

NAVIGATING THE GIG LANDSCAPE: A STUDY ON GIG ENTREPRENEURS AND ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

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Abstract

In recent years, the term "gig economy" has become increasingly popular as a result of technological advancements that have made it easier for people to work remotely and independently. The gig economy refers to the trend of people working in short-term, project-based jobs rather than traditional long-term employment. This paper will explore the dynamic world of gig entrepreneurs and how it has transformed from a traditional landscape into project-based. The study will highlight the predominant skill required and growth factors for gig entrepreneurs and the obstacles faced by them while pursuing their goal. The data are collected from 150 gig entrepreneurs from Coimbatore city. The study investigates the relationship of demographic profile with skills and strategies used by them and also the challenges faced by them. The conclusions offer critical insights into the gig economy and suggestions for boosting success and recognition for both gig workers and entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Entrepreneur, Gig Economy, Skills, Growth, Sustainability

Introduction

Labour is the human effort or work that is required to produce goods and services. It is a crucial factor of production, along with capital, land, and entrepreneurship. Labour can be physical or mental, and it encompasses a wide range of occupations, from manual labourers to highly skilled professionals. There are several types of labour, each with its unique characteristics and requirements. First is manual labour, who are involved in physical work that typically does not require advanced training or education. Secondly, skilled labour requires specialized knowledge and training. Thirdly unskilled labour, who are involved in jobs that require little or no training. Additionally, there is intellectual labour, which involves mental work, such as scientific research, teaching, and engineering. Finally, there is creative labour, which encompasses fields such as art, music, and design. Each type of labour plays an important role in the economy and contributes to overall productivity and growth.

In recent years, the term "gig economy" has become increasingly popular as a result of technological advancements that have made it easier for people to work remotely and independently. By becoming a gig worker, he can earn a decent work which will directly or indirectly leads to a nation's economic growth which leads a country to achieve 8th SDG goal. The gig economy refers to the trend of people working in short-term, project-based jobs rather than traditional long-term employment.

It has emerged as a new way of working that is gaining popularity worldwide. The gig economy is a type labour market in which temporary or flexible jobs are common, and companies tend to hire freelancers or independent contractors rather than full-time employees. It has revolutionized the way people work and do business. As a result of the gig economy, a new class of entrepreneurs known as Gig entrepreneurs have emerged. They are a section of individuals who work on a project-by-project basis; they offer their services as independent contractors to clients. It refers to someone who uses their skills and talents to create and operate a business based on short-term or freelance work, often through digital platforms or marketplaces. The gig entrepreneur highlights the growing trend of people using technology to create their businesses and pursue flexible, independent work arrangements. Gig entrepreneurship is a combined concept of the gig economy, entrepreneurship, and small business ownership. They are independent workers who leverage their skills and expertise to create their small businesses, offering services and products on a freelance or contract basis. This type of entrepreneurship provides flexibility and autonomy, making it an attractive option for many individuals who value work-life balance and control over their careers. Many people are pursuing gig entrepreneurship as a career in recent years and the challenges and experiences faced by them aren't well understood. This study aims to fill that gap by examining the factors that make them successful and sustainable in the long run.

Statement of the problem

The gig economy has revolutionized the traditional employment model by offering flexibility, convenience, and opportunities for individuals to work on their terms. The growth of the gig economy has brought new challenges and uncertainties for gig workers and gig entrepreneurs. The economic sustainability of gig entrepreneurs is critical to their success and the overall growth of the gig economy, yet little is known about their performance, skills, psychological behaviours and success factors. While there is much research on the gig economy and gig workers, there is limited knowledge of the performance, skills, and success factors of gig entrepreneurs. Therefore, the problem at hand is to investigate the gig entrepreneurs working in the gig economy by providing a study on performance analysis that provides necessary insights and knowledge about them. In summary, the study helps to analyse the performance of Gig entrepreneur towards economic sustainability by examining their skills and challenges faced by them to offer necessary insights into the gig economy.

Objective of the study

- To evaluate the pre-dominant potential skills and growth of gig entrepreneurs
- To examine the difficulties and barriers encountered by gig entrepreneurs

Scope of the study

The scope of this study will focus on exploring the experiences of gig entrepreneurs, with a particular emphasis on their level of predominant potential skill and growth, challenges and obstacles faced by them. The study aims to analyse the performance of gig entrepreneurs by investigating their potential skills, growth factors contributing towards their success and the challenges and obstacles faced by them. By examining the difficulties and barriers encountered by gig entrepreneurs, the research brings to light the obstacles, preventing equitable access to decent work within the gig economy. This insight can inform policy changes and initiatives aimed at reducing inequalities and promoting economic inclusivity, aligning with the spirit of SDG 8. The study will help in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of gig entrepreneurs and suggest ways to overcome the challenges they face towards economic sustainability. The study will target gig entrepreneurs operating in a particular geographical area.

Methodology

Primary data for the study has been collected from 150 gig entrepreneurs in Coimbatore city using Snowball Technique.

Literature Review

John Barrios et.al (2022) have conducted a study on the topic “**Launching with a parachute: The gig economy and new business formation**”. The study aims to investigate the impact of the gig economy on new business formation and entrepreneurial risk-taking. The study used a Stratified random sampling technique and had a total of 500 respondents in various urban areas across the United States. Using descriptive statistics and regression, data collected for the study are analyzed. The findings showed that the introduction of the gig economy created fallback opportunities for would-be entrepreneurs, which in turn reduced risk and encouraged new business formation. Policymakers and business leaders should consider the potential benefits of the gig economy for entrepreneurship and take steps to encourage its growth and development. Additionally, further research is needed to explore the long-term effects of the gig economy on entrepreneurship and the labour market.

Aastha Behl et.al (2022) have collectively written a working paper on the topic “**Barriers to entry of Gig workers in the Gig platform: exploring the dark side of the Gig economy**”. The paper contributes to the literature on the gig economy by proposing a conceptual framework using structural modelling to show the nuances of the gig economy and gig platform. Interview method was used to collect the primary data. The paper acknowledges that there are a few downsides to the gig economy. In conclusion, the researchers further reveal the downsides of the gig economy but they did not mention the upsides of the gig economy.

Emad El sawalhy et al. (2021) have researched the topic “**Technology Business Incubators-TBIs Role in Promoting Freelancing Concept in Gig Economy "Case Study: Islamic University Incubator BTI”**”. This study aimed to examine the role of technology and business incubators in promoting freelancing in the gig economy. The study was conducted using a descriptive and quantitative approach and a sample of 180 entrepreneurs in the Islamic University of Gaza, using a structured questionnaire. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were assessed using Cronbach's alpha and split-half methods. The findings indicate that TBIs provide an environment that supports entrepreneurs and freelancers to create, innovate and implement their creative ideas. Overall, the results showed that TBIs play a crucial role in promoting freelancing and supporting entrepreneurs in the gig economy.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1- Percentage Analysis

Particulars	Groups	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	53	35.3
	Female	97	64.7
Age	18-24	81	54.0
	25-34	38	25.3
	35 and above	31	20.7
Years of Experience	Less than 2 year	70	46.7
	2-5 years	55	36.7
	5-10 years	14	9.3
	More than 10 years	11	7.3
Line of Work	Intellectual	28	18.7
	Technical	37	24.7
	Creative	50	33.3
	Business oriented	35	23.3
Skills possessed by GIG Entrepreneur	Marketing and sales	37	24.7
	Business skills	50	33.3
	Technical skills	35	23.3
	Soft skills	28	18.7
Ways to improve and grow	Continuous learning and skill development	66	44.0
	Networking and relationship building	41	27.3
	Seeking outside help and advice	12	8.0
	Seeking feedback from your customers	31	20.7

From the above table, out of the 150 respondents ,64.7 percent of the respondents are female respondents and Most of the respondents belongs to the age group between 18-24 years at 54.0 per cent. 33.3 per cent of the respondents are estimated to have an Income between Rs.20000-Rs.49,999 and as a line of work, Creative gig entrepreneurs are reported to be at 33.3 per cent. Out of the total respondents, 33.3 per cent of the them rarely or never engage in skill development activities and the concept of continuous learning and skill development is widely used way to improve and grow has been adopted by 44.0 per cent of the respondents.

ANOVA

ANOVA between age and level of agreement based on skills and growth

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant difference between age and level of agreement based on skills and growth

Table -1.2

Factors	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remarks
You developed a set of skills that are valuable to your gig entrepreneurship.	2.584	2	1.292	1.066	.347	Not Significant
You believe that your gig entrepreneurship has the potential to grow and succeed in the future.	2.001	2	1.001	1.300	.276	Not Significant
You regularly seek out opportunities to develop and improve your skills as a gig entrepreneur.	6.557	2	3.279	2.396	.095	Not Significant
You constantly improve and update myself.	4.897	2	2.449	1.589	.208	Not Significant
You can effectively market and promote your gig entrepreneurship to attract and retain customers or clients.	7.654	2	3.827	3.426	.035*	Significant
You feel confident in your ability to adapt to changes.	2.599	2	1.300	1.204	.303	Not Significant
You are committed to learning and growing in your line of work.	5.015	2	2.508	2.071	.130	Not Significant
You are clear with your goals and targets to be achieved as a Gig entrepreneur	5.455	2	2.728	2.625	.076	Not Significant

(Source: Computed data) **S-Significance, NS-Non-significance at 5% level**

The above ANOVA results indicate that there is a significant variations between age and effectively marketing and promoting their gig entrepreneurship to attract and retain customers or clients and for all other factors there is no significant variation between age and skill and growth.

ANOVA between Years of Experience Vs. Challenges & Obstacles

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant difference between the years of experience and the challenges & obstacles faced as a gig entrepreneur.

Table -1.3

Factors	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remarks
You face significant financial challenges in your gig work.	10.600	3	3.533	3.603	.015*	Significant
You have had trouble balancing clients' demands with other personal and professional responsibilities.	6.858	3	2.286	3.170	.026*	Significant
You have encountered difficulty in establishing yourself as a gig entrepreneur.	9.915	3	3.305	3.064	.030*	Significant
You have encountered a lack of support in your line of work	2.408	3	.803	.599	.617	Not Significant
You struggle to maintain a steady stream of income.	16.391	3	5.464	3.415	.019*	Significant
You feel difficulty in finding clients and retaining them.	7.850	3	2.617	2.865	.039*	Significant
You find it difficult to match your client's expectations.	3.236	3	1.079	.983	.403	Not Significant
You face competition from other gig entrepreneurs or traditional businesses.	5.540	3	1.847	1.602	.191	Not Significant
You have faced location barriers in your line of work.	11.058	3	3.686	2.449	.066	Not Significant

(Source: Computed data) S-Significance, NS-Non-significance at 5% level

The ANOVA results also show a significant variation between the years of experience and the financial challenges faced in their gig work, trouble in balancing the demands of clients with other personal and professional responsibilities, encountering difficulty in establishing themselves as a gig entrepreneur, struggling to maintain a steady stream of income and feeling difficulty in finding clients and retaining them.

The ANOVA results also indicate that there is no significant variation between years of experience and lack of support in their line of work, in matching client expectations, facing competition from other gig entrepreneurs or traditional businesses, facing location barriers in their line of work and finding it difficult to source gig opportunities.

Findings of the Study

- 64.7% of the respondents are Female.
- 54.0% of the respondents belong to the age group of 18 years – 24 years.
- 46.7 % of the respondents have less than 2 years of experience.
- 33.3% of the respondents use their creativity for their work
- 33.3 of the respondents possess business skills
- 44.0% of the respondents prefer continuous learning and updating their skills to improve and grow in their field.
- There is a significant difference between age and effectively marketing and promoting gig entrepreneurship to attract and retain customers or clients which shows that young gig entrepreneurs are ready to improve their skills and grow in their respective field
- There is a significant difference between years of experience and facing challenges like financial challenges, trouble in balancing responsibilities, establishing themselves as a gig entrepreneur, struggle to maintain a steady income and finding difficulty in identifying clients. The result ensures that when aspiring gig entrepreneurs receive guidance and resources in their initial years, it can help them overcome these obstacles more effectively, ultimately contributing to the promotion of decent and sustainable work opportunities within the gig landscape. By this way, SDG 8 can be better realized by reducing inequalities and promoting economic growth, particularly in the dynamic and ever-changing gig economy.

Suggestion

- Opportunities should be given to gig entrepreneurs to promote their success and growth
- Gig entrepreneurs shall be given ways to meet their short-term financial needs
- Proper recognition is to be provided to Gig workers and Gig entrepreneurs.
- Gig entrepreneurs should find ways to improvise and gain satisfaction to sustain in their line of work.

Conclusion

The research aimed at providing insights into the Gig economy, gig workers and individuals who chose their career as a gig entrepreneur. The study focused on understanding the level of predominant potential skill and growth of gig entrepreneurs by investigating the factors that contribute to their success and the challenges and obstacles faced by them. By analysing these performance factors, the research tends to provide an idea of their growth and economic sustainability. It is revealed that gig entrepreneurs possess a range of skills and capabilities, including communication, time management, and adaptability, which contribute to their growth and success. The challenges and obstacles faced by gig entrepreneurs were evident in the area of availability of financial resources. This can lead to greater stability and resilience in the face of challenges and uncertainties in the gig economy. Overall, the study provides valuable insights into the performance analysis of gig entrepreneurs and their economic sustainability and growth.

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