

Gig employees' experience: Exploring the well-being of location-based (male) gig workers

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Submitted to the National College of Ireland, August 2024

National College of Ireland

Project Submission Sheet

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Programme: Master of Arts in Human Resource Management **Year:** 2023

Module: Dissertation

Thesis supervisor: Louise Maguire

Submission due date: 10 August 2024

Project title: Gig employees' experience: Exploring the well-being of location-based (male) gig workers

Word count: 15409

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Abstract

The gig economy has grown rapidly due to digitalization and unexpected events such as financial crises and the pandemic. After Covid-19, the number of gig workers increased to 435 million and the gig economy has been studied widely since that. The reason is due to the nature of the gig economy, which creates many advantages for the gig employees' lives such as flexibility and work-life balance. However, the literature review shows that gig workers and their employers encounter multiple disadvantages regarding employees' well-being. Well-being covers the health of physical, emotional and financial levels of people. Focusing on employees' well-being creates employee engagement and retention and benefits a company through employees' performance and productivity. Thus, many studies highlighted that holistic policies, regulations and strategies will encourage gig employment. On top of that, the Irish Supreme Court has announced a new regulation for gig workers meaning they should be treated as PAYE employees.

Considering this new decision, the researcher decided to explore gig employees' well-being, identify if there are any employers' initiatives towards gig employees' well-being and study if gig employees' well-being has changed since the Supreme Court's decision. The researcher interviewed 10 male gig workers who work in location-based gig jobs as well as analyzed data using a quantitative approach. However, the result of the study showed that gig workers struggle with their present lives and have physical and emotional tiredness. Also, the gig employees do not receive any initiatives related to their well-being and the Court's decision has not been introduced to the gig workers. Therefore, only 10% of the participants have heard about the decision and the interviewee who heard of the Supreme Court action said that he did not want to be treated as a PAYE employee due to tax concerns. Furthermore, the study recommends that further research include a diverse sample of gig workers across different types of gig workers and industries. Additionally, focusing on the Supreme Court's decision and its implementation and legislative actions to create an inclusive environment for gig workers. The researcher would note the Supreme Court's decision and its implementation will support gig workers in the Irish context and attract a potential talent pool to Ireland.

Declaration

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Acknowledgments

Firstly, I am grateful for the opportunity to study in the Master's program, the college year and the chance to study gig employees experience were one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life. The college, the program, the lecturers and all the college's employees were professional and respectful. Also, I had the pleasure of meeting my international classmates.

I would like to sincerely thank my dissertation supervisor Dr Louise Maguire and her exceptional supervision. I am very grateful for her empathetic manner, clear guidance, warm encouragement, agile working style and honest feedback. Without her supervision, the research study I undertook would not have come to fruition.

As well, I would like to offer special thanks to the participants who spent their valuable time on the interviews and shared their honest experiences for the research. Doing interviews with them was a great opportunity to identify reality and share their experiences on the study.

I also appreciate my family and their unlimited support and kindness for my wonderful student journey.

With this acknowledgment, I would love to say that I am honored to be a part of the academic community and I am looking forward to my future career.

Thank you so much for everything

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Background

Nowadays, employees are the most valuable asset in any workplace and retaining human resources is important for organizational success, sustainability and competitiveness. Effective management of the workforce is a challenge for most organizations today but securing and retaining skillful workers can be a major issue (Jayanthi et al., 2019).

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digitalization and the digital transformation of work has brought rapid change within the traditional working style. This agile transformation has offered to increase online working opportunities (Sendur, 2022;). Working with inconsistent income and corporate employment benefits were the main working style before the influences listed above; nevertheless, digitalization and remote working have been challenged by some effects on employee well-being and work-life balance (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2021).

Attracting the talent pool and retaining them in the long term depends on the organization's overall strategy. In order to maintain the workforce, development opportunities, compensation, work-life balance, work environment, etc. are crucial for any company. However, depending on personal preference or the importance of a job people have been choosing their own working style (Kossivi et al., 2016).

According to the World Bank, around 435 million gig workers are working actively and looking for flexibility and autonomy, which suits their lifestyles. As the statistics suggest that there is a need to investigate their well-being (Datte et al., 2023).

1.2 Research focus

This research concentrates on gig employees' well-being who are living in Ireland. Gig employees are identified for their independent talent, flexible working style and work-life balance (Kempton, 2023).

The gig economy and its employees are a relatively new phenomenon and their well-being and their rights have been attended to in Ireland in recent years. The first important decision related to the gig economy was that gig workers should be treated as PAYE employees (Healy, 2023).

The gig economy was studied extensively and 2297 documents were discussed in academic sources between 2014 and 2022. Most articles were focused on the relationships between employees and employers. As well, as current debates covered “(1) new types of organizations (e.g., algorithmic control and managerial oversight); (2) new nature of work (e.g., weak social and legal protection); (3) new status of employees (e.g., distinguishing between employees and independent contractors)” (Batmunkh et al., 2022).

As such, there is a gap in academic study about gig employees' well-being as well as the implications of the Supreme Court and gig employees' well-being in the Irish context, which is the research's focus. Critical to this study is the extension of the above research with a special focus on the gap identified in the literature on how gig employees' well-being is in the Irish context.

This study will be run through a review of relevant literature and related reports' data collection by the researcher.

1.3 Overall research aim, objectives and methods

The overall aim of the study is to define how gig employees' well-being is. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. **To explore how male gig workers feel about their well-being overall.**
2. **To ascertain if gig employees receive any initiatives related to their well-being from their working companies.**
3. **To evaluate if gig employees' well-being has changed since the Supreme Court's decision that Gig employees are treated as PAYE employees.**

The primary research is conducted qualitatively using online calls and telephone interviews with gig employees who consider their gig work as their main income source, with the expectation to contribute to existing studies in the literature. The research approach being undertaken is justified as similar peer-reviewed research has also utilized this method (Alterman et al., 2018; Stiehl et al., 2019; Benjamin et al., 2019).

The researcher believes to benefit from a more in-depth understanding of gig employees' well-being, any activities towards their well-being and the implications of the Supreme Court's decision in Ireland by comparing the theory in the literature with results from their real-world study. Full details on the research methodology will be discussed in a later chapter.

1.4 Organization of the dissertation

The literature review chapter will critically study and analyze related theories about the study, which will encourage identifying the research questions and objectives. The research methodology will be discussed and choose how it should be undertaken to answer the specific research questions and objectives. The interview's data and findings will be analyzed to provide insights and will be considered within the theory in the literature to illustrate the conclusion. The research's limitations will be explained with recommendations for further research. After all, the researcher's self-reflection section will be written.

1.5 Value of this research

The study contributes to the literature as there are no studies related to the research aims. The researcher's knowledge will explore data regarding gig employees' well-being and their right to be treated as PAYE employees. Even though the findings from the study cannot represent the majority of people due to the small sample size, they can be used to offer some insights into this topic and provide a foundation for further research. The researcher believes that the study will help to deepen understanding related to overall gig employees' well-being and its implications.

The next chapter will critically examine the literature appropriate to research objectives.

Chapter 2 - Review of literature

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the literature related to the gig economy and well-being. Since the 21st century, organizational development has undergone social, political and technological changes that led to transformations within the working world (Sanidas, 2004; and Zhidkova, 2022). Advancements and changes have altered the nature of work and human mindsets (Vucekovic et al., 2023). Traditional standard employment is about retaining employment through continuous, full-time and subordinate cooperation. However, according to the International Labour Organization (2016) employers and governments have begun to accept and encourage different types of labour such as the gig economy which is included in non-standard employment (NSE).

2.2 Gig economy

The gig economy and its workers are defined differently in the scientific literature and by international reports such as taskers, self-employed workers, sharing economy workers, crowd

workers, platform workers, independent contractors, work 4.0 and free market (Koutsimpogiorgos et al., 2020; Tan et al., 2021; Watston et al., 2021; and International Labour Organization, 2024). The International Labour Organization (ILO) (2016) conducted research and examined working conditions, labour market transitions and implementations of introduced non-standard employment around the world. The report highlighted four types of temporary employment which are as follows, part-time, on-call work, multi-party employment relationship and disguised employment/dependent self-employment. Disguised employment/dependent self-employment means its workers are not part of the employment relationship but are engaged with digital tools and the driving force of the revolution is digitalization (Aguinis and Lawal, 2013; Stewart and Stanford, 2017; Wood et al., 2019). The economic term emphasizes that the economy is organized through digital platforms (OECD, 2023). The economy has expanded new business markets, jobs and income opportunities with parties' flexibility and limitation of participation throughout the economy. Therefore, holistic policies, regulations and strategies will encourage gig employees (Tan, 2021; OECD, 2021; International Labour Organization, 2024). Basically, connector online platforms, which match firms and workers is the main novelty of the gig economy. For example, care.com is an online platform for home services and approximately 5 million people gain employment via the website. The platform "Crowdsource" organizes 8 million workers in crowd-work, where companies and workers are connected through the platform (Ruyter and Brown, 2019). Ruyter and Brown (2019) noted that the nature of gig work is referred to as "Whirligig", which means the rate and repetition are unpredictable. In the 20th century, the gig was most associated with show business and its musicians tended to entertain the public through one-off events. During this time, entertainment industry players getting paid was unpredictable and precarious. The phrase 'Whirligig' is now abbreviated to GIG and GIG work's nature was temporary, infrequent and

underpaid. In the 21st century, Gig work has covered any type of performance, task or participation with or without payment. Nowadays, Datta et al., (2023) found 5 main reasons why employers hire gig workers such as 60% said they did not have specifically skilled workers, 43% said that gig workers offer more flexible prices than full-time employees, 33% noted that gig workers are affordable and 24% said lack of availability from permanent workers. A Gartner (2022) study explained that 30% of respondents work with gig workers and 50% of respondents said that gig employees help to improve their business agility. Since the pandemic, the gig economy and its types have been studied widely (Liao, 2020; Eaton and Heckscher, 2021; Taylor et al., 2023). Gig work can also be divided into location-based gig jobs (which are arranged by digital platforms such as taxi drivers), and online gig jobs (which obtain tasks, assignments or professional jobs such as data entry, and website design). But also, online gig jobs provide online freelancing and microwork. While online freelancing workers are highly skilled and project-based, microwork is based on tasks that are divided into small subtasks (Datta et al., 2023). The Gig economy has been implemented in many sectors such as hospitality, transportation, and professional services (e.g. IT, architecture, accounting, HR, legal) (OECD, 2021). A study by Pesole et al., (2018) classified platform workers into 11 categories such as clerical and data-entry, professional services, creative and multimedia work, sales and marketing etc.. On top of that, the significant comparison was online workers (median age 34) were 10 years younger than offline workers (median age 44). In addition, Ozimek (2022) found that 47% of remote workers are freelancers and also that freelancers have the highest satisfaction for work-life balance and daily performance in comparison to traditional employees and freelancers.

2.2.1 The International Gig Economy

CIPD (2023) found that the gig workers' type and size of employment in the UK are as follows, private hire drivers 11% (e.g. taxi drivers), food delivery drivers 18%, couriers 12% (e.g. package and postal deliveries), manual personal services 20% (e.g. electrical work, plumbing, cleaning.,) and desk-based services 53% (e.g. IT development, communication services, admin jobs.,). In the UK, there are around 500,000 gig workers and 50% of them see their gig work as their main income source.

In 2023, the Irish Supreme Court announced that delivery drivers, who are defined as gig workers should be served like employees otherwise PAYE employees (Healy, 2023).

Dua at al (2022) asserted that 36% of American workers who work in the Gig economy as platform workers such as freelancers, or professionals hired on a part-time or short-time basis will make up 85.6 million people by 2027 (Buffett, 2024). In the U.S. freelancers are a big contributor to the labor market and economy, which makes up 36% of the workforce and made \$1.3 trillion to the U.S. economy in 2020. From 2020 to 2021, the share of workers increased by 1,2% to 35%. The freelancers are highly educated and 51% of freelancers have postgraduate degrees (Ozemik, 2021).

In Korea, the sharing economy was started by a few start-ups in the early 2010s and the advantages of the Gig economy are defined as cost-effective, high customer experience, and enhancement of capacity. As well as the Information and Communication Technology sectors led to rapid gig economy development and reached 276 billion Korea Won investment in 2019 (Kim, 2022).

In Malaysia, 5 million gig workers were working in 2022, the research based on the Job Demands Roles model concludes gig employee engagement is motivated by their job autonomy and impacts on their job performance (Mohsin, 2022).

In Scotland, gig employees' experience is evaluated through Scotland's Fair Work Framework, which involves employees' security, opportunity, effective voice, respect, and fulfillment. The Scotland framework reported that Gig employees work with many challenges and every experience is different. Evaluation results showed that Gig workers have limited opportunities for career advancement, learning and development regardless of the chance to learn on the job. Regarding effective voice and respect, neither employer nor customer platform workers feel respected or listened to their voice. (Fair Work Convention, 2016)

2.2.2 Gig employees' experience

Sudden events such as financial crises or the pandemic increased the number of participants in the gig economy (Zwick, 2018; Taylor, 2023). On top of that, Datta et al., (2023) asserted that globally there are 435 million online gig workers, its 243 million (56.3% is 30 or below age) are young people and the overall number of males (56%) is higher. Flexibility on location and time management (27.4%), an opportunity to learn digital new skills (15.5%), online/side jobs providing extra income (23.9%), autonomy (12.9%) and survival (20.3%) were reasons why young people chose to work in the gig economy (Ahmad, 2021). While youths and adults were both motivated by flexibility and learning new skills adults are motivated by additional income. The gig workers' employee status is situationally variable due to job-specific factors and contingency (Dubal, 2019). Gig workers defined their employment status as self-employed with employees (27.5%), self-employed without employees (26.2%), employees (19.5%), disabled (16.3%), students (15.4%), and housewives (8.7%). Gig workers are considered as an important component of modern working style and considering their interest in work-life balance and the nature of work is crucial (Wu and Huang, 2024).

The Gig economy is a key part of a contemporary workforce that allows people who care for their babies or parents to work and earn money, for example. Goswami (2020) survey shows half of the Gig workers are between 40 and 59 years old and around 20% are in their 60s. In the last 10 years, the gig economy has expanded by 43%. However, Gig workers do not take the advantages related to wellbeing and security as office workers. Katz and Krueger (2016) surveyed contingent (Gig) working arrangements from 2005 to 2015 in the US, the workers' engagement rating increased from 10.5% to 15.8% due to alternative working arrangements such as feeling autonomy and flexibility and arranging their time. However, gig employees do not receive any job security or rights related to well-being such as sick pay. However, flexibility and autonomy are the most perceived advantages of the Gig economy (Ravenelle, 2019 and Wood et al., 2019).

These literature reviews show that Gig employees have autonomy and flexibility to create their wanted outcomes nevertheless, some research highlights that Gig employees lack support related to well-being.

Essentially the gig economy's key characteristics are that it is precarious (International Labour Organization, 2016; Tan, 2021), contains insecurity, fewer benefits, high competition, fewer expenses, higher incomes for some, autonomy, social isolation (Musilek et al., 2019; Graham et al., 2017 and International Labour Organization, 2016) and uncertainty rather than standard employment (Bryant, 2020; Caza et al., 2021; Lauren and Anandan, 2024; Chen et al., 2024). The most recent study of International Labour Organization (2024) featuring the gig economy is based on a task-based payment model and this research shows that the gig economy has significant gaps within social security and its coverage. For example, lack in health insurance, unemployment insurance, pension coverage or planning and injury insurance.

2.3 Well-being

Well-being and its dimensions are defined variously in scientific literature and this section will discuss different aspects of well-being.

On the one hand, the International Labour Organization (2024) defined that employee well-being relates to all aspects of working life such as the working environment, utilizing physical things such as tools, equipment and facilities, employee satisfaction, workplace culture and teamwork. Similarly, the World Health Organization (2010) stated that physical, mental and social well-being are components of health. Healthy well-being illustrates a person who can work productively, contribute to their environment and cope with life stressors. Also, the WHO Healthy Workplace model was introduced, which looked at the physical work environment, personal health resources, enterprise community involvement and psychosocial work environment (e.g. organization's internal decision latitude, time pressure, job clarity, job design, communication, culture, control management style, and leadership).

On the other hand, CIPD (2023) considers that the well-being model works within the scope of health, good work, values/principles, collective/social, personal growth, good lifestyle choices and financial well-being. In detail, financial well-being is highlighted with fair pay and benefits policies, retirement planning and employee financial support. Good work is shown in a good working environment, good line management, fair work demands, balanced autonomy, inclusive change management and fair pay and reward. Values and principles illustrate leadership, and ethical standards lead forward inclusion and diversity. Collective/Social well-being shows the well-being of the group people/team through employee voice and positive relationships. Personal growth is measured by an employee's career development, emotions, lifelong learning and creativity. Good lifestyle choices benefit from physical activity and healthy eating. Health and

well-being provide three dimensions of health such as physical health, physical safety and mental health.

Besides these studies, CIPD (2023) conducted surveys to find companies' activities for employees' well-being. As a result, companies organize the following; training/workshops related to sharing knowledge of well-being (e.g. stress management and work-life balance), activating employee assistance programs, some medical examinations (e.g. free eye tests for remote workers) and providing occupational sick pay through insurance initiatives (CIPD, 2023).

On top of that, these companies' initiatives for employees' well-being affect productivity, rate of absenteeism, presenteeism and retention (Harter et al., 2003; Cartwright et al., 2005; Nielsen and Noblet, 2018). Also, WHO (2010) highlighted that a business's success depends on its employees' health and well-being as well as U.S. Chamber of Commerce (2016) concluded that employers' best practice is investing in their most expensive asset, within most companies the most expensive asset is their workforce which is essential to a company's functions. Also, investing in human capital's health and well-being is beneficial for a company. For example, a well-designed well-being program's investment of \$1.5 becomes 3\$ profit for a company in two to nine years. CIPD (2023) claimed that employee health and well-being initiatives boost employee engagement, improve performance, promote an employee value proposition, create better employee morale and engagement, a healthier and more inclusive culture, better work-life balance, lower sickness, enhance the employer brand, better employee retention and reduce work-related stress. In order to nurture effective performance and an effective work environment, organizations and their activities should consider the importance of psychological and subjective well-being (Rani et al., 2017; Li et al., 2022;).

2.3.1 Subjective well-being (SWB)

Ryff and Keyes (1995) introduced the structure of psychological well-being within a 6-factor model and Ryff (2013) redefined core dimensions of psychological well-being through autonomy, environmental mastery, self-acceptance, purpose in life, positive relationships and personal growth. These dimensions claim that humans need to self-realize and develop themselves for what they want to be. Also, the studies explored the relationship between psychological well-being and physical health. Otherwise, workloads are the main factor for depression and physical symptoms.

Equally, subjective well-being and mental health conditions are related to job-related factors (e.g. job content, tasks, workload, job control, organizational culture, interpersonal relationships, role, career development and work schedule) (World Health Organization, 2022). Subjective well-being (SWB) shows good mental states related to various evaluations such as positive and negative moods, feelings, states and people's reactions to their life experiences. However, Lu and Gilmour (2004) explained that culture is a major force for subjective well-being and it shapes the experience of SWD. The culture involves SWD with socially oriented or individually oriented. The study highlighted that happiness is a top example of SWD and noted conceptions of happiness are defined differently in Asian and Euro-American cultures. For example, Asians are socially oriented and they define subjective well-being as a duty for society. Whereas Western Euro-Americans are individually oriented and subjective well-being is shown as personal accountability. Besides that, happiness and unhappiness are ever-present as the background to each other, whereas for the Americans, their relationship only comes to notice when one is currently unhappy.

Recognizing the importance of assessing employees' well-being, the 5-item World Health Organization Well-being Index (WHO-5) was introduced and it has been used since 1998. Topp

et al., (2014) highlighted that the index has high validity and 213 articles noted that the assessment applies to a wide range of study fields.

2.4 Gig workers' well-being

The fourth industrial revolution, digitalization and the pandemic have been intensifying gig works based on digital platforms. Studying gig workers' well-being will develop an ecosystem for gig employees (Kim, 2022). Considering literature reviews related to gig employees' well-being, remote and gig workers' well-being within physical and psychological aspects were being studied actively. The employees illustrated their well-being through the next perspectives such as gig employees experienced threats and discrimination from users who order or get service from gig employees (D'Cruz, 2016; Chen, 2018; Roberts, 2018; Koppel, 2018; Berger, 2019; Lehdonvirta, 2018; Ljungholm, 2019; Nickell, 2019; Churchill, 2019; Davis, 2020). Insecure work, insufficient work-life balance, burnout, work dissatisfaction, exploiting vulnerabilities of migrant workers and meaningfulness were mentioned (Deng, 2016; Brawley, 2017; Koppel, 2018; Kost, 2018; Lehdonvirta, 2019; Nemkova, 2019; Christie, 2019; Durlauf, 2019; Jesnes, 2019; Keith, 2019; Davis, 2020). Also, competition, lack of training, data breaches, ownership and privacy of data, and unfair pay rates were concluded in other studies (Dufva, 2017; Smith, 2018; Wood et al., 2019; Duhaime, 2019; Goods, 2019; Lemke, 2019).

From recent studies, Samad et al., (2022) concluded that gig workers' main factor for choosing work in the gig economy is flexibility to arrange their work and life balance. However, there are many disadvantages such as a lack of financial well-being related to insurance, health benefits and retirement planning. But also, it is challenging to keep a work-life balance due to the demands of work being unpredictable. Banks (2019) discussed the well-being implications of gig work and noted that Uber drivers in New York City earn \$30 hourly. However, gig work is stressful, with

job insecurity, poor working conditions and lack of encouragement economically, psychologically, physically and socially. The report noted that there should be support systems and basic protections designed for gig employees.

Arnoldi et al., (2021) studied the well-being of gig workers who work in low-skilled, service-based jobs. The study found that the low-skilled gig workers are usually migrants who find challenges for permanent jobs. In order to afford life expenses, low-skilled gig workers work at Amazon, Uber and Deliveroo. Moreover, the study offered four enhancements for their well-being. First, legal aspects to protect gig workers such as contracts. Second, job-related regulation of compensation and appraisal. Third, encourage their social well-being such as social networking and fourth, system improvements for gig workers' well-being.

Li et al., (2022) reported that Covid-19 created reduced accessibility to work, created a lack of work for everyone in addition to uncertainty internationally, isolation, a lack of communication and distancing from the workplace. However, technological advancements and working arrangements have been made in the workplace for full-time employees. By contrast, the gig work's nature is flexible, uncertain, irregular, unstable, temporary and diverse. The study examined gig workers' physical, psychological, social and subjective well-being during the Covid-19 pandemic. The study noted the pandemic impacted gig workers' well-being variously. The nature of gig work changed into intense working hours, physical tiredness and sleep deprivation due to isolation and on-demand jobs. Some gig workers experienced a lack of work at times, which caused anxiety due to not maintaining an income. However, many gig workers felt self-growth and self-acceptance because gig workers were used to working from home with freedom thus a lesser need to panic during the pandemic.

Yan (2023) researched the effects of Enterprise-Union on gig workers' well-being in China. The research is based on gig workers' problems related to labour rights and security. Labour security, labour rights and development labour rights are the foundation of gig employees' well-being. Not well-defined or protected labour rights and security cause a low level of well-being and poor quality of work. Data was collected from 13 platform enterprises in China and 312 valid data were used. 60% of participants were male, 73% were aged 21-40 and 44% accounted for an express service industry. The theoretical framework concentrated on the three implementations (improvement of regulation, obtaining training to develop gig employees professionally and supporting gig employees' physical and psychological needs) for maintaining the well-being of gig workers. The practical approaches enrich gig employees' well-being within work autonomy, right to voice, promote their career and so on. Furthermore, the study offered to study executions of trade unions and enterprises in practice and explore basic labour rights of gig employment.

Datta et al., (2023) surveyed online gig workers' social protection through social insurance (e.g. pensions, unemployment insurance and disability benefits) and social assistance (e.g. cash and in-kind transfers and care services). The study found that most online gig workers do not get insurance or social protection from platforms and companies. The study showed that gig workers lack coverage and regulations that manage their social security. Basically, gig workers do not acquire health insurance and are not contributing to their pensions or retirement plans. The Working Without Borders report recommended policy recommendations to benefit well-being and avoid the risks of gig workers globally. Therefore, training which promotes gig workers to build digital skills and practical on-the-job skills (e.g. professional or mental health) will create labour market inclusion. On the other hand, digital infrastructure and digital devices should be accessible to anyone such as access to loans for getting needed devices. Also, improved social protection

coverage (e.g. health insurance, sick leave and retirement benefits) for gig workers regardless of contract or segmentation. Gig workers are an important part of the global economy and they are increasing the mass of the workforce, (Batjwa, 2018 and Harun et al., 2020).

2.5 Conclusion

Studying the gig economy and well-being, the literature review reveals that gig jobs have opportunities and challenges for gig workers. The gig economy is driven by social, political, and technological changes and the number of participants is increasing yearly. The gig economy involves autonomy, flexibility, and additional income opportunities, which attracts certain demographics, including young people and people who seek work-life balance. However, gig workers face more challenges than full-time employees such as insecurity, unpredictable income, lack of benefits and protections and limited career advancement opportunities. Additionally, the contingency nature of the gig work leads to a lack of financial and subjective well-being. Employee well-being is crucial for both workers and organizational success. Effective well-being initiatives develop employee engagement, productivity, and retention, and benefit companies. To address these issues, there is a need to study gig employees' well-being within the Irish context. Fair compensation, social protections such as health insurance and pensions, and environments that show respect, choice to be heard, and development opportunities. By identifying gig workers' well-being, the study can suggest a more inclusive and supportive gig economy that promotes gig employees' well-being.

Chapter 3- Research question and objectives

3.1 Research question

Saunders et al., (2023) noted that research questions allow the research project to clarify what the issue is and what the research will seek to find out, explain and answer. The review of the literature revealed a common theme that has shown the need to discover gig employees' subjective well-being. Consequently, the main research question is:

How is the overall well-being of male gig employees who work as location-based gig workers?

3.2 Research objectives

Saunders et al., (2023) claimed that “research objectives allow you to operationalize your question, that is to state the steps you will take to answer it. Each research objective therefore provides a clear specific statement of an aspect of the research that you need to undertake to meet your research aim”.

In order to find an answer to the main question, the following sub-objectives were formulated from the review of the literature.

1. To explore how gig workers feel about their well-being overall.

Even though Gig employees and their challenges have been studied, the studies are focused on data related demographically and geographically, there are some gaps in how gig workers feel about their well-being. The first research objective seeks to understand the well-being of gig workers who consider their gig work as their main income source.

2. To ascertain if gig employees receive any initiatives related to their well-being from their working companies.

There has been some research about employees receiving initiatives for their well-being and these outcomes impacting an organization's success (CIPD, 2023). However, several studies showed that gig employees do not get support related to their well-being. Nowadays, gig workers' mass and scope are being grown by digitalization (Wood et al., 2019) and 435 million gig workers work actively in 2023 (Datta et al., 2023). Objective two of this research aims to define if there are specific activities related to well-being for gig employees.

3. To evaluate if gig employees' well-being has changed since the Supreme Court's decision that Gig employees are treated as employees.

The literature review studied that Gig employees feel autonomy and flexibility but they do not receive well-being initiatives. However, gig employees within the Irish context are supposed to receive some initiatives and be treated as PAYE employees (Healy, 2023). The research will study whether there are any changes in gig employees' well-being within the Irish context.

Comparing the studies and the literature review findings, this study will gain an understanding of how gig employees feel about their well-being and initiatives regarding the workplace within the Irish context and contribute knowledge to the literature of the future.

The next chapter demonstrates the research methods used with these research objectives.

Chapter 4 – Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The research aims to study the well-being of gig employees in an Irish context, especially the initiatives related to the well-being of gig employees. This chapter will discuss methodological considerations for this study. Saunders et al., (2023) explained that research methodology shows how research will be managed and the process to collect and analyze data. In order to find the most appropriate research methodology, I am using the research onion which was suggested by Saunders et al., (2023), which shows the research procedures and supports the researcher to find the most suitable method to address the problems of the research.

Figure 1 The research onion

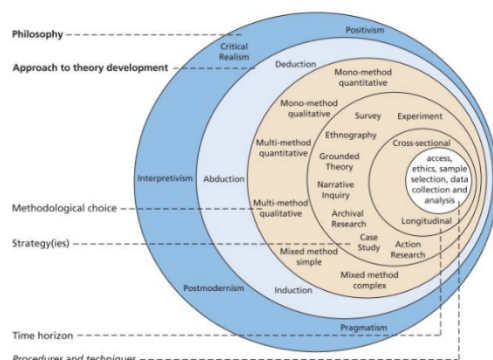


Figure 4.1 The research onion
Source: © 2022 Mark NK Saunders; developed from Saunders et al. 2019

Source: Saunders et al., 2019, p.130

In this chapter, research philosophies, the research approach, sampling methods, data collection, data analysis, research limitations and ethical considerations will be discussed.

4.2 Research philosophy

The term research philosophy is defined as “a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge.” (Saunders et al., 2023, p. 131). Research philosophy sets out the worldview within the study and impacts how data is interpreted. Conducting research, the researchers will be aware of different assumptions (e.i. ontological and epistemological) at every stage.

Saunders et al., (2023) explained that ontological assumptions are about the realities or nature of reality. This assumption defines the things that comprise reality and encompasses objectivism and subjectivism. In detail, objectivism illustrates realism and integrates assumptions of the natural sciences and social reality. Subjectivism shows a merged belief of the arts and humanities, which is set out by people’s perceptions and actions. Tan et al., (2020) asserted that the gig economy’s ontological assumption is based on diverse factors such as technological advancements, social norms, individual aspirations and location. The realities of the gig economy are perceived and expanded by gig workers themselves, policymakers and regulators (Singh, 2023).

Saunders et al., (2023) asserted that Epistemological assumptions are related to human knowledge such as what is acceptable, valid and legal and how the knowledge can be impactful to use. As well, the assumption provides positivism and interpretivism. Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) highlighted positions of positivism, which concentrates on physical objects and natural phenomena and focuses on the facts and measures them. In addition, interpretivism focuses on the whole experience rather than small parts of it; research objectives are influenced by a researcher’s interest; a researcher uses formal discussions and interviews. Moreover, positivism encourages the researcher to center on statistical results and interpretivism supports the subjective meaning of the study (Junjie and Yingxin, 2021).

The researcher will concentrate on interpretive philosophy to expand understanding and interpretations of the study (Saunders et al., 2019). Additionally, interpretive studies improve the depth of understanding and interpretations (Saunders et al., 2023). A well-thought-out assumption will create a credible research philosophy and research question as well as ensure that the assumptions are consistent with the research design and methods used (Saunders et al., 2023).

4.3 Research approach

Saunders et al., (2023) explained that three main approaches are portrayed to theory development such as deductive, inductive and abductive as well as the fundamental differences are illustrated in Table 1. The deductive approach refers to “a theory and hypothesis are developed and research strategy designed to test the hypothesis”. The inductive approach assumes that “data are collected and a theory developed as a result of the data analysis. As well, abduction is explained that “data are used to explore the phenomenon, identify themes and explain patterns, to generate a new or modify an existing theory which is subsequently tested, often through additional data collection”.

Table 1 Deduction, induction and abduction: from reason to research

	Deduction	Induction	Abduction
Logic	In a deductive inference, when the premises are true, the conclusion must also be true	In an inductive inference, known premises are used to generate untested conclusions	In an abductive inference, known premises are used to generate testable conclusions
Generalisability	Generalising from the general to the specific	Generalising from the specific to the general	Generalising from the interactions between the specific and the general
Use of data	Data collection is used to evaluate propositions or hypotheses related to an existing theory	Data collection is used to explore a phenomenon, identify themes and patterns and create a conceptual framework	Data collection is used to explore a phenomenon, identify themes and patterns, locate these in a conceptual framework and test this through subsequent data collection and so forth
Theory	Theory falsification or verification	Theory generation and building	Theory generation or modification; incorporating existing theory where appropriate, to build new theory or modify existing theory
Philosophical underpinning*	Positivism (Pragmatism)	Interpretivism (Critical realism) (Postmodernism) (Pragmatism)	(Interpretivism) Critical realism Postmodernism Pragmatism

* brackets indicate use is less frequent within this philosophy

Source: Saunders et al., 2023 p. 155

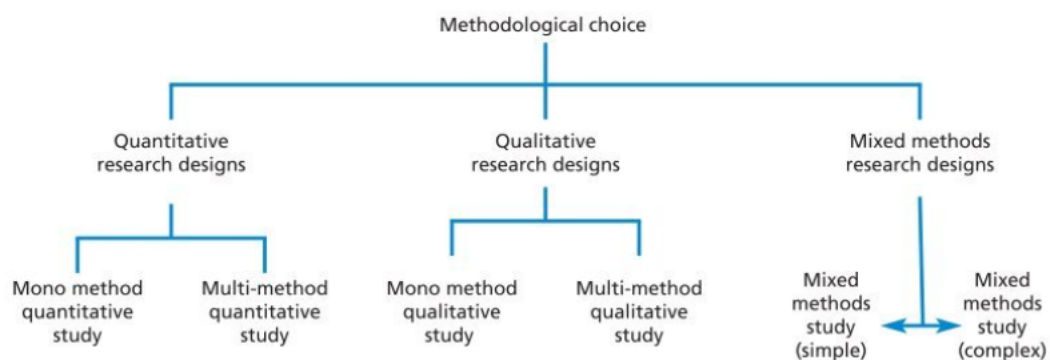
This study is concerned with finding and sharing the feelings and experiences of gig employees. Thus, the researcher will adopt an inductive research approach. With induction, data collection is used to identify a phenomenon, consider themes and patterns and create a conceptual framework (Saunders et al., 2023).

4.4 Research design and method

Saunders et al., (2023) explained that research design is the progress to answer the research question and plan to achieve the research aim. It defines how to collect and analyze data, consider ethical issues and elements of research design. Ethical, purposeful, well-designed, transparent, contextualized, credible, careful, imaginative and equitable are defined as principles for high-quality research (Naughton et al., 2020).

Research methodological choice refers to either quantitative, qualitative or mixed approaches Saunders et al., (2023). The three methodological choices and their differences are explained in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Methodological choice



Source: Saunders et al., 2023, p. 182

Streefkerk (2019) stated that qualitative research focuses on exploring ideas or formulating hypotheses/theories but quantitative research tests hypotheses and theories. Qualitative research also employs understanding, context, complexity and subjectivity. Saunders et al., (2023) noted that quantitative refers to any data collection procedures (such as questionnaires) or analysis techniques (such as graphs or statistics) that generate or use numerical data”. Haq (2014) asserted that mixed methods research produces more accurate results than studying either qualitative and quantitative methods alone in discussing issues. In order to study the research objectives (Chapter 3), the researcher should choose the most suitable method and Gallup which is a large-scale organization engaged in examining subjective well-being (Tyler et al., 2020).

Thus, the study will apply the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index which employs survey questions within a qualitative method (Gallup, 2011). The methodology identifies subjective well-being through questions about yesterday’s emotional experiences (Kahneman and Deaton, 2010).

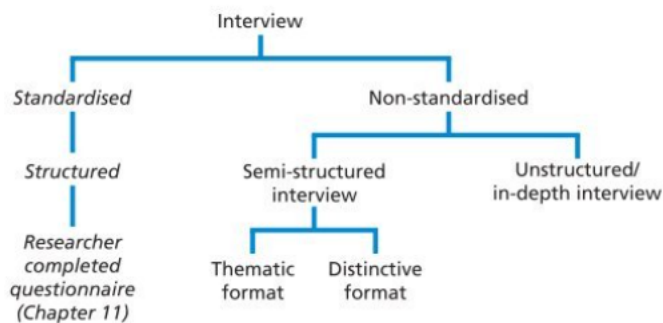
This study adopts an inductive approach with an interpretive philosophy and a qualitative approach through the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index to explore gig employees’ well-being. It is suitable for identifying the experiences of gig employees and the qualitative approach has been conducted by (Alterman et al., 2018; and Stiehl et al., 2018).

4.5 Data collection

Couper (2017) discussed that methodological and technological developments have challenged survey strategy and advanced survey methods. The research interview is defined as “a purposeful conversation between two or more people, during which the interviewer asks concise and unambiguous questions and listens attentively to the interviewee’s responses.” (Saunders et al., 2023, p. 434). The interview is important for collecting data in social research, which is a valuable

data-gathering technique for gaining insight regarding personal characteristics, experiences, values, attitudes and behavior (Newell, 1994). The interview structures are standardized and non-standardized, which is shown in the next figure.

Figure 3 Interview structure



Source: Saunders et al., 2023, p. 443

The standardized interviews use a predetermined set of identical questions to collect comparable data from each participant within interview media such as online, face-to-face or telephone. But also, the structured interviews are conducted using researcher-completed questionnaires.

The interview mode involves one-to-one interviews and group interviews (Saunders et al., 2023). The one-to-one interview is a commonly employed method for collecting data in social research.

Recently, there has been a rising concern about bias and power dynamics in the literature regarding the steps of conducting an interview, particularly the role of the interviewer and the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. However, the method finds valuable perceptions, understandings and experiences of a given phenomenon. As well, the one-to-one interview is more than a conversational interaction between two people (Ryan et al., 2013).

Thus, the study will involve standardized interviews with structured questions. The author will employ Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index which includes questions to identify wellbeing, physical health, emotional health, healthy behavior and work environment.

4.6 Research sample

Sampling is the selected population to be researched which is clearly defined, accessible and includes reachable steps (Lunsford et al., 1995). The study sample should represent the population to ensure it effectively addresses the research question and objectives (Saunders et al., 2023).

4.6.1 Sampling technique

Sampling techniques are divided into probability/representative sampling and non-probability sampling. In probability sampling, every sampling segment within the targeted population has a known probability of being chosen for the sample. Conversely, in-probability sampling, the likelihood of selecting each sampling component is not defined (Saunders et al., 2023). Sharma (2017) claimed that the non-probability sampling technique is based on judgement. Probability sampling is also called random sampling; this technique reduces the potential for human bias in the selection and it is highly representative of the population being studied.

Acharya et al., (2013) asserted that in probability sampling, everyone in the population is given an equal chance of being selected in the study as well as probability sampling is classified as simple random, systematic random, stratified random, cluster, multiphase and multistage sampling. While comparing probability sampling techniques, in contrast, non-probability sampling includes quota, purposive, volunteer and haphazard sampling (Saunders et al., 2019).

Alvi (2016) discussed that using an appropriate sampling technique is crucial for research and selecting types of sampling depending on the prime goal of research. If the research is exploring

an idea rather than studying a population, researchers should use a non-probability sampling technique. By contrast, if the study aims to develop an understanding of the population, probability sampling is appropriate. Saunders et al., (2023) discussed types of sampling techniques and highlighted cluster sampling is accurate, easily accessible and relates to relevant clusters, not individual members. As well, this sampling represents geographically based clusters.

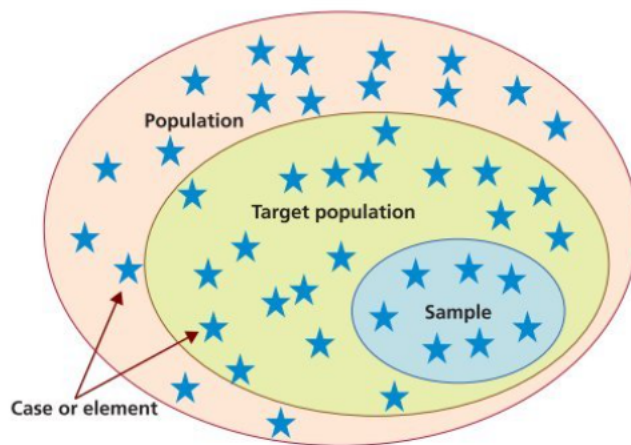
The researcher used a non-probability sampling approach for this study as it allows one to be more specific when selecting a sample (Saunders et al., 2016). Non-probability sampling refers to “*can be used to develop theoretical generalizations based on analytical generalizability, while probability sampling can be used generalize statistically about a target population*” (Saunders et al., 2023, p. 293). There are four main types of non-probability sampling such as quota sampling, purposive sampling, volunteer sampling and haphazard sampling (Saunders et al., 2023).

As the participants of this research are gig employees in Ireland, which shows the participants for the study will be selected through a non-probability purposive sampling approach by the researcher can be appropriate for this research.

4.6.2 Sample size and target population

Saunders et al., (2023) discussed that the sample being studied should be related to the population defined in the research question. The target population is a specifically determined population related to the research objective. Desu and Raghavarao (1990, p.112) stated “*Statisticians draw inferences about population parameters based on samples of appropriate size. The number of units used in the sample is called the sample size*”.

Figure 4 Population, target population, sample and individual cases



Source: Adapted from Saunders et al., 2023, p. 292

Saunders et al., (2023) explained that collected data should represent characteristics of the target population and the margin of error can be tolerable.

This study seeks to ascertain the understanding of the target population, which are gig employees, who work in Ireland and see their gig work as their main income source. The sample is accessible as the researcher is a member of gig workers groups online.

4.6.3 Participant selection

The study aimed to explore the well-being of gig workers who work in professional services such as professionals of IT, architecture, accounting, HR, and legal (these professionals are classified by their type by OECD, 2021). Initially, the target population intended to study both female and male workers to examine diverse insights. However, during contacting gig workers, some difficulties were in finding female gig workers. Despite extensive efforts, including various network groups, the female gig workers' response rate was not enough. Due to these challenges,

the study adapted its objectives and target population to focus on male gig workers. The decision was made to ensure that the researcher could collect valuable data within the limitations of the study. This adjustment allowed the study to gather qualitative data from a specific segment of the gig workers. This adjustment can cause some limitations and ethical considerations, which will be discussed in the section below.

4.7 Data analysis

The research is run by qualitative data analysis, which is carried out based on interpretivist philosophy and an inductive approach. Saunders et al., (2023) elucidate that quantitative data collected in natural settings tends to be rich in contextual detail and research analysis involves verbal data, text data and visual data. Analytical focus techniques can be thematic, actions or processes and the use of language. But also, qualitative data is identified through their fullness of deep analysis and their themes establish well-grounded and contextual explanations.

Thematic analysis refers to “*an analytic approach or method in which patterns of meaning are developed through processes of coding*” (Saunders et al., 2023 p. 664).

Castleberry and Nolen (2018) explained that thematic analysis (TA) is a data analysis strategy that is used for analyzing all qualitative designs. The TA approach is to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within qualitative data. TA is used widely to identify and interpret meaning within qualitative data and is used for a number of qualitative studies such as social research science (Heriyanto, 2018).

Thus, in order to study gig employees’ well-being, the study applies thematic analysis.

4.8 Research limitations

One of the main limitations of the research is the limited amount of research conducted on the gig employees' well-being and especially in the Irish context. The lack of a literature review required the researcher to study international experiences of the gig economy.

Secondly, the researcher aimed to study gig employees who work in professional services such as professionals of IT, architecture, accounting, HR and legal (these professionals are classified by OECD, 2021). However, the researcher conducted interviews with location-based gig workers such as taxi drivers arranged through digital platforms due to difficulties in contacting professionals who work in the Irish context.

Thirdly, the researcher aimed to gain diverse insights into both females and men. However, some barriers and challenges were encountered when connecting with female gig workers. Because of this reason, the study focused on the experience of only men, which may not represent the well-being experiences of all gig workers. The researcher is fully aware that the study did not have a very broad scope.

A fourth limitation relates to the number of participants in this study in other words, the study and its findings cannot illustrate the overall population (Subedi, 2021). Nevertheless, the study has some potential to be a basis for further academic investigation related to male gig employees' well-being.

Lastly, the researcher's bias can influence the results in order to portray an anticipated outcome (Shuttleworth, 2017; Ramona, 2011). Thus, the researcher was fully aware throughout the interview process and analyzing findings.

4.9 Ethical considerations

In conducting a qualitative study, some moral consequences can be fostered between the participants therefore, the researcher should avoid ethical concerns including confidentiality and informed consent (Adhabi and Anozie, 2017).

Research ethics refers to “*the standards of behavior that guide conduct concerning the rights of those who become the subject of your work or are affected by it*” (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 185).

Ethical considerations are as important as other research processes such as generating ideas, defining a topic and conducting design research. Ethical issues can be in the research’s topic and design, data collection, processing, analysis and reporting stages.

Before starting a survey, the survey cover letter will introduce a well-defined research purpose to voluntary participants and explain confidentiality about information, which will be anonymous and participants have the right to withdraw their information. All processes of research and the researcher will be honest, nonjudgemental, respectful, avoid harm, keep the participants’ privacy, responsible for analyzing, reporting, and data management compliance (Saunders et al., 2023).

The interviews were conducted online and by phone call. Before the interviews, the researcher sent an email to introduce the purpose of the research and a consent form. The time and date were chosen by the interviewees at their convenience. Overall, all necessary ethical considerations were fulfilled.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter discusses the available research methodologies with the research strategy to define the most suitable method to address the problems of this study. Adopting an inductive methodology with an interpretive philosophy and a qualitative approach via phone and online

interview strategy is the most appropriate in exploring the nature of work and the experience of gig employees' well-being. The researcher uses online and phone interviews as the research instrument and its data collection, data analysis, research limitations and ethical considerations are discussed. The next chapter will examine the findings based on the interview data and research objectives.

Chapter 5 – Analysis and Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings of the telephone interviews with gig employees who consider their gig work the main income source. These interviews were carried out between the 15th and 20th of July 2024.

The interviews are structured through the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index which is discussed in Chapter 4. The standardized interview involves thematic analysis where the data will be analyzed, and findings will be concluded individually with the gig workers' expressed opinions. Also, the researcher notes that all participants were male which is elucidated in Chapter 3. Due to this reason, all findings illustrate the perspective of male gig workers.

In the study, the participants were asked open-ended questions and were requested to answer along with a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree. The Likert scale is chosen for the interviewee and interviewer to be on the same page and its effectiveness in defining the interviewee's feelings intensity. Also, each question asked the participants to explain why they chose each point.

Generally, the questions along with the Likert scale and its open-ended structured interview were used to define overall gig employees' perception of their well-being.

In addition, the gig workers' identities are shown in Table 2 and the participants will be noted by their type of work and age, for example, Taxi driver, 55.

Table 2 The participants' general information

Nº	Type of gig work	Age	Duration of working in the gig economy
1	Musician, carpenter and landscape technician	35	3-5 years
2	Taxi driver	54	1-2 years
3	Circus man, carpentry and magician	33	6+ years
4	Consultant and coaching service	46	3-5 years
5	Delivery driver	27	less than 1 year
6	Delivery driver	29	1-2 years
7	Delivery driver	31	less than 1 year
8	Taxi driver	44	6+ years
9	Taxi driver	37	1-2 years
10	VIP taxi driver	42	1-2 years

5.2 To explore how gig workers feel about their well-being overall

The first research objective will define the gig workers' well-being through themed questions, which are modified from the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index. The Index provides themes

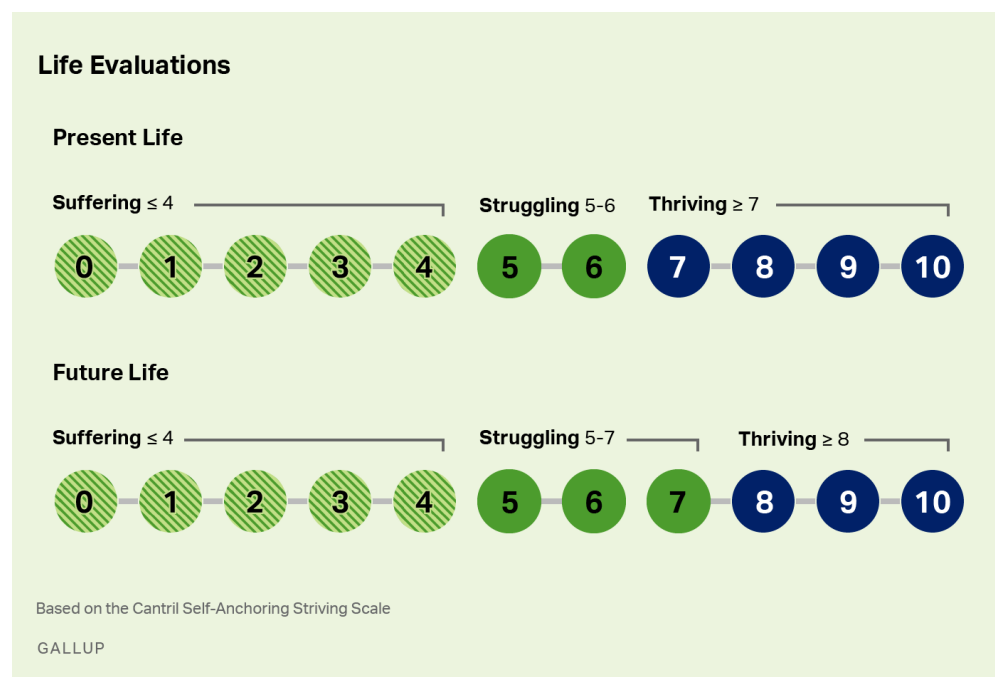
related to physical well-being, emotional well-being, work environment, healthy behavior and level of well-being. The themes and their methods will be explained with each discussion of themes.

The following themes and answers arise from the telephone interview analysis.

5.2.1 - Theme 1: Levels of well-being

The first theme from the interview was life evaluation in other words levels of well-being, which asks about present life situations and anticipated life situations. The questions were asked along with a Likert scale of 1 to 10, which suggests 3 definitions of levels of well-being such as thriving, struggling and suffering (shown in the next figure).

Figure 5 Life evaluations and its explanatory



Source: Adapted from “Employee Wellbeing” by Gallup, 2017

When the researcher asked the question of life evaluation, the average score of the participants' future expectation for life was 8.4, which shows the participants' life anticipation for the future is thriving and interviewees have positive views of their next five years.

However, present life was evaluated by 5.6 out of 10 and Gallup's explanation for 5.6 of the level of well-being means struggling with life. This means that people struggle in their present life and have uncertain or negative thoughts. In the next table, the participants' answers about their level of well-being were chosen out of 10.

Table 3 Answers for level of well-being

Nº	Participants	Present life	Anticipated life
1	Musician, carpenter and landscape technician, 35	8	9
2	Taxi driver, 54	8	10
3	Circus man, carpenter and magician, 33	4	8
4	Consultant and coach, 46	8	9
5	Delivery driver, 27	4	8
6	Delivery driver, 29	5	9
7	Delivery driver, 31	7	10
8	Taxi driver, 44	2	5
9	Taxi driver, 37	4	7
10	VIP taxi driver, 42	6	9

In Table 3, participant number 3, 5, 8, and 9 expressed themselves as Suffering by 2 to 4 points out of 10, which means their lives are miserable and have negative views of the future. In the section below, the participants who chose scores 4 out of 10 shared how their life was and why they expressed themselves as score under 4.

Participant 3 (Circus man, carpenter and magician, 33) said that he is sick at the moment due to his injury and usually stays home, which may be the reason why he evaluates his present life at 4 points. The circus man now works between the range of 11-20 hours in a week and he mentioned he is under treatment to cover his illness related to injury of the circus.

Participant 5 (Delivery driver, Male, 27) is from Turkey and he is a student. So far, he is struggling to settle down the life in Ireland. The easiest job to get was delivery driver but he is struggling to find the locations for orders and memorize the streets of Dublin.

Participant 8 (Taxi driver, 44) is from Morocco and he lives with his wife and a child. He brought his family to Ireland this year and now he pays rent and provides food. In Ireland, living with his family is so nice but expenses are so high. Also, his wife is going to start working as a cleaner. He hopes that will help to build a better life.

Participant 9 (Taxi driver, Male, 37) has two children and works during the night. His wife works during the day from 9 am to 5 pm, when she comes home he goes to work. He arrives home before his wife leaves for work. He babysits his children, brings them to school and collects them.

In the next themes, the researcher will discuss more reasons why some have high satisfaction and others do not.

5.2.2 - Theme 2: Physical health

This theme covers issues related to physical well-being and the researcher aimed to define how gig employees feel about their physical health. Besides having interviews, the researcher requested to know about participants' physical health through a Likert scale of 1 to 5 for each question. Overall, the participants evaluated their physical health by 1.9 scores. In other words, this theme was strong among all the participants who claimed they had healthy bodies and did not have physical pain. However, depending on the nature of some gig work, they shared their physical issues related to their gig work.

Participant 1 (Musician, carpenter and landscape technician, 35) claimed he has some back pain and headaches due to his gig work. He works as a carpenter as his main job, landscape technician and musician during the weekend. He usually feels back pain and tiredness because he needs to carry heavy things. Also, playing drums is his hobby and he practices once a week. However, if his band has a show on the weekend or weekday, he gets a headache and is exhausted the next working day.

Participant 2 (Taxi driver, 54) said that he has problems with his knees due to his gig work. He used to work as a chef and he was having sore feet and back pain due to standing for long hours. Then he decided to work as a taxi driver. Now he does not feel strong physical pain but he has pain in his knees. This is because he drives long hours and there is no chance to stop and walk so after he comes home, he tries to walk.

Participant 3 (Circus man, carpenter and magician, 33) mentioned that he had an injury from his circus job. The participant usually has circus practice and there are many challenges to learning new techniques related to his work. Once he got injured because of a fall from horseback riding.

He mentioned that his circus job has many disadvantages and advantages. For example, he loves what he does and making people laugh makes him so happy but going to the circus tour makes him drained. After his long tours, he stays at home for 2 weeks without contact with people, which makes him relaxed.

Participant 4 (Consultant and coach, 46) highlighted that he always works on a computer and it makes his eyesight bad and eyes tired. He feels physically fine but he predicts that his eyesight is getting worse day by day due to spending too long hours with a computer screen. Also, after long hours sitting, he feels stiff in his back, neck and shoulders.

5.2.3 - Theme 3: Emotional health

This theme evaluated how gig employees feel emotionally and the participants expressed their emotional well-being with scores of 2.8

8 out of 10 gig employees felt that their gig work creates flexible working arrangements, high, additional income and autonomy for themselves. On the other hand, their working style makes them nervous. It allowed them to arrange their personal life but, in this case, the researcher considers this score as the gig employees are not satisfied enough emotionally. In this theme, the study will discuss each question and participants' answers.

Firstly, the interview discussed whether they received enough respect while executing the gig work. 8 of the interviewees claimed that they are treated with respect.

Participant 10 (VIP taxi driver, Male, 42) said that he receives much appreciation for his daily tasks. He lives with his two children and wife and is like Participant 9. He arranges his time with his wife to babysit. He mentioned that his gig work has a perfect work-life balance and higher

income than his previous jobs. Also, his customers usually express their appreciation and his working company treats him respectfully.

Secondly, the interviewer asked about how often they smile or laugh. 4 of the participants said that they usually or often laugh. When asked the reason:

Participant 5 (Delivery driver, 27) said that he gets paid to deliver food and receive tips. Usually, customers have such a nice attitude. Also, he feels autonomy and he listens to music and podcasts and makes phone calls during working hours.

Participant 4 (Consultant and coach, 46) said that he is happy to work in the gig economy. The reason why is he likes the fact that he shares his experience with people and coaches many people at the same time. He started working in the gig economy during the pandemic, he feels grateful for what he does. Especially, his contracted companies and people share their achievements and outcomes, which makes him more delighted.

However, some participants shared their poor experiences regarding respect and feeling happiness.

Participant 8 (Taxi driver, Male, 44) sometimes feels sick of his work. During nighttime, he picks up many drunken people, some of them cannot say their addresses or cannot pay their payment. He gets annoyed and sometimes they make his car dirty. There are no appreciable conversations.

Participant 6 (Delivery driver, Male, 29) shared his experience as annoying. The reason why he expresses not nice experiences is because of drivers and traffic jams. Especially, other taxi drivers are so rude and it is hard to drive and find stops. Some customers are nice but sometimes they treat him like nothing. They drive many miles to carry the food but get paid only 4 euros.

The next question asks if they feel like they are learning new things or doing something interesting. For this question, almost everybody said they do interesting things and sometimes they learn new experiences.

Participant 1 (Musician, carpenter and landscape technician, 35) learns new things and he is interested in what he does. The participant works project to project and every project requires a different set of skills and different colleagues. All his jobs require him to learn new things or use his creativity. Also, he said that he gets bored quickly, so his working style helps him to earn money within enjoyment of work.

Participant 5 (Delivery driver, Male, 27) learned many things while working in the gig economy. He recently came to Ireland. While he is delivering, he meets many different customers and understands their characteristics. He learned about new locations and roads. Every day is a totally different experience. He experienced cultural shock and coped with that with his work experience. Even though some were happy with their gig work taxi drivers and delivery drivers were not satisfied with their repetitive jobs. Every day they have the same tasks and there are no challenges or opportunities to make their day interesting. For example:

Participant 8 (Taxi driver, Male, 44) sometimes feels lonely. Because he used to work in a company in Morocco, he had many friends and colleagues. But now, he works solo and he does not have peers to share his experiences and daily events.

When the researcher asked about their experienced feelings yesterday and made them evaluate their feelings on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (Strongly yes-5 to strongly no-1), the average was 3.1 scores for enjoyment, 2.3 scores for physical pain, 2.4 scores for worry, 1.9 scores for sadness, 3.1 scores for stress, 2.9 scores for anger and 3 scores for happiness.

Table 4 Emotional feelings and its evaluation

Feelings	Enjoyment	Physical pain	Worry	Sadness	Stress	Anger	Happiness
Av. scores	3.1	2.3	2.4	1.9	3.1	2.9	3

About the feelings, every participant shared their experiences of the day and here the researcher will conclude their experiences.

Participant 1 (Musician, carpenter and landscape technician, 35) feels enjoyment and happiness on a good level (4 points for each) but physical pain and stress are a lot for him. The reason for this is that he is not on an hourly wage but rather paid for what he has completed in a day's work thus he is working hard from 8 am to 5 pm every day. Also, he is his boss, which means he must be responsible for everything. Working for himself, he earns a high income but again risk and stress are usually on his mind.

Participant 2 (Taxi driver, 54) said he does not have negative feelings and he felt happiness and enjoyment quite often (4 points for each). He really seems content with his life and working as a gig worker. He used to work as a chef prior to his gig employment as a taxi driver. He was not happy as a chef because of the unsociable hours and stressful environment. He has come to find that working as a gig employee he can schedule his life better, feels happier day to day and finds more time to be available for his family. Gig employment has benefited his work-life balance greatly.

Participant 3 (Circus man, carpenter and magician, 33) expressed that he feels anger, stress and sadness (3 points for each) due to an undefined medical condition that affects his day-to-day routine. He is sick quite often which results in missing days. He does not work often but spends a lot of time practicing his trade for when he does work. Despite not having enough paid gigs on a regular basis he loves what he does and is aiming to pursue his career in magic and the circus with the hope it will become his main income. To subsidize his interest in magic and the circus he takes on work in carpentry as well to increase his income.

Participant 4 (Consultant and coach, 46) was so happy in general that he described his enjoyment and happiness with 5 points each. Before the pandemic, he was in a full-time job with one company, and his levels of satisfaction were not great then. During Covid, he had time to reconfigure his career to suit him. He stayed in the same field of work however he works with multiple companies and people now as a gig worker. He has found his new approach to his job as a gig worker has increased his income and emotional well-being.

Participant 5 (Delivery driver, 27) has entered gig employment as a necessity for a source of income. He feels stressed and worried about money as his income fluctuates daily. Acquiring the job was easy but he wishes to seek a different career path. As a delivery driver, his busiest times are when it's raining. He expressed that he is worried and stressed about his income, and sad about his daily life (3 points for each feeling). The weather makes his job hard but he earns better during rainy days. Overall, he is not happy working as a gig employee and feels stressed and worried about his current life.

Participant 6 (Delivery driver, 29) expressed that he is full of physical pain, worry, sadness, stress and anger (every feeling is measured by 4 and 5). He tries to find a non-physical job but he still cannot find a full-time job. Since he started working as a gig worker, he found traffic jams are

tough to deliver fast. He drives across Dublin but gets paid too little. Once he calculated his hourly wage, that was 4 euro an hour. Sometimes he waits for orders the whole day, there are days he has a few orders. Usually, he feels nervous about his life.

Participant 7 (Delivery driver, 31) has been working as a delivery driver for 2 years. When he started working this job, he was a student in an English language course. While studying, working shifts and his timetable were hard to arrange. Then he decided to work as a driver. He expressed his anger, worry and stress by 3 to 5 points each. He mentioned that he does not have time to relax and enjoy himself due to his income.

Participant 8 (Taxi driver, 44) sees the advantages and disadvantages of working in the gig economy. He used to work in a company as a full-time employee and in his previous employment, he did not like dealing with managers and supervisors. Then he decided to work for himself and now he enjoys his autonomy. However, he feels isolated and alone as he does not have any co-workers to spend his daily routine with. He misses the friendships and camaraderie of working in a company with others but ultimately, he does not miss working under people and having to deal with managers and authority. In addition, he highlighted that when customers are drunk, he also misses his old job.

Participant 9 (Taxi driver, 37) has two kids and her wife works full-time (9 am-5 pm). The main reason he drives a taxi is he has to babysit. He goes to work after his wife comes home. He expressed his anger, physical pain, stress and worry by each 3 and 4 points and explained that the feelings are related to his working hours. He cannot get enough hours of sleep because he brings his children to school and collects them.

Participant 10 (VIP taxi driver, 42) used to work full-time and work shifts were hard to arrange with his personal life. Driving a VIP taxi earns a bit higher, more professional income than regular

Taxi drivers. The reason is a VIP Taxi offers service for airport transfer and corporate transport. The services take long journeys and long hours. Thus, he expressed that he is quite happy and joyful about his life (each feeling is expressed by 4 points). However, there are some weaknesses that he mentioned that he has physical pain such as back pain and stiff neck.

5.2.4 - Theme 4: Healthy behavior

The theme aimed to define how the gig employees keep good healthy behavior for their lifestyle and the researcher questioned whether they smoke, eat recommended amounts of fruit and vegetables and exercise for 30 minutes or more.

Studying their healthy behavior index, 30% do not smoke as well as 60% work out and 60% eat 400 grams of fruits and vegetables (World Health Organization defined).

Participants 1, 2, and 3 said that smoking gives them time to think and relax during the big days.

Participants 4, 5 and 7 do not smoke because of the smell of cigarettes. They highlighted smoking makes their cars smelly and not convenient to talk with customers.

Participant 2 highlighted that he eats healthy food because his wife prepares his meals and she packs many bananas and other fruit in his meal box.

Participant 10 mentioned that he has problems with his spine and back, he is advised to work out at least 30 minutes a day by the doctor. That is why he works out.

Participants 6 and 7 explained that they get their own meals free from pizza and burger places that get food delivered.

Participants 1 and 5 said that their daily work is the same as fitness, they always carry heavy loads and work physically.

5.2.5 - Theme 5: Work environment

The work environment theme provides questions related to a working environment, employer and their attitudes.

- The gig employees' labour contract and working hours
- The gig workers' satisfaction with their employer such as applications (Deliveroo, Uber, Freenow, Just Eat).
- Their employers' attitudes toward the gig employees
- The gig economy's working environment

The gig workers all have contracts for services, which are not renewed or taken seriously except for participant 4 (Consultant and coach, 46). The gig workers usually deal with employers without any contracts or written documents.

Participant 4 (Consultant and coach, 46) has a contract for services and signs in every single project that he works for.

Every gig employee has their own characteristics and it all depends on the employer or company they work with.

Participant 3 (Circus man, carpenter and magician, 33) signs a contract for going on circus tours. The tours are occasionally and 2 or 3 times yearly. Otherwise, he deals with verbal contracts or agreements.

Discussing their working hours, 50% work 31-40 hours a week and 40% work more than 41 hours a week. Also, the gig employees are dealing with 3 or more employers or applications.

Participant 1 (Musician, carpenter and landscape technician, 35) cooperates with 4 or more suppliers and customers every week. He receives orders from his carpentry and landscape jobs as well as has verbal contracts with pubs on his music band's behalf.

Participant 8 (Taxi driver, 44) works more than 41 hours weekly because he feels anxiety for his basic needs. He mentioned that stopping for orders in the street is better than relaxing at home.

The gig workers have good impressions about their work applications and the applications collect a bit of money from their earnings. If they work hard, they get paid as much as they work.

Participants 2, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 are working as delivery drivers and taxi drivers, who find their orders through applications.

Participant 2 (Taxi driver, 54) lives in Kildare and he found his customers who need trustworthy drivers in his town and serve them almost permanently.

Participant 1 found his work orders from Facebook pages. He posts his jobs pictures and usually customers contact him on his Facebook page.

10 out of 10 answered that their employers treat them as PEERS, which shows they get satisfaction that they consider themselves as self-employed.

Participant 8 (Taxi driver, 44) chose to work in the gig economy because he wanted to be his own boss. Dealing with managers or supervisors of his previous job was complicated and now he is happy that he is his own boss.

Participant 3 (Circus man, carpenter and magician, 33) loves different types of jobs, he likes to feel free anytime. The main reason that he works in the gig economy is he goes suddenly traveling and he enjoys that. In addition, if he signs a permanent contract, he feels high pressure from the responsibility.

5.3 To ascertain if gig employees receive any initiatives related to their well-being from their working companies

Although the study aimed to find if the gig employees get any initiatives regarding well-being, there are no significant activities toward gig employees' well-being. Only two interviewees claimed that they received some discounts, which encouraged the gig workers' financial well-being. Participant 4 acknowledged that he has been offered some initiatives regarding his gig work.

Participant 3 (Circus man, carpenter and magician, 33) was offered some initiatives related to well-being such as a mindfulness program during his circus tour to avoid stress, some training related to his circus skill development and some discounts for his tools.

Participant 4 (Consultant and coach, 46) The company that has a contract with Participant 4 provides some mindfulness programs, training and development, mentorship programs and team events for him. Those are not qualified for him but the activities engage him with the companies and the projects which he works for. He gets chances to familiarize himself with companies and colleagues during these events.

Participant 5 (Delivery driver, 27) receives online training videos on his working application which offers jobs. The training videos are about how to work as a delivery driver, how to greet customers, how to use applications etcetera.

5.4 To evaluate if gig employees' well-being has changed since the Supreme Court's decision that Gig employees are treated as employees.

In 2023, the Supreme Court of Ireland made a decision regarding gig employees' rights, which implies gig employees within the Irish context are supposed to receive some initiatives and be treated as PAYE employees (Healy, 2023). The study aimed to find whether this implication is being heard and used by gig employees and employers of gig employees.

However, only 10% of the participants who took part in my research study were informed of the Supreme Court ruling for gig employees. Participant 7 (Delivery driver, 31) expressed his belief that if gig employees were to be treated like PAYE employees he believes the result of this would be paying increased taxes for work done. Because of this, he is happier to stay clear of new recommended regulations and structures of gig employees.

5.5 Summary of Findings

The chapter discusses the main findings from emerging themes, which were collected through telephone and online interviews with gig employees who work in Ireland. The themes are divided through the research objectives. The themes and discussions provided gig employees' real experience of their well-being such as their physical index, emotional index, healthy behavior index and working environment index. At the end of the interviews, the researcher asked their opinions related to the Supreme Court's decision. However, gig employees did not hear about new implications and have not noticed any change in their workplaces and applications.

The themes and gig employees' real experiences which are discussed in this study can illustrate useful recommendations for human resources roles and employers.

In the next section, analysis and findings will be examined in accordance with established theories and literature. As well, the study shows that the gig employees, their well-being, the Supreme Court's decision and its implications and usages need to be studied deeply further.

Chapter 6 – Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will compare the findings of qualitative analyses with the literature review of Chapter 2. The gig employees' well-being was examined within the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index and its themes, focusing on the experiences and perspectives of male gig workers. In order to discuss logically, the chapter will be guided by research objectives: 1) to explore how male gig workers feel about their well-being overall; 2) to ascertain if gig employees receive any initiatives related to their well-being from their working companies; 3) to evaluate if gig employees' well-being has been changed since the Supreme Court's decision.

6.2 To explore how gig workers feel about their well-being overall

The research was conducted through online and phone interviews with male gig employees who work as location-based gig workers such as taxi drivers, delivery drivers and so on. They acknowledged that they chose the gig economy due to flexibility, high income and work-life balance. However, the real experiences of interviews will be discussed through the themes in this section.

6.2.1 - Theme 1: Levels of well-being

In the existing literature review, Samad et al., (2022) noted that gig workers' main factor for choosing work in the gig economy is flexibility to arrange their work and life balance. Analyzing

the experiences of the gig workers, the gig workers chose to work in the gig economy trying to find a work-life balance. This is shown in the findings, 20% of the participants have kids and arrange their time with their personal life such as bringing their kids to school and collecting them back. Otherwise, working full-time jobs and their shifts make it hard to find a balance and arrangement for their personal lives.

Arnoldi et al., (2021) noted that gig work does not require high skills and the gig work is usually service-based. Also, the low-skilled gig workers are usually migrants who find it challenging to find permanent jobs. The findings of the study asserted the literature review that 30% of the gig workers were migrants and mentioned that working as a driver is the easiest job to start immediately.

According to Banks (2019) and Li et al., (2022), gig workers encounter many challenges such as isolation, lack of communication, stress, etcetera. The fact is proven by the findings of the study, the gig workers evaluated their present life as they have uncertain or negative thoughts. The evaluation and its reasons were connected to the literature review regarding the gig workers' challenges.

However, Kossivi et al., (2016) and Datte et al., (2023) stated that gig workers choose to work in the gig economy on their preferences such as autonomy and compensation. This is approved by the findings that the gig workers see their future life as thriving and interviewees have positive views of their next five years. The life evaluation and explanations are evidence that the gig workers see themselves and their lives positively.

6.2.2 - Theme 2: Physical health and healthy behavior

In the literature review, physical health is the main component of well-being and some issues such as intense working hours, physical tiredness and sleep deprivation due to isolation and on-demand jobs can happen for gig workers (Yan et al., 2023; Kim, 2022 and Li et al., 2022). This study would appear to confirm the literature reviews, that physical problems were caused by the nature of gig work to the participants. The fact that 70% of the gig workers mentioned physical pain at some level. In this study, the physical was expressed variously by knee soreness due to driving long hours, sleeping deprivation because of working late hours and so on.

In order to have the energy to get things done, keeping healthy behavior is crucial (Rath and Harter, 2010). The research correlates strongly with the literature as the participants agree that keeping healthy behavior. This was confirmed by the participants' 60%, who eat healthy food and work out daily. Also, most of the participants acknowledged that they do not have serious health problems except for minor physical pain.

6.2.3 - Theme 3: Emotional health

Emotional health is related to positive and negative moods, feelings, states and people's reactions to their life experiences (World Health Organization, 2022). Emotional health is explained through psychological well-being, which is defined within the 6-factor model such as self-acceptance, purpose in life, personal growth and other factors (Ryff, 2013). The emotional health theme of the study involves gig worker's perspectives related to emotions such as a worker feeling like they are learning something new or doing something interesting during the gig work (Gallup, 2024).

The emotional health of the gig workers varies individually but 80% of gig workers said that they felt happiness at some level. The point is the strongest expression of the study because the employees are not highly satisfied with their unstable income but they are doing their best for their

life. Some gig workers were not happy with their full-time jobs due to unsociable hours and a stressful environment. However, some gig workers acknowledge that their gig work gives them a work-life balance and higher income.

There were some negative emotions mentioned during interviews, reflecting the unstable and unpredictable nature of gig work (Ruyter and Brown, 2019). The income is the reward of any work but 50% of participants said that they felt worried or sad because of their unstable income. Furthermore, 40% of the gig workers mentioned that they felt stress regarding the task of the day, which means the person felt their responsibility and executing the task is directly related to their income. The gig employees must be responsible for everything and missing days will be days without income. Working for themselves earns a high income but again stress related to managing everything is usually on their mind. Additionally, 40% of the gig workers said that they experienced strong anger during the day at least once, which is created by their working condition. The gig workers must deal with customers and they do not have anyone to deal with customers for them. Sometimes, there are no appreciable conversations and disrespectful attitudes from customers. Every day is a different experience for the gig workers.

The discussion asserts that gig workers encounter emotional pressure due to unstable income but they emotionally enjoy their autonomy, flexibility and work-life balance (Samad et al., 2022; Datta et al., 2023; Tan, 2021; OECD, 2021 and ILO, 2024).

6.2.4 - Theme 5: Work environment

The gig economy is expanded through digitalization and the nature of the gig economy is autonomy and flexibility (Aguinis and Lawal, 2013; Wood et al., 2019 and OECD, 2023). However, the gig economy has limited opportunities for career advancement, learning and development except for the chance to learn on the job and for their voice to be heard (Fair Work Convention, 2016). The researcher found the gig workforce generally trusts the employer such as the applications or websites they use to find jobs. Additionally, the gig workers are satisfied with their employers and customers treat them like peers. The findings show that the gig workers chose by their interest to work solo, take responsibility and risk and find their preferred lifestyle. Even though some nature of the gig work are causing stress, the gig workers like to learn new things daily and are passionate about what they do.

Overall, the research indicates that the work environments are convenient and the gig employees of the study are satisfied with their working conditions.

6.3 To ascertain if gig employees receive any initiatives related to their well-being from their working companies

The literature states that the gig economy lacks health insurance, unemployment insurance, pension coverage or planning and injury insurance (International Labour Organization, 2024). The gig workers do not receive job security provisions such as sick pay and potential benefits for their well-being (Musílek et al., 2019; Graham et al., 2017 and International Labour Organization, 2016). The study showed that only 30% of the gig workers have received some initiative related to their well-being. The initiatives were related to well-being such as a mindfulness program and some discounts for tools (The discount is an initiative aimed at financial well-being). But this initiative is not repetitive and depends on their working gig projects.

In the study, there was only one consultant and coach gig worker, who said that he had a chance to participate in mindfulness programs, training and development, mentorship programs and team events. From this point, the well-being initiative can be arranged for the profession or the person. Overall, employers in the gig economy, including agencies, applications and websites facilitate the gig workers to find jobs. For these services, gig workers pay back a proper amount of their earnings to these intermediaries. However, the findings showed that 70% of gig workers never had a chance to receive any well-being initiatives and highlighting the lack of support for their well-being from their employers.

6.4 To evaluate if gig employees' well-being has changed since the Supreme Court's decision that Gig employees are treated as PAYE employees.

Gig employees within the Irish context are supposed to receive some initiatives and be treated as PAYE employees (Healy, 2023). The legal shift implies that gig workers have the right to be considered like full-time workers and take benefits related to their well-being. However, the researcher can say that there is not a positive finding regarding the research objective. Only 10% of participants have heard about the decision.

This study found that even though the Irish Supreme Court has issued the decision that gig employees could receive positive effects, there is a significant gap in decision and implication. The gig workers seem to lack information about the decision and the employer did not act in practice. Thus, the gig employees do not benefit from the potential initiatives due to the lack of awareness and understanding.

Additionally, the one gig worker who heard the decision said that he would prefer to maintain his current working conditions due to tax concerns. To gig workers, paying tax is hard to manage

because the gig workers do not work for one company permanently as full-time employees. The nature of the gig work will require specific arrangements and policies.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusion of findings

The study's first goal is to identify overall gig workers' well-being within physical, emotional, healthy behavior and work environment. The second is to find out if the gig workers receive any initiatives regarding their well-being from their employers. In this case, the employers are applications that engage gig employees with their customers. Last but not least the objective is to explore the recent decision of the Irish Supreme Court related to gig employees. That means the gig workers are supposed to be treated like PAYE employees. In other words, gig employees deserve to get some perks as full-time employees such as holiday payments, sick payments etcetera. The study aimed to identify the implications that were heard by gig employees and their employers and whether there were any changes after the Supreme Court decision toward gig employees.

In order to examine these research objectives, the researcher studied the literature review and existing theories regarding well-being. According to the literature, studying well-being within the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index is the most suitable for the research. Also, based on the objectives and the methodology, the researcher employed a qualitative research approach using online and phone interviews.

The literature review discussed gig economy, its workers and the workers' well-being. As discussed in Chapter 2, gig workers choose the gig economy for their own work-life balance, flexibility, autonomy and higher income generally (Ravenelle, 2019; Wood et al., 2019).

The themes are applied through the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index and the researcher studied the reality within themes.

The interviews and their reality clarified that reality is much the same as the literature review at some stage. First, the gig workers who are in location-based gig work do not require high skill sets and it is easy to start for the gig employees. The fact is shown that 30% of gig workers were migrants, who were given chances to earn money to survive.

The gig employees chose to work in the gig economy due to their work-life balance, flexibility, autonomy and higher income than their previous jobs. These statements are asserted by the interviews and the study clarified overall well-being within life evaluations. The employees described their present life as struggling but they assumed they were thriving and having positive views for the next five years. These statements are explained by components of well-being. Physical well-being is not illustrated as good enough, 70% of gig workers mentioned physical pain due to the nature of their gig work. Emotional well-being is considered as pretty good, which is explained by 80% of gig workers who said that they felt happiness at some level. The gig workers felt happiness in their learning on the job, arranging their time to spend time with their family and feeling autonomy was the highest highlighted factor for their satisfaction. On the other hand, 40% of gig workers mentioned that they felt stress regarding the gig work and its nature. Instability and unpredictability are the main features of the gig economy and it is also the main stressor for gig workers. About their work environment, the gig workers receive respect from their employers and they are happy for their working conditions which are chosen by their preference.

According to the second and the third objectives of the research, the gig employees do not receive initiatives for their well-being and they do not know about the Supreme Court's decision. In addition, there were some limitations in conducting the study such as the size of the sample,

recruiting the participants to collect diverse insights from male and female employees and challenges to contact with gig employees. This study concludes that the gig economy and its parties regarding employers, employees and government agencies need to focus on the implementation of new implications. The gig employees must get attention for their well-being regarding their rights. In the next section, recommendations for further research will be discussed.

7.2 Recommendations

The study focused on location-based gig jobs thus, the researcher recommends that future research should aim to include a more diverse sample of industries and types of gig work. Studying other types of gig work will likely reveal different experiences of the gig workforce. Employing varied recruitment strategies and possibly collaborating with gig worker organizations could enhance access to a broader participant pool, providing a more comprehensive understanding of gig workers' well-being.

Secondly, the study focused solely on male gig workers. The decision to focus exclusively on male gig workers was made because of the recruitment challenges faced in contacting female gig workers. Thus, the study recommends further studies should aim to provide diverse genders. This will contribute to the understanding of gig employees and elucidate different perspectives than male gig workers.

Another recommendation is the findings of the study showed that employers who employ gig workers should consider their initiatives toward gig employees. Employers should understand that providing initiatives for gig workers is the responsibility of employers as well as investing in employees is the most valuable asset for the future of the company (Hennessey, 2022). Boosting the gig workers' well-being has the potential to retain gig workers with satisfaction, engagement

and an inclusive culture (CIPD, 2023). By this idea, the author wants to say that even though gig workers work temporarily such as project-based, if the gig worker is satisfied with a company and its well-being initiatives, the gig worker will be easier to be hired again for the next gig work. Hiring and recruiting new gig workers will cost more than hiring the already satisfied gig workers with a company and its well-being initiatives. The idea asserted by Wallace (2023), is that hiring new employees will cost lost productivity, lost tribal knowledge, costs related to recruiting and so on.

Finally, the Supreme Court and politicians must introduce their new implications and educate the parties of employment such as employers, employees and government agencies. On the other hand, regarding the decision there is a need for legislation or law. The implications will create an inclusive work environment for all gig employees. In 2023, there are 435 million gig workers were working actively (Datta et al., 2023) and globalization and digitalization are being spread all over the world. Thus, creating inclusive work environments through the Supreme Court implication will attract potential workers to Ireland. The implication will bring new challenges and opportunities for the Irish context and its parties not only gig workers.

7.3 Personal learning statement

Overall, I am genuinely happy with my choice of topic for my dissertation and appreciate my supervisor and her valuable advice and feedback. I enjoyed the process of research and interviews for this research paper. I appreciate all the help I received from my college lecturers/professors and library professionals, along with discussions with my classmates and interview candidates who helped me in creating this research paper.

My attention to the topic was greatly influenced by the rapid growth of gig workers in society after the effects of Covid-19 on the global economy as a whole. My choice to undertake this study for my dissertation was influenced by the Supreme Court's decision. The decision is based on the Domino pizza delivery driver's case and the Supreme Court worked critically on the case and announced the implication in October 2023. The announcement implies all gig workers must be treated like PAYE employees. Also, there are numerous research studies on the gig economy but there is a lack of enfaces on their well-being.

As I have undertaken the career path of human resources the gig economy proves to be a problematic concern for human resource professionals. Many gig workers who face problems at work see it as an easier option to cut ties with said employer than resolve the issue as they generally have multiple employers to seek income from. The aim of human resources departments is to keep employees satisfied and engaged so they stay with the companies they work for leading to longevity in employee/employer relationships. Thus, providing efficiently run companies for the benefit of all levels of hierarchy in the business.

My main focus within the research topic of gig workers' well-being was to see if they receive initiatives within their workplaces to improve their well-being and also to see what effect the Supreme Court judgment to ensure that gig employees are treated like PAYE employees has had an effect to what degree.

I faced many challenges along the way in my study. Initially, I wanted to base my study on male and female professional workers (IT, legal, architecture, accounting etc.). I found it difficult to find enough number of candidates to interview to undertake this demographic of study. My study became enfaced on male location-based workers as this was what was available to me.

I learned many things along the journey of my studies. Some of these key learning points were gig workers are happy about flexibility, autonomy and work-life balance. However, they feel stress and worry about unpredictable working conditions. It also became apparent that most gig workers are not aware of the Supreme Court's decision, which might protect and improve the well-being of these workers similarly to PAYE workers. I also learnt it is important to figure out what your dissertation proposal is early in your studies which gives you time to think and plan a course of action for the research proposal. It is also important to discuss the thesis proposal with anyone you can as different opinions and views will benefit you greatly. Above all it is vital that you are interested in the topic you choose, as this makes the whole process easier. It should be noted that it is important to research a topic which is under research overall as this will benefit other studies in this area in the future.

In conclusion, I am very happy with the topic I chose and worked under my supervisor's guidance. Because my supervisor guided me in all stages and gave me valuable advice and feedback. Furthermore, I hope this study benefits further more research in this area and as an effect improves the well-being of gig employees.

Lastly, I appreciate the CIPD-accredited program, the dissertation process and the whole journey of the college, it was a great experience and opportunity to develop myself.

Thank you so much.

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