

Exploring Work Motivation in Malaysia's Gig Economy: A Study on Millennials' Involvement and Influencing Factors

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Abstract

The rise of the gig economy has indeed changed the face of the modern workforce, with more millennials engaging in it because of the flexibility and autonomy derived from such a work environment. This study explores the key factors influencing millennial participation in Malaysia's gig economy, focusing on flexibility, independence, and skill competence. We analysed data from 384 millennials using a structured questionnaire through Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis. Results show that flexibility is the strongest motivator, followed by independence and skill competence. These findings underscore the need for policies that promote gig workers' autonomy and skill competence while addressing income instability. This study provides a localised perspective on work motivation within Malaysia's digital economy. These results have considerable implications for researchers and policy actors in understanding millennial gig worker dynamics and crafting interventions to improve their work experiences within the emerging digital economy. This study further contributes to the more extensive discussion on the future of work, especially in developing economies like Malaysia.

Keywords: Gig Economy, Millennials, Work Motivation, Flexibility, Digital Economy.

Introduction

The gig economy has rapidly transformed the global labour market, offering flexible, short-term work opportunities through digital platforms. This shift from traditional employment models enables workers to engage in diverse tasks without long-term commitments, providing opportunities and challenges. The rise of digital platforms such as Uber, Grab, and Foodpanda allows individuals to work across various sectors, further redefining modern work patterns (Shaw et al., 2023). However, despite its global growth,

most research on the gig economy has focused on Western countries, with little attention given to how this model operates in developing economies like Malaysia.

Malaysia's unique socio-economic environment—shaped by familial obligations, economic pressures, and cultural expectations—demands a localised approach to understanding gig economy participation. Millennials, born between 1981 and 1996, play a significant role in Malaysia's gig economy, where many engage in gig economy to supplement income or as an alternative to traditional employment. Yet, their motivations may differ from global trends, making it necessary to examine factors such as flexibility, independence, and skill competence within this local context.

This study addresses the research gap by exploring the critical motivational factors—flexibility, independence, and skill competence—that drive millennial participation in Malaysia's gig economy. It aims to uncover how these motivations align with or differ from global trends and how local socio-economic conditions influence participation. Specifically, the study investigates how millennial workers navigate the trade-offs between flexibility and financial stability and whether the gig economy is viable for continuous learning and personal growth.

Although still a relatively new sector in Malaysia, the gig economy has grown steadily in recent years, becoming an essential component of the country's evolving labour landscape. This growth has been driven by the increasing adoption of digital platforms and the rise of e-commerce. Platforms like Grab and Foodpanda have provided opportunities across various roles, including ride-hailing, delivery services, and freelance digital work. Mohd Nasir et al. (2024) posited that the gig economy offers an alternative livelihood in response to economic uncertainties and automation, particularly as Malaysia pursues its goal of building a robust digital economy.

Millennials' preference for work-life balance, autonomy, and self-fulfilment aligns with the flexibility offered by the gig economy (Zulkefli & Khalil Omar, 2023). Unlike previous generations, millennials prioritise professional freedom over job security, making them well-suited for platform-based employment (Mehta, 2023). However, beyond the appeal of flexible schedules, socio-cultural factors such as familial responsibilities and financial pressures may also influence their participation in the gig economy. For example, balancing caregiving roles with work may shift the significance of flexibility, while societal expectations around career stability may affect the desire for independence.

Studies in Western contexts have identified flexibility, independence, and skill competence as primary motivators (Shaw et al., 2023; Vallas & Schor, 2020). These factors may hold different meanings in Malaysia. For instance, the opportunity for skill competence might resonate differently in regions with limited access to digital platforms or education. This study investigates how these motivations operate within Malaysia's unique context, offering new insights into the evolving relationship between the gig economy and millennial workers.

Understanding the dynamics of the gig economy in Malaysia is crucial for research and policy development. This study contributes to gig economy research by highlighting how non-

Western socio-economic imperatives—such as familial expectations and financial uncertainty—influence gig economy preferences. It also provides actionable insights for policymakers and platform operators, focusing on strategies to balance autonomy with social protections, foster skill development, and attract and retain millennial gig workers.

The following sections of this paper are structured as follows. Section 2 reviews existing research on the gig economy and key motivational factors influencing participation, including flexibility, independence, and skill competence. Section 3 outlines the research methodology, including the study design, sample population, data collection methods, and analytical techniques. Section 4 reports the results, including descriptive statistics and correlation analyses, highlighting the relationships between motivational factors and millennial involvement in the gig economy. Section 5 discusses the findings within the context of existing literature, emphasising the implications of independence, flexibility, and skill competence on gig economy participation. Finally, Section 6 concludes with recommendations for policy and future research, summarising key insights and addressing study limitations.

Literature Review

The Global Growth of the Gig Economy

The gig economy has emerged as a significant force in the labour market, offering an alternative to traditional full-time employment. Characterised by short-term, flexible work assignments, often facilitated through digital platforms, the gig economy provides opportunities for workers to perform tasks for various clients and companies without the need for long-term commitments (Newlands, 2024). This model includes a wide range of work, from ridesharing and food delivery to freelance design, programming, and other digital services. Rapid advancements in technology have fuelled the expansion of the gig economy, particularly the rise of digital platforms that enable workers and employers to connect easily (Cassell & Deutsch, 2023).

On a global scale, the gig economy has reshaped work by offering unprecedented flexibility and autonomy for workers. Platforms such as Uber, Grab, and Foodpanda have significantly democratised access to employment opportunities, allowing individuals to control their working hours, income, and job preferences (Mehta, 2023). This shift reflects broader changes in labour markets driven by technological innovations, globalisation, and the increased demand for flexible labour solutions (Zhou, 2024). However, while the gig economy offers flexibility and autonomy, it also introduces challenges such as income instability, a lack of benefits, and the absence of long-term job security (Salmah et al., 2024).

The rapid rise of the gig economy has generated mixed responses. Proponents argue that it empowers individuals, particularly those marginalised by traditional labour markets, by providing diverse income opportunities (Joshi et al., 2024). On the other hand, it highlights the precarious nature of the gig economy, which often lacks social protections and job stability. As a result, the gig economy is frequently seen as a double-edged sword, offering both opportunities and risks for workers globally. While research on the gig economy is growing, it remains necessary to explore its implications in different national contexts, particularly in non-Western countries like Malaysia, where economic structures, cultural norms, and labour market conditions may differ significantly.

Malaysia's Gig Economy Landscape

In Malaysia, the gig economy has experienced steady growth, driven by the expansion of digital platforms and the increasing adoption of e-commerce. The government's push toward developing a digital economy, outlined in initiatives such as the Malaysia Digital Economy Blueprint (MyDIGITAL), has facilitated the integration of digital platforms into everyday life, enabling the gig economy to flourish. Services like Grab, Foodpanda, and other local freelance platforms have seen a significant uptick in users, both from workers and consumers. These platforms allow workers to take on various roles, from delivering food and packages to providing freelance digital services, catering to the demands of the growing gig economy.

The rise of the gig economy in Malaysia can also be attributed to economic pressures and the need for supplemental income among young workers. Many millennials, facing financial challenges such as underemployment, stagnating wages, and rising living costs, have turned to the gig economy as a viable source of income (Verma et al., 2024). For many, the gig economy offers a way to cope with financial instability, especially during periods of economic downturn, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, Malaysia saw a surge in gig economy participation, particularly in delivery services and freelance digital work, as traditional jobs became increasingly scarce (Mohd Daud et al., 2024).

Despite its rapid growth, the gig economy in Malaysia faces several challenges. Issues such as inadequate social protections for gig workers, lack of regulation, and inconsistent income have raised concerns about the sustainability of this employment model. While the Malaysian government has acknowledged the gig economy's potential to contribute to the digital economy, policies still need to ensure the protection and well-being of gig workers (Samad et al., 2024). Therefore, this study aims to contribute to understanding the motivational factors driving millennials to participate or work in Malaysia's gig economy and how these factors align with the broader global trends.

Work Motivation in the Gig Economy

Work motivation refers to the internal and external forces that drive individuals to engage in certain work behaviours. Xing et al (2022), posited that work motivation may be the psychological processes that determine or energise the direction, intensity, and persistence of action within the continuing stream of experiences characterising the person concerning his work. Several theories have been developed to explain work motivation, including the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which focuses on intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Intrinsic motivation arises from internal satisfaction, such as the enjoyment of performing a task or the desire for personal growth. In contrast, extrinsic motivation stems from external rewards, such as financial incentives or social recognition. These motivational factors are critical in shaping individuals' participation in the gig economy, where work is often characterised by autonomy and flexible arrangements.

In the gig economy context, intrinsic motivators such as independence, personal fulfilment, and skill competence are particularly relevant (Tassinari & Maccarrone, 2020). Workers are often drawn to the gig economy because it allows them to take control of their work schedules and pursue tasks that align with their interests and abilities. On the other hand, extrinsic motivators such as financial rewards, the need for supplemental income, and the desire for job security also play a crucial role in driving individuals to engage in the gig

economy (Jabagi et al., 2019). The balance between these intrinsic and extrinsic factors can vary depending on the worker's circumstances and the specific context of the gig economy in different regions.

While studies have explored work motivation in the gig economy globally, limited research focuses on Malaysia's context. Given Malaysia's unique cultural and economic dynamics, it is essential to examine how these motivational factors influence local gig workers, particularly millennials. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the key motivational drivers for millennials in Malaysia, specifically focusing on the roles of independence, flexibility, and skill competence.

Independence as a Motivational Factor

Independence has been identified as a core motivational factor in the gig economy, especially among younger workers. The desire for independence reflects a shift in workforce preferences, where workers seek to break away from the traditional constraints of full-time employment (Hickson, 2024). In the gig economy, independence is often associated with controlling one's work environment, setting personal goals, and deciding when and how to work. This level of autonomy is highly appealing to millennials, who prioritise flexibility and self-determination in their professional lives (Davidson et al., 2023).

For many gig workers, the independence offered by the gig economy is a significant departure from the rigidity of conventional employment, which often involves fixed working hours, hierarchical structures, and limited control over one's tasks. By contrast, the gig economy allows individuals to select functions that align with their interests and expertise, leading to greater job satisfaction and engagement (Barlage et al., 2019). This sense of independence is essential for millennials, who often view work as an extension of their identity and seek opportunities that provide meaning and purpose.

In Malaysia, the desire for independence among gig workers may be influenced by cultural and societal factors, including expectations around family support and economic pressures. While independence is highly valued, it may be moderated by external factors such as familial obligations or the need to contribute to household income (Rashid et al., 2023). This study explores how independence influences gig economy participation among Malaysian millennials and whether it aligns with findings from other regions.

Flexibility and Its Role in Gig Economy Participation

Flexibility is often cited as one of the most significant factors attracting workers to the gig economy. In contrast to traditional jobs, which typically involve fixed schedules and long-term commitments, the gig economy allows individuals to tailor their work hours to fit their needs and lifestyles (Duggan et al., 2023). This flexibility particularly appeals to millennials, who often prioritise work-life balance and value the ability to pursue multiple interests or responsibilities alongside their work (Mehta, 2023). Flexibility in the gig economy allows workers to choose when and how much they work, allowing them to adapt their work schedule to personal commitments, such as education, family care, or other side projects (Tassinari & Maccarrone, 2020).

In Malaysia, flexibility plays a crucial role in shaping the participation of millennials in the gig economy. Many young workers work gigs to supplement their income while pursuing other activities, such as higher education or entrepreneurship (Mahmud et al., 2023). This flexibility is significant for individuals unable or unwilling to commit to full-time employment due to personal circumstances or career aspirations. However, while flexibility is an attractive feature of the gig economy, it can also lead to challenges such as irregular income and job insecurity (Lu et al., 2023). As such, understanding how millennials in Malaysia navigate the trade-offs between flexibility and financial stability is crucial to developing policies that support sustainable gig economy environments.

While flexibility is widely recognised as a significant motivator for gig economy participation globally, its specific role in Malaysia's gig economy has yet to be thoroughly examined. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring how flexibility influences millennial workers' decisions to engage in the gig economy and how this factor interacts with other motivational drivers, such as independence and skill competence.

Skill Competence as a Motivator in the Gig Economy

The opportunity to develop and apply new skills is another significant motivator for gig economy workers, particularly millennials. The gig economy allows individuals to diversify their skill sets, gain experience in new areas, and enhance their employability (Gussek & Wiesche, 2023). For many millennials, the gig economy is a source of income and a platform for continuous learning and career development. In industries such as freelance digital services, gig workers often have the opportunity to build portfolios, develop specialised skills, and network with potential clients and employers, which can enhance their long-term career prospects (Barlage et al., 2019).

In Malaysia, where the digital economy is rapidly expanding, the demand for new skills in areas such as e-commerce, digital marketing, and software development is growing. The gig economy allows millennials to gain valuable experience in these fields and stay competitive in an increasingly digitalised job market (Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation, 2024). Additionally, the gig economy allows workers to experiment with different industries and roles, enabling them to identify and refine their skills. This flexibility particularly appeals to millennials, who often seek opportunities for personal growth and career advancement (Mehta, 2023).

However, while skill competence is recognised as an essential motivator for the gig economy globally, limited research examines how this factor influences millennials' participation in Malaysia's gig economy. This study aims to explore the role of skill competence in motivating Malaysian millennials to engage in the gig economy and assess whether this factor aligns with global findings. The gig economy can allow millennials to diversify their skill sets and enhance their employability, especially within the digital economy. To many, the gig economy is a platform for continuous learning and professional development. While previous studies have explored flexibility, independence, and skill competence as motivators in gig economies, these findings are primarily based on Western contexts. In contrast, Malaysia presents unique socio-economic factors that may alter the significance of these motivators.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the critical motivational factors among millennials' participation in the Malaysian gig economy, focusing on the roles of independence, flexibility, and skill competence. From analysing the drivers, the study will establish how these motivations shape the work behaviours of millennials and further establish how findings compare with trends in the gig economy across the world. The study also attempts to identify unique socio-economic and cultural variables that shape gig-work participation in Malaysia and provide insights into challenges and opportunities regarding the sustainability of the gig economy in the rapidly growing digital economy's backdrop. On the other hand, this study also aims to fill the existing research gap by providing localised perspectives on how millennials in Malaysia make trade-offs between flexibility and financial stability and how the gig economy serves as a platform for developing skills and personal growth. The research hypothesis for this study is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Research Hypothesis

Variable	Related Hypothesis
Independence	H ₁ : Independence positively influences millennials' participation in the gig economy in Malaysia.
Flexibility	H ₂ : Flexibility has a significant positive effect on millennials' participation in the gig economy in Malaysia.
Skill competence	H ₃ : Skill competence positively affects millennials' participation in the gig economy in Malaysia.

Research Methods*Research Design*

The research design used for this study is quantitative, as it aims to consider motivational factors that influence millennials' participation in the gig economy in Malaysia. This research will be descriptive and correlational to construe the relationship between the independent variables of independence, flexibility, and skill competence and the dependent variable representing millennials' participation in the gig economy. This backbone of the research design means the study can measure the strength and direction of the relationship across variables using statistical analysis.

Sampling Strategy

The sample size of 384 respondents in this study was determined based on the widely accepted guidelines for sampling in quantitative research. According to Krejcie & Morgan (1970), a sample size of 384 is appropriate for a population where the total number of individuals is not precisely known but is presumed to be large enough to warrant this calculation. Krejcie & Morgan's formula is frequently used to determine sample size for finite populations, where a sample of 384 offers a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, ensuring the results are both statistically reliable and valid.

The sampling method was based on the availability of respondents working in the gig economy, especially engaging with digital platforms such as Grab, Foodpanda, Maxim, and other local gigs. Convenience sampling was employed in this exploratory study, where the research interest is confined to a section of the population, which, in this case, is millennials aged between 26 and 40 years. This method and approach have thus allowed data collection

from a population that might otherwise be quite hard to access through random sampling, given the nature of the gig economy: people working on flexible schedules dispersed across various locations and sectors (Etikan et al., 2016).

Although convenience sampling poses some generalisability limitations, the sample size selected for this study—384—reduces the effects of such problems through adequate representation. According to (Taherdoost, 2016), a larger sample will tend to improve the results even when the sampling is non-probability. The motivation of millennial gig workers across many participants gives this study the potential to inform policy and platform design within the Malaysian gig economy.

Data Collection and Instruments

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire (Table 2) via online platforms and physical surveys in various regions in Malaysia, targeting millennial gig workers. A structured questionnaire guided the respondents to capture responses on relevant demographic information and perceived motivators for engagement in the gig economy using a 5-point Likert scale (Table 3).

The questionnaire was divided into several parts:

Table 2

Structure of Questionnaire

Section	Questionnaire
A	Demographics (age, gender, educational level, type of gig economy, etc.)
B	Independence, using a 5-point Likert scale that assesses the degree to which a person wants to act independently and exercise control over work.
C	Flexibility, which assesses how flexibility influences work-life balance and a respondent's engagement in the gig economy.
D	Skill Competence, which assesses how the development opportunity given by the skill drives their involvement.
E	Engagement with the Gig Economy, measuring the level and frequency of gig economy engagement.

Table 3

Mean Range of Likert Scales

No	Description	Mean Range	Scale	Interpretation
1	Strongly Disagree	1.00 – 1.79	1	Very Low
2	Disagree	1.80 – 2.59	2	Low
3	Uncertain	2.60 – 3.39	3	Moderate
4	Agree	3.40 – 4.19	4	High
5	Strongly Agree	4.20 – 5.00	5	Very High

Data Analysis

Pilot testing was conducted with a sample of 30 agropreneurs to assess the reliability and validity of the questionnaires. The internal reliability of the measurement tools was tested using the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient (α), which indicates how closely related a set of items

are as a group. Cronbach's Alpha values greater than 0.70 are typically considered acceptable, and the results for this study's variables (independence, flexibility, skill competence, and gig economy participation) all exceeded this threshold, demonstrating internal solid consistency.

The study used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to perform descriptive and inferential statistical analyses for data analysis. Pearson correlation analysis assessed the strength and direction of relationships between the key independent variables (independence, flexibility, and skill competence) and the dependent variable (millennial participation in the gig economy). Multiple regression analysis was also carried out to identify which independent variable had the most significant influence on gig economy participation.

Using Cronbach's Alpha in this study ensures that the variables measured are reliable and consistent across the sample. Future studies may consider incorporating additional validity checks, such as construct validity through factor analysis, ensuring that the measurement items accurately represent the theoretical constructs. For this study, reliability is obtained when the Cronbach α value is more significant than 0.5; according to Screpp (2020), the results of the study found that all these factors have internal consistency with their respective measurement indicators as a value above 0.75 (Table 4)—far greater than the threshold of 0.5—of Cronbach α , indicating strong internal consistency.

Table 4

Reliability Statistics for Each Variable

Factors	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient (α)	Number of Items
Independence	0.715	6
Flexibility	0.761	6
Skill Competence	0.755	6
Millennial participation in the gig economy	0.810	6
Total		24

Ethical Issues

Ethical practices were followed throughout the research process. All the respondents had been informed about the purpose of the study and their rights to withdraw at any point before participation and had given their consent. No information regarding confidentiality and anonymity was collected that could link a specific response to an individual. These latter data were used strictly for research purposes, and the study was subjected to the ethical guidelines set out and approved by the research institution.

Limitations of the Study

Although the study highlights excellent insight into the gig economy participation by millennials, some limitations include reliance on convenience sampling, reducing the generalizability of findings to a broader population of millennials. Secondly, the study relies on self-report data; hence, the subjective perceptions will introduce potential bias from the respondents. Further studies should be longitudinal, increasing sample sizes and diversity to reevaluate gig economy participation over time.

Results

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 5

Demographic Profile

Demographic	Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	210	54.7
	Female	174	45.3
Ethnic	Malay	242	63
	Chinese	120	31.3
	India	15	3.9
	Others	7	1.8
Occupation	Full-time employee	162	42.2
	Part-time employee	91	23.7
	Self-employed	59	15.4
	Unemployed	72	18.8
Educational background	Degree	244	63.5
	Diploma	89	23.2
	Master	12	3.1
	PhD	2	0.5
	SPM and below	37	9.6
Level of income	Less than RM1000	65	16.9
	More than RM4000	68	17.7
	RM1001 – RM2000	52	13.5
	RM2001 – RM 3000	95	24.7
	RM3001 – RM 4000	104	27.1

The demographic composition of the respondents shows some of the most critical information needed in exploring the level of millennial participation in Malaysia's gig economy. The sample population's total numbers are 210 male respondents, 54.7%, and 174 female respondents, 45.3%. From this reasonably balanced gender distribution, it could be deduced that males and females are practically involved in the gig economy, with a slightly higher number of males. This would tend to demonstrate a gender disparity, suggesting that gig workers may more often be men and thus probably need further exploration of how much gender is a determining factor in involvement within the gig economy.

In this research, all the ethnic representations are Malays: 63% have 242 respondents, Chinese 31.3% have 120 respondents, Indians 3.9% have 15 respondents, and others make up 1.8%, which creates seven respondents. This reflected Malaysia's demographic composition and suggested variations in gig economy participation across different ethnic groupings. The majority ethnic group of the respondents, being Malay, could also suggest that cultural and social factors influence engagement in the gig economy, an area for further investigation.

Thus, the occupational status of the respondents conveys a wide range of employment backgrounds in which gig workers emerge. Most are full-time workers—42.2%—showing that the gig economy is supplemental for many. Part-time employees make up 23.7%, while 15.4% are self-employed, and 18.8% are out of work. This shows that the gig economy can appeal to those wanting additional income alongside traditional work or as a primary income source for the self-employed and unemployed. The relatively more significant percentage of unemployed respondents reflects the fact that gig economic pursuits become a jobless people's alternative during periods of unemployment.

As for education background, most respondents hold a degree with 63.5%, followed by diploma holders with 23.2%. The Master's degree and PhD held were minimal at 3.1% and 0.5%, respectively. 9.6% of respondents hold or lower Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) qualification. This suggests that individuals with higher education levels populate gig platforms because the gig economy offers flexibility and opportunities to apply specialised skills. Fewer than one in five gig workers had only secondary education, suggesting that higher qualifications can pave the way to technology-enabled gig platforms or more fulfilling gig opportunities. Overall, income distribution among the respondents ranges from a broad scope to as high as RM 4000 and above. The income distribution reflects 24.7% of earnings between RM 2001 and RM 3000, while 27.1% earns between RM 3001 and RM 4000. This means that middle-income earners are most attracted to the gig economy, probably merely supplementing their income or other non-monetary benefits such as flexibility or autonomy. Another 17.7% earn more than RM4000, suggesting that the gig economy is not necessarily confined to low-income workers. While 16.9% of respondents have less than RM1000 income, the data suggests that the gig economy draws participants from an extensive range of income brackets, further underlining its diverse appeal.

B. Descriptive Analysis of Motivational Factors

Table 6

Correlation Matrix

Variable	Independence (I)	Flexibility (F)	Skill Competence (SC)	TGE (Gig Economy)
Independence (I)	1.00	0.597**	0.641**	0.578**
Flexibility (F)	0.597**	1.00	0.666**	0.667**
Skill Competence (SC)	0.641**	0.666**	1.00	0.730**
TGE	0.578**	0.667**	0.730**	1.00

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics

Motivator	Mean	Standard Deviation
Independence	5.3199	0.43712
Flexibility	5.3069	0.48019
Skill Competence	5.2426	0.46562

Tables 6 and 7 above show the descriptive statistics of the main variables in the study. Independence had the highest mean score (M = 5.3199, SD = 0.43712), followed closely by Flexibility (M = 5.3069, SD = 0.48019) and Skill Competence (M = 5.2426, SD = 0.46562). These

high mean values indicate that all three factors are critical motivators for millennials in the gig economy, with independence as the most influential.

Figure 1 below visually represents the mean and standard deviation for the descriptive analysis's three main variables (independence, flexibility, and skill competence). The proximity of the mean values highlights that, while all factors are essential, the respondents perceive independence as slightly more significant.

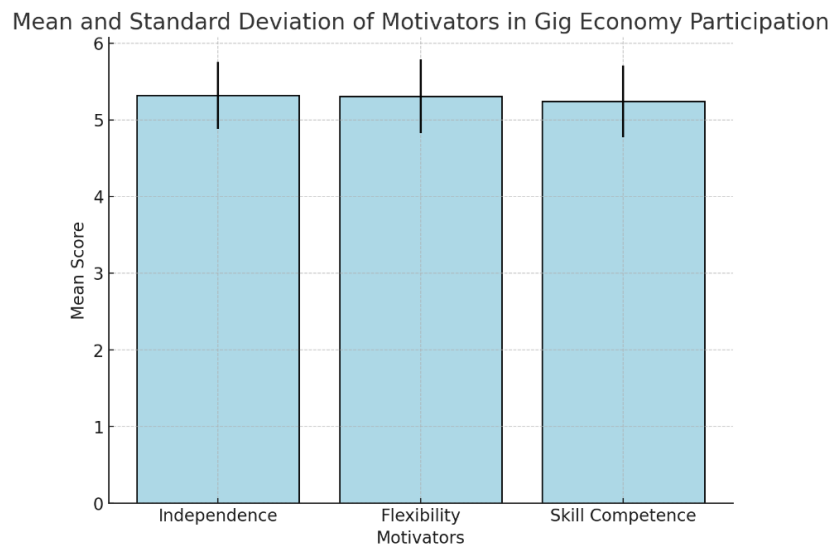


Figure 1. Mean and Standard Deviation of Motivators in Gig Economy Participation

The median for all three variables is 5.3333, which is quite close to the mean, indicating that the data is centred around the mean. This consistency indicates that most respondents rated independence, flexibility, and skill competence relatively, similarly emphasising a shared understanding of these factors as vital components of their gig economy experience. Mean closeness to the median underlines that responses are relatively symmetrically distributed, with these factors relatively uniformly valued across the sample.

The mode shows that the mode of independence and skill competence is 5.50, which could mean that many respondents find these issues significant regarding their work motivations. The mode for flexibility is 5.33, indicating that, despite multiple modes for this variable, flexibility remains one of the most frequent and essential motivators. Here, slight variability reflects differences in how individual respondents might experience the flexibility the gig economy allows, though this remains one of the top motivators.

It has been observed that the standard deviation for each of the three series is relatively small, with a figure of 0.43712 for independence, 0.48019 for flexibility, and 0.46562 for skill competence. This implies that millennials exhibit a less excellent dispersion in perceiving these motivational factors. The closeness in ranking indicates a widespread belief among the respondents in the importance of independence, flexibility, and skill competence, and it points to a consensus of their value within the gig economy. The somewhat higher standard deviation for flexibility might hint at a broader range of experiences, but overall, agreement remains remarkably strong.

The descriptive analysis, therefore, demonstrates that independence, flexibility, and skill competence are key factors driving millennials' motivation to participate in the gig economy. The high means and low variance in these factors suggest that these factors are valued universally by these workers, compelling them into gig engagement. In that respect, independence is most desired, showing millennials favour working in an autonomous setting where they make decisions independently and manage their time. Flexibility comes as a close second to represent day-to-day work arrangements that can accommodate personal lifestyles and needs. That denotes that the importance of skill competence points to millennials wanting to apply and develop their skills continuously within the gig economy, even if this aspect is lower in ranking than independence and flexibility.

These findings indicate that businesses and platforms should appeal to the gig economy's independence, flexibility, and skill competence potential to attract and retain millennial gig workers. Again, the key lies in understanding motivations to embed a work environment that nurtures millennials' values, positioning the gig economy as a valid and attractive alternative to traditional employment.

Correlation Analysis

Table 8

Correlations among all variables

Correlations

		I	F	SC	TGE
I	Pearson Correlation	1	.597**	.641**	.578**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	384	384	384	384
F	Pearson Correlation	.597**	1	.666**	.667**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	384	384	384	384
SC	Pearson Correlation	.641**	.666**	1	.730**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	384	384	384	384
TGE	Pearson Correlation	.578**	.667**	.730**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	384	384	384	384

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis between the variables independence (I), flexibility (F), and skill competence (SC) has important implications for how these factors interlink in driving Malaysian Millennials toward the Gig Economy (TGE). All the relationships among the

variables are statistically significant, as all the p-values are less than 0.01, justifying their importance in the context of gig economy involvement (see Table 8).

The relationship between independence and flexibility is $r = 0.597$, $p < 0.001$; therefore, a positive relationship can be considered vital; hence, the more critical independence in work for millennials, the more flexibility would be regarded as necessary. Thus, decision-making autonomy and having one's schedule may be the main attractors for people searching for non-standard work environments, such as the gig economy. Similarly, the independence variable is positively related to skill competence at the rate of $r = 0.641$, $p < 0.001$, showing that in the gig economy, those who appreciate being independent place a high degree of importance on applying and developing their competencies. The lowest, though still significant, is between independence and millennials towards the gig economy, $r = 0.578$, $p < 0.001$. This indicates that independence is a significant but straightforward factor in millennial participation in the gig economy.

There is also a strong relationship between flexibility and skill competence: $r = 0.666$, $p < 0.001$, suggesting millennials are drawn to gig economy environments that offer flexible work arrangements and opportunities to apply and develop their skills. The correlation of flexibility with millennials towards the gig economy, $r = 0.667$, $p < 0.001$, indicates flexibility at the centre of motivating millennials toward gig economy involvement. This result highlights that flexibility, be it in hours supplied or location, is one of the primary factors in millennials deciding to participate in the gig economy as part of the more significant trend of seeking work-life balance and autonomy.

The strongest correlation in the dataset is between skill competence and millennials towards the gig economy: $r = 0.730$, $p < 0.001$. This significant positive relationship suggests millennials with higher outward orientations towards skill competence are likelier to participate in the gig economy. The gig economy represents an exciting opportunity for those who want flexibility in the work environment and substantial development of professional skills. This points to a dual attraction of the gig economy: it provides millennials with a sense of independence while still being able to exploit and build on their skill sets.

Overall, it is observed from the correlation analysis that independence, flexibility, and skill competence are related significantly and positively to millennials' involvement in the gig economy. All these factors affect their motivations differently, but skill competence has the most dominant effect on participation. The finding indicates that other than autonomy and flexibility, continuous professional development is also one of the significant motivating factors attracting millennials toward the gig economy. Enterprises and gig platforms that have to recruit and retain millennials have only to leverage these factors of autonomy, flexible work arrangements, and enhancement of skills.

D. Multiple Regression Results

The multiple regression (see Table 9) was conducted to check the effect of three significant independent variables, namely independence (I), flexibility (F), and skill competence (SC), upon the dependent variable millennials towards the gig economy (TGE). The model summary gives several key statistics explaining millennials' engagement in the gig economy. The R-value of 0.773 proves a robust positive correlation between all the combined

independent variables and millennial involvement in the gig economy. This indicates that a high level of association exists, whereby an increase in factors like independence, flexibility, and skill competence correlates with increased millennial participation in the gig economy.

Table 9

Multiple Regression Model Summary

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.773 ^a	.597	.594	.32302	1.804

a. Predictors: (Constant), SC, I, F

b. Dependent Variable: TGE

The R Square value of 0.597 indicates that around 59.7% of the variance in TGE is explained by the combination of independence, flexibility, and skill competence. This suggests that these factors account for a significant part of why millennials opt for the gig economy. However, the remaining 40.3% may result from other external factors not captured by the model, which could be explored further.

The Adjusted R Square of 0.594 adjusts for the possible inflation of R Square due to the number of predictors in the model. This value provides a more realistic estimate of the model's generalizability. It confirms that the relationship between these predictors and millennial involvement in the gig economy holds beyond this dataset.

The Standard Error of the estimate of 0.32302 reflects the average deviation of observed values from predicted values. A more minor standard error means higher accuracy of the model's predictions. This small error suggests that the model reasonably accurately predicts millennials' gig economy participation, with little deviation between predicted and actual values. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.804 falls within the acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.5, indicating no significant autocorrelation in the model's residuals. In other words, the prediction errors are independent, affirming that the model's assumptions are valid and the results are reliable.

Based on the multiple regression model, independence, flexibility, and skill competence collectively explain about 60% of the variance in millennial engagement in the gig economy, underscoring these factors' strong influence on work motivation in this sector. The model is statistically robust, with minimal prediction error and no evidence of residual autocorrelation. The results highlight that autonomy, flexible work arrangements, and skill competence opportunities are critical drivers for millennials engaging in the gig economy. These findings provide a foundation for further research and practical applications in understanding the drivers of millennial participation in the gig economy.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The ANOVA analysis (Table 10) is an overall significance assessment of the regression model in which independence, flexibility, and skill competence predict millennials toward the gig economy. The Regression Sum of Squares (58.769) shows that the independent variables explain a substantial portion of the variation in millennial involvement in the gig economy,

meaning these motivating factors play a significant role in determining how Millennials engage in the gig economy. The Residual Sum of Squares (39.650), which is comparatively more minor, indicates a good fit for the model.

Table 10
ANOVA Summary

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	58.729	3	19.576	187.618	.000^b
	Residual	39.650	380	.104		
	Total	98.378	383			

a. Dependent Variable: TGE

b. Predictors: (Constant), SC, I, F

The F-statistic of 187.618, with a very high significance level of 0.000, justifies the combined effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. It confirms that independence, flexibility, and skill competence strongly influence millennial participation in the gig economy. The significant F value indicates that the likelihood of this result occurring by chance is very low, allowing us to reject the null hypothesis that the predictors do not affect millennial involvement in the gig economy.

Overall, the model explains about 59.7% of the variation in TGE, as depicted by the R Square value. This means that the variance in gig economy participation is primarily explained by the independent variables, emphasising their importance as motivating factors. Given that the model explains such a large portion of the variation, it suggests that independence, flexibility, and skill competence are crucial drivers for millennials opting for the gig economy, making this model a robust predictor of gig economy engagement.

Discussions

The findings from the present study provide valuable insights into the motivational factors driving millennials to participate in Malaysia's gig economy, focusing on the roles of flexibility, independence, and skill competence. Among these factors, flexibility emerged as the most potent motivator, consistent with global trends that emphasise the value of the gig economy for its freedom in adjusting schedules and work environments to meet personal needs. This aligns with previous research, such as Marumpe et al (2023), which highlights how flexibility allows gig workers to balance work with personal pursuits, education, and caregiving. In Malaysia, where millennials increasingly seek work-life balance, this flexibility is crucial in attracting them to gig roles.

Independence was identified as the second most influential factor, reflecting millennials' desire for autonomy at work. Vallas & Schor (2020), observed similar trends globally, where younger workers value the freedom to control their work schedules and tasks. However, in Malaysia, the desire for independence may be tempered by socio-cultural factors such as familial expectations and the need for economic security. Despite these pressures, the study confirms that independence remains crucial for gig economy participation, enabling millennials to structure their work around their personal goals.

Skill competence, though ranked lower than flexibility and independence, is also critical in motivating millennials to engage in the gig economy. This aligns with global studies, such as Gussek & Wiesche (2023), which shows that the gig economy offers continuous learning and skill diversification opportunities. In Malaysia's rapidly expanding digital economy, the gig economy provides platforms for millennials to develop their digital skills, making them more competitive in the job market. However, the study suggests that for Malaysian millennials, skill competence is secondary to the autonomy and flexibility offered by the gig economy, indicating that although they value professional growth, their primary motivation lies in non-traditional work arrangements.

Furthermore, correlation analysis reinforces the interconnectedness of these motivational factors. Independence and flexibility are positively correlated, suggesting that millennials who seek autonomy value the ability to tailor their schedules to fit their lifestyles. These findings align with the Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2024), emphasising that autonomy and competence are critical drivers of intrinsic motivation. In the context of the gig economy, flexibility allows millennials to experience greater control over their work schedules, which enhances their sense of independence—a key component of intrinsic motivation. However, unlike previous studies that focused predominantly on Western contexts (Shaw et al., 2023), this study provides localised insights by showing that socio-cultural factors, such as family obligations and economic pressures, influence Malaysian millennials' preferences for flexibility and independence. This indicates that while flexibility and independence are universal motivators, their significance can vary depending on the socio-economic environment. These findings are consistent with the work of Tassinari & Maccarrone (2020), who observed similar dynamics in gig economies across different regions.

The implications of these findings are significant for policymakers and platform operators. Understanding that flexibility, independence, and skill competence are critical motivators can help shape policies that enhance the appeal and sustainability of gig economy environments in Malaysia. For instance, gig platforms could introduce more structured opportunities for skill competence and career growth while maintaining flexible work arrangements. Additionally, policymakers could focus on providing social protections and income stability for gig workers to address challenges such as income instability and lack of benefits, as highlighted by (Lu et al., 2023).

This research contributes to understanding millennials' participation in Malaysia's gig economy by identifying key motivators such as flexibility, independence, and skill competence. While these findings align with global trends, they highlight unique socio-cultural factors influencing gig economy participation in Malaysia.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This research contributes significantly as it addresses the gap in understanding millennial work motivations within a Malaysian gig economy context. This study contributes insights into how motives of flexibility, independence, and skills competence drive gig participation under non-Western socio-economic conditions, thus developing the global discussion on gig economy motivation. In conclusion, this study has provided valuable insight into the motivational drivers for Millennials participating in the gig economy of Malaysia, with key focuses on flexibility, independence, and skill competence. From this, it goes into greater

detail to say that, indeed, flexibility is a critical motivator insofar as it affords workers an ability to balance their personal and professional lives—a finding consistent with similar research from around the world (Marumpe et al., 2023). The appeal of flexibility lies in workers' ability to create their schedules, which millennials prioritise due to their desire for work-life balance. On the other hand, independence ranked second and referred to control over how, when, and where millennials work, consistent with Vallas & Schor's (2020) findings on autonomy as a critical driver in gig economy participation. Competence of skills is the third motivator; it is less outstanding but not less important because it allows workers to learn continuously and develop their professional skills in the increasingly digital labour market (Gussek & Wiesche, 2023).

The correlation analysis in the present work has pointed out a strong positive connection among factors of independence, flexibility, and skill competence, showing that these factors are connected in shaping millennials' gig economy engagement. These influences play out through the unique socio-cultural dynamics in the Malaysian context, such as family obligations and economic imperatives. While this finding is not dissimilar from global trends in the gig economy, it points to a significant need to contextualise gig economy participation through specific cultural and economic frameworks. This, therefore, provides a contribution that emanates from localised experience as part of the broad study of work motivation within the gig economy, particularly among developing countries like Malaysia.

Recommendations

Therefore, from the findings of this study, there can be several recommendations made to the benefit of the policymakers, the operators of the platforms, and other stakeholders in Malaysia's gig economy:

1. **Increasing Flexibility while Improving Stability:** Whereas flexibility is the relative attraction of the gig economy, it has most often been accompanied by difficulties related to a lack of benefits and income instability. Policymakers should introduce tailored social protection schemes that cater to gig workers, such as healthcare plans, retirement benefits, and income stabilisation mechanisms. Additionally, platforms could adopt hybrid models that balance flexibility with guaranteed minimum pay. For example, some countries, like Spain, have started exploring platforms that offer gig workers a hybrid approach to work autonomy while guaranteeing fundamental rights and benefits (Newlands, 2024).
2. **Skill Competence Opportunities:** While flexibility and independence are most valued, competence and skills are major driving forces among gig workers. As Gussek & Wiesche (2023) pointed out, gig platforms need to design programs that offer training and development programs to upgrade workers' digital skills (Gussek & Wiesche, 2023). The programs would focus on critical areas, including digital marketing, software development, and entrepreneurship, to further enhance the employability of gig workers in their careers both within and outside the gig economy.
3. **Balancing Independence with Structured Support:** Independence is a significant motivator, but the study indicates that some millennials may struggle to balance autonomy with economic pressures and societal expectations. Gig platforms can

introduce mentorship programs or provide structured support systems that guide workers in managing their time and responsibilities effectively. By offering resources such as financial planning and career development advice, platforms can help gig workers better navigate the challenges of independent work.

4. **Fostering Inclusive Policies for Gig Workers:** Given the demographic diversity of Malaysia, policies that account for different socio-economic and cultural factors should be developed. Policymakers should aim to create a more inclusive gig economy by ensuring that opportunities are accessible to all population segments, including marginalised groups. This could involve improving digital literacy and providing access to technological tools that enable a broader range of individuals to participate in the gig economy. Improvement in digital literacy and access to technological resources, especially for marginalised groups in rural or low-income households, will need heightened attention by policymakers. According to the research by Joshi et al. (2024), digital exclusion remains one of the main obstacles to the participation rate of non-Western countries. Addressing this might boost participation across various demographic groups.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders in Malaysia can also establish an enabling and sustainable gig economy environment. Policymakers and platform operators can thus address the challenges of flexibility, skill competence, and support systems to attract millennials as gig workers and ensure their retention so that the gig economy continues to flourish. Further research should also focus on the long-term effects of these aspects on gig economy participation due to rapid changes in technology and shifting labour market scenarios.

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