

Analyzing the Challenges, Effects, and Motivations of Gig Economy Workers

Noorziah Mohd Salleh, Sri Norfitriani Mohamed Shukry, Velarie
Maylyn Claudius Jokinol

Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 88617, Kota Kinabalu,
Sabah, Malaysia

Email: noorziah@uitm.edu.my, fitriani.shukry@gmail.com, vel.claudius@gmail.com

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i6/17514>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i6/17514

Published Date: 21 June 2023

Abstract

This qualitative study explores the gig economy's challenges, effects, and motivations. Understanding the crucial issues could result in improved human resource management and better health and wellbeing for workers. A qualitative approach was used to explore the main jobs performed by gig workers in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. This study included both full-time and part-time walkers and cyclists. A semi-structured interview was used to identify the challenges and effects of gig delivery food riders. The main challenge is an unstable income, which may negatively impact their finances. Upon delivery, the commission is paid. This situation has no job security because the company does not employ them. They have no benefits or protections, such as health insurance or paid time off. Due to the job's physical demands, they also work long hours and experience fatigue. Customer demand and how many riders are on duty may affect job assignments daily. Depending on customer demand and rider availability, job assignments vary. In order to meet customer demands, riders may be required to work long shifts or odd hours. As a result of a lack of job security and benefits, riders and their families may experience financial instability.

Keywords: Challenges, Motivation, Effect, Food Industry, Gig Worker Wellbeing, Human Resource Management, Sustainable Development Goals.

Introduction

In the gig economy, workers perform one-time jobs mediated by online platforms (Koutsimpogiorgos et al., 2020). Food delivery is one of the most prevalent trends in the gig economy, just as smartphones are becoming more common. It is estimated that Malaysia has 559,900 gig workers in various industries, including agriculture, industry, and services (Shafiei et al., 2022). Most products are delivered by car, motorcycle, bicycle, or foot. Several characteristics are associated with this type of employment, including less job security, shorter contract periods, dependent self-employment, irregular working hours, and informal work arrangements (Harun et al., 2022). Short-term contracts or freelance work are more

common than permanent employment. Food delivery jobs, however, are widely known for their flexibility in terms of working hours, the locations they cover, and the amount they make. These individuals are considered independent workers, freelancers, or part-time employees within the gig economy.

Studies on the gig economy focus primarily on customer satisfaction and perceptions of these services, which can help companies in their sales and marketing efforts. However, studies have not been conducted on the importance of gig workers' roles, work-life balance, challenges, and internal management influence. A particular concern arises; there need to be actual job specifications for gig workers that would facilitate a better management of human resources for gig workers. According to LinkedIn Talent Solutions (2022), gig workers in the food delivery industry perform similar tasks with food industry personnel. These workers' health and wellbeing should be addressed.

The gig economy contributes to the country's economic growth. Grab has over 36 million users in Malaysia and a 48% market share. FoodPanda is ranked first with 49% of the market share, followed by GoJek, ShopeeFood, LineMen, and BaeMin. With proper human resource management, GrabFood may become the market leader in Malaysia shortly if it becomes one of the most trusted apps for food delivery. Globally, food delivery services have been a success. North America's top three food delivery services are DoorDash, GrubHub, and Uber Eats. Food delivery companies in Europe include Deliveroo, FoodPanda, Eat Takeaway, and Wolt. It is a promising industry that will soon become necessary for some customers.

The Social Security Organisation (SOCSO) *Lindung* scheme had only 145,000 food riders in 2021 (The Star, 2021). There were 354,932 registrations for the service, with 1,400 from other sectors (Basyir, 2022). Most food riders are inactive due to new jobs or career changes. Studies suggest that younger riders use these positions as a stepping stone to continue their studies or get a more permanent job. However, their motivations are unclear. Food riders are considered to benefit from agility before transitioning to more stable and permanent jobs (Randolph et al.).

The food delivery studies focus on customer satisfaction rather than rider satisfaction. Food delivery has a variety of objectives that are not solely determined by customer satisfaction and market demand. These objectives are also by some individuals' willingness to participate in the market. The mental and physical toll of any job may reach a breaking point, so food workers themselves should know that their limits. Previous studies examined motivational factors such as work centrality, entitlement norms, and obligation (Ayapana et al., 2022). Other studies have indicated that delivery workers doubt the importance of their work (Lin et al., 2020). Riders were motivated by their families. It was reported that Manuti et al (2018) studied work meaning among millennials. They mainly found to do the job on a short-term basis before getting a more secure job. It is believed that this is the last job anyone will ever hold.

Consequently, several motivational factors influenced the food riders' decision to perform delivery work. Food riders choose this career path because they feel obligated to do so (Leenoi, 2021). Companies must strengthen their HRM to ensure the gig economy evolves since its importance cannot be overstated.

Literature Review

Challenges Associated with The Gig Economy

Prior studies on food riders have been conducted (Kurniawati et al., 2021; Mustapa et al., 2021) to examine the challenges associated with industrial 4.0 jobs in Malaysia. The

challenges riders face at work have been examined in several studies. Parking spaces, waiting areas, and road safety facilities were found to need to be improved (Ikbal, 2021). Food delivery riders faced external challenges, including inclement weather and the Covid-19 pandemic (Ayapana et al., 2022), as well as the covid 19 virus and social behaviour (Caday et al., 2021), the top categories of workforce deprivation (Kaine & Josserand, 2019).

On the physical side, a few studies have reported riders needing to maintain calm despite unpleasant energies since transporting food can be exhausting. Fast food delivery drivers reported recovering from the recession and taking on delivery assignments. Furthermore, time constraints have a crushing effect on them. Riders are also timed and monitored remotely by a system which alerts the manager if they fail to meet the required time (Popan, 2021). As a result, riders are unable to plan their lives. This may lead to chronic or mild burnout in the long run. Most fast-food workers in the United States, including riders and crew, have reported burnout during the past year (Gould, 2009). As a result of workers being rushed more than usual, the event has been described as intensive and stressful. In a study of 100 Brazilian riders, attention deficit disorder, antisocial personality disorder, and hyperactivity were prevalent. During the pandemic, food riders reported experiencing anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues (Stewart et al., 2020). Mental health issues have also been linked to adverse traffic outcomes (Kieling et al., 2011; Papakostopoulos & Nathanael, 2021). There is often a high pace of work and a prolonged duration of work (Shin et al., 2019). These factors result in workers taking fewer breaks, under more significant stress, behaving unsafely, and being fatigued at work.

Food riders are also at risk of road accidents, theft, and being blamed for delays (Buncaras et al., 2022). Additionally, riders are generally employed on an informal basis and accept a high level of risk as part of their employment (Papakostopoulos & Nathanael, 2021). According to Dablanc et al (2017), delivery riders engage in informal employment and must be paid based on the number of goods they deliver. In a less developed country in Africa, the delivery rider is perceived as a means of alleviating poverty and unemployment among the population with low levels of education and socioeconomic status. These individuals have been reported to be the most likely to engage in a poor safety culture that poses a greater risk to them and influences their motivation to continue working in the occupation (Hamzat et al., 2019). In addition, most delivery riders are young road users who need formal training in riding. There needs to be a higher awareness of the risks of using roads. For example, a study indicates that riders hired as contractors rather than employees reported needing more training. Moreover, they pointed out that working in bad weather when there is a high demand for deliveries makes an already hazardous profession even more dangerous.

Food delivery has been cited as a stepping stone to gaining experience and a temporary motivation for remaining in the industry. The literature indicates that work centrality, entitlements and obligations are employment's three main driving forces (Duggan et al., 2022). Work centrality refers to how important work is in a person's life. Individuals place a higher value on their work than on leisure, family, and religion. Thus, work-centred individuals spend much time on work-related activities (Borges & Tamayo, 2001). It is also described as "my job is the greatest source of satisfaction in my life", "the most significant things that happen to me are related to my work", and "I have other activities that are more meaningful than my job" (Bal & Kooij, 2011, pp. 44-46). In addition, the entitlement norm defines work as an underlying right of individuals and a responsibility of society. A belief in the right to privileged treatment at work is associated with excessive self-esteem in one's abilities at work (Langerud & Jordan, 2018). Work is viewed as everyone's responsibility towards society or

their organization due to an obligation norm. Employees must work within their organizations and contribute to society (i.e., everyone has to work). Duty is derived from internalized personal responsibility and social or institutional commitment (Snir & Harpaz, 2002).

Human Resource Management Challenges

An organization's stability and sustainability depend on understanding the factors contributing to developing human capital intellect (Karman, 2020). Every organization must nurture its people and place them at the top of their priority list. Organizational growth and human capital are closely linked in today's rapidly changing business environment. Positive growth can be achieved through knowledge that improves skills (Yli-Renko et al., 2002).

The new trend of the labour force, such as gig workers, is raising concerns among policy experts, human resource portioners, politicians, and the government. The lack of HR management rules and regulations leads to most gig workers being mistreated and terminated wrongfully. Most gig workers, especially food delivery riders, are employed without rightful compensation and benefits. Compared to traditional independent contractors, most gig workers often need more power to negotiate contracts or even compensation rates on many platforms.

Gig workers are often classified as independent contractors in developed countries, allowing platforms to save significantly on labour costs. Nevertheless, they are at risk, leading to a decade-long legal battle. In Malaysia, gig workers are protected under the Self-Employment Social Security Act 2017. They are protected by eight types of protection: health care, loss of ability to work, permanent loss of ability, medical treatment, compensation for surviving family members, recovery benefits, education plan, and death benefits (Social Security Organization, 2021).

According to many management scholars, gig work violates established organization theory that views a stable workforce as a competitive advantage and threatens employee satisfaction (Ahsan, 2020; Ashford & Bérastégui, 2021). Gig work, however, is viewed differently by other observers, who believe that companies and workers benefit from more flexibility. Low entry barriers and considerable autonomy make gig work ideal for smoothing income and supplementing wages to meet immediate needs (Hall & Krueger, 2018). In addition, workers can connect with their peers through technological advances, despite being direct competitors themselves (Kuhn & Maleki, 2017).

Workers in emerging economies may benefit financially from wealthy clients. Online platforms now offer remote workers relatively high wages. Standardizing worker histories and quality information on platforms can help emerging economies disproportionately (Agrawal et al., 2016). Although piecework labour platforms may benefit workers in emerging economies (Lehdonvirta et al., 2019), algorithmic management can cause social isolation, overwork, exhaustion, and more flexibility. Like other work, gigs are flexible. Ashford et al. (2018) propose a model of how people thrive in the gig economy, considering the differences between platforms and workers. They emphasize skilled workers who choose to work full-time in this manner. Technology supports their non-traditional work.

Methodology

This study utilized a qualitative approach to explore the challenges, effects, and motivations of working in the food industry. From a philosophical perspective consist of a stance toward the nature of reality (ontology) and constructivism and interpretivism paradigm (Creswell, 2003).

The concept of purposeful sampling is used in this qualitative research. GrabFood riders in Kota Kinabalu participated in this study. The number of GrabFood delivery personnel is estimated to be approximately 2000, both full-time and part-time, in Kota Kinabalu. Participants in the study included both walkers and cyclists. This study used semi-structured interview questions to ensure that they remained within the scope of the study. An analysis of the data was conducted between 17 April 2022 and 21 January 2023.

The interviewees were asked to provide personal information; gender, age, how long they had been delivering food, whether the job was full-time or part-time, and their average monthly income, length of employment, salary, employment status and main challenges and the effects mainly in Malay. The interviewees were approached personally in their usual resting areas around Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Ten interviewees participated after being invited and explained the study's objectives briefly. They were probed to describe their experiences and problems in detail, and, with their consent, the process was recorded. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and was conducted in person or via Zoom if clarification was needed and to ensure that the information gathered was accurate. A semi-structured interview was arranged as follows: after informed consent, the interviewer questioned the interviewee about the first job he had completed, followed by the most recent job and challenges or difficulties faced.

A thematic analysis was conducted in this study that can reveal experiences, thoughts, and behaviours. The analysis followed six steps: familiarizing themselves with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the study's conclusions (Braun & Clarke, 2012). A semi-structured interview combines both the structured and unstructured types of interviews. This means that unlike in unstructured interviews, the researcher is guided by already determined questions. Nevertheless, the phrasing and order of the questions are not determined.

Data Analysis

Using Braun & Clarke's (2012) guidelines on narrative research, the interview data was collected by coding the themes obtained. Next, all the themes identified were named as central themes and the effects. The most insightful quotes are reported in the results section (translated into English). In cases of conflicting views about similar causal relationships, the results section also notes how often the respective causalities were mentioned to illustrate their relative importance. The researchers collected data by recording and transcribing the procedures used to collect the information. Transcription was prepared to obtain reliable and comprehensive information on a particular topic. The transcript was provided in text format allowing researchers to examine the responses.

Results and Discussions

There were ten participants in the study, all of whom were males between the ages of 23 and 43. Among them, five are married, one is engaged, three are single, and one is divorced. All of them have been working as GrabFood riders for at least two years; seven are full-time, and three are part-time due to their day jobs. Five of them have earned certificates for tertiary education, ranging from certificates to degrees. Table 1 below shows the details of the interviewees who worked for Grab company in Sabah.

Table 1

Interviewee Demographic Profile

Participants Code	Age	Gender	Employment Status	Marital Status	Education
Grab Rider A	35	Male	Full-time	Divorced	Diploma
Grab Rider B	23	Male	Full-time	Single	SPM
Grab Rider C	23	Male	Part-time	Single	Degree
Grab Rider D	26	Male	Full-time	Single	Diploma
Grab Rider E	41	Male	Full-time	Married	SPM
Grab Rider F	29	Male	Full-time	Engaged	STPM
Grab Rider G	43	Male	Part-time	Married	SPM
Grab Rider H	31	Male	Full-time	Married	Certificate
Grab Rider I	25	Male	Part-time	Married	Degree
Grab Rider J	31	Male	Full-time	Married	SPM

The qualitative insights provided by the gig workers interviewed corroborate and explain the previous studies' results obtained. Researchers analyzed the transcript to generate findings based on narrative analysis. The transcript passage is given in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Data analysis of interviewees.

Transcript passage	Initial code(s)	Corresponding category/theme
<p>Researcher: Tell me the challenges you face while doing your job.</p> <p>Rider A: There are a few challenges in this work. I need energy. However, like I said that day, the risk of an accident is the highest if you are a rider. I had an accident when the person hit me, that time I went to the hospital, the motorcycle went to the workshop. For three days, I had no income. Other than that, I cannot think of anything anymore. If you want to talk about challenges, that is my biggest challenge.</p>	<p>Risk of road accidents (Rider A, B, D, E, H, J)</p> <p>Do not have an income while hospitalized</p> <p>Gig workers pay vehicle repair costs</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Risk of road accidents 2. Income instability 3. There is no compensation for death, hospitalization, or vehicle damage
<p>Rider B: OK, if I must elaborate, it pertains to driving safety. It is because some people do not care about the flood when they ride a motorcycle. Therefore, life is at risk. After that, I have also had customers mistakenly pin the location. As soon as I reached that location, I contacted him to get food, but he had already obtained food from another gig worker. However, luckily, if this is the case, Grab will ask the customer to pay extra. Yes, extra for the rider. That is right</p>	<p>Life is at risk/risk of road accidents.</p> <p>Wrongly sent location by a client, but gig worker still receives payment (rider B, E)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Wrong location
<p>Rider D: Umm..accident. This is the most challenging risk. How do you want to say ah if it is about the consequences? I did not experience these consequences, but a friend did. He died at the scene as a result of an accident. Yes, both of us took Grab that time. I know he is the eldest child and feel sorry for his family. They are not wealthy people. He is the one who always gives money to his family. When something like that happens, who will support his family? It is a pity, so my message to other riders, be careful on the road. Besides, what else... Do you have to chase a dog? Haha.. sometimes people in the village let their dogs roam around. Even if I run away, I will still be chased. Well, that can also be attributed to the dog's accident. Haha</p>	<p>Risk of road accident</p> <p>Death as a result of a traffic accident (Rider D, A)</p> <p>Animal attack risk (Rider D)</p> <p>No compensation was provided to the family (Rider D, F, H)</p>	

Rider H: Uhm, this is a challenge and a risk to life on the road. All kinds of things can happen. Uish, if you want to talk about his effect, do not. I cannot imagine how my family will eat. So it is best to avoid that.	Risk of road accident The family left with no compensation.	
Rider I: So far, everything has been relatively easy. Most of all, it is about angry customers. That is not because we are slow to send his order; the restaurant needs to be faster to prepare the food. However, when it comes to the type of customers, I ignore it. In addition, in my family situation, if you look at the income as a rider, it could be more stable compared to working full time.	Facing customer dissatisfaction (Rider I, E) Unstable income (Rider I, J, G, A)	5. Dealing with customer anger/dissatisfaction
Rider J: Yes, like I said, an accident. I had an accident and did not work. So income is affected, and health too. It hurts. Besides, what else? I feel like nothing.	Risk of road accident Unstable income Health risk	
Rider G: <i>Firstly</i> , long working hours. So if I do Grab, I have to leave my family. Because I do this part-time to supplement my income, but that is why I am rarely at home. However, if I do not do it, the re is nothing extra. Now the price of good products is high, isn't it hard? I have to do two jobs.	Less time with family to generate extra income	6. Limited time with family
Rider E: OK, the challenges. That day I said I had been sexually harassed, hahaha; this time, it is real; this time, I sent the food to the wrong location. I have had this many times. It differs from KL, where park names and block numbers are already known, but in Sabah, like this village, where are all those street names? I have to be able to pin on the correct location. Hahaha, as a result, I got lost in a people's village. Besides, I thought before ah. Oh! My income could be more stable. If I am diligent, I have money; if I am lazy, I do not. Yes, so my income could be more stable. More? Uhm, yes, I agree with my friend. The risk of an	Deal with customer dissatisfaction. Wrong location Sexual harassment No work, no income Risk of road accident	7. Sexual harassment 8. Animal attack risk 9. Inactive work terminated after 6 months

accident is high. Not just Grab riders but everyone who rides a motorbike. Oh, where can I work if it is an accident or worse?		
<p>Researcher: Tell me why did you choose this job?</p> <p>Rider F: I think income. When I wanted to get married, I needed to save. However, that is it; it all depends on your efforts. Because I am hardworking, I can accomplish a lot. In addition, I am most afraid of an accident. I cannot imagine what it is like. If I live, I am disabled, then I will burden my family, and if I die, who will support my family later? So that is the biggest challenge as a rider.</p>	No income if no work/income (Rider A, B, C, E, F, G, J, H, C, I) Family breadwinner/no compensation if hospitalized or died	1. Work for income
Rider A: I set my working hours to 8 am-8 pm to save some money. Working for a company is different. If you receive a salary today, you wait another month. I finish my work one or two months before Raya (Similar to Christmas), and I have 2 weeks off during Raya. There is no limit to how I want to arrange my work or holidays. Alone.	More income if work extra hours Flexible hours	2. Flexible hours
Rider B: Yes. We have time to take a short break, pray, and eat during this work. If my mom and dad suddenly want to ask me for help at home, I get off the Grab and go straight home.	Income and flexible hours	
Rider C: I am satisfied, yeah. The money for Grab has already covered food and fuel. The salary from my day job at Weitengen can be saved and kept. Most of the time, it is OK. There is no reason to stay with your parents anymore.	Extra income	
Rider D: I am happy doing this. I used to work as a Domino's rider, but it was tiring because I also had to help in the kitchen.	Satisfied with the job, but exhausting	
Rider E: I can arrange the time and the family if necessary. Take your school children. My wife goes to your clinic. It is good, where can you work and can leave anytime you like	Flexible hours	
Rider F: Iya, so far, so good.	Satisfied with the job	

Rider G: It is OK because I can have an extra income, so it is OK.	Income	
Rider H: Ya, I like this job because of the time; it is freelance; it is like I work whenever convenient for me	Flexible hours	
Rider J Uhm, 50–50. I like riding a motorbike; it is a satisfaction to me, and I get income	Income	
Rider E: Uih, the most challenging, hilly area, chased by a dog, seduced by girls, one time, you know, I called a customer, and I said I had reached the destination, the customer said hold on, I just took a shower, does she needed to tell me she just took a shower. Then, she came out just wearing a bath towel. I looked at different points the moment I saw her. My friend was asked to go into the house and told that her husband was not there. My friend placed the food at the front door and ran.	Animal attack risk Sexual harassment	
Rider H: If I say challenging, it is indeed challenging because there is a risk when you ride on the road. However, I like this job, there is a motivation, like Grab right, every month there are riders' recreational activities such as a fishing contest, we enjoy the activities, and the prizes are also great, like vouchers for gas, engine maintenance, where can you get that! best la	Road accident risk The company provides recreational activities	
Rider A: Iya, fair enough, I can save a little, OK	Income	
Rider B: Iya, now okay.	Satisfied	
Rider E: To date, OK, I can do more, but it depends if I want to work or not; that's it. Haha.	Satisfied	
Rider F: Iya, as long as I want to become a rider and the work is still available. The status as a rider will expire if they do not work for 6 months. I am not sure if we can continue doing the job after that.	Work terminated/expired if no job done in 6 months	

Rider H: Yes, it is worth doing. The income is good, although Grab reduced the commission in 2021-2022, but if hardworking, the income is OK	Income	
Rider C: Yes, grab is my extra income. OK to pay anything.	Income	
Rider G: Yes, the income is enough to pay extra bills; it is enough to support my family	Income	
Rider I: No, to me, I have to work and have a stable income. To do grab, is it OK for a part-time basis? If full-time, I don't think so.	Income	Part-time job

The challenges, effects, and motivational factors of staying at gig work were emphasized by all food riders interviewed. This is particularly remarkable. This is because all interviewees stressed the importance of credible references when they were asked what was their motives for continuing their job despite the difficulties they faced. Table 3 below provides a general idea of the most crucial driving forces behind choosing gig work based on frequency challenges and motivational factors.

There are nine challenges listed in Table 2: income instability, road accidents, no compensation for death or hospitalization and vehicle damage, wrong location, dealing with anger and dissatisfaction among customers, limited time with family, sexual harassment, animal attack risk and Inactive work terminated after 6 months. Most interviewees mentioned that income instability and the risk of road accidents were the main challenges in their daily work. According to the findings, all interviewees delivered food on motorcycles. There is a severe risk of them being involved in road accidents and deaths. It is consistent with Buncaras et al. 's (2022) finding that food delivery riders face many hazards and must avoid them. According to the study, constantly on the road requires a lot of focus and care. This is because even a tiny mistake can result in serious injury if improperly handled. Among the ten interviewees, one had a friend who died, and based on the interview with interviewee D, no compensation was provided for the family left behind. After losing the family's breadwinner, the parents and other siblings felt the most significant impact after the incident. The interviewee hoped this would never happen to his family, as he could not imagine what would happen if he died on the road. He also mentioned that if the accident resulted in a permanent disability, he would burden the family. In addition, he added that if he passed away, no one would be able to feed his family. He suggested that the right course of action when driving on the road is always to remain vigilant. Further investigation revealed that no interviewees had insurance coverage or protection as food delivery employees.

According to their answers to interview questions and observations during rest periods, these employees appear satisfied with their salary, flexible hours, and enjoyment of their work despite the risks they face. They seemed to accept the risks when they discussed being chased by a dog and when they could not find the exact location of their customers (interviewees D, E, H). Mostly, they laughed and were cheerful. As a result of further inquiry, it is evident that none of them disagrees with Grab's commission rates. In most cases, they said they risked their lives for the prosperity of their families.

Further, five of them had tertiary education backgrounds (interviewee A, B, C, D, I), but they chose to work full-time (interviewee A, D), and they are both single and divorced. In the opinion of a degree holder, interviewee I, the job was temporary and served as a stepping stone to gaining more work experience. Seven of the interviewees were full-timers, and the rest were part-timers. Most part-timers had diplomas or degrees (Interviewees A, C, D, I). Generally, interviewees were provided with flexible hours to rest whenever they wanted. Two interviewees complained of fatigue from working two jobs, one of whom also worked at Domino in the kitchen. They were also not required to work every day. All interviewees understand the nature of their work. This is because they work long and hard, they would earn extra income, and by not putting in effort hard, they will receive less income. An interviewee mentioned that Grab provided recreational activities with good prizes, and he expressed his satisfaction by chirping, "Where can you get that?" (Interviewee H). Due to the incorrect location, interviewees had to deal with angry and dissatisfied customers. Although the food was not delivered, Grab paid the interviewee. Most interviewees, however, chose

to move on and forget the rude behaviour of customers, so the rude behaviour did not adversely affect them.

Additionally, it was mentioned that Sabahans were highly tolerant. This is consistent with Buncaras et al (2022), who pointed out that riding on slick roads is dangerous since they can become even more slippery as a result. Thus, they have to ride caution all the time. The time factor was noted to be one of the most significant factors. This is because riders had to make it to their destination in time in order to avoid disappointing their customers by not arriving on time.

Having to work two jobs at the same time, an interviewee did not have time to spend with his family because of his long working hours (interviewee G). Thus, the interviewee is struggling to balance work and family at this point in his life. During this period, he understands that raising a family has been difficult.

Food Delivery Worker Reasons To Work In The Industry

The majority of interviewees were happy and satisfied with their jobs as food delivery workers. They were generally satisfied with the salary, flexibility of working hours, and working schedule. An office job does not provide the same sense of satisfaction as a field job. One interviewee who worked part-time said he enjoyed riding a motorcycle and getting paid for it. Flexibility is the most significant motivating factor for interviewees to do this job. This is because they can work as few hours as they can or as much as they want, depending on their needs. Nine out of ten interviewees mentioned flexibility as the reason they enjoy this job so much.

Most interviewees had a tertiary education certificate, which indicates that they had qualifications and skills that they utilized while working full-time for GrabFood. When probed, many of them felt that they would like to use their qualifications and skills, but they were unable to find jobs that were well-paying or at least sufficient to maintain themselves. Nine out of ten of them were looking for other opportunities due to the nature of their position as GrabFood workers. In addition, they did not have the benefits of an employee, although in Malaysia, companies are legally required to provide Employee Provident Fund (EPF), SOCSO, and EIS contributions to their employees. There are many Malaysian companies that provide minimum benefits to their employees and their dependents, such as medical coverage. Due to the lack of extra income, the interviewees did not contribute to the EPF themselves. Due to this, they are unable to save for their retirement.

The majority of respondents provided solely for their families. Therefore, it is imperative that they earn enough money to provide for their spouses and children, regardless of their work nature. The work of food delivery workers offers a great deal of freedom when it comes to choosing one's own working hours. They are able to take time off whenever they need to attend to more pressing family matters, such as a sick child or school events for their children. Five out of ten respondents indicated that they were able to provide for their families with what they earn. As an additional source of income, three out of ten GrabFood delivery workers do GrabFood delivery. In order to cover additional expenses, these workers have a day job and only deliver food when they are required to do so.

Conclusion

Gig workers face many challenges, but the most pressing is income instability. Families' wellbeing will be their main priority. Having protection would ease the burden on the family if the worker is injured while on duty. The work environment is usually very intense, long and

demanding. Work-related stress is caused by fewer breaks, higher work stress, unsafe riding behaviour, and fatigue. Gig workers are also driven by the ability to work on their own schedule. This issue should be highlighted by human resource management in the company, especially when it comes to compensation. Despite having degrees, the gig delivery riders in this study are unable to find employment. However, they earn enough to support their families, which also indicates good income. Using the study's findings, riders can earn a living. Additionally, the gig economy offers higher wages than traditional jobs and is often less physically demanding. This increased pay can help offset some of the challenges associated with fatigue, unpredictable hours and long delivery times. Additionally, the gig economy allows riders to create their own schedules and take time off. This flexibility can be especially beneficial for those who balance other commitments, such as family or school. Despite the challenges and stress associated with food riding, it generally does not require any specific job descriptions, so it is an ideal part-time job for those without a solid educational background, unemployed, or awaiting a permanent job.

This study found that although gig workers have many advantages, many disadvantages exist. Firstly, the job should provide more security and a stable income. The workers highly need security as the job requires physical demand. Riders and their families may experience financial instability and exposure to many accidents that could lead to death. Secondly, it provides no health insurance or paid time off benefits. They also work long and odd hours and experience fatigue. Depending on customer demand and rider availability, job assignments vary. As a result of a lack of job security, unstable income and no benefits offered, human resource management in relevant organizations should take this matter seriously to protect the workers and be socially responsible.

Recommendations

The government should initiate a proper HR management system in companies in order to support the gig economy, which is expected to grow and contribute to economic growth in the future. In addition to mandating SOCSO for Grab riders, it should also be mandated to prevent accidents. Even though accident risks cannot be eliminated, families would be less burdened in the worst-case scenario, which at the very least, would help their well-being.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the funding provided by Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia and also would like to thank the gig riders who participated in this study for their participation. Their engagement and insights have enabled us to better understand the gig economy and its benefits.

References

- Ahsan, M. (2020). Entrepreneurship and ethics in the sharing economy: A critical perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 161(1), 19–33.
- Ashford, S. J., Caza, B. B., & Reid, E. M. (2018). From surviving to thriving in the gig economy: A research agenda for individuals in the new world of work. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, pp. 38, 23–41.
- Ayapana, M., Bucaras, Z., Gumapas, A., Interia, J., Martin, J., Rodriguez, K., Trucilla, L., and Tus, J. (2022). "Food at Speed of a Click: The Experience and Challenges Faced by Food Delivery Riders Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic". *International Journal of Psychology and Counseling*. Vol.12 (1), pp 192-207.

- Agrawal, A., Lacetera, N., & Lyons, E. (2016). Does standardized information in online markets disproportionately benefit job applicants from less developed countries? *Journal of International Economics*, 103, 1-12.
- Bal, P. M., & Kooij, D. (2011). The relations between work centrality, psychological contracts, and job attitudes: The influence of age. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 20(4), 497–523.
- Basyir, M. (2022). The majority of 350,000 SESSS registrants are from the e-hailing industry. *New Straits Times*. Retrieved 24 July 2022, from <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2022/01/766979/majority-350000-sesss-registrants-e-hailing-industry>
- Berastegui, P. (2021). Exposure to psychosocial risk factors in the gig economy: a systematic review. *ETUI Research Paper-Report*..
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In H. Cooper, P. M. Camic, D. L. Long, A. T. Panter, D. Rindskopf, & K. J. Sher (Eds.), *APA handbook of research methods in psychology*, Vol. 2. Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological (pp. 57–71). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/13620-004>
- Caday, T. L., Draculan, K. A. E., Villapando, K. D. C., & Gumasing, M. J. J. (2021). A Risk Level Assessment of Food Delivery Riders for COVID-19. *International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management*.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks: Sage
- Dablanc, L. E. Morganti, Arvidsson N., Woxenius J., Browne M., Saidi N., (2017), The rise of on-demand 'instant deliveries' in European cities *Supply Chain Forum Int J*, 18 (4) , pp. 203-217
- De Bruyn, S., & Chibili, M. N. (2019). The Food and Beverage Department. In *Modern Hotel Operations Management* (pp. 164-239). Routledge.
- Duggan, J., Sherman, U., Carbery, R., & McDonnell, A. (2022). Boundaryless careers and algorithmic constraints in the gig economy. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 33(22), 4468-4498.
- Hamzat, A., Kanmodi K. K., Adesina, M. A. (2019), Stimulant, narcotic, and hallucinogen use among long-distance commercial drivers in Sokoto: a survey on prevalence and consequential knowledge *Int Public Health J*, 11 (2) pp. 129-137
- Harun, N., Ali, N. M., & Khan, N. L. (2022). An Experimental Measure of Malaysia's Gig Workers Using Labour Force Survey. *Statistical Journal of the IAOS*, Vo.36, No.4, pp. 969-977. Retrieved from <https://content.iospress.com/articles/statistical-journal-of-the-iaos/sji200749>
- Kuhn, K. M., & Galloway, T. L. (2019). Expanding perspectives on gig work and gig workers. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 34(4), 186-191.
- Kaine, S., & Jossierand, E. (2019). The organization and experience of work in the gig economy. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022185619865480>
- Kieling, R. R., Szobot, C. M., Matte, B., Coelho, R. S., Kieling, C., Pechansky, F., Rohde, L. A. (2011), Mental disorders and delivery motorcycle drivers (motoboys): a dangerous association *Eur Psychiatry*, 26 (1) pp. 23-27
- Kurniawati, A., Raj, M. S. S., & Singh, J. S. K. (2021). The study of customer satisfaction among Grab users in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. *Electronic Journal of Business and Management*, 6(2), 30-64. Mustapa, S. N. S., Anuar, A., & Mohd Piah, Z. (2021). Food

- delivery business: A new trend in 2020. *FBM Insights Universiti Teknologi Mara Cawangan Kedah*, 3, 13-15
- Koutsimpogiorgos, N., Van Slageren, J., Herrmann, A. M., & Frenken, K. (2020). Conceptualizing the gig economy and its regulatory problems. *Policy & Internet*, 12(4), 525-545.
- Karman, A. (2020). Understanding sustainable human resource management—organizational value linkages: The strength of the SHRM system. *Human Systems Management*, 39(1), 51-68.
- Langerud, D. H., & Jordan, P. J. (2018). Entitlement at work: Linking positive behaviours to employee entitlement. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 26(1), 75–94. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2018.33>
- Leenoi, P. (2021). How to Improve Working Conditions for Gig Workers in Thailand. *Policy Brief: International Labour Organization, Geneva*.
- Lehdonvirta, V., Kassi, O., Hjorth, I., Barnard, H., & Graham, M. (2019). The global platform economy: A new offshoring institution enabling emerging-economy micro providers. *Journal of Management*, 45(2), 567-599.
- Lin, P. M., Au, W. C., Leung, V. T., & Peng, K. L. (2020). Exploring the meaning of work within the sharing economy: A case of food-delivery workers. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 91, 102686.
- LinkedIn Talent Solutions. (2022). Hiring food delivery riders. <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/resources/how-to-hire-guides/food-delivery-driver/job-description>
- Gould, M. A. (2009). Fast food work: An empirical perspective of ideal employees. *Relations industrielles*, 64(3), 376-398.
- Manuti, A., Curci, A., & Van der Heijden, B. (2018). The meaning of working for young people: the case of the millennials. *International Journal of Training and Development*, 22(4), 274-288.
- Ikkal, M. N. A., Abdullah, A., & Ab Rahman, S. A. (2022). Perception of food delivery rider during Movement Control Order (MCO): A case study in Wangsa Maju Kuala Lumpur. *Social & Management Research Journal*, 19(1), 145–163. <https://doi.org/10.24191/smrj.v19i1.17271>
- Papakostopoulos, V., & Nathanael, D. (2021). The complex interrelationship of work-related factors underlying risky driving behaviour of food delivery riders in Athens, Greece. *Safety and health at work*, 12(2), 147-153.
- Popan, C. (2021). Embodied precariat and digital control in the "Gig Economy": The mobile labour of food delivery workers. *Journal of Urban Technology*, 1-20.
- Randolph, S. A. (2019). Gig Workers. *Workplace Health & Safety*, 67(8), 439–440.
- Shafiei, A., Mohamed, R., & Ab Rahman, R. (2022). Factors Affecting Food Delivery Riders' Intention to Participate in the Gig Economy. *Social and Management Research Journal*, 19(2), 169-210.
- Shin D. S., Byun, J. H., Jeong, B. Y. (2019), Crashes and traffic signal violations caused by commercial motorcycle couriers *Saf Health Work*, 10 (2) pp. 213-218
- Snir, R., & Harpaz, I. (2002). Work-Leisure Relations: Leisure Orientation and the Meaning of Work. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 34(2), 178–203. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2002.11949968>
- The Star. (2021). Delivery riders get protection from Socso. *The Star*. Retrieved from <https://www.thestar.com.my/business/business-news/2021/07/17/delivery-riders-get-protection-from-socso>

Yli-Renko, H., Autio, E., & Tontti, V. (2002). Social capital, knowledge, and the international growth of technology-based new firms. *International business review*, 11(3), 279-304.