

STUDY OF FACTORS INFLUENCING TRANSITION WORKFORCE TOWARDS GIG-BASED OPPORTUNITIES

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Abstract

This literature review examines the changing nature of work and the movement of skilled workers from traditional employment arrangements towards gig-based opportunities. The review focuses on the worker perspective and considers individual, organizational and contextual influences that may support workforce transition. The literature indicates that autonomy, skills, self-determination, human capital, employer-related limitations, algorithmic controls, task performance and technology-enabled work arrangements are relevant to understanding this transition. The review also organizes the literature into three broad themes: individual skills, employer deficiencies and contextual ICT support. These themes provide a conceptual basis for understanding why skilled workers increasingly consider flexible, project-based and technology-enabled work outside conventional employment structures.

Keywords: gig economy, transition workforce, gig work, traditional employment, algorithmic control, autonomy, human capital, ICT support

1. Background

The nature of work is changing. Formal employment opportunities across private and public sector employers are witnessing changes in talent sourcing, allocation, utilization and access. Traditional talent generally remained within formal job structures, whereas modern work arrangements increasingly allow talent to move across formal and informal work ecosystems.

Traditional job practices focused mainly on allocation and utilization of talent within formal structures. Contemporary human resource practices, however, increasingly draw on both formal and informal talent, including high-skill gig work. The high-skill gig workforce has emerged as an alternative to formal employment, particularly as organizations and workers respond to changing skill requirements and business conditions.

The increasing importance of skills, together with the growth of virtual work, has contributed to this transformation. The pandemic also accelerated the use of virtual working arrangements and increased attention towards high-skill gig work. Existing literature discusses this phenomenon through perspectives such as person-job fit, strategic human capital and boundaryless careers.

The literature therefore provides a basis for examining the factors that motivate talented workers to move from formal employment structures towards informal, flexible and knowledge-driven gig opportunities. This review considers the phenomenon primarily from the worker perspective rather than from the employer or other stakeholder perspective.

2. Understanding Gig Working

Research on gig working identifies personal, individual, contextual and environmental factors as contributing to the growth of high-skill gig work. From the individual perspective, gig work can provide empowerment, autonomy and self-sufficiency.

From the organizational perspective, the use of gig talent can support innovation, creativity and problem-solving. Gig working also creates a blurred boundary between an independent service provider and an employee. The nature of the relationship depends on how the freelancer and the hiring organization work together.

In the Indian context, the literature reviewed in the source paper associates the growth of gig and high-skill gig opportunities with personal characteristics and contextual conditions. The development of technology-enabled work arrangements has further supported this change.

3. Gig Work and Traditional Work

Traditional employment generally involves a long-term association with an organization and formal positions within an established structure. Roles and responsibilities are defined within the organizational hierarchy and are intended to support continuing organizational objectives.

Gig work, in contrast, generally involves a time-bound association in which a worker and organization cooperate for a specific period and for particular skills or tasks. The demand for specialized skills and the need to remain competitive encourage organizations to seek talent outside their internal workforce.

Gig opportunities are therefore more opportunity-driven and skill-driven than traditional employment arrangements. They emphasize the use of specific skills for particular assignments rather than the expectation of lifelong job security. Information and communication technology is an important foundation for these arrangements because it enables the connection, allocation and management of work and talent.

4. Indian Scenario

The gig workforce in India has developed alongside economic reforms, the opening of sectors and increasing dependence on information and communication technology. Organizations have increasingly used technology for strategy, competitiveness and market orientation, creating greater opportunities to access talent outside conventional employment structures.

The source literature identifies the growth of data science, artificial intelligence, ICT-enabled business models, startup culture and contractual hiring as factors associated with the development of gig opportunities. Cost considerations and the need for specialized skills also contribute to organizational reliance on flexible talent arrangements.

The Indian scenario therefore reflects a combination of technological development, changing organizational requirements and changing approaches to work. These developments create conditions in which skilled workers can consider alternatives to conventional employment.

5. Post-Pandemic Scenario

The COVID-19 pandemic led organizations to reconsider established assumptions about the nature and location of work. Before the pandemic, white-collar employment was commonly associated with a fixed office location, while some blue-collar work could be fixed or mobile. The pandemic disrupted these established definitions and accelerated virtual and remote working arrangements.

Gig work itself, however, did not originate with the pandemic. It refers broadly to work delivered on demand, when required, and for a defined period. The pandemic increased visibility and acceptance of flexible and technology-enabled working arrangements.

The literature reviewed in the source paper also highlights the growth of platform-based firms and the increasing use of technology to connect demand and supply. These developments demonstrate how technology can support the expansion of gig work and create new forms of work participation.

6. Objective of the Review

To classify factors contributing to the transition of gig workers from traditional sector to gig sector.

7. Literature on Theoretical Paradigms

The transition from traditional work to gig work can be understood through individual aspects and resources, employer-generated deficiencies and contextual elements. The democratization of skills, talent, job allocation and opportunities outside rigid workplaces has contributed to the emergence of a transition workforce.

A transition workforce includes skilled individuals as well as people possessing informal or previously unrecognized skills who seek to monetize their capabilities. New forms of job acquisition, greater leverage of skills, independent competition and revenue generation are associated with this transition.

Self-incentivization and external incentives can also influence transition decisions. Personal branding may provide workers with opportunities to present their capabilities to a wider market and may allow organizations to access professionals with specific skills for short-term projects and engagements.

The literature further connects changing work arrangements with self-determination, resource availability, fit and the broader transformation of vocational work. Thus, the transition from traditional employment to gig work draws upon existing theoretical frameworks and conceptual perspectives rather than representing a single-factor phenomenon.

8. Transition Workforce Elements

The transition workforce has been discussed in the literature as both a uni-dimensional and multi-dimensional phenomenon. Working-time arrangements are changing, and the transition involves the interaction of conceptual, environmental, organizational and individual factors. Transition behaviour includes the individual's ability to adapt, acquire fit and thrive under changing work conditions. Literature on gig work has considered perspectives such as self-determination, resource orientation, talent life cycle, contingency frameworks, social chronological theory and bioecological approaches. The literature also distinguishes individual approaches from organizational and system approaches. These perspectives suggest that workforce transition is influenced not only by personal capabilities but also by organizational practices and the wider technological and economic environment.

9. Factors Influencing Workforce Transition

The reviewed literature identifies several factors that can contribute to workforce transition towards gig-based opportunities. These factors represent different dimensions of the relationship between the worker, the work platform, the organization and the wider work environment.

Factor	Explanation
Gatekeeping Algorithmic Controls	Perceptions of app-driven algorithmic control over opportunity discovery and gatekeeping.
Guiding Algorithmic Controls	Perceptions of app-driven guidance in selecting the most suitable option from available opportunities.
Autonomy	The worker's sense of being able to make autonomous decisions after considering the available options.
Fairness	Perceptions of fairness in opportunity sharing and evaluation of available options.
Privacy	The perceived scope for privacy and confidentiality in the options selected by the prospective gig worker.
Micro-level Self Legitimacy	The individual's self-assessed sense of legitimacy and proficiency in performing a task.
Surface Acting	The intention to perform a task without personal or emotional engagement.
Deep Acting	The intention to engage deeply with the task at a personal or emotional level.
Task Performance	The proficiency and consistency with which a gig worker performs an assigned task.
Moonlighting Pressures	The intention or pressure to work for another organization or a competitor.

10. Broader Factors Emerging from the Literature

Beyond the specific factors described above, the reviewed literature points towards individual competency, self-determination, human capital preparedness, employer-driven restraints, inertia in talent management, lack of talent recognition in incentive design and the increasing availability of talent across multiple organizations. These factors indicate that workforce transition is shaped by a combination of worker-level and organizational conditions. The literature also notes that definitions and dimensions of transition behaviour vary across national cultures, economic conditions, industries, research phases and samples. Consequently, the meaning and measurement of transition workforce may differ according to the context in which gig work is examined.

Technology platforms are particularly important because they support talent mobilization, monetization and commercialization. Technology therefore operates not only as an infrastructure for gig work but also as a contextual influence on how workers discover, select and perform opportunities.

11. Thematic Development

The literature can be organized into three broad themes that help explain the development of the transition workforce.

Theme A: Individual Skills

The first major influence is individual skills and unique capabilities. Skills create opportunities for workers to participate in markets outside their current employer. The development of an external market for skills supports the democratization of skills and jobs and allows workers to use specialized capabilities across different work arrangements.

Theme B: Employer Deficiencies

The second influence relates to employer deficiencies and evolving organizational requirements. Organizations may require multiple forms of skills, talent and expertise that are not available internally. Where internal resource capital cannot meet changing requirements, organizations may search for specialized talent outside the organization. Cost rationalization and outsourcing of non-core activities can further support demand for specialized transition workforce.

Theme C: Contextual ICT Support

The third influence is contextual ICT support. Developments in information and communication technology enable teleworking, localized working, virtual working and remote monitoring. GPS, tracking and geographical guidance technologies also support the conduct and monitoring of work. The growing embedment of technology in work relationships therefore provides an important context for workforce transition.

12. Research Gap

The reviewed literature shows that gig work has been examined from several perspectives, including autonomy, algorithmic control, self-determination, human capital, organizational requirements and technology. However, the literature also reflects variation in definitions, dimensions and contextual interpretations of transition behaviour. The transition from traditional employment to gig-based opportunities is therefore not adequately explained by a single factor. A worker's skills and self-assessment, organizational requirements and deficiencies, and technology-enabled work conditions appear to operate together. This provides a basis for further research that brings these dimensions together while maintaining a clear focus on the worker perspective.

13. Conclusion

The literature indicates that the workforce is moving towards more flexible, skill-based and technology-enabled forms of work. Gig working represents one important expression of this change, particularly for workers who possess specialized skills and seek autonomy, flexibility and wider opportunities. The transition workforce can be understood through three broad dimensions: individual skills, employer deficiencies and contextual ICT support. Within these dimensions, algorithmic controls, autonomy, fairness, privacy, self-legitimacy, emotional engagement, task performance and moonlighting pressures provide additional perspectives for understanding gig work. Overall, the reviewed literature establishes that the movement from traditional employment towards gig-based opportunities is a multi-dimensional process involving individual capabilities, organizational conditions and technological context. These theoretical and conceptual perspectives provide a foundation for further research on workforce transition towards gig-based opportunities.

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