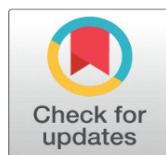


FRAGMENTED LIVES: EXPLORING THE INNER WORLDS OF GIG WORKERS

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ABSTRACT

The gig economy has become a prominent topic in the 21st century, according to an independent review of workers' emerging era. There are many different types of occupations available in India's gig economy, and the sum of people working in this sector continues to rise. Gig workers face various obstacles. The psychological requirements for gig workers have slowly begun to receive prominence. Limited study exists on psychological capital among gig workers in India. This study intended to test a "Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ)" for freelance employees. The 24-item PCQ measured "self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience. PsyCap can help individuals behave safely, reduce job expectations, and improve safety leadership. We used survey methods to get the data, with 149 samples participating as respondents. The study found that the PCQ dimension in India has strong psychometric qualities, making it a suitable tool for assessing psychological capital in Indian gig employees.

Keywords: Gig Economy, Gig Workers, Psychological & Capital Dimensions



1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of "gig economy" refers to a form of employment wherein digital platforms support direct interaction between companies, consumers, freelancers, and themselves, thereby permitting a more flexible and adjustable work schedule (Mohamed Jaafar & Nik Mat 2021). The term "gig" was first utilized in the 1920s, when jazz music was most popular in the US and artists sometimes worked around their schedules without receiving the benefits of regular employment. When the digital era began to take off in the 1990s, the gig economy started to grow quickly (Whitehead, 2019). According to the latest independent investigations, the gig economy is currently an emotive topic in conversations concerning current employment patterns. Some well-known apps in the "gig economy" are Grab, Uber, and Food Panda. The widespread use of cell phones and the internet connects people who use the internet from different countries. This makes it possible for companies to interact with their abilities and requirements to workers who are located remotely via digital platforms (Healy et al., 2017). The Indian economy is distinguished by a notable feature: an estimated 92% of its workforce is engaged in informal work. The gig economy includes temporary work, commonly referred to as non-standard schedules in which employees work as needed. Comparably, non-traditional employment, like contract labour and part-time work, is becoming more common in developed countries (Wang et al., 2022).

The adoption of new technologies and digital transformation can the ability to completely change the Indian labour market. These developments present several exciting opportunities, such as the creation of higher-paying and more productive jobs, better job matching with appropriate opportunities, easier access to options for a living, improved workplace safety, and easier access to welfare benefits and protections. Despite the common worry that technology will replace people with machines, it is important to remember that technological innovations have also helped create new jobs that are good for everyone. Technology adoption and integration in the workplace might open up new doors for success and progression while effectively resolving any possible drawbacks brought on by new developments in technology. Psychological capital and well-being are important concepts in organizational behavior, human resources, and positive psychology. The gig economy has a big impact on individual mental and general well-being in addition to their income. Numerous additional nations have conducted studies on the welfare of gig workers, including the United States, the United Kingdom, France, China, and India (Aboobaker et al., 2021; Apouey et al., 2020; Berger et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2022). However, not much study has been done on the psychological capital aspects of gig workers in India. Prior research has mostly concentrated on the labor force of gig workers (Ahmad, 2021; Harun et al., 2020; Rahim et al., 2021) and the legislative concerns about gig workers (Radzi et al., 2022; Uchiyama et al., 2022). Consequently, the purpose of this research is to better understand the elements that lead to psychological capital dimensions among gig workers in India, thereby enhancing the quality of life of those who work in the gig economy.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To measure the co-relationship between the psychological dimensions of gig workers in the Indian context.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW GIG WORKERS

Full-time employment has traditionally been the norm. However, due to workforce growth, digitization, and recessions, many job searchers are challenged to find permanent employment (Manyika et al., 2016). To increase their income, many people start working in the gig economy (Joelle, 2022). Instead of working one job and receiving the required monthly salary, gig workers can work many jobs to earn additional money. In addition to the monetary wages, the flexibility of gig work and the increased control over working hours are major benefits for many employees. Flexible schedules and the desire to supplement income were the main reasons Indian gig workers chose to enter the gig economy, according to a Nitiyog review (Nitiyog, 2023). Gig employment can also assist people in achieving an improved balance between work and life, which can improve their general well-being. Furthermore, compared to regular employees, gig workers are thought to have lesser benefits and working conditions. For example, in the UK, low-paid independent contractors may be eligible for housing subsidies along with tax credits as incentives to work (Hutton, 2016). High-paid self-employed workers may struggle to secure financial references and statements for renting, mortgages, and loans. Given that the "gig economy" is a relatively new phenomenon, it is necessary to consider the welfare of gig workers.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL

Luthans and colleagues (2004) identified "Psychological capital," or "Psycap," as a human capital dimension that enhances an organization's competitive edge. Psycap, which is an individual's positive emotional state of development or a capacity resembling a positive state, is comprised of the following four elements: (1) possessing a sense of self-worth (Work Self-Efficacy) to undertake and exert the required effort to achieve success at difficult tasks; (2) attributing positive outcomes to recent and future successes (Optimism); (3) persisting in pursuit of objectives and, when needed, restructuring paths to them (Hope) for achievement, and (4) persevering in the face of adversity. Encouraging Psycap was created to help employees and organizations work together and gain a competitive advantage. People who have self-efficacy feel they have the willpower, mental capacity, and physical effort needed to complete a task successfully. Compared to those with low self-efficacy, those with high self-efficacy are probably more likely to pick difficult assignments and persist in the face of challenges. The term "optimism" is used to describe individuals who have a positive outlook on life and who ascribe good things to internal, long-lasting, and pervasive causes, while attributing unfavorable events to external influences that are just transient. This implies that they focus on the positive aspects of their lives and try to put some space between themselves and the things that have happened to them. This helps them avoid feelings of sadness, remorse, and self-blame. It is more normal for optimists to come up with goals of action when faced with challenges. Two things represent hope: pathways and agency. The first deals with an individual's drive for success in a particular task within a specific environment, while the second describes the task's possible methods of completion.

Motivating oneself to put in the time, effort, and energy necessary to accomplish one's objectives is a great way for people to demonstrate their agency, internalized resolve, and willpower. (Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S., 2001.) People who have more hope are more focused on their goals and come up with new ways to reach their targets. Ultimately, resilience is the capacity of an individual to cope with difficulties, ambiguity, danger, and failure while adjusting to challenging situations in life. When faced with adverse events and changes in their environment, those who possess strong resilience typically exhibit greater adaptability (Luthans, F., & Youssef, C.M., 2004a) Despite Luthan's initial introduction of the term, psychological capital has evolved in the Western context to encourage employee and organizational unity and gain competitive advantages. In Asia, particularly in India, there is far less research being done on this subject. Therefore, the goal of the current study was to create and validate the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) among gig workers in India.

4. METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS

This study consists of 149 gig employees in this study, we Using the Questionnaire platform, we randomly selected gig workers nationwide between November 2023 and January 2024 to increase the sample's representativeness. The survey's recovery rate reached 71.9%, with a total of 186 questionnaires obtained through self-report and 149 valid questionnaires received after systematically excluding those that did not satisfy the standards and those with incomplete answers. The samples are mainly distributed in Bengaluru, Vijayawada, and Vizag, accounting for 33.6% of the total respondents.

MEASURE

Luthans et al. invented and validated the PsyCap Questionnaire, which is adapted to the organizational context (Luthans, F., Youssef, C.M., & Avolio, B.J., (2007). This instrument was developed using variables that are widely accepted and documented in the literature, including resilience, hope, optimism, and self-efficacy (Machado, F.I.M.P., (2008). There are a total of twenty-four questions in this questionnaire, six for each of the four aspects (hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience). Respondents are asked to indicate the extent of agreement with each of these questions using a Likert scale that ranges from one (which means "strongly disagree") to six (which means "strongly agree").

HYPOTHESIS

H1: Self-efficacy significantly influenced the psychological dimensions of gig workers.

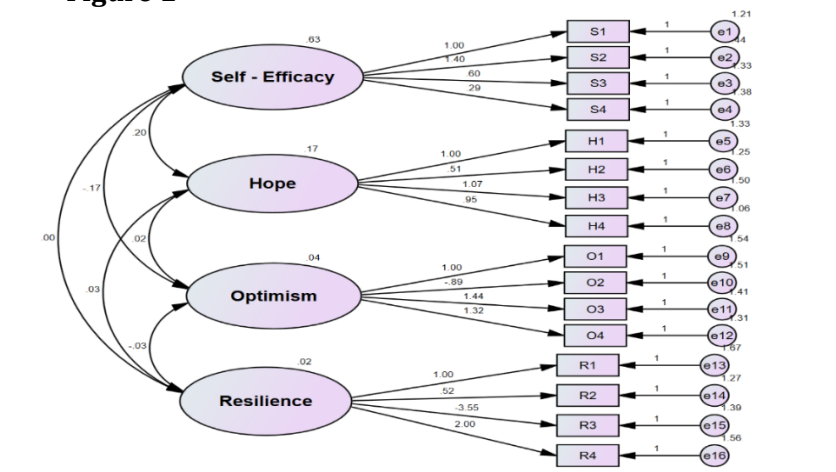
H2: Hope significantly influenced the psychological dimensions of gig workers.

H3: Optimism significantly influenced the psychological dimensions of gig workers.

H4: Resilience significantly influenced the psychological dimensions of gig workers.

DATA ANALYSIS: We used AMOS software to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis for our objectives. Each factor's composite reliability and average extracted variance were assessed (Fornell, C. & Lacker, D. F., (1981). Figure: 1 follows

Figure 1



5. MEASURE OF CRONBACH'S ALPHA

Validity requires reliability. The values of Cronbach's alpha coefficient were found to confirm internal consistency in Table 1. What value of the final alpha coefficient is required to establish the reliability of the psycap dimensions measurement technique? According to Malhotra and Naresh (2010), Cronbach's alpha index for this analysis should be greater than $\alpha = 0.6$. For this kind of analysis, Cronbach's alpha index should be greater than $\alpha = 0.6$, according to Malhotra and Naresh (2010). In contrast, according to Kline (2000), the items must have a minimum homogeneity value of $\alpha = 0.7$. Table 1 indicates this value was found in all manifest and latent variables. The first dimension (SE – Self-efficacy) presents an $\alpha = 0.73$; the second (H -Hope) shows an $\alpha = 0.80$; the third dimension (O- Optimism) shows an $\alpha = 0.82$; and the finally fourth (R- Resilience) presents $\alpha = 0.79$. Despite the low coefficients for the two components, the scale has good reliability.

Table: 1 represents the Exploratory factor analysis:

Exploratory factor: Cronbach's Alpha					
Dimensions	Items	Factor loading			
		F1	F2	F3	F4
Self-efficacy	1. I am confident in finding solutions for long-term problems.	Cronbach's Alpha = 0.73			
	2. I can make plans for my work area and set goals for it.	0.786			
	3. I feel confident when communicating with customers and suppliers to resolve issues.	0.827			
	4. I feel confident in presenting information to a group of colleagues.	0.653			
Hope	1. If I were in an obstacle in the workplace, I could come up with different ways to help myself out of it.	Cronbach's Alpha = 0.80			
	2. For any problem, there are many ways to solve it.		0.813		
	3. I have a lot of ideas on how to get towards my goals at work.		0.789		
	4. I am a successful person at work right now.		0.761		
Resilience	1. Overall, I am capable of managing work challenges.	Cronbach's Alpha = 0.82			
	2. At work, I can stand "at my own risk."			0.783	
	3. I can handle work challenges as I have defeated them before.			0.816	
	4. I believe I can manage multiple tasks simultaneously at work.			0.832	
Optimism	1. I always focus on the good aspects of my work.	Cronbach's Alpha = 0.79			
	2. I am "optimistic" about the future at work.				0.745
	3. The things never go how I want them to at work.				0.741
	4. I believe that even setbacks have wonderful outcomes.				0.662

Table 2: represents the Confirmatory factor analysis

	χ^2	DF	P	Normed χ^2	GFI	AGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMR	RMSEA
Psycap	189.83	98	0	1.937	0.879	0.832	0.912	0.969	0.982	0.131	0.072

According to the results of the confirmatory factor analysis (see Table 2 and Figure 1), First, the tested model's fit to the data (N = 149) was evaluated. The model's covariance matrix and the values found empirically must fit as closely as possible in this analysis. The model's quality is assessed using several indices. The most common model acceptance criterion is Pearson's chi-square test. The value of chi-square ($\chi^2 = 189.83$) at 98 degrees of freedom (df) was found in the model that was analyzed in Figure 1. A p-value of $p < 0.05$ indicates that the model has reached significance and should not be rejected. This condition is satisfied by the analyzed psycp model ($p = 0$). The null hypothesis is more likely to be true the higher the p-value. The optimal range for the ratio between the degrees of freedom ($\chi^2 / df = 1.937$) and the chi-square test is between 1.0 and 2.0. Ranges of (1.0; 3.0) or possibly (1.0; 5.0) were previously accepted, particularly for immense models. The CFI = .982, NFI = .912, TLI = .969, RMR = 0.131, and RMSEA = .049 index indicate that the model is well-adjusted and suitable for wide use.

TABLE 3: REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The presenting regression coefficients of the relationship between the psycap dimensions like self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience. The regression coefficients offer valuable information regarding the degree and orientation of these associations. It is worth noting that Self-efficacy demonstrates a coefficient value of 0.295, which suggests a moderately positive influence. In contrast, hope exhibits a significance value of 0.948, the positive effect that the coefficient for optimism is 0.887, and resilience value is 0.521. It is important to mention that the t-values and standard errors ('SE') accompany the coefficients for self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience. A significance level of $p < 0.001$ indicates that the significance is statistically significant ('***').

Regression coefficients			Estimates	S.E.	C.R.	P
S1	<---	SE	1			
S2	<---	SE	1.401	0.245	5.707	***
S3	<---	SE	0.596	0.142	4.191	***
S4	<---	SE	0.295	0.129	2.28	0.023
H1	<---	H	1			
H2	<---	H	0.508	0.309	1.642	0.101
H3	<---	H	1.068	0.439	2.433	0.015
H4	<---	H	0.948	0.381	2.486	0.013
O1	<---	O	1			
O2	<---	O	0.887	0.533	-1.664	0.096
O3	<---	O	1.438	0.693	2.074	0.038
O4	<---	O	1.321	0.647	2.042	0.041
R1	<---	R	1			
R2	<---	R	0.521	1.154	0.45	0.052
R3	<---	R	1.234	1.282	-0.829	0.407
R4	<---	R	1.999	0.551	0.784	0.033

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to enhance the psychometric analysis of the "PsyCap Questionnaire" for gig workers in India. Positive ideas have a greater impact on coworkers' performance and happiness; thus, it is significant. It is important to note that the results shown here are very good, indicating that the scale is strong and can be used in several different situations. From this, we can see that the model is well-adjusted, which shows that it can be used in many situations. The dimensions of optimism and resilience display the lowest values, while the self-efficacy feature displays the greatest values. These findings are understandable given the Indian situation. The result confirmed the study by Luthan and colleagues, which established Furthermore, the 4-factor PCQ model demonstrated construct validity in the data utilized for CFA analysis. listed the Psychological Capital Questionnaire's strong reliability values. (Luthan & Associates, 2007). The respondents of the current study were gig workers employed in the delivery industry. It is recommended that future research investigate the extent to which the association between PCQ and the psychological well-being of gig workers in Indian contexts is extended.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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