

Job Quality of Gig Workers: An Empirical Review of Cloud and Location-Based Gig Workers

Abdul Rasyid Kasim, Ee Shiang Lim*

School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia,

Email: rasyid@student.usm.my

*Corresponding Author Email: eslim@usm.my

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Abstract

Job quality in a traditional economy has been widely discussed across all its aspects. However, in the gig economy, the literature on job quality among gig workers remains in its infancy, with studies focusing on select indicators or specific groups. Therefore, this study provides an empirical review comparing the job quality of cloud- and location-based gig workers. This study reviews and synthesises empirical studies of job quality within a multidimensional framework encompassing the following dimensions: income and benefits, prospects, work-life balance, voice and representation, job design, physical environment, social environment, and work intensity. The review indicates that job quality varies across types of gig work, cloud, and location-based gig workers. Based on empirical studies, cloud workers enjoy autonomy and are less exposed to the risk of accidents, but face intense competition and limited social support. Location-based gig workers enjoy social support and face limited competition, but they are exposed to the risk of accidents and limited autonomy at work. Overall, the empirical evidence from the review shows that differences in job quality across types of gig workers exist on selected indicators. The future study should examine the perceived job quality in more detail across types of gig workers.

Keywords: Job Quality, Gig Workers, Cloud Workers, Location-Based Workers, Empirical Review

Introduction

With a growing number of workers in the gig economy, the quality of jobs in this sector has become a critical concern. Gig workers, unlike traditional workers, are not explicitly recognised or safeguarded under labour laws (Norlander et al., 2021; Stewart & Stanford, 2017; Toor & Taa, 2025; Wei & MacDonald, 2021). In Malaysia, for example, gig workers are excluded from the safeguards provided by the Employment Act 1955 and other labour regulations because they are classified as independent workers (Md Radzi et al., 2022). This stems from the definition of workers under the Employment Act 1955, which states that those who enter into a contract for services are considered independent workers. Therefore, gig workers are not protected under the Employment Act 1955 (Abu Hassan et al., 2023).

The absence of adequate legal protection results in gig workers losing various rights under labour legislation. In Malaysia, they are not entitled to the social protection mandated by the Employment Act 1955 and other labour ordinances, which encompass aspects such as minimum wage entitlements and benefits. This includes social security provisions and retirement savings schemes, such as the Employees Provident Fund (EPF). Therefore, gig workers face income instability, lack of social security, and exploitation (Toor & Taa, 2025).

Empirical studies on job quality in the gig economy are still in their infancy. There are limited empirical studies examining job quality in the gig economy. The existing studies are rather limited in scope, focusing on only a few job quality indicators. Furthermore, existing empirical studies also focus on selected types of gig work, such as location-based (Chen et al., 2022; Goods et al., 2019; Myhill et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2022) and cloud-based (Anwar & Graham, 2021; Wood et al., 2019). While some studies assume that gig workers share similar job-quality experiences regardless of the type of gig work (Anderson et al., 2021; CIPD, 2017). Furthermore, empirical studies comparing job quality across types of gig work remain scarce. As a result, this provides limited insight into the job quality experienced by gig workers, particularly in cloud and location-based gig work. Therefore, this study aims to provide an empirical review of job quality across types of gig workers, specifically cloud- and location-based gig workers, using a multidimensional approach to job quality. The scope of dimensions included in this study is income and benefits, prospect, work-life balance, voice and representation, job design, physical environment, social environment, and work intensity.

Job quality is widely acknowledged as a complex and multidimensional concept (for instance, Arranz et al., 2017; de Bustillo et al., 2009; Findlay et al., 2013; Huneus et al., 2012). This complexity has led to the development of various frameworks and job quality models to evaluate it. Consequently, numerous job quality models have been proposed by international institutions such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Cazes et al., 2015), Eurofound (Eurofound, 2017), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) (UNECE, 2015), and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) (CIPD, 2022).

Some models, such as those by UNECE (2015), evaluate job quality by considering indicators from both job characteristics and the broader national-level macroeconomic labour market. Conversely, some models, such as those of CIPD (2022) and Eurofound (2017), focus primarily on individual-level indicators of job characteristics. The review will primarily focus on literature measuring job quality at the individual level, given that the study evaluates it from workers' perspectives. Empirical studies usually employed a variety of indicators within each dimension to assess job quality.

This review makes the following contribution. Firstly, the study contributes to the limited empirical literature on job quality in the gig economy. These empirical studies use a comprehensive list of indicators from various dimensions of job quality. In comparison, empirical research on the job quality experienced by gig workers remains limited. Related studies have been carried out in countries such as Australia (Goods et al., 2019), Scotland (Myhill et al., 2021), China (Chen et al., 2022; Wei & MacDonald, 2021; Wu et al., 2022), Vietnam (Nguyen et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2023), and regions like Southeast Asia and Sub-

Saharan Africa (Wood et al., 2019). Most of these studies are less comprehensive, as they tend to focus on selected job quality indicators such as income, job security, and autonomy (Wood et al., 2019; Wei & MacDonald, 2021; Wu et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2023). Second, the review contributes to the comparison of job quality across gig worker types. Most empirical studies focus on a specific type of gig work and treat gig workers as homogeneous. For example, location-based (Chen et al., 2022; Goods et al., 2019; Myhill et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2022) and cloud-based (Anwar & Graham, 2021; Wood et al., 2019) except Eurofound (2018). This provides limited insight into the perceived job quality among gig workers and potential differences across various types of gig workers in developing countries. Based on the existing empirical literature, this study employs an empirical review of a comprehensive set of indicators spanning diverse job dimensions, yielding a more nuanced understanding of job quality among gig workers across gig-worker types.

Methodology

The research process involves searching several open-access journal databases. However, before conducting an empirical study, this study develops a multidimensional framework of job quality. Four main international institutional frameworks of job quality are used as main references to develop a framework of multidimensional job quality, which are the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Cazes et al., 2015), Eurofound (Eurofound, 2017), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) (UNECE, 2015), and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) (CIPD, 2022). Generally, this job quality can be classified into eight dimensions, namely income and benefits, prospect, work-life balance, job design, physical environment, social environment, work intensity (Cazes et al., 2015; CIPD, 2017; Eurofound, 2017; UNECE, 2015), and voice and representation (CIPD, 2017; UNECE, 2015). Studies were included if the review focused on gig workers, included job quality at the individual level and job characteristics, and evaluated them from workers' perspectives. Empirical studies to be extracted in this study focus on job quality or work characteristics, type of gig work, job quality dimensions, indicators, and the findings of the studies.

Empirical Literature Review

Income and Benefits

Income is a key indicator of job quality (de Bustillo et al., 2009). It encompasses both wage and non-wage benefits, such as employer-provided pensions and healthcare (Chen & Mehdi, 2019; CIPD, 2017; Steffgen et al., 2020). Some scholars use income level as an indicator for the income dimension (Wei & MacDonald, 2021; Wood et al., 2019; Yu, 2020).

Instead of using income level, some opt for a subjective indicator, namely income satisfaction (CIPD, 2017; Zulkefli et al., 2023). This indicator has the advantage of considering the importance of this specific job characteristic to individuals (de Bustillo et al., 2009). Compared with traditional workers who receive a fixed monthly income, gig workers earn income based on platform demand. The low demand and low income mean that gig workers can earn. In other words, income is volatile for gig workers (Myhill et al., 2021). Workers on the cloud-based platform could make less money if demand is low. For example, the qualitative study by Wood et al. (2019) examines the job quality of cloud-based gig workers in Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, revealing that gig workers often spend a significant amount of time searching for jobs on the platform without receiving payment. A similar result is also reported

by James (2024) regarding cloud-based gig workers in the United Kingdom. Besides that, income among gig workers is also not fixed. Myhill et al. (2021) indicate that the income of location-based gig workers, such as couriers, food delivery drivers, and car drivers, is highly volatile. Nevertheless, some, like Clark (2005), argue that income alone may not adequately reflect the job quality experienced by workers.

In addition to income, workers might also receive social security benefits. These benefits include retirement and pension schemes (CIPD, 2017; UNECE, 2015; Wei & MacDonald, 2021), as well as insurance coverage (CIPD, 2022; de Bustillo et al., 2009; Keith et al., 2020; UNECE, 2015; Wei & MacDonald, 2021). Gig workers also lack social security benefits. A semi-structured study by Win and Mohamad (2022) indicates that the absence of benefits, such as entitled retirement and health insurance, poses a challenge for gig workers. Rahim et al. (2021), in a scoping review of the empirical literature, found that full-time gig workers on a few gig platforms, such as Grab and Foodpanda, are unable to claim these social security benefits.

Prospects

Prospects refer to the job factors that contribute to a person's need for employment, including both material and psychological needs, such as self-esteem and identity (Eurofound, 2017). Two commonly used indicators in assessing prospect dimension are job security and career advancement. Job security is an indicator of the prospect dimension. It addresses the concern about the possibility of losing one's job (de Bustillo et al., 2009). It is evaluated by examining workers' perceptions towards job insecurity, typically focusing on the likelihood or probability of losing one's job (for example, Boreham et al., 2016; Charlesworth et al., 2014; CIPD, 2022; Eurofound, 2017; González et al., 2021; Horowitz, 2016; Steffgen et al., 2020; UNECE, 2015; Wood et al., 2019). Empirical studies have found that gig workers' sense of job security is remarkably low. Wood et al. (2019) observe that approximately 44 per cent of gig workers indicate they are easily replaceable. This vulnerability arises from their lack of formal job security, leaving them susceptible to termination without prior notice (Wood et al., 2019). The vulnerability arises as gig workers are categorised as "independent contractors" who provide services under a contract for services. They are not recognised as "employees" by platform providers and therefore are not bound by a formal contract of service (Abdull Rahman et al., 2023). The low job security of gig workers is also attributed to the platform's algorithm, which determines their work assignments. For example, Goods et al. (2019), who analyse job quality among food delivery riders in Australia, indicate that gig workers need to maintain an acceptance rating above 85% and a cancellation rating below 15% to avoid being banned from using the platform. The insecurity of the job may also arise from the physical demands of the job. Salleh et al. (2023) found that food riders in Malaysia experience less job security due to the physical demands of their job.

Career advancement refers to the opportunities for job promotion (CIPD, 2022; Eurofound, 2017; Myhill et al., 2021; Steffgen et al., 2020). This indicator has been frequently used in previous studies (CarnegieUk Trust & The RSA, 2018; CIPD, 2022; Eurofound, 2017; Myhill et al., 2021). Jobs that offer more opportunities for career progression tend to be associated with better job quality (Eurofound, 2017). Gig workers typically experience limited opportunities for career advancement, as reflected in previous research. For example, Myhill et al. (2021), in their study conducted in Scotland using face-to-face interviews, found that

most gig workers had limited opportunities for career advancement. Similarly, Eurofound (2018) observed, through in-depth interviews, that many gig workers perceive gig work as offering no opportunities for career advancement. These findings collectively highlight the limited possibilities and advancement opportunities available in this form of employment arrangement.

Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance refers to a family-friendly work environment (James, 2024). For example, the employer offers flexible work schedules, allowing employees to work remotely, reduce their working hours, and provide assistance with childcare (James, 2024). It is valued through indicators of long working hours, atypical working hours, and flexibility. One of the measures of work-life balance is long working hours (Cazes et al., 2015). Long working hours are a key element in achieving work-life balance (Lewis et al., 2008) and, therefore, an important aspect of job quality. As suggested by several scholars, long working hours are often measured by daily or weekly hours worked (e.g., Cazes et al., 2015) or by the perceived extent to which workers need to work long hours (Nguyen et al., 2023; Steffgen et al., 2020). Wei and MacDonald (2021) have found that location-based gig workers in China tend to have longer working hours, with an average of fifty-five to sixty hours per week. The same situation also happened in other empirical studies of cloud-based gig workers (e.g., Wood et al., 2019). Typically, extended working hours in gig labour are linked to lower job quality. For instance, Lewandowski et al. (2022) suggest that migrant gig workers in Poland typically work longer hours, contributing to a decline in job quality. Furthermore, longer hours do not necessarily guarantee higher income for gig workers. A deep interview study of food delivery riders in the United States indicates that a higher percentage of gig workers spend most of their working hours searching for work, similar to what Wood et al. (2019) found among cloud-based workers.

Besides long working hours, atypical working hours are also familiar in gig work (Eurofound, 2017). Atypical working hours are referred to as non-standard working hours (Wood et al., 2019), such as work undertaken on weekends, evenings, and nights (Eurofound, 2017; Wood et al., 2019), typically allocated for other aspects of life. Empirical research indicates that long (Nguyen et al., 2023; Wood et al., 2019) and atypical working hours (Wood et al., 2019) lead to exhaustion among gig workers. However, gig workers may find atypical working hours advantageous, as they are often associated with additional benefits, such as bonuses or extra pay. For instance, Eurofound (2018) found that gig workers in France and Sweden receive higher pay for weekend work compared to weekday work. Therefore, the perceived job quality regarding these indicators depends on the gig workers' goals.

Flexibility can also be included in the work-life balance dimension (CIPD, 2022; Goods et al., 2019; Wei & MacDonald, 2021; Wood et al., 2019). Flexibility is a key difference between traditional and gig work. It encompasses choosing working times and locations (Goods et al., 2019; Wei & MacDonald, 2021; Wood et al., 2019) as well as having free time for personal matters (e.g., CIPD, 2022; Eurofound, 2017; Wood et al., 2020). Wei and MacDonald (2021) suggest that gig workers are drawn to better work-life balance, relative gig job flexibility, absence of office politics, and remote work. However, Wood et al. (2019) have found that cloud work gig workers often have limited flexibility in their working hours due to client demand or time zone differences. Goods et al. (2019) noted that even food delivery workers'

flexibility is constrained by customer demand and restaurant hours. Besides these constraints, the gig workers still have the flexibility to spend time with family or on personal matters. For example, an empirical study indicates that cloud-based gig workers can split their work hours to fulfil personal responsibilities (James, 2024). Empirical evidence suggests that gig workers' flexibility may be constrained. Nevertheless, there is still an opportunity for gig workers to have time for their personal responsibilities or family matters.

Voice and Representation

Workers' voices and representation are vital factors influencing job quality. The voice refers to the desire to suppress information, ideas, and opinions regarding work-related improvements (Van Dyne et al., 2003). Workers may express their voices directly or indirectly. The direct voice refers to workers engaging in decision-making and expressing their views through various avenues such as programs, groups, and meetings (Nawakitphaitoon & Zhang, 2021; Victor & Letam Queen, 2022). Key indicators associated with the direct voice include participation in decision-making, consideration of worker opinions, and the exchange of ideas (Alabduljader, 2022; CIPD, 2022; Eurofound, 2017; Steffgen et al., 2020). Empirical studies suggest that gig workers lack the opportunity to express their voices. The gig platform operator ignores gig workers' opinions, even though they are eager to participate in platform management (Wei & MacDonald, 2021). In the context of gig workers in Malaysia, they also lack a proper channel to voice their opinions directly to the platform. Therefore, there are cases of protestation among gig workers. For example, FoodPanda riders complained about the new payment scheme, which eliminated hourly pay, unfair treatment, the lack of social security benefits like EPF or SOCSO, and suspensions or bans if cancelled deliveries were beyond their control, through a series of protests (Rahim et al., 2021).

Alternatively, workers may express their voices indirectly through external entities, such as labour unions or employee representatives. Membership in trade unions and employee associations is included among the indicators in the job quality models (CIPD, 2022; Eurofound, 2017; UNECE, 2015). Empirical studies in the gig economy consistently highlight a lack of voice via indirect voice (Goods et al., 2019; Myhill et al., 2021; Wei & MacDonald, 2021). Usually, both Wei and MacDonald (2021) and Myhill et al. (2021) observed low participation in trade unions (11.9%) and industry associations (13.2%) among gig workers. A descriptive CIPD (2017) study among gig workers also indicates that only 10% of gig workers participate in trade unions. This suggests limited collective representation and participation among gig workers through these indirect channels.

Job Design

Job design is the process of determining the duties and responsibilities of workers (CIPD, 2023). Two indicators for the job design dimension are autonomy and training opportunities. Autonomy is also commonly understood to be granted when workers are given flexibility in their jobs, making them more productive, engaged, and happy (Wu et al., 2022). Autonomy is measured through the experience of an individual having the authority to choose and adjust tasks, work methods, work pace, working hours, or schedule (Cazes et al., 2015; CIPD, 2022; de Bustillo et al., 2009; Eurofound, 2017; Myhill et al., 2021; Steffgen et al., 2020; UNECE, 2015; Wood et al., 2019). Overall, these indicators aim to explain the authority of workers at work. Empirical studies agree that gig workers have autonomy at work. For instance, Wu et al. (2022) and Wood et al. (2019) suggest a high degree of autonomy among food delivery

workers in China and cloud workers in Southeast Asia, respectively. Cloud-based gig workers might have greater autonomy compared to the location-based ones. Cloud-based gig workers have greater autonomy compared to location-based gig workers (Eurofound, 2018). However, the autonomy of both groups is constrained due to app control or algorithm management. A few research studies consistently suggest that autonomy among gig workers is further constrained by app control (Eurofound, 2018; Goods et al., 2019; Myhill et al., 2021; Wood et al., 2019).

Another key indicator in job design is the provision of training opportunities. Training opportunities are valued through the experience of workers as an opportunity to receive training (CIPD, 2022; Eurofound, 2017; Myhill et al., 2021; Steffgen et al., 2020; UNECE, 2015; Wei & MacDonald, 2021). The opportunity to get training will improve job quality (Eurostat, 2013). Empirical studies agree that gig workers have limited access to training (for example, Eurofound, 2018; Lewandowski et al., 2022; Myhill et al., 2021; Wei & MacDonald, 2021). Eurofound (2018) further describes that even though cloud workers are highly skilled, both location-based and cloud-based gig platforms provide a similar limited access to training. These studies highlight the limited availability of training for gig workers, suggesting a lack of opportunities for skill development and potential implications for job quality in these contexts.

Physical Environment

The physical work environment refers to the specific conditions under which work activities are carried out (de Bustillo et al., 2009). A comfortable physical space can help to create a more positive working environment. Indicators such as the risks of accidents at work (CIPD, 2022; de Bustillo et al., 2009; Eurofound, 2017; Goods et al., 2019; UNECE, 2015; Wei & MacDonald, 2021) are one of the indicators to measure the physical environment. The unsafe work environment can be related to the low job quality. Location-based gig workers are more likely to be involved in accidents, as discussed in previous studies. It is due to the physical task that can cause an unsafe work environment (Eurofound, 2018). For example, delivery tasks or drivers are exposed to traffic accidents (Goods et al., 2019; Nguyen et al., 2023; Schmidt, 2017; Wei & MacDonald, 2021), and cleaning tasks performed at home are exposed to contact with chemicals (Eurofound, 2018). Abdull Rahman et al. (2023) conducted a deep interview study of food delivery riders in Johor Bahru, Malaysia, highlighting the risk of accidents among these food delivery riders, especially during rainy weather. However, there is no particular risk of accidents among cloud-based gig workers that has been discussed in previous studies. Besides that, health hazards caused by the work (Cazes et al., 2015; CIPD, 2022; UNECE, 2015; Wei & MacDonald, 2021) have been used as proxies for assessing the quality of the physical working environment. Exposure to health hazards in gig work is also part of the physical environment. Health hazards can be measured through various approaches (Eurofound, 2017) or by assessing how workers perceive the impact of work on their health (CIPD, 2022; Steffgen et al., 2020). Compared with the risk of accidents, the health hazards at work can affect both cloud- and location-based gig workers. For example, Anwar and Graham (2021) conducted in-depth interviews with cloud-based gig workers in South Africa and found that cloud work can cause health issues such as lack of sleep, stress, and tiredness. In another study, a scoping review method indicates that cloud work, similar to typing work, can cause musculoskeletal injuries (Bajwa et al., 2018). However, concerns about health hazards remain more important than the physical demands of gig work. Wei and MacDonald (2021) indicate

that both safety and health are the most important considerations for gig workers who want to work in a safe environment and complete their tasks safely. Empirical studies indicate the chance of location-based gig work involving health hazards related to body illness (such as Myhill et al., 2021).

Social Environment

The workplace's social environment facilitates personal growth and development, improves productivity, and encourages worker integration and self-esteem (Eurofound, 2017). Proxies often used to assess social environment include social support from superiors and peers (Cazes et al., 2015; CIPD, 2022; Eurofound, 2017; UNECE, 2015). Social support is a positive indicator of job quality. Eurofound (2018) supports that a supportive social environment enables gig workers to develop personal and professional relationships, work as part of a team towards a common objective, and learn from others. Location-based gig workers have good social support. Food delivery riders interact well with one another by forming a social media group to share knowledge and help each other (Goods et al., 2019). However, cloud workers who can perform their tasks at home may have less social support. Cloud workers who work from home have been reported to experience feelings of isolation and a lack of social interaction (Anwar & Graham, 2021; Wood et al., 2019). Gig workers do not have an immediate superior like traditional workers. However, the platform supports the apps. Myhill et al. (2021) identify the support from the platform, and the results indicate both the positive and negative aspects of the app platform. On the downside, the platform operator's perceived lack of work-related social support is frequently cited as a disadvantage of working through an app. For example, if a customer makes a complaint, the workers will be deactivated or suspended during the investigation. Nevertheless, the study has also reported a non-discretionary basis, as with traditional workers.

Another indicator in the social environment dimension is competition (Keith et al., 2020; Wood et al., 2019). In this literature, competition refers to competition among gig workers. Higher competition probably decreases the job quality. This is due to competition, which is believed to make the work more intense, especially in the gig economy, where workers may need to compete with coworkers who undertake similar gig work (Anwar & Graham, 2021). As the number of individuals participating in gig labour increases, competition in gig work also rises. One reason is that gig work is a free-market labour force in which anyone can register as a gig worker with a low barrier to entry, whether in cloud-based or location-based work (Goods et al., 2019; Wood et al., 2019). Besides that, as there are no limits for the workers to register on the gig platform, it has caused an oversupply of gig workers. However, location-based gig workers compete within specific groups, as opposed to the larger population of cloud workers. In cloud-based gig work, the oversupply of gig workers globally, including those from different countries, makes it more competitive for gig workers to bid for jobs (Anwar & Graham, 2021; CIPD, 2017; Eurofound, 2018; James, 2024; Wood et al., 2019). Competition for location-based gig workers is geographically bounded and influenced by platform algorithms that control location, availability, and performance.

Work Intensity

Work intensity refers to the effort and hardship required to perform a given task (Eurofound, 2018). Work intensity is a measure of the effort one puts into work, and high work intensity is associated with a heavy workload, meeting tight deadlines, and working at a high speed

(Wood et al., 2019). Work intensity encompasses indicators like time pressure. Time pressure can be measured through the perceived of workers working at a very fast pace and under tight deadlines (Cazes et al., 2015; de Bustillo et al., 2009; Eurofound, 2017; UNECE, 2015; Wood et al., 2019) and the allocation of time to get the job done (Cazes et al., 2015; CIPD, 2022; Eurofound, 2017). While work intensity can lead to increased work effort, decreased relaxation time between jobs, and a negative impact on job quality, as noted by de Bustillo et al. (2009), it can also contribute to stress and a higher risk of workplace accidents. Empirical studies indicate that gig workers experience high intensity, as they need to work at a fast pace and meet tight deadlines (Wood et al., 2019). In the gig economy, algorithm management that controls gig workers is also a source of high intensity among them. Algorithmic management is often used to evaluate worker performance as perceived by customers, and highly rated workers are likely to receive more orders due to customers' preferences and platform rankings (Wood et al., 2019; Eurofound, 2018). Eurofound (2018) found that both gig workers and cloud- and location-based gig workers experience distinct work intensities due to algorithmic control, limited breaks, and tight deadlines. Table 1 summarises the findings of the comparative synthesis based on the empirical review above.

Table 1

Comparative Synthesis of the Empirical Review

Dimension	Indicators	Comparative Synthesis	Studies
Income and Benefits	Income	In general, income among gig workers across types of work is low and volatile due to uncertainty in job demand.	Wood et al. (2019); Myhill et al. (2021); Wei & MacDonald (2021); James (2024)
	Social Security Benefits	Gig workers still lack access to social security benefits.	Win and Mohamad (2022); Rahim et al. (2021)
Prospect	Job security	Gig workers lack job security due to algorithmic assignment criteria set by platforms and the physical demands of the work.	Wood et al. (2019); Goods et al. (2019); Salleh et al. (2023); Abdull Rahman et al. (2023)
	Career advancement	Gig workers face limitations in career progression, with research revealing that most perceive no opportunities for advancement.	Eurofound (2018); Myhill et al. (2021)

Dimension	Indicators	Comparative Synthesis	Studies
Work-life balance	Long working hours	Empirical findings have shown that both cloud- and location-based gig workers work long hours. However, longer hours do not necessarily guarantee higher income.	Wood et al. (2019); Wei & MacDonald (2021); Lewandowski et al. (2022)
	Atypical working hours	Atypical working hours, often seen in gig work, include weekends, evenings, and nights. These hours can lead to exhaustion, but they may also offer benefits like bonuses or higher pay.	Wood et al. (2019); Eurofound (2018); Nguyen et al. (2023)
	Flexibility	Studies indicate that the flexibility of cloud- and location-based gig workers can be limited by factors such as client demands, time zone differences, and operating hours. Despite these constraints, gig workers still find opportunities to manage personal responsibilities, such as splitting work hours to make time for family.	Wood et al. (2019); Goods et al. (2019); Wei & MacDonald (2021); James (2024)
Voice and representation	Direct Voice	Gig workers often face barriers to voicing their concerns because platform operators typically disregard their input.	Wei & MacDonald (2021); Rahim et al. (2021)
	Indirect Voice	Workers may express their voices indirectly through entities like labour unions, but studies indicate limited participation among gig workers.	Goods et al. (2019); Myhill et al. (2021); Wei & MacDonald (2021); CIPD (2017)

Dimension	Indicators	Comparative Synthesis	Studies
Job Design	Job Autonomy	Studies demonstrate that gig workers, particularly in cloud-based environments, generally enjoy higher autonomy than location-based workers. However, this autonomy is often limited by app control and algorithm management,	Wood et al. (2019); Eurofound (2018); Goods et al. (2019); Myhill et al. (2021); Wu et al. (2022)
	Training Opportunity	Both location-based and cloud-based platforms offer limited training opportunities, which hinders skill development and affects job quality	Eurofound (2018); Lewandowski et al., 2022; Myhill et al. (2021); Wei & MacDonald (2021)
Physical environment	Risk of Accident	Generally, location-based gig workers, such as delivery drivers, are particularly vulnerable to accidents due to their tasks, especially under adverse conditions like bad weather, compared to cloud workers.	Eurofound (2018); Goods et al. (2019); Wei & MacDonald (2021); Abdull Rahman et al. (2023); Nguyen et al. (2023); Schmidt (2017)
	Health Hazards	Studies show that both work types present health risks; the emphasis remains on the health hazards inherent to gig work, Studies show that both types of gig work expose workers to health risks.	Anwar & Graham (2021); Bajwa et al. (2018); Myhill et al. (2021); Wei & MacDonald (2021)
Social Environment	Social support	Gig workers, particularly location-based ones like food delivery riders, benefit from strong social support networks. In contrast, cloud workers may experience isolation due to limited social interactions.	Wood et al. (2019); Anwar & Graham (2021); Goods et al. (2019); Myhill et al. (2021)

Dimension	Indicators	Comparative Synthesis	Studies
	Competition	Generally, both types of gig workers face competition due to low barriers to entry; competition intensifies, particularly in cloud-based work, where global oversupply is prevalent. Location-based workers face competition within specific groups, influenced by geographic factors and platform algorithms.	Wood et al. (2019); Anwar & Graham (2021); Goods et al. (2019); Eurofound (2018); CIPD, (2017); James, (2024)
Work Intensity	Time pressure	Gig workers experience high work intensity due to fast-paced demands and the algorithms that evaluate their performance.	Wood et al. (2019), Eurofound (2018)

Conclusion

The findings of this empirical review suggest differences in job quality between cloud- and location-based gig workers. Cloud workers are found to enjoy autonomy and be less exposed to the risk of accidents, but face high competition and less social support. Compared with location-based gig workers, who enjoy social support and face limited competition. However, they are exposed to the risk of accidents and to limited autonomy at work. The review also indicates that job quality is similar across cloud- and location-based gig workers, including income, social security benefits, job security, career advancement, long working hours, atypical working hours, flexibility, direct voice, indirect voice, training opportunities, health hazards, and work intensity.

The most important finding of this review suggests that gig workers are not homogeneous. The differences in certain aspects of job quality indicators stem from differences in working conditions and the work itself. However, as this is an empirical review, it could not confirm the difference in the job quality indicator. Therefore, future research should explore job quality in greater detail among cloud- and location-based gig workers. This finding is important for policymakers, as it means gig worker policy should consider both types of gig workers to ensure their well-being.

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