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Motivating Factors for Workers and Platforms in the South African Gig Economy.

Cristina Pogorevici
University of Pennsylvania

Thulo Serobe
University of Pennsylvania

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Motivating Factors for Workers and Platforms in the South African Gig Economy.

Abstract

This paper aims to analyze how employee benefits, working conditions, and compensation affect the decision-making processes of two major players in the gig economy: the worker and the technology platform. Data, literature reviews, and academic papers were used to analyze the positive and negative attributes of gig work globally, the South African legislative and regulatory environment pertaining to the gig economy, and the motivations of gig platforms.

Much of the secondary research pointed to the fact that gig workers universally face potentially worse working conditions than their traditionally-employed counterparts, there has been a decline in the South African worker's power in the labor market partly due to the weakness of direct state intervention, and thus collective action/organization by gig workers may be the best (or only) recourse for gig working conditions to improve.

A necessary step for any collective mobilization of gig workers is to understand the most prominent motivating and discouraging factors of gig work in the mind of the gig worker. Based on the information collected from a survey of gig workers primarily based in Johannesburg and Cape Town, the respondents of interest ranked the advantages of gig work as follows (from most to least important): income, flexible working hours, independence, ability to grow skillsets due to greater exposure and variety of tasks, lowered risk of job and income loss. Their ranked disadvantages of gig work are as follows: inconsistent income, lack of employment benefits, social isolation, and stress.

The additional needs and preferences reported by respondents in the survey ranged from receiving a travel allowance (to cover transportation costs) and loss of income insurance (security) to increased benefits and up-front deposits from clients. Some respondents noted that further support and training from clients would be beneficial and that they should receive fairer treatment. A concern for some freelancers was the scarcity of gigs and others lacked a sense of purpose in their day-to-day work.

Keywords

South Africa, gig economy, freelance, unemployment, policy, motivation, informal economy, technology

Disciplines

Behavioral Economics | Business | Business Law, Public Responsibility, and Ethics | E-Commerce | Economics | Entrepreneurial and Small Business Operations | International and Comparative Labor Relations | Labor Economics | Labor Relations | Science and Technology Studies

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Keywords

South Africa | gig economy | freelance | unemployment | policy | motivation | informal economy | technology | factors

Motivating Factors for Workers and Platforms in the Gig Economy.

Authors:

Cristina Pogorevici

The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania
cpogo@wharton.upenn.edu

Thulo Serobe

The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania
thulo@wharton.upenn.edu

Academic Advisor:

Prasanna Tambe

Associate Professor of Operations, Information and Decisions
The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania

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Motivating Factors for Workers and Platforms in the Gig Economy.

1. INTRODUCTION

'Gig economy' also called the 'sharing' economy, 'open talent' economy, 'freelance' economy and the 'on demand' economy, involves a temporary contractual job or short-term contract or freelance work that a person may take, on a project-to-project basis, for which the payment is made once the task is completed. Cities are actors in sustainable urban development, and in recent times, also the grounds for the development of the gig economy. Urban spaces provide a fertile breeding ground for various sharing initiatives. While some of these sharing initiatives are built on existing practices and infrastructures, others require the involvement of private companies, as in the case of car sharing.

This study aims to analyze how employee benefits, working conditions, and compensation affect the decision-making processes of gig workers when deciding to enter or continue in the gig economy. Before primary data collection commenced, the researchers reviewed literature reviews and other secondary data to determine the points of parity and difference between platforms and gig workers at a macro scale. The researchers conducted a survey and semi-structured interviews of gig workers and gig platforms.

In order to investigate the research question the researchers focused on South Africa. South Africa was selected as the developing country of interest for two main reasons. First, the

youth unemployment rate in South Africa is 52.85%¹, the country's unemployment rate is 29%², and the informal sector currently only comprises 16.7% of employment. Secondly, the traditional labor market in South Africa is particularly inflexible due to strict labor laws regarding hiring, dismissal, compensation, and working conditions. Thus, there exists a relatively large gap in employer-employee requirements between the traditional labor market and the gig labor market. These factors suggest that South Africa may be one of the economies with the most to gain from a gig economy that furthers overall economic growth, increases employment, all while adhering to the expectations and needs of workers. This research paper aims to play a small role in increasing the visibility and literature on this very issue. As the gig economy is predominant in urban settings, two South African cities serve as the main focal points: Johannesburg and Cape Town.

Little work has been done to determine which factors are most harmful in the mind of the gig worker (this is key as it would, necessarily, determine the objectives of any sort of collective action).

¹South Africa Unemployment Rate 2000-2020 Data: 2021-2022 Forecast: Calendar. (n.d.). Retrieved August 26, 2020, from <https://tradingeconomics.com/south-africa/unemployment-rate>

² idem

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Much research has been done on the inferior, and potentially ever-worsening, labor conditions of gig workers primarily in developing countries, the difficulty of implementing effective gig worker collective action, and the feasibility of pro-gig worker regulation in economies whose government incentive structures restrict their ability to enforce said regulation.

2.1. The Gig Economy

Acquier proposed an organising framework for the sharing economy that rests upon “three foundational cores”. Visible in Figure 1 below, these are: (1) access economy (e.g., the sharing of underutilised assets for optimising resource use), (2) platform economy (e.g., digital platforms mediating decentralised exchanges among peers), and (3) community-based economy (e.g., coordination through “non-contractual, non-hierarchical or non-monetized forms of interaction”). Acquier discusses the need to understand the complex and sometimes contradictory objectives cities have when advising them on how to engage in the sharing economy. Cities are supposed to navigate between requirements such as acting in the interest of the public and working on digital platforms without causing any negative externalities (2017).³

³ Acquier, A.; Daudigeos, T.; Pinkse, J. Promises and paradoxes of the sharing economy: An organizing framework. *Technol. Forecast. Soc. Chang.* 2017, 125, 1–10.
[<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0040162517309101?via%3Dihub>]



Figure 1. Conceptual underpinnings of the sharing economy. Borrowed from Acquier et al.

Taking a different perspective, Wood evaluates the job quality of work in the remote gig economy, with a focus on workers in six Asian and African countries, including South Africa. He explains that, while algorithmic management techniques offer benefits to workers including flexibility, autonomy, task variety and complexity, these same mechanisms of control also result in low pay, social isolation, working unsocial and irregular hours, overwork, sleep deprivation and exhaustion (2019)⁴. Jabagi examines the poor labor conditions faced by gig workers, including some of the factors listed above, under the lens of digital labor platforms (2019).⁵

By way of finding a solution to the poor standards of labor that some gig workers face, researchers investigated the feasibility of relying on gig platforms to raise their standard of care towards their workers. However, Steinberger posits that platforms, either through self-selection or regulatory guidance, would only be incentivised to do so if they adjust the employment status

⁴ Wood, A.J., Lehdonvirta, V. and Graham, M. (2018), Workers of the Internet unite? Online freelancer organisation among remote gig economy workers in six Asian and African countries. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 33: 95-112. [<https://doi-org.proxy.library.upenn.edu/10.1111/ntwe.12112>]

⁵ Jabagi, N., Croteau, A., Audebrand, L. and Marsan, J. (2019), "Gig-workers' motivation: thinking beyond carrots and sticks", *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, Vol. 34 No. 4, pp. 192-213. [<https://doi.org/10.1108/JMP-06-2018-0255>]

of their workers to heighten their duty of care (2018)⁶. Failing this, he explains, firms may be driven to get involved in “a race to the bottom on wages and work expenditures” without the traditional safety measures in use to protect employees.

In the absence of intervention from gig platforms to improve the working conditions of their workers, Wood explores the importance and viability of collective action amongst gig workers in middle-income countries (2018). The study uses 107 interviews and a survey of 658 freelancers who obtain work via a variety of online platforms to highlight that Internet-based communities play a vital role in their work experiences. They found that unions would need to convince workers of the instrumental value of unionisation in what is a global gig economy. Their findings also suggest that as online freelancing increases in importance, so too will workers’ propensity for self-organisation and willingness to collectively raise labour standards. (Wood, 2018)⁷.

Summarizing the literature, on the one hand, it is not obvious that a local government should engage in the sharing economy. It might be better to leave this space open for private and voluntary initiatives, such as collective action. On the other hand, poor labor conditions faced by gig workers need to be addressed and platforms are not incentivised to change their operations. Despite researchers’ identifying the growing need for collective organization between gig

⁶ Steinberger, Ben Z. (2018). "Redefining 'Employee' in the Gig Economy: Shielding Workers from the Uber Model," *Fordham Journal of Corporate & Financial Law* 23(2): 577-596. [<https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/jcfl/vol23/iss2/5/>]

⁷ Wood, A. J., Graham, M., Lehdonvirta, V., & Hjorth, I. (2019). Good Gig, Bad Gig: Autonomy and Algorithmic Control in the Global Gig Economy. *Work, Employment and Society*, 33(1), 56–75. [<https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017018785616>]

workers, they have found that there is a significant lack of gig work collective action, both self-organization and unionization, in Asian and African countries. Similar trends may be seen in other developing countries.

2.2. Unemployment & Poverty in South Africa

It is observed that the negative effects caused for workers without collective organization are particularly heightened in economies like post-apartheid South Africa, in which the power of the labor market has progressively weakened as that of owners of capital has strengthened (Di Paola, 2013)⁸. This study highlights two trends that help explain the decline in the strength of South Africa's labor market: the failure of government to address major socio-economic challenges, including its difficulty in establishing effective collective bargaining for workers, combined with the weakness of direct state intervention in the labour market. They support the idea that the rebuilding of labor's power in South Africa hinges on the ability of government and the private market to re-engage with workplace activism.

While many researchers have thoroughly investigated the governmental, socio-economic, and private market forces that depress labor standards, and while many researchers have proposed collective action as an effective tool to protect (gig) workers, there is still much ambiguity around which aspects of their working conditions are most important in their decision-making process to continue or begin working in the gig economy. Having this

⁸ Miriam Di Paola & Nicolas Pons-Vignon (2013) Labour market restructuring in South Africa: low wages, high insecurity, *Review of African Political Economy*, 40:138, 628-638, DOI: 10.1080/03056244.2013.858432 [<https://www-tandfonline-com.proxy.library.upenn.edu/doi/full/10.1080/03056244.2013.858432>]

understanding may be invaluable in any collective organization between gig workers, as trade-offs are weighed between workers, platforms/employers, and the government.

In this literature review, it can be seen that the research has pointed to the fact that gig workers face a plethora of poor labor conditions, and that collective action in the gig economy has failed to address these conditions. Little work has been done to determine which labor conditions are most harmful or beneficial in the mind of the gig worker. Because researchers posit that collective action may be the only recourse for downcast gig workers, understanding these high-priority factors for gig workers would be necessary to determine the objectives of collective action.

3. STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Methods

This study investigates the question of how employee benefits, working conditions, and compensation affect the decision-making processes of gig workers.

Question	Method	Expected Number of Datapoints	Data Collected
What are the important factors for gig workers?	Survey	100	These factors may include: compensation, employee benefits specific to their industry (such as healthcare, insurance, discounts on third-party products/services, maintenance), flexible working hours, independence between platforms (not enforcing exclusivity agreements), community (or isolation)
Are there trade offs between the most important factors for gig workers?	Survey refined by information collected through interviews and secondary research	100	Information on tradeoffs and rankings between the most important positive and negative factors
What are the regulatory requirements and labor laws pertaining to gig employers?	Secondary Research	South African Labour Law pertaining to gig workers	Regulatory requirements and labor laws assessment
What factors are important for gig platforms in the decision-making	Semi-structured interview with a gig platform representative	1	Decision-making criteria regarding gig worker benefits

criteria regarding gig worker benefits?			
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Table 1. Research Design

The research uses both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The qualitative interview of the CEO of NoSweat, a prominent gig platform in South Africa with over 10,000 active freelancers, was semi-structured and was primarily used to provide greater context around the motivations of South African gig platforms. In addition to this interview, a survey was distributed through Facebook Community, LinkedIn, and Instagram groups, including:

- Online Work Opportunities - South Africa
- Work opportunities in South Africa
- Work From Home opportunities that work in South Africa
- South Africa Business Advertising
- Business Networking South-Africa

3.2. Collecting Data from Gig Workers

Respondents were first classified according to a 2-by-2 matrix: whether or not their current work on a particular platform constitutes their primary or secondary source of income and whether or not they are working on a particular platform out of necessity or if it is their preferred choice.

Thereafter, the workers were provided with a series of options in which they had to make tradeoffs between the most important factors that they used when engaging in their current work and/or would use when deciding their future work. These factors include: compensation, employee benefits specific to their industry (such as healthcare, insurance, discounts on third-party products/services, maintenance), flexible working hours, independence between platforms (not enforcing exclusivity agreements), community (or isolation), stress, ability to develop skills through greater exposure to various workstreams, decreased risk of income loss due to a diversified set of employers.

Finally, workers were asked few open-ended questions to gauge the most beneficial and detrimental aspects of their being a gig worker (as opposed to a traditional employee) and their being a gig worker for their particular platform (as opposed to competitors).

3.3. Timeline

The primary data was supplemented by literature reviews and other secondary data from the International Labor Organisation, UNDP, the World Bank, Fund for Peace, etc.

Action	Date
Contact potential interview participants and preparation	May 1st to May 31st, 2020
Virtual Interviews	June 1st to August 1st, 2020

Survey Distribution	July 1st to August 1st, 2020
Paper Design and Structure	August 1st to August 31st, 2020
Paper Delivery Date	August 31st, 2020

Table 2. Research Timeline

4. KEY FINDINGS

4.1. The regulatory requirements and labor laws pertaining to gig platforms

The South African Labour Court has not explicitly ruled as to whether gig workers, as defined in this paper, are to be considered as employees of the platform(s) for which they work. In July 2017, a noteworthy case between seven Uber drivers and Uber SA was brought before the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation, and Arbitration (CCMA). The Commissioner held that “Uber drivers rendered personal services, drove in their own name and were not permitted to outsource driving to anyone else” and further held that “the relationship between Uber and its drivers was indefinite, as long as the drivers complied with the necessary requirements.” However, the Labour Court in *Uber South Africa Technology Services (Pty) Ltd v National Union of Public Service and Allied Workers (NUPSAW) and Others* overturned the Commissioner's ruling, holding that “the deferring parties failed to discharge the onus to establish that they were employees of Uber SA.” This judgement is only applicable to the facts of that case, and the Labour Court did not provide an assessment as to whether Uber drivers were employees or independent contractors.

Currently, gig workers in South Africa are considered independent contractors and are thus “governed by the laws of contract and the specific contract under which they are working.” Gig workers are not entitled to the benefits and protections afforded to employees under the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995.

Therefore, gig platforms are only impeded by their competitive positioning in the free market insofar as their gig workers’ labor conditions, benefits, and compensation are concerned.

It is no wonder that many gig platforms in South Africa are seemingly in “a race to the bottom on wages and work expenditures” (Steinberger, 2018).

4.2. Labor benefits and issues in the mind of the gig worker

The above secondary research conducted by the researchers suggests that 1) gig workers universally face potentially worse working conditions than their traditionally-employed counterparts, 2) there has been a decline in the South African worker’s power in the labor market partly due to the weakness of direct state intervention, and thus 3) collective action/organization by gig workers may be the best (or only) recourse for gig working conditions to improve.

In order to better understand the positive and negative factors of gig work in the mind of the South African gig worker, the researchers conducted a survey with 174 respondents, 82 of which are people currently working in the gig economy in the country. These 82 respondents of interest were fairly similarly split between male and female, the vast majority of them were under the age of 40, more than half were from Johannesburg or Cape Town and most of them had not received any tertiary education.

The respondents of interest ranked the advantages of gig work as follows (where 1 is the most important factor for them deciding to join / continue to engage in the gig economy): 1) income, 2) flexible working hours, 3) independence, 4) ability to grow skillsets due to greater exposure and variety of tasks, 5) lowered risk of job and income loss.

Income is in the top 2 benefits for ~81% of respondents, notwithstanding the fact that the respondents are fairly evenly distributed regarding their satisfaction of their current income from gig work. A further question is whether this is indicative of the fact that the respondents that are

dissatisfied/neutral with their current income levels, engage in gig work as little/no alternative options are available in traditional employment. Flexible working hours are ranked highly by respondents (mostly between 2 and 3) and ~82% are satisfied with this attribute of their gig work. Independence is the third ranked attribute by respondents, with over 80% of respondents being satisfied with this attribute of their work. The ability to to develop skill sets is less important than the other options but has a high level of satisfaction from respondents. The lowered risk of job/income loss is ranked lowest by respondents and has somewhat inconclusive satisfaction ratings.

The respondents of interest ranked the disadvantages of gig work as follows (where 1 is the most important factor for their dissatisfaction of their gig work): 1) inconsistent income, 2) lack of employment benefits, 3) social isolation, and 4) stress.

Where respondents have placed high importance on the greater income that they can receive from gig work (compared to traditional employment), the inconsistency of this income is the leading drawback of gig work for respondents. While 50% of respondents do not mind receiving no employee benefits, they rank it second on average out of these negative factors. A low ranking for isolation/loneliness is consistent with the fact that only few respondents feel lonely often. Respondents of interest have a low ranking for stress compared to other factors.

The respondents were also asked to submit any needs and preferences that they look for in their gig work that were not mentioned in the survey. The reported needs of respondents concerning compensation ranged from receiving a travel allowance (to cover transportation costs) and loss of income insurance (security) to increased benefits and up-front deposits from clients. Some respondents noted that further support and training from clients would be

beneficial and that they should receive fairer treatment. A concern for some freelancers was the scarcity of gigs and others lacked a sense of purpose in their day-to-day work.

4.3. Survey Report

174 Responses out of which 82 from people currently participating in the Gig Economy in South Africa.

Gender

Answer	%	Count
Male	43.90%	36
Female	56.10%	46
Total	100%	82

Age

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Age	18.00	70.00	31.93	9.72	94.46	82

Most respondents are below 40 with the minimum age being 18 and the maximum age being 70.

Where do you live? Please select your city.

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Johannesburg	42.68%	35
2	Cape Town	12.20%	10
3	Durban	6.10%	5
4	Pretoria	10.98%	9
5	Port Elizabeth	3.66%	3
6	Other	24.39%	20
	Total	100%	82

Johannesburg & Cape Town represent over half of the respondents' locations, with ~42% of respondents from Johannesburg.

What is your highest level of education achieved?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Finished master or higher degree	9.76%	8
2	Finished bachelors degree	20.73%	17
3	Finished secondary school	56.10%	46
4	Finished primary and lower	0.00%	0
5	Other	13.41%	11
	Total	100%	82

Out of the respondents working in the gig economy, 56.10% only finished secondary school meanwhile 30.49% have a bachelor's degree or higher. Most respondents have limited education.

What is your employment status?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Student	14.63%	12
2	Salaried Employee (full-time)	14.63%	12
3	Salaried Employee (part-time)	10.98%	9
4	Freelancer / Gig Worker	32.93%	27
5	Self employed / business owner	19.51%	16
6	Homemaker	1.22%	1
7	Unemployed	6.10%	5
	Total	100%	82

Is informal (gig) work your primary or secondary source of monthly income?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Primary source of income	71.95%	59
2	Secondary source of income	28.05%	23
	Total	100%	82

While all of these respondents engage in gig work and ~72% of the respondents view gig work as their primary source of income, only ~33% of the respondents consider themselves as “freelancers / gig workers.”

For each of the questions below, select how much you agree/disagree with each of the statements (referring to your primary gig role).

#	Question	Strongly disagree		Somewhat disagree		Neutral		Somewhat agree		Strongly agree	
1	I am satisfied with the income I receive from my primary gig role	17.07%	14	19.51%	16	14.63%	12	28.05%	23	20.73%	17
2	I don't mind receiving no employee benefits (healthcare, dental, insurance, maintenance, etc.) from my primary gig platform	15.85%	13	14.63%	12	19.51%	16	17.07%	14	32.93%	27
3	I like having flexible working hours	8.54%	7	2.44%	2	7.32%	6	15.85%	13	65.85%	54
4	I like the independence and freedom to choose when and where to work, and being able to work for more than one platform	7.32%	6	2.44%	2	7.32%	6	19.51%	16	63.41%	52

5	As a gig worker, I often feel lonely	28.05%	23	19.51%	16	24.39 %	20	17.07%	14	10.98%	9
6	As a gig worker, I have exposure to more opportunities and can grow my skillset	6.10%	5	6.10%	5	4.88%	4	28.05%	23	54.88%	45
7	I have less risk of job and income loss because I have multiple employers	21.95%	18	12.20%	10	17.07 %	14	25.61%	21	23.17%	19
8	I am more stressed as a gig worker than I would be at a traditional job	29.27%	24	12.20%	10	21.95 %	18	15.85%	13	20.73%	17

Income: respondents are fairly evenly split between highly dissatisfied and highly satisfied with the income they receive from their gig work.

Employee benefits: 50% of gig workers don't mind receiving no employee benefits (healthcare, dental, insurance, maintenance, etc.) from their primary gig platform

Flexible working hours: two thirds of respondents are highly satisfied (~82% like having flexible working hours)

Independence: nearly two thirds of respondents are highly satisfied (~83% like the independence and freedom to choose when and where to work, and being able to work for more than one platform)

Loneliness: less than 30% of respondents often feel lonely (this does not seem to be a major factor for respondents)

Potential to develop skillset: ~83% of respondents have exposure to more opportunities and can grow their skillset

Less risk of job/income loss: respondents are fairly evenly split between highly dissatisfied and highly satisfied with the risk mitigation that their diversified income stream brings.

Stress: respondents are fairly evenly split between highly dissatisfied and highly satisfied with the amount of stress they experience as gig workers compared to traditional employment.

Rank these benefits of gig work in order of importance to you when choosing to work in the gig economy (1 being the most important benefit and 5 being the benefit you care the least about)

#	Question	1		2		3		4		5	
1	Income	56.10 %	46	25.61 %	21	8.54%	7	9.76 %	8	0.00 %	0
2	Flexible working hours	17.07 %	14	35.37 %	29	29.27 %	24	9.76 %	8	8.54 %	7
3	Independence and freedom to choose when and where to work	15.85 %	13	19.51 %	16	35.37 %	29	15.85 %	13	13.41 %	11
4	Growing skillsets and exposure to more opportunities	8.54%	7	15.85 %	13	15.85 %	13	39.02 %	32	20.73 %	17

5	Less risk of job and income loss with multiple employers	2.44%	2	3.66%	3	10.98%	9	25.61%	21	57.32%	47
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The respondents' ranked importance of the benefits of gig work are: 1) income, 2) flexible working hours, 3) independence, 4) ability to grow skillsets, 5) lowered risk of job and income loss.

Income: income is in the top 2 benefits for ~81% of respondents, notwithstanding the fact that the respondents are fairly evenly distributed regarding their satisfaction of their current income from gig work. A further question is whether this is indicative of the fact that the respondents that are dissatisfied/neutral with their current income levels, engage in gig work as little/no alternative options are available in traditional employment.

Flexible working hours: this is ranked highly by respondents (mostly between 2 and 3) and ~82% are satisfied with this attribute of their gig work.

Independence: this is the third ranked attribute by respondents, with over 80% of respondents being satisfied with this attribute of their work.

Potential to develop skillset: this factor is less important than the other options but has a high level of satisfaction from respondents.

Less risk of job/income loss: this is ranked lowest by respondents and has somewhat inconclusive satisfaction ratings.

Rank these disadvantages in order of importance to you when choosing to work in the gig economy (1 being the most important disadvantage and 5 being the disadvantage you care the least about)

#	Question	1		2		3		4	
1	Inconsistent income	65.85 %	54	21.95 %	18	8.54%	7	3.66 %	3
2	No / few employment benefits (healthcare, dental, insurance, maintenance, etc.)	21.95 %	18	39.02 %	32	25.61 %	21	13.41 %	11
3	Isolation (feeling lonely)	2.44%	2	23.17 %	19	35.37 %	29	39.02 %	32
4	Stress	9.76%	8	15.85 %	13	30.49 %	25	43.90 %	36

The respondents' ranked importance of the disadvantages of gig work are: 1) inconsistent income, 2) lack of employment benefits, 3) social isolation, and 4) stress.

Inconsistent income: where respondents have placed high importance on the greater income that they can receive from gig work (compared to traditional employment), the inconsistency of this income is the leading drawback of gig work.

No/few employment benefits: while 50% of respondents do not mind receiving no employee benefits, they rank it second on average out of these negative factors.

Social isolation: a low ranking for isolation/loneliness is consistent with the fact that few respondents' feeling lonely often (see above).

Stress: respondents have a low ranking for stress compared to other factors

Are there any needs and preferences that you look for in your gig work and that weren't mentioned in this survey?

In times like these where we faced with a global pandemic and lockdown the scarcity of gigs is an issue as it means less income. Distance sometimes is an issue as transport costs more than the amount paid by the gig

A sense of purpose

Some kind of insurance or guarantee that will protect me against loss of income or a body that can represent me due to the platform penalizing me or closing my account involuntarily. I have been kicked out of a site before (Freelancer) without given a good reason or explanation of what I did wrong or given a opportunity to fend for myself. They just kept giving me a generic answer of some violation and said they don't have to explain further. I had a balance that they did not pay out and I can't rejoin the site ever again. Basically kicked me out cold. I'm a professional and would never intend to violate terms knowingly. I'm worried that it may happen again with other platforms since I rely on these sites for my income.

More support and training

More different gigs to complete.

Travel allowance if needed

Need more job so i can earn more

Jobs are not enough to cover expenses

I need more jobs so that I can always have income.

I wish they can not be seasonal jobs they must run non stop

Benefits

More pay/ income

Yes I would like Gig Jobs to consider ideas from jobbers. Ideas that will create more jobs.

We need more jobs

The availability of jobs on the gig platforms

Up front deposit /guaranteed payment. Fair treatment. Market rates

Everything is just okay

Consistency & opportunity

Just more work to be able to work

Gigs that are safe for women

None at the moment.

I am disabled, and sometimes require the use of a wheelchair. So the buildings I work in need to be disabled friendly with ramps etc, and bathrooms I have access to (not all buildings do)

Wish some jobs would pay better than what they are offering

As i gig worker i struggle to get my own vechle i am in need of a bakkie

For employers to respect your time and your personal rates, 80% of the time I am underpaid because employers set the rates which is always lower than it should be. They make you feel bad to sticking to the work times when they need you to work late but they did not get a CE for it.

Security that the client will pay

Income

Sometimes there are no jobs for a month or it chooses geographically

They must have an easy payment system

A car to work with

Wish there were more gig work opportunities available in my country.

Opportunities to co-gig (buddy up with another jobber perhaps)

More platforms/exposure to find gigs

Yes... I just pray they bring more jobs because we are starving.

Yes a good paying gig

How can I be helped to grow

Community to talk to

The reported needs of respondents concerning compensation ranged from receiving a travel allowance (to cover transportation costs) and loss of income insurance (security) to increased benefits and up-front deposits from clients. Some respondents noted that further support and training from clients would be beneficial and that they should receive fairer treatment. A concern for some freelancers was the scarcity of gigs and others lacked a sense of purpose in their day-to-day work.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1. Sample Size Limitations in Qualitative & Quantitative Research

The main problem with small studies is interpretation of results, in particular confidence intervals and p-values. When conducting a research study, the data is used to estimate the true effect using the observed estimate and 95% confidence interval. Another major limitation of small studies is that they can produce false-positive results, or they over-estimate the magnitude of an association.⁹

5.2. COVID 19 Limitations

The Coronavirus pandemic offered researchers the chance to use technology when engaging in data collection. While initially the ambition was to conduct interviews on the ground in South Africa, this initiative was not accomplished due to travel restrictions and health concerns. Adjusting to the requirements of video and audio software was a challenge as the conversations/interviews sometimes suffered from poor audio or video quality and thus became time-consuming.

In terms of recruiting and advertising the study, the researchers mainly used social media to advertise and recruit participants (through Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn) and online listservs of certain gig platforms. The main disadvantage of using social media for study

⁹ Small studies: Strengths and limitations. (n.d.). Retrieved August 26, 2020, from <https://erj.ersjournals.com/content/erj/32/5/1141.full.pdf>

recruitment is the lack of reach to those with limited or no internet access. Because the gig economy relies on internet connectivity, the researchers did not consider this a major concern for the viability of the study.

5.3. Further Research

The study's limited reach by way of primary data collection suggests that the most significant opportunity for further research lies in substantially increasing the number of respondents. Additionally, a wider set of the advantages and disadvantages of gig work can be analyzed to provide greater insight and granularity into the motivating and discouraging factors of South African gig workers. Finally, further research should be conducted into the development of collection action in a lowly regulated, highly decentralized market in a developing economy.

6. APPENDIX

APPENDIX A. Survey Questions

Block 1: Demographics

Q1 Gender

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q2 Age

Q3 Where do you live? Please select your city.

- Johannesburg (1)
- Cape Town (2)
- Durban (3)
- Pretoria (4)
- Port Elizabeth (5)
- Other (6) _____

Q4 What is your highest level of education achieved?

- Finished master or higher degree (1)
- Finished bachelors degree (2)
- Finished secondary school (3)
- Finished primary and lower (4)
- Other (5) _____

Q5 What is your employment status?

- Student (1)
- Salaried Employee (full-time) (2)
- Salaried Employee (part-time) (3)
- Freelancer / Gig Worker (4)
- Self employed / business owner (5)
- Homemaker (6)

Other (7) _____

Gig economy: this involves a temporary contractual job or short-term contract or freelance work that a person may take, on a project-to-project basis, for which the payment is made once the task is completed.

Examples: Uber/Bolt drivers Picup workers Airbnb landlords Online marketplace sellers Volunteers Artists On-call workers Highly skilled contractors
Seasonal workers And many others

Q6 Do you work in the gig or informal economy (ride-sharing, on demand delivery, freelance, etc.)?
Select Yes if you work at least 2 hours per week.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Block 2: Gig Economy

Q7 Is informal (gig) work your primary or secondary source of monthly income?

- Primary source of income (1)
- Secondary source of income (2)

Q8 Which gig platforms do you work for? Select all that apply.

- Sweep South (1)
- M4Jam (2)
- Picup (3)
- GetTOD (4)
- NoSweat (5)
- Uber (6)
- UberEats (7)
- OrderIn (8)
- MrD (9)
- Bolt (10)
- Taxify (11)
- RideGuru (12)
- Taxi Live Africa (13)
- Fiverr (14)
- Upwork (15)
- Freelancer (16)

- Jobvine (17)
- Other (18) _____

Q10 Which one of the platforms selected above is the one you work most for?

Q9 Which one of the following describes your current status?

- "I work at my primary gig platform because I have to - there are no other options for me to make a living." (1)
- "I work at my primary gig platform because it is the best - all the other options are not as good as this one!" (2)
- Other (3) _____

Block 3: Needs & Preferences

Q12 For each of the questions below, select how much you agree/disagree with each of the statements (referring to your primary gig role).

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I am satisfied with the income I receive from my primary gig role (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't mind receiving no employee benefits (healthcare, dental, insurance, maintenance, etc.) from my primary gig platform (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like having flexible working hours (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I like the independence and freedom to choose when and where to work, and being able to work for more than one platform (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
As a gig worker, I often feel lonely (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
As a gig worker, I have exposure to more opportunities and can grow my skillset (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have less risk of job and income loss because I have multiple employers (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am more stressed as a gig worker than I would be at a traditional job (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q18 Rank these benefits of gig work in order of importance to you when choosing to work in the gig economy (1 being the most important benefit and 5 being the benefit you care the least about)

- _____ Income (1)
- _____ Flexible working hours (2)
- _____ Independence and freedom to choose when and where to work (3)
- _____ Growing skillsets and exposure to more opportunities (4)
- _____ Less risk of job and income loss with multiple employers (5)

Q19 Rank these disadvantages in order of importance to you when choosing to work in the gig economy (1 being the most important disadvantage and 5 being the disadvantage you care the least about)

- _____ Inconsistent income (1)
- _____ No / few employment benefits (healthcare, dental, insurance, maintenance, etc.) (2)
- _____ Isolation (feeling lonely) (3)
- _____ Stress (4)

Q20 Are there any needs and preferences that you look for in your gig work and that weren't mentioned in this survey?

Q21 For every survey completed, we will donate R20 to a South African nonprofit organization of your choice (up to 100 responses). **Which one would you like us to donate to on your behalf?**

- CHOC – Childhood Cancer Foundation SA (1)
- FoodBank South Africa (2)
- Hotel Hope (3)
- Either one (4)

Q13 **Please leave your email address below if you would be willing to be contacted for a short 15-minute interview.**

APPENDIX B. Database of Companies Contacted

Company	Type of work
Sweep South	Cleaning services
M4Jam	microjobs
Jobvine	freelance
GetTOD	On-demand handyman
NoSweat	freelance
Uber	rideshare
UberEats	food
OrderIn	food
MrD	food
Bolt	rideshare
Taxify	rideshare
RideGuru	rideshare
Taxi Live Africa	rideshare
Fiverr	freelance
Upwork	freelance
Freelancer	freelance
Jobvine	freelance

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