Limitations and Future research

This study has several limitations that should be addressed. The sample was limited to young gig workers, primarily from Tilburg and its surrounding areas, which may only partially represent the experiences and motivations of gig workers across the Netherlands. Future research may include a more diverse and geographically varied sample to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the gig economy in the Netherlands (Creswell, 2009). Moreover, a larger and more diverse sample size would improve the generalizability of the findings (Watson et al., 2018) and enable a more robust statistical analysis. According to Bryman (2012), a larger sample size can increase the power of the study, reduce the margin of error, and enhance the reliability of the results.

Additionally, a mixed-method approach can comprehensively understand a phenomenon from multiple perspectives (Plano Clark, 2017). This would allow for more definitive conclusions about the broader population of gig workers. Also, the fact that the respondents came from nearby and the interviewer's network may provide different information since they were acquaintances. Future studies could benefit from incorporating quantitative methods to validate and extend the findings presented here (Patton, 2002). Mixed-methods research could combine the depth of qualitative insights with the generalizability of quantitative data, offering a more holistic view of the gig economy. This approach would also address the challenge of obtaining comprehensive information from younger respondents by triangulating data from multiple sources and methods (Plano Clark, 2017). Moreover, the study's focus on younger workers means that the motivational factors identified may not apply to older gig workers or those with different life circumstances. Future research can explore how motivations and challenges differ across various demographic groups within the gig economy (Podsakoff et al.,

2003).

Another area for improvement is the sole examination of the perspective of gig workers without considering the viewpoint of employers. While this study provides valuable insights into the motivations and challenges faced by gig workers, a comprehensive understanding of the gig economy necessitates exploration from the employers' standpoint. For an employer looking for (temporary) helpers, freelance platforms also have several advantages. Engaging a gig worker for a task typically takes 2.7 days, significantly quicker than the traditional recruitment process, which averages around 34 days (Falato et al., 2015). By incorporating employers' perspectives, future studies can offer a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics within the gig economy and elucidate the mutual experiences and perceptions of workers and employers, which can easily be done by using mixed methods (Hesse-Biber, 2010). Studies conducted by Katz and Krueger (2019) and Langley and Leyshon (2017) have underscored the importance of examining both sides of the employment relationship within the gig economy to glean a comprehensive understanding of its functioning and impact.

However, it is essential to mention that all respondents who participated in this study have been registered with an online freelance platform for quite some time. They were already active before the shift in supply and demand occurred. When they became active on the platform, there was more demand for gig workers than supply could provide, which allowed them to work a lot and build a reputation. As a result, they have less experience with not being hired much than gig workers starting nowadays. This makes for a more positive picture than possible, since only the experience of being active on an application for longer is evident. In the sequel, it is essential to distinguish between gig workers yet starting on a platform and those who have been active for a long time, seeing the influence of the algorithm behind the platforms' applications.

Managerial Implications

From a managerial perspective, this study highlights the importance of understanding the motives of young gig workers to better cater to their needs and improve retention rates.

Employers and platforms might consider implementing more balanced motivational strategies that include extrinsic rewards and intrinsic satisfaction. For instance, providing opportunities for skill development and career progression could enhance job satisfaction and long-term commitment among gig workers (Duggan et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the findings suggest that online freelance platforms may want to address the disparities created by their reputation systems. Introducing measures to support new or less active gig workers, such as mentorship programs or more transparent rating systems, could help level the playing field and ensure a fairer distribution of job opportunities. Especially for big and popular platforms in the Netherlands like YoungOnes, it is necessary to keep popular among the younger generation. Without them, the platform will no longer exist.

Conclusion

This study highlights the experiences perceived by Dutch gig workers operating in the gig economy. Despite the supply and demand mismatch in the gig economy, gig work is still experienced with plenty of financial, scheduling, job-related, and relational opportunities that outweigh the challenges. Young individuals consider gig work an attractive option during their study years. The primary factors driving gig workers are extrinsic, with financial rewards and flexibility being crucial. The ability to schedule work around personal commitments and interests is a significant advantage, fostering job satisfaction and aligning with broader life crafting goals.

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Appendices

Appendix A Time schedule

IRP Submission	15 January 2024
Further literature search	January & February 2024
Developing the research design	February 2024
Contacting respondents	February 2024
Conducting the research	March, April 2024
Writing the report	April & May 2024
Finish thesis draft	June 2024
Submission of final Master thesis	19 June 2024

Appendix B

Consent Form

Self-initiated Proactive Work Behavior Among Employees Working in Unconventional Work Settings/Arrangements

Researchers

Rawan Ghazzawi, Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences: HR Studies Department, Tilburg University

Fleur de Beer, Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences: HR Studies Department, Tilburg University

Niels Stockman, Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences: HR Studies Department, Tilburg University

Jeanine Reeuwijk, Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences: HR Studies Department, Tilburg University

Manon van de Velde, Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences: HR Studies Department, Tilburg University

Karlijn van Vredendaal, Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences: HR Studies Department, Tilburg University

Signature

With your signature on the back of this consent statement, you voluntarily and consciously give permission to participate in this research. This does not waive your legal rights to withdraw your participation at any time.

With your signature you also indicate that you have read the information letter associated with this study in its entirety and that you agree with the following points:

- I have read and understood the information letter associated with this study in its entirety.
- I could ask additional questions about the research and these questions were answered sufficiently.
- I have had sufficient time to decide whether I want to participate in this study.
- I know that participation in this study is completely voluntary.
- I know that the investigation [to be completed] will continue.
- I know that I can decide to withdraw from participation at any time, without negative consequences, and that I do not have to give a reason for this.
- I know that I have the right to access, rectify, forget, restrict or prevent processing of my personal data.

- I know that my data will be processed as indicated in the information letter and that only the research team can view my data.
- I give permission to use my research data for the purposes stated in the information letter.
- I give permission to store my anonymized research data for the legal period of 10 years.

I hereby give voluntary and conscious consent to participate in the research:

Self-initiated Proactive Work Behavior Among Employees Working in Unconventional Work Settings/Arrangements.

Name contestant:

Signature: Date: ____ / ____ / _____

To be completed by researcher(s):

I hereby declare that I have fully informed the above participant about the above-mentioned research.

Name of researcher:

Signature: Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Appendix C

Information Letter

Self-initiated Proactive Work Behavior Among Employees Working in Unconventional Work Settings/Arrangements

Researchers

Rawan Ghazzawi, Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences: HR Studies Department, Tilburg University

Fleur de Beer, Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences: HR Studies Department, Tilburg University

Niels Stockman, Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences: HR Studies Department, Tilburg University

Jeanine Reeuwijk, Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences: HR Studies Department, Tilburg University

Manon van de Velde, Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences: HR Studies Department, Tilburg University

Karlijn van Vredendaal, Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences: HR Studies Department, Tilburg University

Introduction

This letter contains important information about this investigation and associated rules. Please read this letter carefully and ask any questions before agreeing to participate.

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH INVOLVE?

Goal

The present research aims to investigate the self-initiated proactive work Behavior among employees working in unconventional work settings/arrangements and such behaviors might influence their work environment, wellbeing, and the way they perceive their work. In the context of this study, unconventional work settings/arrangements include working as gig workers or as interim HR managers where the chances of you not remaining in the organization after the end of your project/gig are high.

Background

Proactive work behavior refers to actions taken by individuals within an organization to anticipate, prevent, or initiate change in response to emerging opportunities or challenges. It

involves taking initiative, being forward-thinking, and actively seeking ways to improve work processes, solve problems, or achieve goals without necessarily being prompted by others. Organizations are increasingly prompting such behaviors among employees as they know that they are driven by urges to satisfy basic needs at work and to make work better matching with preferences, abilities, and strengths. There are several types of proactive work behavior and we know a lot already about this behavior in different professional contexts, however our knowledge about it in the context of Unconventional Work Settings/Arrangements is limited.

Nature and duration

We will conduct an interview with you. During this interview, we will ask you various questions about the general tasks that you do and some of the behaviors and consequent feelings and effects that you experience at work. Please listen to the questions carefully and answer them as you see fit. The interview will take up to 60 minutes.

WHAT DOES PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH INVOLVE?

Contents

Participation in this research involves being in an interview and answering some questions about your behavior at work, what you think, and how you feel about it. The interview is divided into parts and each part will address an aspect related to the main research question.

Disadvantages/consequences

Our research involves no physical or psychological harm. Yet, if you may find any of the questions disturbing, or feel uncomfortable to answer them you are free to leave them unanswered or to terminate your participation. There will be no negative consequences from this.

PARTICIPATION INFORMATION

Voluntary participation

We ask for your permission to participate in the study during the duration of this study. Participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right not to participate in this study. If you decide to stop participating during the study, you can do so at any time without any negative consequences and without giving a reason. You are free to only answer questions that you want to answer.

The researchers can end the study at any time. The decision to end the experiment may be made to protect your health and safety, or because the research plan requires that people who do not meet certain conditions or do not strictly follow the instructions cannot participate.

What are my rights? [For personal data]

As a participant you have the right to inspect, rectify, forget, restrict or prevent processing of your personal data. For more information, see: <https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/nl/privacy>

Processing results and confidentiality of data

All information collected about you will be treated confidentially. You will be identified in the investigation by a code name, or number. Information that personally identifies you will not be released without your written permission.

Storage period of the research data

The anonymized research data will be stored securely for a period of 10 years and only the researchers will have access to it. When the results of this research are published or presented at conferences, no information that could reveal your identity will be included. The anonymized data can be used for follow-up research or other studies and will be made available anonymously for this purpose.

Data processing

The first part of the interview, which contains the demographic information will be deleted permanently as it is only required for descriptive purposes and will be used in aggregate format. The rest of the data collected from these interviews will be checked and information about the jobs or the organizations in which the participants work (names, sizes, sectors, etc..) will be de-identified. None of the data stored will include any identifying information or any information that can link any answer to any participant.

Compensation

Participation in this study will not be reimbursed.

Approval from the Ethical Review Committee

This study has been approved by the ethics review board (ERB) of Tilburg University under file number TSB_RP1429 .

Participation

If you would like to participate in this study, you can give your consent by signing the [attached consent statement. / click 'agree' on the next page and continue with the research.]

Contact

For questions about this research, please contact:

Rawan Ghazzawi

r.ghazzawi@tilburguniversity.edu

Appendix D

Interview Protocol

Again, thank you for participating in my research. The purpose of this research is to investigate what are the drivers and what motivates the young generation in the Netherlands to choose for gig work. For this research I want to conduct semi-structured interviews with a sample of twelve gig workers in order to understand such motives among them.

In this interview, I will ask you questions about why you choose to do gig work, what are the advantages and challenges of gig work and how it meets your skills. The interview will not take longer than 60 minutes. As mentioned in the consent form, the information that you will provide during the interview will be handled with utmost privacy and anonymity.

First, can you please share with me your:

- A. Age (How old are you?)*
- B. Gender (Man or woman?)*
- C. Highest educational degree acquired?*
- D. Are you still studying? If yes, what study are you doing?*

General

1. For how long have you been doing gig work?
2. How often per month are you doing gigs via YoungOnes?
3. What is your general experience with the platform YoungOnes?
4. What prompted or influenced your decision to pursue gig work?
 - Were there specific circumstances or reasons that played a significant role in your choice to start doing gig work?
5. Could you describe the unique advantages of gig work compared to those typically found in traditional jobs?
 - Have you experienced any particular benefits in this regard?
 - Have you experienced any particular challenges in this regard?
 - What about things you need to arrange yourself to perform gig work?
 - What do you find most attractive about performing this work?
 - Autonomy / Variety of tasks / Compensation / Duration / Location

6. For how long are you planning to do gig work?
 - What factors contribute to this perspective?
7. To what extent do you value autonomy, so freedom, in your work?
8. To what extent do you value using your skills and achieving goals in performing gig work?
9. To what extent are connectedness and meaningful connections with colleagues important for you?
10. What resources (tools, facilities, support) do you have when performing a gig? This can be both physical (tools) and immaterial (training, information, support).
 - Are there sometimes things you don't have access to that you would need?
11. What are demands (responsibilities, tasks, expectations) you have in your work?
12. Thinking back at the tasks that you do, what changes do you make to your job/gig?
 - Why do you make these changes?
 - How do you feel about it?
13. Thinking about these changes, what skills do you think they helped you develop individually?
 - And as a team?
14. To what extent would you have experienced freelance work differently than you do now?
15. How do you actively seek opportunities within gig work to enhance specific skills or develop new ones?
16. How does gig work contribute to your lifestyle or serve as a pathway to future career opportunities?
17. How important is work-life balance to you?

Motivation

There is a difference between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is driven by personal interest, enjoyment, satisfaction. So you perform tasks because you genuinely enjoy them. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is characterized by motivation from external sources, such as rewards, recognition, status. With this form of motivation, you perform tasks to be rewarded and to avoid certain consequences.

18. In what ways does freelance work motivate you?

- Is it more through intrinsic or extrinsic motivation?

Closure

19. Thanks for sharing your experience with gig work and the YoungOnes platform. Is there anything yourself you would like to mention that hasn't yet come in handy? Or do you have any other questions?

Appendix E

Debriefing

Dear participant,
Many thanks for your participation in this study.

The aim of the present research is to investigate the self-initiated proactive work Behavior among employees working in unconventional work settings/arrangements and how such behaviors might influence their work environment, wellbeing, and the way they perceive their work.

Even if you will not profit directly from participating in this research, your responses will help to understand how proactive work behavior manifests itself in your work context.

The interview you just completed is part of a project that investigates job crafting across different professional contexts. Job crafting is an employee-initiated behavior aimed at achieving a better fit between the needs and strengths of employees and their work. Job crafting has been linked to several positive work- and non-work-related outcomes. A lot of research has been done on the topic of job crafting in multiple professional contexts. However, this was not paralleled with increased knowledge about how such proactive work behavior is demonstrated across different work contexts, especially untraditional ones. Any information given by participants will remain anonymous. We will share anonymized data with other researchers as we are dedicated to open science foundations and believe in a transparent process of data gathering and analyzing. No personal information will be linked to individual responses, and all of them will be strictly confidential.

If you have any further questions or comments, you can also contact the researchers at Tilburg University via r.ghazzawi@tilburguniversity.

Also, if you are interested in reading more about this topic, try the following:
Rudolph, C. W., Katz, I. M., Lavigne, K. N., & Zacher, H. (2017). Job crafting: A meta-analysis of relationships with individual differences, job characteristics, and work outcomes. *Journal of vocational behavior*, 102, 112-138.

In case there are any remaining questions, please feel free to contact us.
Thanks again for your participation,

On behalf of the project team,
Rawan Ghazzawi, Department of Human Resource Studies, Tilburg University

Appendix F Data Structure

