

Factors of Gig Job Involvement and the Effect on B40 and M40 Socio-economic Sustainability

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Abstract: The emergence of information and communication technology (ICT) departed from conventional working arrangements to create new ones that permit interaction between employers and employees via apps and systems. The gig economy has arisen as a key theme in a recent independent review of modern employment practices. However, most of the existing literature focused on the implications of growth in these arrangements for workers and their families. Realizing the importance of the research on job involvement for Malaysian citizens specifically among B40 and M40 to opt for gig work is still largely unexplored, hence, this study aims to explore the factors influencing the involvement of a gig worker among B40 and M40 while examining the effect on the enhancement of the B40 and M40 segment's socio-economic sustainability. Using a purposive sampling method, the data were collected through a survey among gig workers in Malaysia. A total of 1415 valid questionnaires were gathered from the gig workers in 14 states of Malaysia. Additionally, SPSS 28.0 was applied to test the hypotheses. The results indicated that circumstances, earnings, risk, prospects, and workload had a positive relationship with the B40 and M40 socio-economic sustainability while flexibility is not significant toward B40 and M40 socio-economic sustainability. The result also shows that there is a significant difference between B40 and M40 income groups toward socio-economic sustainability. Findings from this study contributed new knowledge on the gig economy in Malaysia. The research also assists policymakers in understanding holistically the current job scenario of gig workers to formulate policies, incentives, and development programs.

Keywords: *Gig Job, Gig Economy, Socio-economic, Sustainability*

1. Introduction and Background

A gig economy is an open capitalist model where individuals make money for a short period or a long time Huws et al. (2017). According to Heeks (2017), virtual employment is a rapidly rising economic trend that will shape the future of employment and economic growth in both developing and developed countries. From this point, the working structure is often by commerce rather than traditional employment. Workers in the gig economy are typically employed as subcontractors and are not eligible for minimum wage and overtime protections under federal and state labor laws. The physical gig economy is internet-based work arrangements whereby people discover short-term work or tasks using websites or smartphone apps connecting with clients and workers (Kuhn & Galloway, 2019). Globally, 70 million workers are estimated to have registered with online labor platforms that facilitate remote forms of gig work. Meanwhile, in Malaysia, a study on the agile workforce has found that 38 percent of the respondents in Malaysia who are currently in full-time employment are looking to enter the gig economy in the next 12 months. In addition, Malaysian household income has been categorized into their level of income groups, which are T20, M40, and B40 (Ezzatul Adahwiyah et al., 2021). According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM, 2020), based on a survey in 2020, RM 4,850 was indeed the B40 group consisting of 2.78 million households. On the other hand, the M40 group was 2.78 million families, with income ranging from RM 4,851 to RM 10,970. Much of the discussion of the gig economy has focused on the implications of growth in these arrangements for workers and their families. However, the research on job involvement for Malaysian citizens specifically among B40 and M40 to opt for gig work is still largely unexplored and needs to be determined. Hence, this study aims to explore the factors influencing the involvement of a gig worker among B40 and M40 while examining the effect on the enhancement of the B40 and M40 segment's socio-economic sustainability.

2. Literature Review

Numerous variables might influence those who work in the gig economy to accept gig labor. Aside from that, an uncontrolled element directly induces individuals to operate as gig laborers. Many excellent people have been laid off globally as a result of the business's unstable status, which could not last long and was less progressive. Many firms are being forced to shut down due to movements controlled by the monarch and the government. When the government carried out the movement restriction order, the business sector viewed societal engagement as forcibly screaming down. Based on the findings done by the previous researcher, reviewing the existing literature, several factors influence the B40 and M40 populations to be involved in the gig economy as follows:

Earning: Earnings fluctuate between standard jobs and non-standard jobs as well as known as the gig economy where the availability pulls independent workers for a short period and enables to task rate amount. Workers in traditional employment may have to work eight hours every day. However, in the gig economy, employees make more money in less time than by spending eight hours at a desk. Gig workers' engagement with platforms may also differ, and it relies on their commitment to work full-time or part-time, which affects worker remuneration. Keith et al. (2019) point out that gig workers' incomes are flexible and correlate with the gig economy's sectors and how they interpret employment. A study in an online course sought to identify the driving forces behind people's decision to work as gig workers, and the result indicated that economic value is the primary factor in becoming online gig workers (Alif et al., 2020). Moreover, Valente et al. (2019) explored the factors that led people in poor nations to enter the sharing economy as Brazilian Uber drivers and it was found that the main reason was to generate more cash.

The different platforms of the gig economy give extensive thoughtful of the earning and job involvement in the gig economy platform. On the sharing economy platform, 120 Pakistan e-hailing drivers intend to participate in the sharing economy because of the economic benefit they claim managed to earn income as primary and supplementary income (Raza et al., 2021). Silva Júnior et al. (2022) also claimed that app-based drivers are demanding flexible work arrangements by sharing their private assets with the public because of earning extra income from the platform. In addition, Nawaz et al. (2019), pinpoint the driving forces that keep freelancers interested in this field and encourage them to continue. The result specified that economic value significantly impacted the freelancer value proposition. Earning is not only the issue when gig workers are engaged in that platform. Beyond that, the individual becomes the major income distribution in the family. Mahmood and Hassan (2020) claimed that extrinsic motivation acts as money that leads women to participate in the spatial crowdsourcing platform due to being the family's breadwinner. As a whole, gig workers are motivated to supply themselves to get more economic benefits such as more income or supplementary income to maintain their status quo by involving the gig economy platform. Therefore, the following hypothesis developed:

H1: *Earning significantly influences the gig worker's socio-economic sustainability.*

Workload: The concept of workload in gig jobs can vary depending on the nature of the work and the specific gig. Gig workers have control over the number of projects they take on, allowing them to adjust their workload based on their capacity and preferences. According to Churchill and Craig (2019), some gig workers may spend fewer hours on the most uncomplicated assignment to maintain a better work-life balance, while others would have to work extraordinarily long hours to keep up with their pace. Hodor (2020), states that the perception of gig workers differs from conventional employees, and they are more susceptible to incentive compensation. Because of task-based compensation, gig workers are motivated to take on more tasks and responsibilities. Liang et al. (2018) reasoned that people are profit-orientated; they are desirous and extrinsically motivated to make a tremendous effort on tasks and job demands regardless of the job's complexity. It has been widely noted and determined that the gig economy's lighter workload results from its unique features and traits, such as short-term contracts (Katsnelson & Oberholzer-Gee, 2021). According to a study by Banik et al. (2020), freelancers join the gig economy because of their freedom, independence, and control over their work schedules and workload.

Similarly, Pichault and McKeown (2019) contended that increased autonomy also opens up opportunities for job customization, professional assistance in avoiding organizational intrusions, control over workload and

speed of work, skill development, and scheduling of time and space in the contemporary working arrangement. Jain et al. (2021) revealed that workload implicit is the vital factor that drives Gen Z to participate in the gig economy, and the result showed that males and females equally show the most significant workload factor. The author suggests that Gen Z understands the need for reasonable workloads that can be accomplished effectively and on time. As a whole, based on the above discussion hypothesized that workload significantly influences job involvement in the gig economy and acts as a predictor for the socio-economic sustainability of the gig workers.

H2: *Workload significantly influences the gig worker's socio-economic sustainability.*

Flexibility: Flexibility refers to the autonomy and control independent employees have over their work schedules, resulting in flexible and irregular labor based on hours or even shorter durations (Zheng & Yang, 2020). Flexible work schedules are more customizable than typical working days, allowing employees to work around personal or family obligations. Also, flexibility or freedom to execute is available as long as production is observable. Regardless, the entity will always have a benefit and a drawback. According to Ugargol and Patrick (2018), employee engagement and flexibility go hand in hand. In addition, most employees adopted flexible work hours, flexible shifts, and work-from-home arrangements, indicating that these helped them combine work and family life. However, the gig economy will be more flexible for independent contract workers than the contractual workers. For instance, gig workers initialize the responsibility with just access to the internet.

According to Lehdonvirta (2018), the respondents have revealed positive and negative perceptions while working online with flexible work arrangements. For example, the respondents managed to care for their children while doing the job; meanwhile, some claim they did not work because they lacked control over their responsibilities. Nawaz et al. (2019) intended to investigate the motivation factor that drives freelancers to engage in the gig economy platform and autonomy value was significantly correlated with the Freelancer value proposition (FVP) in the course inherited benefit of doing freelancing. In addition, Riyono and Usman (2022) also claimed that most freelancers decided to work full-time in the freelancer IT sector on the grounds of flexibility and adequate time to spend with family members and a degree of freedom to make decisions, namely freedom over decision-making. Wulandari et al. (2019) indicated that flexibility played an essential role in decision-making in opting for the Sribulancer platform. The flexibility factors will undoubtedly come to mind when considering employment in the gig economy in comparison to traditional work settings. Employees have the best of both worlds by working on a gig economy platform that is managed to maintain their socioeconomic status while also allowing them to enjoy flexibility. Hence, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H3: *Flexibility significantly influences the gig worker's socio-economic sustainability.*

Prospect: Prospect is very close to individual psychology, where people keep pushing themselves forward to get better opportunities in the future. Kaufman (2018) defines prospects as those having prior expertise in the subject who may re-engage their creative skills and re-create something, regardless of competence. In this situation, employees might have significant changes to promotion to a higher-level position or get permanent in the organization. Moreover, when employees seek extensive career prospects, knowledge, and experiences play a crucial role. Abraham et al. (2018), argue that the internet's interconnectedness has made it more appealing for businesses to restructure their operations. Technological advancement has been massively changing the business model, function, and workforce for the future to maintain their business. The more advances encountered, the more changes need to be made. The current known new economy is the Gig economy expanding drastically by hiring non-standard employees with flexible working arrangements and algorithmic systems. Additionally, gig workers would not find their job opportunities or career prospects by depending on techno advancement; thus, other factors also work together for job availability. Users are the leading role players in the gig economy; if the number of users increases, job opportunities will be more significant by offering a great deal to the user. Wood et al. (2019) argued that due to customer preferences and the platform's algorithmic ranking of employees within search results, workers with the highest score and the most incredible experience tended to get more employment.

Furthermore, people with minimal qualifications, skills, and lack of opportunity tend to find the option in the gig economy. Churchill and Craig (2019) studied how men and women work on digital platforms and what

kinds of tasks they perform via these platforms. The finding was illustrated that men are mainly dominating in the delivery side proposition, nevertheless, the women most employed for the administrative side to sustain economic purposes. Occur as a result of women with particular abilities finding more significant opportunities online than in traditional employment. Notwithstanding the lack of opportunity and mix-match requirements, the economic crisis is the factor people eventually turn into a gig economy. Parallel with Ahmad (2020), most respondents stated that they believe gig workers have a bright future and contribute to the economy because of the availability of jobs in the gig economy during the Movement Control Order. In summary, it directly influences them to get involved in the gig economy to earn some income while waiting for the desired position. Thus, the following hypothesis is designed:

H4: *Prospect significantly influences the gig worker's socio-economic sustainability.*

Risk: Risk is also an essential factor that needs to be considered in employment status. Having a solid employment status will help to maintain a good living standard. Aligning with Mohammed and Alaa (2018), employment security refers to an employee's assessment of their present working circumstances and prospects in their current job, both positively and negatively. The researcher also studied to identify variables affecting academic staff job satisfaction at two private institutions. Job security and job satisfaction were shown to be strongly linked. At the same time, the employees believe that current employment is stable and fully protected by the Employment Act. It will directly influence to boots up the organization's performance. This interpretation contrasts with Abolade (2018), who argues that job uncertainty contributes to poor organizational performance and high staff turnover rates. The result indicated an inverse relationship between job insecurity and organizational performance. Due to the delay, that employee could not predict how far the employment status will be sustained in the future.

Another viewpoint on independent contract workers is famous for freelancers, task-based employees, etc. This group of workers is classified as the third category of employment type in employment law (Cherry and Aloisi, 2017). However, the gig workers will be left behind where proper law protection does not exist to lift in a conflict situation. Green et al. (2018) argue that, when it comes to the gig economy, there are no labor unions and no clear regulations in place to safeguard employees. The gig workers will face difficulties beyond income, such as job insecurity, benefits, and social protection. Additionally, the risk also comes from the safety and health of gig workers who are required to move geographically from point A to point B. As a result, there is a high possibility that the driver may face a rare event that leads to fatal death. Therefore, the current study hypothesized risk can impact individuals' willingness to engage in gig work and affect socioeconomic sustainability.

H5: *Risk significantly influences the gig worker's socio-economic sustainability.*

Circumstance: According to a definition provided by Yang and Treadway (2018), the circumstance is the maximal unique significance of an event, an occasion, or a person's contact is a biological, personal, relational-social, and cultural synthesis of interactional impact. The event will manifest itself, influenced by the surrounding group that motivates someone to do something. Specifically, the gig worker is stimulated by the surrounding or group of society that influences them to be involved in the gig economy. Typically, the gig worker might be inspired by a close community that managed to generate more income in a short period. Because earning was the main issue for everyone in managing daily expenses, people surely stepped into the wisdom of making more money. A qualitative study by Gandhi et al. (2018) described people's motivations for working as gig employees. The study found that social networks such as Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook encourage some people to become gig workers in this environment. Based on the in-depth interview, the respondent illustrated that, involved in the project after seeing the success of others on YouTube, which immediately influenced the responder to agree to gig employment. Similarly, Valente et al. (2019) identified most of the respondents claimed that they became full-time Uber drivers because of their friends who formerly worked as Uber drivers for quite a long time.

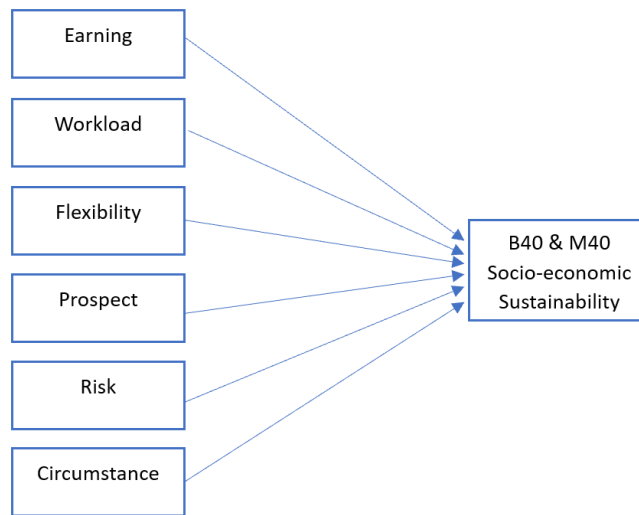
Furthermore, the social influence motivates some to get involved in the gig economy and as a comfort zone where people tend to get a positive vibe and encouragement to perform tasks. Social interaction is distinguished between the physical and digital-based gig economies (Churchill & Craig, 2019). For example, in the physical gig economy, the gig workers move from point A to B, purposely delivering the food, cleaning, courier services, and pick-drop off a passenger. There will be socializing between the worker and the

customer. However, digital-based gig workers perform their tasks via the virtual office, and there is no social interaction between team members or colleagues. Thus, it is expected that there was a direct relationship between the circumstances incorporated with social influence and job involvement in the gig economy.

H6: *Circumstance significantly influences the gig worker's socio-economic sustainability.*

To sum up, based on the presented discussion above, the current study develops a research framework as illustrated in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Research framework



3. Methodology

This study is quantitative research whereby data is collected and analyzed statistically to answer research objectives and questions. This research selected a sample from 1415 gig workers around Malaysia. A purposive random sampling technique was utilized where the target respondents were those who were involved in gig jobs, specifically in the food delivery service within 14 states in Malaysia. A survey questionnaire was conducted and distributed electronically and face-to-face to the gig workers. The questionnaire encompasses five sections. In section A, 10 questions on the basic demographic profiles were asked. While in Section B, discussed questions related to socioeconomic sustainability, earning, workload, flexibility, prospect, circumstance, and risk. Section B used the Likert scale to allow respondents to respond appropriately to the question. The points Likert scale is not being used in the current study because seven points are a good balance between having sufficient discrimination points and maintaining a sufficient number of response options. Seven-point Likert scales appear more suitable for the electronic distribution of usability surveys (Finstad, 2010). The Likert scale used in the questionnaire is as follows: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Slightly Disagree 4-Moderate, 5- 5-Slightly Agree 6-Agree, 7-Strongly Agree. This research applied SPSS 28.0 to analyze the data and test the hypotheses.

4. Results

This section presents sets of results relating to the profile of respondents based on demographic and geographic characteristics (gender, age, level of education, and region).

Profile of Respondents: Table 1 summarizes the respondents' demographic profiles. According to the table, the majority of the respondents are male (90.8%) and female (9.2%). Most of the respondents were aged between 18 to 25 years old (39.1%) followed those by age 26 to 32 (36.5%), 33 to 39 years old (16%), 40 to 46 years old (6.4%), and 47 and above were (2%). In addition, the respondents were from each of the 13 states in Malaysia in the range of 94 to 138 respondents (6.6% to 9.8%) except for Kelantan only consisted of 54 respondents (3.8%). For the income category, it can be concluded that most of the respondents were from

B40 (B1-B4) which comprised 1362 (96.3%) respondents while M40 (M1-M4) were 53 (3.7%) respondents. For previous employment experiences, the majority of the respondents have 2 to 5 years of experience (42.1%). Meanwhile, most of the respondents have 2 to 3 years of gig job experience (46.4%). Furthermore, 80.1% of the respondent use motorbikes for their gig job and 97.7% own their vehicle. For the gig job platform, the majority of them were from FoodPanda (48.3%) and Grab (43.4%). Finally, in terms of hours required to work, most of the respondents agreed they need to work 8 hours and above (58.6%), followed by 5 to 8 hours (33.8%), and less than 5 hours (7.6%).

Table 1: Respondent Demographic and Geographic Information

Demographic Factor	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	1285	90.8
	Female	130	9.2
Total		1415	100
Age	18-25	553	39.1
	26-32	517	36.5
	33-39	227	16.0
	40-46	90	6.4
	47 and above	28	2.0
Total		1415	100
State	Johor	101	7.1
	Kedah	98	6.9
	Kelantan	54	3.8
	Melaka	101	7.1
	Negeri Sembilan	112	7.9
	Pahang	94	6.6
	Penang	102	7.2
	Perak	103	7.3
	Perlis	99	7.0
	Sabah	99	7.0
	Sarawak	113	8.0
	Selangor	138	9.8
	Terengganu	95	6.7
	Wilayah Persekutuan	106	7.5
Total		1415	100
Income Range	B1 (RM 0 – RM 2500)	818	57.8
	B2 (RM 2501 – RM 3170)	421	29.8
	B3 (RM 3171 – RM 3970)	100	7.1
	B4 (RM 3971 – RM 4850)	23	1.6
	M1 (RM 4851 – RM 5880)	18	1.3
	M2 (RM 5881 – RM 7100)	18	1.3
	M3 (RM 7101 – RM 8700)	9	0.6
	M4 (RM 8701– RM 10970)	8	0.5
Total		1415	100
Previous Employment Experiences	Less than 1 Year	534	37.7
	2 to 5 Years	596	42.1
	> 5 Years	285	20.1
Total		1415	100
Gig Job Experiences	Less than 1 Year	603	42.6
	2 to 3 Years	657	46.4
	> 3 Years	155	11.0
Total		1415	100
Types of Vehicles Used for Gig Jobs	Bicycle	12	0.8
	Motorbike	1133	80.1

	Car	261	18.4
	Others	9	0.6
Total		1415	100
Vehicles Ownership	Own Vehicle	1382	97.7
	Rental Vehicle	33	2.3
Total		1415	100
Gig Job Platform	Food Panda	684	48.3
	Grab	613	43.3
	Gojo (Mycar)	5	0.4
	Maxim	77	5.4
	Lalamove	29	2.0
	Deliveroo	3	0.2
	Happy Fresh	4	0.3
Total		1415	100
Hours required to work	Less than 5 Hours	108	7.6
	5 to 8 Hours	478	33.8
	8 hours and above	829	58.6
Total		1415	100

Descriptive Statistics: Descriptive statistics for the socio-economic sustainability were conducted and Table 2 below displays the outcome. These provide the average mean scores of the gig worker on their perception of the gig job's socio-economic sustainability. Table 2 illustrates the highest mean of the socio-economic sustainability variable. The item "I would prefer any job while waiting for my desired job" has the highest mean value with 5.53 (SD = 1.395), while the lowest mean is the item "I have my own business to back up my income", with the mean value of 3.79 (SD = 2.167).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The incentive by the government helps me to maintain a good living standard.	1415	5.02	1.716
I have my own business to back up my income.	1415	3.79	2.167
I feel capable of using my current income to achieve my financial goals.	1415	5.02	1.660
My spending is always less than my income.	1415	4.58	1.914
I am familiar with the current trends in technology.	1415	5.51	1.418
I chose my current job due to the lack of availability of job opportunities.	1415	5.26	1.678
I would prefer any job while waiting for my desired job.	1415	5.53	1.395
I have a good perception of the reskilling and upskilling programs organized by the government.	1415	5.28	1.495

Hypotheses Testing Analysis: A multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the hypotheses of the current study. Table 3 reveals the factors influencing B40 and M40 socio-economic sustainability and it depicts that the largest beta value of the standardized coefficient is the circumstance (0.339), followed by the prospect (0.185), workload (0.136), earning (0.133), risk (0.094), and flexibility (-0.178). All variables consisting of earnings (p-value < 0.01), workload (p-value < 0.01), prospect (p-value < 0.01), risk (p-value < 0.01), and circumstance (p-value < 0.01) positively influenced the socio-economic sustainability. Meanwhile, only one variable which is flexibility (p-value = 0.859) was found not significant toward B40 and M40 socio-economic sustainability. In addition, the R2 value of 0.541 indicates that all the factors explained 54.1% of the variance in socio-economic sustainability.

Table 3: Hypotheses Result

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std Beta	t	Sig	Result
H1	Earning → Socio-economic sustainability	.133	5.031	<.001	Accepted
H2	Workload → Socio-economic sustainability	.136	4.148	<.001	Accepted
H3	Flexibility → Socio-economic sustainability	-.005	-.178	.859	Rejected
H4	Prospect → Socio-economic sustainability	.185	5.602	<.001	Accepted
H5	Risk → Socio-economic sustainability	.094	3.319	<.001	Accepted
H6	Circumstance → Socio-economic sustainability	.339	11.936	<.001	Accepted

T-Test Analysis: A T-test was conducted to examine the differences between the two groups of income from B40 and M40. Table 4 depicts the differences in socio-economic sustainability between the B40 and M40 income range. The result shows there is a significant difference in socio-economic sustainability for both B40 and M40 income groups. Thus, this confirmed that their socio-economic sustainability is different.

Table 4: T-Test for B40 and M40 toward Socio-economic Sustainability

Socio-economic Sustainability	N	Mean	F	Sig
B40	1362	4.9732	28.68410	<0.001
M40	53	5.6368		

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study aims to examine the relationship between all the gig job involvement factors which are circumstance, earning, flexibility, prospect, risk, and workload toward socio-economic sustainability. The result of the study showed the B40 and M40 socioeconomic sustainability were affected by five of the gig job involvement factors which are circumstances, earnings, risk, prospects, and workload. Meanwhile, flexibility does not have any significant effect on the B40 and M40 socio-economic sustainability. Overall, the factors of circumstances, earnings, risk, prospects, and workload collectively influence gig job involvement by shaping individuals' motivations, commitment, work-life balance, financial security, and career aspirations. These factors vary from person to person, and their interplay determines the level of engagement and sustainability of gig work for individuals. Furthermore, the study also found that there is a significant difference between B40 and M40 income groups in socio-economic sustainability. The significant difference in socio-economic sustainability between B40 and M40 income groups in gig jobs might be influenced by a combination of factors, including income disparities, access to high-value opportunities, financial stability, skills, networks, and policy environments.

Addressing the socio-economic sustainability challenges associated with gig jobs requires a multi-faceted approach. Policymakers, employers, and gig workers themselves can play roles in creating a more sustainable gig economy. This may involve implementing regulations that provide gig workers with increased social protections, ensuring fair pay, promoting access to training and career development opportunities, and fostering social connections among gig workers. Since the current study employed a cross-sectional analysis, future studies are suggested to conduct a longitudinal study that follows gig workers over an extended period to examine how their involvement in gig jobs affects their socio-economic sustainability over time. Future studies could assess income stability, social protections, job security, and career development trajectories, comparing gig workers with those in traditional employment. In addition, future studies should also investigate the impact of gig job involvement on the overall well-being of gig workers, including mental health, job satisfaction, and work-life balance. Assessing the relationship between gig work involvement and well-being can provide insights into the potential social and psychological consequences of gig employment.

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