

Exploring the Factors Shaping the Mental Well-Being of Gig Workers: A Systematic Literature Review

Shehan De Saram, Sonali Galagedara, Anne Perera, Ama Priyankara, Vageesha Rajapakse*

SLIIT Business School, Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Malabe, Sri Lanka
vageesha.r@slit.lk

Abstract - The gig economy has revolutionized the present global job market, with the boost of gig working trends. Despite offering the major positive perk of work flexibility, gig work also creates felt challenges towards the mental well-being of gig-workers. In such a setting, this review of literature was conducted with the aim of synthesizing the factors affecting the mental well-being of gig workers as per the global scholarly discourse. The review includes 35 peer-reviewed articles published between 2015 to 2025 analyzed in par with PRISMA 2020 guidelines. In terms of review outcomes, several key factors such as job safety concerns, variability of periodic income and algorithmic control were identified as most influential stressors of gig workers. Interestingly, results also revealed that technostress and social isolation are further contributors hindering the gig worker's mental well-being. Even though literature reveals mechanisms such as peer support networks and flexibility of job schedules as mental well-being facilitators, such aspects are reported inconsistently across different contexts. The review sheds light on interesting yet underexplored areas such as platform design and demographic variabilities influencing gig-worker's mental well-being, as possible avenues for future research. In this manner, this review synthesizes fragmented literature and subsequently presents a comprehensive framework that captures triple aspects of economic, technological and social stressors, which collectively contribute towards the mental-wellbeing outcomes of gig-workers. By embedding local evidence together with global studies, the results further provide valuable implications for target stakeholders regarding shared as well as region-specific challenges. In this manner, this review of literature contributes towards the advancement of understanding psychological realities of gig-work and further paves way towards future research whilst calling for policy reforms aimed at creating sustainable and supportive gig economies.

Keywords: Challenges, Gig Workers, Freelancers, Gig Economy, Mental Well-Being

I. INTRODUCTION

At present, the rising popularity of platform-supported employment has revolutionized the traditional job market. This novel work arrangement is primarily characterized by freelance working and short-term employment contracts, opposing the traditional permanent jobs. These arrangements are technically identified as the gig work, and broadly referred to as the gig economy, which encompasses digitally mediated labor through platforms such as Uber, PickMe, and Fiver (Woodcock & Graham, 2020). In this study, "gig work" refers to flexible, on-demand jobs completed by independent contractors, frequently without long-term agreements or benefits. In this context, "Mental well-being" refers to both psychological results (such as stress, depression, and

anxiety) and aspects of personal well-being (such as autonomy, social support, and peer connection).

When the global platform work set-up is considered, gig-working trends are especially abundant in services such as third-party ride-hailing and delivery, termed location-based services (Heiland, 2021). Although these platforms provide benefits like job autonomy and schedule flexibility, extant research highlights significant challenges to workers' mental well-being (Barratt et al., 2020). These challenges are often overlooked due to the appealing nature of gig work, which includes low entry barriers and perceived freedom.

The gig worker is inherently characterized by automated algorithmic management systems for work supervision, work condition regulation and evaluation of employee performance (Kellogg et al., 2020). This tends to result in heightened psychological pressures for gig workers due to lack of human element in supervision as well as limited opportunity for personalized discussion and appeals (Rosenblat & Stark, 2015; Van Doorn, 2017). Moreover, outwardly appealing aspects such as minimum entry barriers and considerable job schedule flexibility makes gig work a popular and inviting employment category. However, it is important to note that, this predominantly visible appeal of gig work, tends to outweigh the real possible vulnerabilities gig workers are exposed to, resulting in negative psychological outcomes (Schor et al., 2020). Gig work by its nature itself is unstable and hence encompasses a considerable level of risk, which in turn affects the gig-workers mental well-being. In fact, the gig workers often identified as independent contract workers, are inherently exposed to lack of financial stability, powered by factors such as irregular income flows and absence of regular employment benefits unlike traditional permanent workers. This often makes gig workers end up in economic anxiety (Berger et al., 2019; Srnicek, 2017). Adding to these, lack of peer involved work environments and access to real time work-place support mechanisms, gig workers are increasingly reported to be experiencing feelings of loneliness and social disconnection, subsequently impairing their mental well-being (Forte, 2017; ILO Annual Report, 2021).

Further adding to the stated challenges, it is also evident that location based gig works face a great deal of psychological stress from factors such as on-the-move pressure while navigating through locations to service customers amidst traffic, potential violence as well as adverse climatic conditions (Alexander & Gleeson, 2019). The locational aspect of this type of gig work further heightens the psychological strains experienced by gig workers. This happens in several ways, including but not limited to demanding drivers to place themselves in algorithmically suggested locations to attract further hires, often named as "hot-zones" and even charging penalties and perk cuts for rejecting distant or off route hire and delivery requests (Christie & Ward, 2019).

Although there is an increasing amount of literature on the gig economy, there is still a dearth of systematic synthesis that focuses on gig workers' mental well-being. Current research lacks an integrated framework and typically looks at discrete elements like algorithmic control or economic precarity. This review addresses that gap by synthesizing interdisciplinary evidence to construct a

holistic understanding of the factors impairing gig workers' mental well-being. The novelty of this study lies in its triangulated approach examining social, technological, and economic stressors collectively.

This review aims to systematically synthesize global literature on the factors shaping the mental well-being of gig workers, with a particular focus on location-based services. While earlier research has algorithmic control or unstable pay, this review incorporates these findings using well-established frameworks for occupational well-being. In particular, the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness as psychological needs, the job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which explains how job demands (e.g., surveillance, workload) and resources (e.g., autonomy support) interact to influence well-being, and the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, which emphasize the role of resource gain and loss in stress and resilience, all contribute to the synthesis.

This study develops a holistic framework supported by a thorough synthesis of extant literature. The framework identifies three primary bases of mental well-being impairment: social, technological, and economic. The study is guided by the following research objectives:

- To identify and categorize the key factors affecting gig workers' mental well-being.
 - To examine how location-based gig work intensifies psychological stress.
- To synthesis literature across disciplines to inform sustainable gig work practices.

Research questions:

- What are the main social, technological, and economic factors influencing the mental well-being of gig workers?
- How do algorithmic management and locational demands contribute to psychological strain?
- What gaps exist in current literature regarding support mechanisms for gig workers?

II. METHODOLOGY

This study conducted a systematic literature review to find and synthesize evidence regarding the factors influencing the mental well-being of gig workers. The review adhered to the PRISMA 2020 standards (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analysis) to guarantee rigor, transparency, and replicability. Figure 1 illustrates the PRISMA flow diagram of the study selection process.

A. Identification

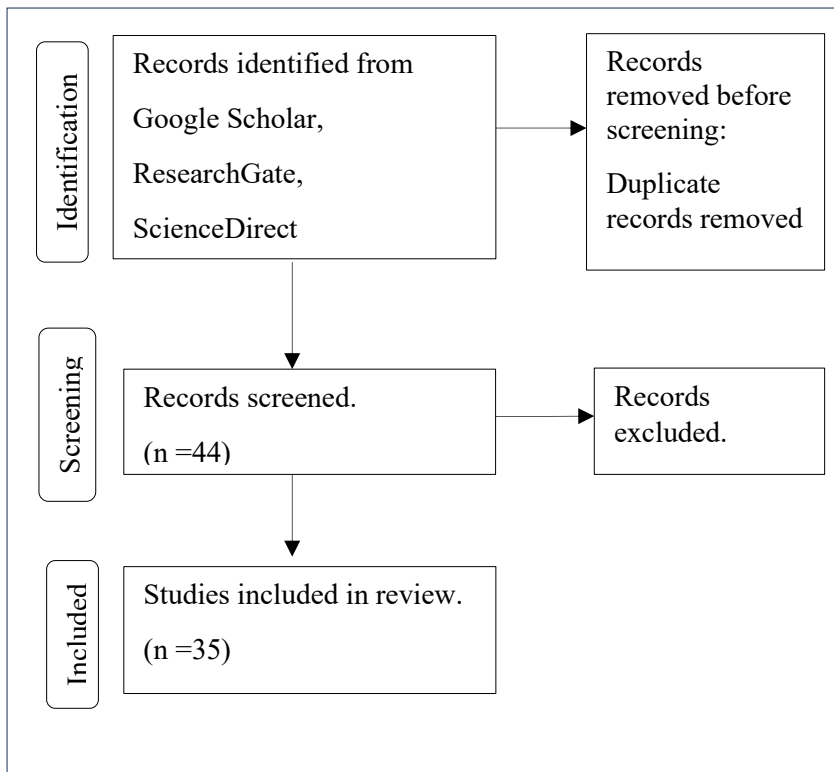
During the identification phase, resources including Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and ResearchGate were used to compile pertinent studies. Keywords such as “*gig workers*,” “*freelancers*,” “*mental well-being*,” and “*challenges*” were used to generate search strings, and Boolean operators (AND/OR) were used to further refine the results. Only peer-reviewed journal publications published between 2015 and 2025 were included in the evaluation in order to encompass ten years of developing data on gig labour and mental well-being, especially in light of post-pandemic difficulties and digital transition. Four duplicate records were eliminated prior to screening out the 44 records that were found.

B. Screening

The remaining 44 data were evaluated during the screening phase based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. At this stage, nine records were eliminated because they lacked empirical support, were purely conceptual or opinion-based, concentrated on traditional employment models or the logistical and operational aspects of gig work, and lacked methodological transparency, including inadequate information about the sample and research design.

C. Inclusion

At the inclusion stage, 35 peer reviewed papers were selected since they matched all criteria and provided empirical insights into the elements determining the mental well-being of gig workers. To guarantee methodological soundness, each study underwent a quality assessment, with special focus on the clarity of the research design, the sufficiency of sample details, and the transparency of the results. Thematic analysis was used to synthesize the final pool of studies. Recurring problems were categorized and arranged into broad theses, including demographic factors, algorithmic control, financial instability, job insecurity, technostress, and social isolation. The coding was done separately by two reviewers, and any differences were.

Figure 12. PRISMA Flow Diagram of Study Selection Process

Source: Authors' compilation based on reviewed literature.

1) *Data Synthesis:*

A thematic synthesis approach was used. Independently coded recurring themes such as job insecurity, algorithmic control, and social isolation. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion. Themes were then mapped against occupational well-being framework (JD-R, SDT, COR) to enhance theoretical coherence and interpretive depth.

2) *Limitations:*

While the review offers comprehensive coverage, it is limited by language bias (English-only sources), platform diversity and regional representation, with fewer studies from Africa and Southeast Asia. These limitations are acknowledged as areas for future expansion.

3) *Significance of Methodological Approach:*

By integrating thematic synthesis with established well-being theories, the method not only consolidates fragmented literature but also advances theoretical understanding and informs policy design.

The thematic analysis conducted in this study was guided by the PRISMA 2020 framework, which provided a structured approach for examining data extracted from the selected literature. This method was chosen for its ability

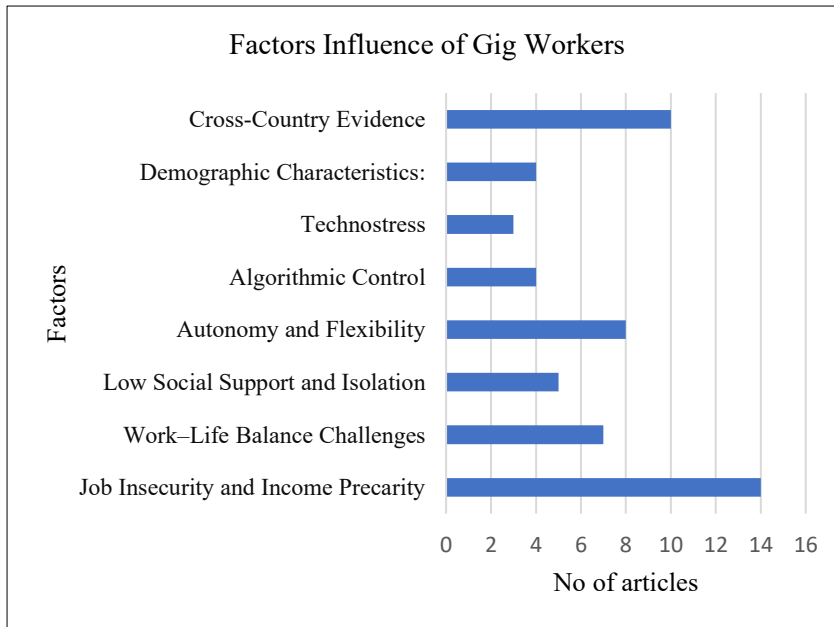
to systematically identify and integrate qualitative findings across multiple studies, aligning with the study's objective of exploring factors affecting the mental health of gig workers. To develop overarching themes, the authors engaged in iterative discussions, manually coded the extracted data, and organized it into coherent categories. This collaborative process ensured transparency, consistency, and analytical rigor, affirming the appropriateness and justification of the chosen methodology.

Since the study adopted a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology, it did not involve the collection of primary data from individual participants. The analysis relied exclusively on secondary data sourced from existing published research. Consequently, ethical approval and participation recruitment were not applicable.

III. RESULTS

The systematic review of 35 peer-reviewed studies revealed a complex set of interrelated factors shaping the mental well-being of gig workers. The thematic analysis identified nine recurring dimensions: job insecurity and income Instability, Work-Life Balance Challenges, Low Social Support and Isolation, Autonomy and Flexibility, Algorithmic Control, Technostress, Demographic Characteristics, Cross-Country Evidence. While these factors appeared with varying frequency, together they highlight both the risks and potential protective elements influencing workers' psychological health. These insights related to the study's findings have been visualized further for better clarity. Figure 2 visualizes the frequency of recurring stress factors revealed by thematic literature analysis, that were reported across the 35 reviewed studies.

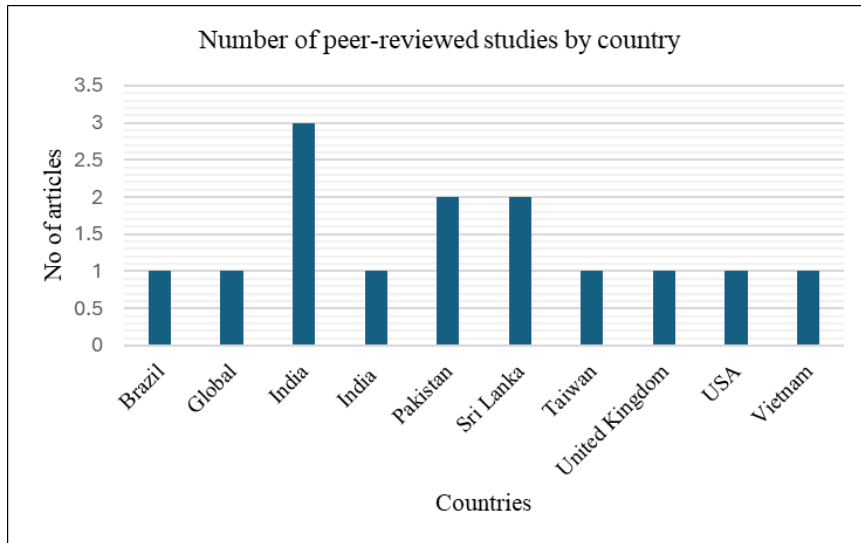
Figure 13. Frequency of Factors Influencing Gig Workers' Mental Well - Being across Reviewed Studies – Factors Are Ranked by Frequency, with Job Insecurity and Algorithmic Control Emerging as Dominant Stressors



Source: Authors' compilation based on reviewed literature.

Evidence on gig workers' mental well-being has emerged across multiple countries, with notable contributions from South Asia, Europe, and Latin America. Figure 3 illustrates the number of peer-reviewed studies by country, highlighting geographic variation in research coverage.

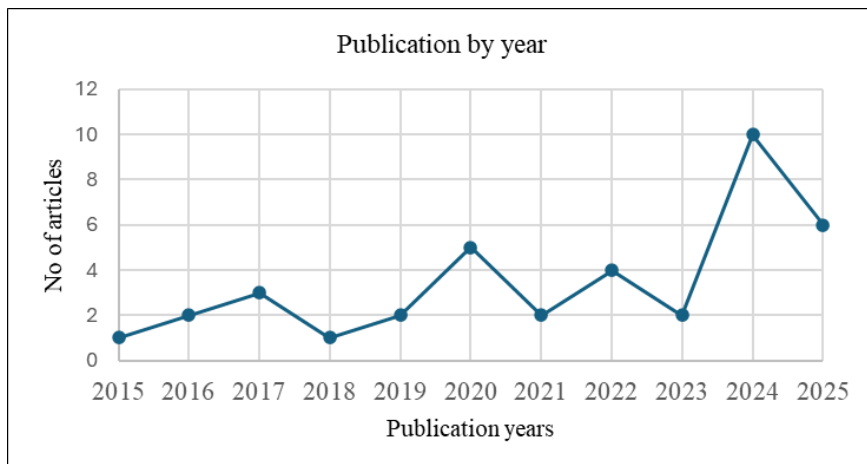
Figure 14. Number of Peer-reviewed Studies by Country Addressing Gig Workers' Mental Well-being



Source: Authors' compilation based on reviewed literature.

Research on gig workers' mental well-being has sharply increased, especially after 2020, reflecting the post-pandemic rise of platform work as a subject of concern. Figure 4 shows the annual distribution of publications between 2015 and 2025.

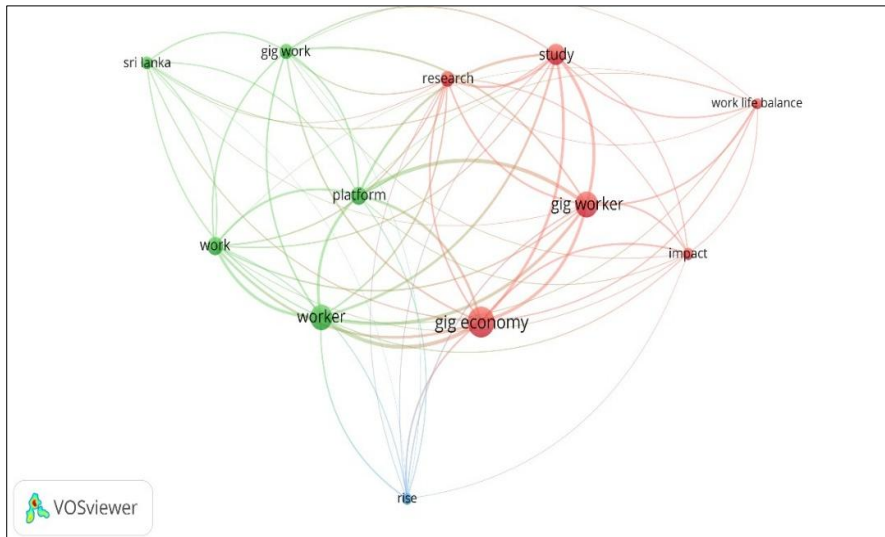
Figure 15. Annual Distribution of Reviewed Publications (2015 -2025)



Source: Authors' compilation based on reviewed literature.

To capture research trends, a keyword co-occurrence analysis was conducted. Figure 5 presents the network visualization

Figure 16. Keyword Co-Occurrence Network of Reviewed Studies Visualized Using VOS Viewer



Source: Authors' compilation based on reviewed literature.

A. Job Insecurity and Income Instability

Job insecurity and irregular income flows emerged as the most consistently reported stressors, cited in 13 of the included studies. Workers' classification as independent contractors denies them access to traditional employment benefits such as health insurance, pensions, and paid leave, creating persistent economic anxiety (Berger et al., 2019; Srnicek, 2017). Studies conducted in South Asian contexts further emphasized how volatile demand and weak labour protections exacerbate these insecurities (Naz & Raj, 2024; Wang et al., 2022). Appouey et al., (2020) similarly found that French drivers and delivery bikers suffered significant income loss during COVID-19, which heightened financial precarity and stress. M. Benzigar Nolas & Clayton Michael Fonceca, (2025) added that Indian food delivery workers faced elevated conflict and stress when flexibility and stability were lacking, with demographic factors moderating these effects.

Economic stability and regulations are influenced by the gig workers mental well-being (Forben, 2025). Gig workers earn financial benefits, but some regulations and mental well-being problems faced psychological risk (Dr Ammad Zafar, 2025). Gig workers' mental well-being depends on the balance between freedom and insecurity. When the gig workers have income stability and social support. And there are enjoyable flexibility and control. However, they are having negative outcomes such as burnout, anxiety, stress etc (Marín-Berges et al., 2025). Gig workers' mental well-being depends on freedom and insecurity. Flexibility offers short-term benefits. Such as algorithmic surveillance, financial precarity, anxiety etc (Felix et al., 2023). There are mental well-being issues and financial instability in the gig economy. However, if policies are in the gig workers can avoid those issues by using more equitable platforms (Noorlailahusna, 2024). Gig workers faced many challenges such as

job insecurity, flexibility and technostress. They are implication of gig workers' well-being (Tara & Iqbal, 2023). Gig workers get paid for each job they do, so their income fluctuates. They don't have fixed hours, or long-term contracts and platform can remove them anytime. They also don't get benefits like healthcare or retirement plans, which makes their money situation even more uncertain (Singh, 2024).

B. Algorithmic Control and Surveillance

Another dominant theme was algorithmic management. Across eight studies, gig workers reported high levels of psychological strain caused by automated systems that monitor performance through ratings, penalize low acceptance rates, and implement sudden deactivation with little recourse (Rosenblat & Stark, 2015; Van Doorn, 2017). In Taiwan, Cheng et al., (2024) found that stronger labour control via digital platforms was significantly associated with higher risk of burnout and poor self-rated mental well-being, primarily through increased job demands. A global review by Margerison et al., (2025) further highlighted how algorithmic control and platform surveillance undermine worker well-being by creating constant pressure. In Sri Lanka, Perera et al., (2025) observed that while technology improved efficiency and engagement in professional gig settings, the lack of transparency in algorithmic decision-making generated mistrust and stress.

Gig workers mental well-being to digital system design, showing how smart city algorithms influence stress and resilient. It adds a technology focused perspective to existing sociological and health research (Piyumidu. & Withaanarachchi, 2024). Freedom and insecurity are key factors in gig workers' mental well-being. Flexibility has immediate advantages. For example, algorithmic monitoring, unstable finance etc (Felix et al., 2023). Algorithms are used by apps websites to manage in online gig work. These systems assign jobs, monitor performance and assign ratings to employees and customers (Wood et al., 2019).

C. Technostress and Digital Demands

Technostress was identified in four studies, arising from the pressure to remain digitally connected, manage app notifications, and adapt to platform updates. Tara & Iqbal, (2023) proposed a theoretical model in which job demands harm well-being, autonomy mitigates strain, and technostress mediates the effects. Felix et al., (2023) found that preference misfits when workers' needs for autonomy or security clashed with platform controls exacerbated stress, while preference congruence did not always guarantee protection if workloads were unsustainable. Hafeez et al., (2022) reported that unpredictability, low wages, and digital surveillance contributed to stress, anxiety, and sleep problems, illustrating how platform features can intensify psychological strain.

D. Work-Life Balance Challenges

Work-life balance was the most frequently cited factor, appearing in 10 studies. While workers valued flexibility initially, blurred boundaries often led to

overwork, irregular hours, and heightened stress (Himani Srihita et al., 2025; M. Benzigar Nolas & Clayton Michael Fonceca, 2025) found that Pakistan workers faced additional pressure from household responsibilities, which amplified conflict between work and personal life. The work life balance, strong support networks, and social protection are importance of improving gig workers' well-being. M. Benzigar Nolas & Clayton Michael Fonceca, (2025) reinforced this finding by showing that lack of stable schedules and support increased stress and conflict. In Sri Lanka, Perera et al., (2025) found that autonomy and digital engagement were motivating, but unclear contracts and lack of organizational support reduced well-being.

The significance of implementing focused strategies like reforming policies, accountability of platforms to enhance the well-being of gig workers (Sapna Shekhawat & Dr. Swati Saxena, 2025). Worker's freedom comes with the established safeguards, salary and a predictable schedule, which may throw off the balance between personal and professional life (Singh, 2024). Although gig employment may seem flexible, it can be challenging to balance work and persona obligations. Employees frequently struggle with unpredictable schedules, extended workdays and a blurring of the boundaries work and home life. While shifting working hours it may sometimes conflict with family responsibilities (Churchill, 2025).

E. Social Support and Isolation

Social support was highlighted as a protective factor in 8 studies, while isolation was cited as a negative outcome in five. Gig workers often operate alone, with minimal peer interaction, which increases risks of loneliness and detachment (Forde, 2017; ILO Annual Report, 2021; Wang et al., 2022). However, peer networks and community groups were found to reduce stress and provide a sense of belonging (Naz & Raj, 2024). Evidence from India and Sri Lanka also demonstrated that social connection enhanced motivation and engagement, counteracting isolation. Gig workers are impacted by a variety of elements, including employment features, psychological well-being, technological influence etc. To address these issues platform accountability, support system is needed to improve gig workers' well-being (Perera et al., 2025).

Work environment is significantly impacting mental well-being among gig workers. Because of increase stress and psychological distress (Marin-Berges et al., 2025). Gig workers place a high value in social support networks, financial literacy initiatives, and targeted interventions to improve their well-being. When addressing those issues, it also contributes to workers' quality, greater productivity and job satisfaction in the gig economy (Naz & Raj, 2024). Women who work as a gig worker they don't have support networks. Platforms offer limited protection from harassment and discrimination. Women frequently face obstacles alone, which further their sense of loneliness (Churchill, 2025).

F. Flexibility and Autonomy

Flexibility and autonomy appeared as both opportunities and risks. Nine studies reported that workers valued the ability to self-schedule and choose tasks, which

contributed positively to motivation and engagement (Perera et al., 2025). Felix et al., (2023) showed that preference congruence when worker preferences aligned with platform features supported well-being, while preference violations worsened outcomes. Forben,(2025) added that structural shifts in the U.S. gig economy have complex implications for autonomy and flexibility, though well-being outcomes were context-dependent.

Workers' experiences in the gig economy are influenced by a complex web of interconnected parts. Although it provides freedom and independence. A lack of social safety and unstable finance are the psychological difficulties of gig workers (Wang et al., 2022). The gig economy provides freedom and flexibility but has financial precarity and mental well-being challenges. If it is policies, there are fairer platforms to gig workers it helps to avoid those problems (Noorlailahusna, 2024). The different generations significantly impact the desire to get involved in the gig economy. They influence by perceived risk, skills, flexible working hours, income etc (Cao & Pham, 2024). To enhance the well-being of gig workers highlights the importance of target interventions, financial literacy programs, flexible working hours policy are important to them. When addressing those issues, it also contributes to workers' quality, greater productivity and job satisfaction in the gig economy (Naz & Raj, 2024). Workers experience autonomy through control over their work location and pace. This includes choosing to work from home and juggling multiple roles or responsibilities (Wood et al., 2019).

G. Demographic Influences

Demographic influences such as age, gender, and generational differences were the least explored, with only three studies addressing them directly. Cao & Pham, (2024) demonstrated that perceived risks, income, skills, flexible schedules, and platform characteristics influenced intention to participate in gig work differently across Generations X, Y, and Z. M. Benzigar Nolas & Clayton Michael Fonceca, (2025) observed that stress outcomes among Indian delivery workers varied by demographic factors such as age and marital status. (Felix et al., 2023) further noted that mismatches in worker preferences could produce different well-being outcomes across worker groups, suggesting that demographic and personal attributes interact with platform dynamics.

Women's freelancing work is impacted by their home lives, including taking care of their families, being mothers, and managing household chores. Their family structure is one of several elements that influence how they experience gig work. Consequently, it is essential to take into account all of these factors at once. (Churchill, 2025).

Although the data is lacking, it suggests that platform circumstances and demographic factors interact to shape results. For instance, different generations assess risk and rewards differently (Cao & Pham, 2024), and also gendered caregiving obligations increase stress among women (Churchill, 2025). These findings underline the significance of intersectional analysis in future research

by indicating that mental health in gig workers is not consistent but rather mediated by life stage, social roles, and cultural expectations.

H. Cross-Country Evidence

The cross-country evidence highlights significant contextual variation. In France and the U.K., gig workers have poorer mental well-being, loneliness and income precarity compared to the traditional employees (Apouey et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022). The preference misfits exacerbated stress, technostress and burnout problems are mention in Spain and Brazil (Felix et al., 2023; Marín-Berges et al., 2025). Instability, lack of security and domestic duties became the main sources of South Asian countries (Dr Ammad Zafar, 2025; Naz & Raj, 2024). The Sri Lankan research highlighted the conflict between autonomy and lack of institutional support (Perera et al., 2025), while in Malaysia linked to better outcomes rather than strong regulations (Noorlailahusna, 2024).

The gig workers safeguard many of government starting to amend the law around in the world. Among them they provide fair compensation benefits and transparent services are considered. This shows how many countries are making an effort to amend their labor laws according to the gig economy (Singh, 2024). There is a stable trend in Australia and other countries. For example, men normally driving and delivery jobs, but women majority like to work in an office, cleaning services etc. Because of worldwide trend there are some traditional gender differences reflects and strengthens (Churchill, 2025).

Although gig labor provides autonomy and income opportunities, structural vulnerabilities such as job insecurity, income precarity, algorithmic control, and weak social protections erode worker well-being in overall analysis. While schedule of flexibility and peer support serve as partial buffers, technostress, loneliness, and poor work–life balance further increases risks. There are still significant study gaps regarding future research.

To provide a consolidated view of the reviewed evidence, Table 1 summarizes empirical studies according to the eight key themes identified in the Results section. This thematic organization highlights how diverse contexts and study designs converge around recurring dimensions such as job insecurity, algorithmic control, and social support, while also revealing underexplored areas like demographic influences and cross-country variation.

Table 1: Thematic Matrix Aligned with Results

Theme (from Results)	Evidence (Studies)	Key Insights
Job Insecurity & Income Instability	Srnicsek (2017); Berger et al. (2019); Apouey et al. (2020); Naz & Raj (2024); Singh (2024); Nolas & Fonceca (2025)	Contractor classification and irregular pay deny benefits; precarity heightens stress; demand volatility worsens insecurity in South Asia.
Work–Life Balance Challenges	Srihita et al. (2025); Nolas & Fonceca (2025); Singh (2024); Churchill (2025)	Flexibility often turns into blurred boundaries, overwork, and family–work conflict, especially among women and South Asian workers.
Social Support & Isolation	Forde (2017); ILO (2021); Naz & Raj (2024); Perera et al. (2024); Churchill (2025)	Gig work limits peer contact, fostering loneliness; peer networks and community groups reduce stress and increase engagement.
Autonomy & Flexibility	Wood et al. (2019); Perera et al. (2024); Felix et al. (2023); Forben (2025)	Autonomy motivates when aligned with worker preferences; flexibility supports engagement but doesn't offset insecurity.
Algorithmic Control	Rosenblat & Stark (2015, 2016); Van Doorn (2017); Schor et al. (2020); Cheng et al. (2024); Lochana Perera et al. (2024)	Algorithmic surveillance, opaque decision-making, and automated deactivation intensify stress and reduce trust in platforms.
Technostress	Hafeez et al. (2022); Tara & Iqbal (2023); Felix et al. (2023); Marín-Berges et al. (2025)	Constant app demands and digital monitoring cause anxiety, sleep issues, and strain; misalignment between worker needs and platform design worsens outcomes.
Demographic Factors	Cao & Pham (2024); Nolas & Fonceca (2025); Churchill (2025)	Generational cohorts differ in their approach to risk and flexibility; women face compounded stress from caregiving and harassment.

Cross-Country Evidence	Apouey et al. (2020); Wang et al. (2022); Noorlailahusna (2024); Naz & Raj (2024); Perera et al. (2024); Marín-Berges et al. (2025)	Shared vulnerabilities exist, but manifestations vary: Europe/UK → loneliness, precarity; South Asia → household pressures, weak regulation; Malaysia → stronger laws improve outcomes.
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Source: Authors' compilation based on reviewed literature.

Overall, the synthesis shows that while gig work offers perceived autonomy and income opportunities, structural vulnerabilities such as job insecurity, income precarity, algorithmic control, and weak social protections erode worker well-being. Technostress, isolation, and poor work–life balance further exacerbate risks, whereas peer support and schedule flexibility act as partial buffers. Demographic influences and platform design remain underexplored, highlighting key gaps for future research.

IV. DISCUSSION

The results of this comprehensive analysis show that a complex interaction between social, technological and economic factors determines the psychological health of gig workers. The insecure character of platform intermediated work is increased by preexisting vulnerabilities such as algorithmic regulation, income fluctuation, and job instability (Berger et al., 2019; Naz & Raj, 2024; Rosenblat & Stark, 2015; Srnicek, 2017; Van Doorn, 2017). These are consistent with well-established occupational health research that links unstable work arrangements to higher levels of stress and burnout. Although gig work differs from traditional precarious employment, it adds an additional layer of algorithmic inspection, opaque power exercises, and performance tracking, all of which contribute to a greater sense of distrust and distrust towards platform regulation. These risks are made worse by weak protectionary regimes in South Asia, such as those in India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka; nevertheless, data from Malayasia shows that better well-being results are associated with more Protection (Noorlailahusna, 2024; Perera et al., 2025).

Psychosocial aspects also play a key role. Work–life imbalance, loneliness, and technostress are a steady danger to well-being cross-nationally, even where flexibility and autonomy are in place (Hafeez et al., 2022; Himani Srihita et al., 2025; M. Benzigar Nolas & Clayton Michael Fonceca, 2025; Wang et al., 2022). These results are reflective of occupational psychology texts, where autonomy only aids workers in the presence of support and sustainable workloads (Roczniewska et al., 2022). Examples from South Asia illustrate the way domestic responsibilities and lack of institutional protection accumulate stress (Himani Srihita et al., 2025; M. Benzigar Nolas & Clayton Michael Fonceca, 2025), while Occidental evidence indicates more emphatically loneliness and the stress of digital monitoring are major dangers (Hafeez et al.,

2022; Wang et al., 2022). Work on technostress reveals in addition the way pervasive digital connectivity, app notifications, and programmatic updates generate intense demands eroding psychological resilience (Felix et al., 2023; Hafeez et al., 2022; Tara & Iqbal, 2023).

New demographic data suggests that such stressors are not uniformly borne. Generational groups vary in assessing risk and reward differently, where the young tend to prioritize flexibility but are also exposed more intensely to instability (Cao & Pham, 2024). Women, in turn, confront multiply-faceted pressures from their unpaid caregiving burden and frailer support networks, multiplying their feelings of isolation and exposure (Churchill, 2025; M. Benzigar Nolas & Clayton Michael Fonceca, 2025). These findings are consistent with broader discussions of labor market intersectionality, which hold that workers' psychological rewards are mediated by their life cycle, gendered expectations, and socioeconomic environment. Despite the shortage of such information, it emphasizes the necessity of moving beyond generalizations about gig economy labor in favor of more specific, intersectional conceptions of mental health. Cross national variations also draw attention to the influence of cultural and institutional contexts. Studies conducted in the UK and Europe show that loneliness, technological stress, and income precarity are common problems (Apouey et al., 2020; Marín-Berges et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2022). While research conducted in South Asia emphasize family responsibilities, instability, and inadequate protection are the most important (Dr Ammad Zafar, 2025; Naz & Raj, 2024). Sri Lankan observations paint a mixed picture, with independence and internet participation fueling passion while unclear contracts and a lack of organizational support undermine wellbeing (Perera et al., 2025). In contrast, Malaysian reports show that better work life balance and mental health are positively connected with stricter rules on workload distribution and pay security (Noorlailahusna, 2024). This diversity suggests that while there are universal vulnerabilities, they emerge differently depending on the local policies, cultural norms, and economic environment.

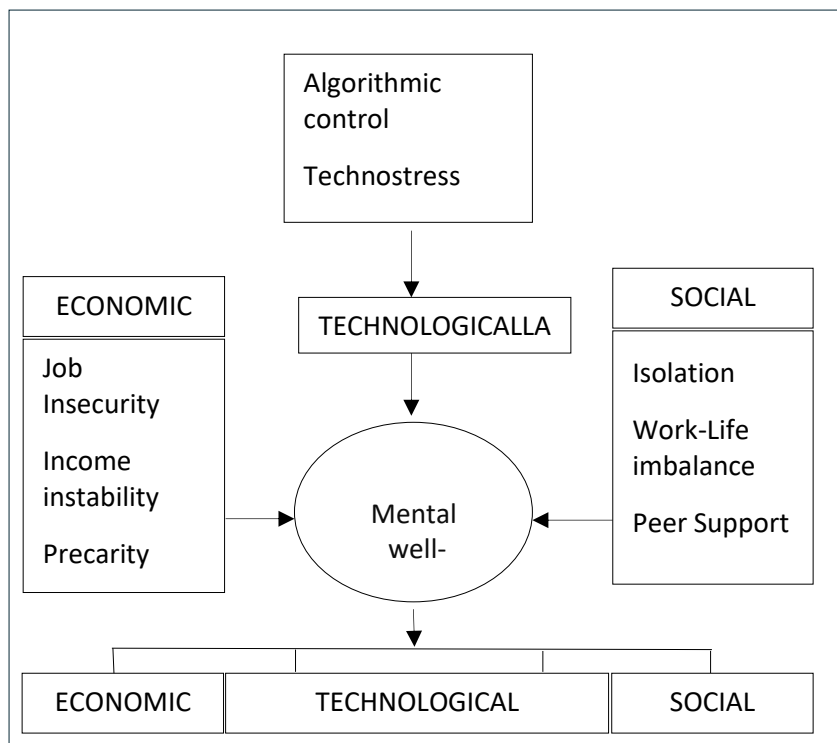
While all factors influence mental well – being, job insecurity and income instability emerged as the most dominant stressors, appearing 14 studies, followed by algorithmic control in 8 studies. These factors exert a stronger influence compared to others such as technostress or demographic characteristics which appeared less frequently. This relative prominence underscores the need for prioritizing interventions that address financial precarity and opaque platform governance.

Peer networks, for example, are useful in urban environments with a high platform density, but they are still restricted in rural areas where employees work alone. Similarly, flexible scheduling increases autonomy, it does not significantly reduce stress for employees dealing with unstable demand. These inconsistencies show that no single solution is always successful and that outcomes are greatly influenced by contextual factors such as labor demographics, regulatory context, and platform governance.

In the meanwhile, a number of studies point to resilience pathways. Social connections, civic organizations, and peer networks act as protective

barriers that reduce stress and increase involvement (Naz & Raj, 2024; Perera et al., 2025). Initiatives such as literacy programmers on finances, flexible scheduling policies, and program -specific support are advised as means to build resilience and avert undesirable consequences (M. Benzigar Nolas & Clayton Michael Fonceca, 2025; Sapna Shekhawat & Dr. Swati Saxena, 2025). Crucially, such measures indicate that independent coping mechanisms on the part of individuals are not enough; platform architecture and governance need to change in a way that minimizes arbitrary deactivation, provides for transparent ratings system, and reduces technostress. Collectively, they indicate that ethical platform governance, regulative protection, and common support networks are key to the development of psychologically durable gig working spaces Overall, when conceded these results highlight how social, technological, and economic factors interact to influence gig workers mental wellbeing through both risk and resilience pathways. These relationships are effectively integrated in the conceptual summary shown Figure 6 which represents how structural elements like labor protection governance affect psychological experiences like autonomy, technostress, and social support, which in turn affect overall mental health outcomes in various context.

sFigure 17. Conceptual Framework of Factors Shaping Mental Wellbeing, Including Economic, Social and Technological Stressors and Resilience Pathways



Source: Authors' compilation based on reviewed literature.

V. IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study reveal numerous implications for policy, practice and academia. For policy makers, the findings of the study project out the different bases impacting the mental well-being of gig workers, which will help them shape the future policy decisions taking these factors into consideration. Government and regulatory authorities should think of providing social security networks for people involved in gig work so that they will also be able to enjoy retirement benefits and health protection coverage, like other traditional employment opportunities. Moreover, policy formulation should be focused towards properly regulating the platform providers (which is currently lacking in South Asian contexts), such that both the platform providers as well a gig economy participants will enjoy win-win outcomes.

The study also provides insights for platform operators. The current revealed factors contributing to the mental well-being of gig workers connect to platforms on which the gig work is based. As such, it is high time that platform operators and related parties, including but not limited to platform designers, take steps to give a sincere touch of ethicality to the platform design, operation, mediation and management. It is important that these parties think of ensuring non-exploitive rating and evaluation mechanisms. In fact, overreliance of algorithmic controls should be given a second thought. Since gig workers are also humans, it is vital that platform operators work in a way that these people are being fairly treated, given change for a dialog as well as appeal, when required. They can also think of embedding mechanisms such as stress mitigation dashboards, workload alerting and analysis and work scheduling AI assistants into these platforms to make the gig-workers feel mentally supported and less strained.

For academics and research scholars, the findings highlight possible future research avenues. The review provides evidence that demographic variables like gender, age and social status which possibly relate to algorithmic control and gig worker mental well-being outcomes remain under research and require further exploration. Moreover, there is a lack of longitudinal studies conducted to understand the dynamic nature of gig work. In fact, mixed method studies adopting quantitative and qualitative mechanisms also is scarce, hence these project out possibilities for scholars to research on.

VI. CONCLUSION

This review of literature was c conducted with the aim of synthesizing the factors effecting the mental well-being of gig workers as per the global scholarly discourse. The review entailed 35 peer reviewed articles, which provided insightful knowledge about the mental well-being and mental health challenges faced by gig workers across the world. The findings of the review highlighted factors influencing the mental well-being of gig workers under three key domains, namely economic, technological and social. These classified insights provided by the study intend to support different stakeholders involved in operationalizing the gig economy, to better manage its participants, so that the future of the gig economy and its workers will be sustainable and favorable.

Furthermore, this study offered pathways to future researchers to further develop the scholarly dialogue related to gig work and gig worker well-being.

By providing a theoretically supported synthesis of gig workers' mental well-being, this review advances models like Job Demand-Resources (JD-R), Self-Determination Theory (SDT), and Conservation of resources (COR). The study clarifies the relationship between job expectations, autonomy, and resource loss in platform-mediated work environments by mapping empirical findings onto these frameworks. Practically speaking, the results point out stresses that platform designers and legislators can take action against, like algorithmic control, income instability, and technostress. For instance, platform redesigns that provide grievance procedures and task distribution clarity may lessen psychological stress. In a similar vein, regional policy changes like peer support programs or minimum wages guarantees can act as a buffer against social and economic vulnerabilities. The review also fills a critical gap in current scholarship by consolidating fragmented evidence across global and local contexts. It provides a roadmap for future research by identifying understudied topics like cross-country disparities and demographic diversity. In the end, by guiding measures that strike a balance between flexibility and protection, the study promotes the growth of sustainable and helpful gig economies.

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