

## Impact Analysis of Gig Economy on Traditional Labour Structure

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### Abstract

*The growth of the gig economy in Indonesia has triggered significant transformations in the traditional labour structure. This study aims to analyse the impact of the gig economy on workers' employment patterns, income, and social protection using a literature review method. The results of the analysis show that the gig economy offers flexibility and new employment opportunities but also increases income uncertainty and widens the social protection gap between gig and traditional workers. In addition, there is a skills disruption that requires increased digital literacy and worker adaptability. This research recommends the need for labour regulation reform, strengthening portable social security systems, and expanding access to digital training so that the gig economy can provide inclusive and sustainable benefits for the entire Indonesian workforce.*

**Keywords** | *gig economy, labour structure, social protection, worker income, skills disruption.*

### INTRODUCTION

The growth of the digital economy in Indonesia over the past decade has triggered a fundamental transformation in the national labour landscape. This phenomenon is not only characterised by the emergence of various digital platforms, but also by the booming gig economy that offers flexibility and new opportunities for the labour force. The gig economy, which refers to a system of project-based work or short-term tasks through digital platforms, has become a major alternative amid stagnating formal employment growth (Mikaela Palada et al., 2024). This change has major consequences for the traditional labour structure, which has been dominated by permanent employment relationships and structured social protection.

In Indonesia, the gig economy is growing rapidly as internet penetration and digital technology adoption become more widespread. Platforms such as Gojek, Grab, Shopee, and Tokopedia are key catalysts in creating new job opportunities in the services, transport, and trade sectors. Data shows that the number of gig workers in Indonesia has increased sharply from around 1.5 million in 2018 to more than 7 million in 2023. This surge signifies a significant shift in people's work preferences and patterns, especially among the younger generation who prioritise flexibility and autonomy at work (Parman et al., 2025).

While offering new economic opportunities, the gig economy also poses serious challenges to the traditional labour structure. One of the most obvious impacts is the erosion of permanent employment, which has been the backbone of workers' social security and economic stability. Many companies now prefer to recruit freelancers or short-term contracts to reduce fixed costs and improve operational efficiency (Keerthana M & Madhumitha M, 2025). As a result, formal workers face the risk of losing their jobs or being forced to turn to the gig sector to survive.



This transformation of the labour structure also has an impact on workers' income patterns. On the one hand, gig workers have the potential to earn higher incomes than traditional workers, especially if they are able to optimally utilise market opportunities. On the other hand, gig workers' income is highly volatile and vulnerable to changes in market demand, platform policies, and intensified competition. This creates economic uncertainty that impacts the long-term well-being of gig workers (S. Li, 2023).

In addition, the shift to the gig economy widens the social protection gap between traditional workers and gig workers. Most gig workers do not have access to health insurance, pensions, or other labour protections that formal workers are entitled to. Uncertain legal status and labour relations between gig workers and digital platforms exacerbate this situation, leaving many gig workers in a highly vulnerable position to economic and social risks (Pilatti et al., 2024).

From a regulatory perspective, the Indonesian government faces major challenges in responding to this new dynamic. The current Labour Law has not been able to fully accommodate the characteristics of the employment relationship in the gig sector. The ambiguous status of gig workers - not permanent employees, but also not full business partners - creates difficulties in enforcing basic labour rights, such as minimum wage, decent working hours, and social protection. This calls for adaptive and inclusive policy reforms to provide gig workers with equal protection to formal workers (S. Li, 2023).

Changes in the employment structure due to the gig economy also affect overall labour market dynamics. The shift in demand for skills from manual to digital requires the workforce to continuously improve competencies, particularly in information technology, communication and digital literacy. However, data shows that many Indonesian workers lack basic digital skills, putting them at risk of falling behind in the digital economy (Rina Ayu, 2024).

On the other hand, the gig economy also opens up opportunities for groups of people who previously had difficulty accessing the formal labour market, such as housewives, people with disabilities, and part-time workers. The flexibility of working time and location offered by gig platforms allows them to earn additional income without having to leave their primary responsibilities at home (De Stefano, 2024). Thus, the gig economy has the potential to increase economic inclusion and reduce hidden unemployment in society. However, the flexibility offered by the gig economy often comes at the cost of high levels of insecurity and a lack of social protection. Many gig workers have to work more than eight hours a day to achieve a decent income, with no guarantee of minimum wage, leave, or health insurance. This often leads to psychological distress and job burnout, which impacts mental health and long-term productivity (N. Abdullah et al., 2024).

The impact of the gig economy on traditional labour structures also has implications for the pattern of industrial relations in Indonesia. Increasingly informal labour relations based on short-term contracts weaken workers' bargaining power in negotiating wages and working conditions. Trade unions also face challenges in recruiting and protecting members in the highly fragmented and dynamic gig sector (Angwaoma Odoko., 2025)

This change requires the government, industry players, and society to jointly formulate effective adaptation strategies. Regulatory reform, strengthening the social security system, and increasing access to vocational training and education are key to ensuring that the gig economy transformation is inclusive and sustainable. Without appropriate policy interventions, the gig economy risks deepening social and economic inequality in Indonesia.

This study aims to comprehensively analyse the impact of the gig economy on the traditional employment structure, with a focus on changes in income patterns, social protection, and policy implications in Indonesia.

## **METHOD**

The research method used is a literature review with a systematic approach, namely collecting and analysing various literature, scientific journals, research reports, and secondary data from official institutions such as BPS and Sakernas published in the last five years, to identify patterns of transformation of the employment structure, changes in income patterns, and policy implications due to gig economic growth in Indonesia; analysis is carried out thematically and meta-synthesis in order to obtain a comprehensive picture and formulate evidence-based policy recommendations (Eliyah & Aslan, 2025) ; (Ferrari, 2020).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Job Structure Transformation**

The transformation of employment structure in the gig economy era marks a fundamental change in the way of working, industrial relations patterns, and labour market dynamics in Indonesia. This change is driven by advances in digital technology that allow the emergence of online platforms as a link between service providers and consumers, thus opening up new flexible and project-based employment opportunities (Siti Maria et al., 2025).

In the traditional labour system, workers are generally bound by long-term contracts with companies, earning income stability, as well as social protections such as insurance and pensions. However, in the gig economy, workers operate as independent contractors without permanent attachment to a company. They offer their services through digital platforms such as Gojek, Grab, Sribu.com, Freelancer.co.id, and Projects.co.id, as well as various other applications that are now prevalent in Indonesia (Jaishree & Vidya Jha, 2024). One of the main characteristics of the gig economy is flexibility. Gig workers have more control over their working time and the number of projects they take on. They can choose to work anytime and anywhere, fitting in with personal or family needs. This flexibility is a major attraction for many people, especially the younger generation and those who need additional income outside their main job (Watson et al., 2024).

In addition to flexibility, task diversity also characterises the gig economy. Workers can perform different types of work simultaneously or alternately, according to their expertise and interests. This provides opportunities to develop a broader portfolio of skills and increase competitiveness in the labour market.



The role of digital platforms is central to the gig economy ecosystem. Platforms serve as intermediaries that connect workers with clients or service users, while also providing payment, assessment, and job search systems. With platforms, geographical boundaries are blurred; workers and employers can come from different locations, even across countries. However, this transformation also poses serious challenges (Vallas & Schor, 2020). One of them is the erosion of permanent jobs. More and more companies are choosing to hire freelancers to reduce operational costs, so the number of permanent jobs in various sectors, especially services and technology, has decreased. As a result, the stability of work and income that has been the hallmark of the traditional system is eroding (Smith, 2025).

In addition, gig workers are required to manage their own finances, insurance, and pensions. The absence of long-term job security means that gig workers must have better personal management skills than conventional employees. This has the potential to increase economic vulnerability, especially for those who lack financial literacy or have no access to social security (De Stefano, 2024).

This transformation in the structure of work also has an impact on recruitment patterns and industrial relations. Labour relations have become increasingly informal and based on short-term contracts, resulting in a weak bargaining position for workers in negotiating wages and working conditions. Trade unions also face challenges in recruiting and protecting members in the highly fragmented and dynamic gig sector (Alauddin, 2025).

On the other hand, the gig economy has made a real contribution to the national economy. For example, Gojek as one of the largest ride-hailing platforms in Indonesia, managed to contribute around IDR249 trillion to the national economy, while creating new jobs and increasing labour force participation. The gig economy also plays a role in reducing unemployment and increasing people's purchasing power (Flanagan, 2019).

The digital transformation that gave birth to the gig economy is also driving innovation and creativity in the labour market. Gig workers are required to continuously develop digital skills and be adaptive to technological changes. This can increase labour productivity and national competitiveness in the era of globalisation (Gusseck & Wiesche, 2022). However, this change in job structure also requires adjustments to labour regulations. The government needs to update labour laws, particularly regarding worker protection, taxes, and social security for freelancers or individuals. Without adaptive regulations, gig workers will remain in an economically and socially vulnerable position (World Bank Group, 2022).

In addition, the transformation of the employment structure through the gig economy provides opportunities for groups of people who previously had difficulty accessing the formal labour market, such as housewives, people with disabilities, and part-time workers. With the flexibility of working time and location, they can earn additional income without having to leave their main responsibilities at home. However, the flexibility and freedom offered by the gig economy often comes at the cost of high levels of income insecurity and a lack of social protection. Many gig workers have to work longer hours to achieve a decent income, with no guarantee of minimum wage, leave, or health insurance. This can cause psychological distress and impact mental health and long-term productivity (Muruganandam & Bhuvaneshwaran., 2025)

This transformation also drives changes in people's consumption patterns and lifestyles. The availability of digital application-based services makes people increasingly familiar with the on-demand economic model, which ultimately affects the overall economic structure (Wardhana., 2020)

Overall, the transformation of employment structures due to the gig economy is a complex phenomenon, bringing positive impacts in the form of flexibility, innovation, and expansion of employment opportunities, but also posing new challenges related to social protection, economic stability, and regulatory adjustments. Therefore, collaboration between the government, industry players, and society is needed to ensure that this transformation is inclusive and sustainable.

### **Socio-economic Impact**

The gig economy has brought about major changes in the socio-economic structure of Indonesian society. With the emergence of various digital platforms, employment opportunities have become more open, both for main and side jobs. Many individuals are now able to earn income without having to rely on conventional employment structures, resulting in increased labour participation and reduced unemployment. This has the effect of increasing people's purchasing power, which in turn drives overall national economic growth (Doorn, 2019).

Flexibility is the main attraction of the gig economy. Workers can choose when, where and how they work, creating a better balance between personal and professional life. This working model is particularly helpful for those with family responsibilities or special needs, such as stay-at-home mums and people with disabilities, to remain economically productive. In addition, access to global employment opportunities is increasingly open thanks to digital platforms, allowing workers to take on projects from abroad and broaden the scope of their careers (Gandini, 2019).

However, with this flexibility comes a major challenge in the form of job insecurity. As gig workers are generally temporary and based on short-term contracts, they do not have long-term job security. They also don't get social protections such as health insurance, pensions, or paid leave that are common for permanent employees. These conditions make gig workers highly vulnerable to financial risks in the event of an accident, illness, or job loss (Islam & Rahman, 2024).

From an economic perspective, the gig economy improves labour market efficiency by connecting workers and consumers directly through digital platforms. Companies can reduce operational costs, while consumers receive services at more competitive prices. However, the intense competition among gig workers often puts pressure on wage standards. Many workers have to accept low rates to get projects, so their income is not always stable from month to month (Wood et al., 2019). Income instability is a major challenge for gig workers. Their income is highly dependent on the number of projects they receive and market conditions at any given time. These fluctuations make it difficult for workers to plan long-term finances and make ends meet in a stable manner. In addition, most gig workers



also have to manage their own financial, tax and social protection aspects without institutional support (OECD Economics Department, 2019).

Another emerging social impact is the change in the way people view work and life balance. On the one hand, work flexibility allows individuals to tailor work to personal needs, but on the other hand, social isolation and pressure to be productive can increase the risk of stress and mental exhaustion. Gig workers often work alone without the community support of traditional work environments, lacking strong social networks (Williams & Horodnic., 2021)

The gig economy also fuels innovation and entrepreneurship. Many individuals are utilising digital platforms to develop micro-enterprises or become self-employed. This lowers entry barriers for budding entrepreneurs, as they can start businesses with little capital and lower risk. However, on the other hand, the growth of the gig economy may also divert potential entrepreneurs from setting up traditional businesses to platform-based business models, which could result in a decline in the number of conventional small businesses (Auguste et al., 2022). Disparities in access to technology, internet connectivity, and digital literacy are still a challenge in Indonesia. Not all workers have the same opportunity to capitalise on opportunities in the gig economy, so social inequalities may occur. Those who live in remote areas or have less exposure to technology tend to be left behind in the competition for projects or jobs (Omar & Jamil, 2025).

In addition, labour regulations in Indonesia have not been able to fully accommodate the characteristics of employment relationships in the gig sector. Many gig workers have to pay their own taxes and do not receive benefits like regular workers. This creates an urgent need to update labour laws, especially regarding worker protection, taxes, and social security for freelancers or individuals (Mikaela Palada et al., 2024). The contribution of the gig economy to the national economy is significant. In addition to absorbing labour and reducing unemployment, the gig economy also encourages the growth of new sectors based on digital and innovation. However, the distribution of these economic benefits has been uneven, as most of the profits are still concentrated on platform owners and highly skilled workers (Parman et al., 2025).

In the future, the gig economy is predicted to continue to grow as technology advances and people's work preferences change. However, it will also face increasingly complex challenges, especially in addressing the gap between flexibility and job security. Governments, industry players, and communities need to collaborate to create adaptive regulations and inclusive social protection systems for all workers (S. Li, 2023).

Overall, the gig economy creates new opportunities and improves labour market efficiency, but it also deepens social and economic vulnerability for some workers. Therefore, inclusive and evidence-based policies are urgently needed to ensure that the growth of the gig economy can go hand in hand with the protection and welfare of workers in Indonesia.

## Skills Disruption

Skills disruption is one of the most obvious impacts of the growth of the gig economy on Indonesia's labour structure. The development of digital technology and online platforms has changed the types of skills required in the labour market. Whereas manual and administrative skills used to be the mainstay of traditional jobs, digital skills, online communication and time management are now crucial in the gig economy (Keerthana M & Madhumitha M, 2025).

Gig workers are required to be able to operate apps, understand digital payment systems, and manage their profile and reputation online. The ability to market oneself, build an online portfolio, and adapt to platform algorithms are key assets to stay competitive. This is in contrast to traditional jobs that usually emphasise field-specific technical skills and are relatively stable in the long term (Pilatti et al., 2024).

This change has led to a skills gap between older workers who are used to conventional systems and a new generation that is more adaptive to technology. Many senior workers in the formal sector feel left behind due to a lack of digital training, while the younger generation is more adaptable to technological change. As a result, there is a skills mismatch phenomenon between market needs and labour availability (Rina Ayu, 2024). In addition to digital skills, the gig economy also demands high self-management skills. Workers must be able to organise their work time, manage their personal finances, and maintain a balance between work and personal life. The absence of a clear organisational structure means that gig workers must be independent in setting targets, managing schedules and ensuring productivity is maintained (De Stefano, 2024).

Online communication skills are becoming increasingly important as interactions between gig workers and clients or service users are conducted entirely through digital platforms. The ability to negotiate, customer service, and build professional networks online are added values that distinguish successful gig workers from those who are less successful. This shows that soft skills such as adaptability, empathy, and problem solving are now increasingly needed in the digital economy era (N. Abdullah et al., 2024).

On the other hand, not all workers have equal access to digital training and skills development. Gaps in internet access, technology facilities, and digital literacy are still major barriers, especially in remote areas. The government and digital platforms need to play an active role in providing training and mentoring so that all levels of society can adapt to these changes. Skills disruption has also impacted labour recruitment and selection patterns (Angwaoma Odoko, 2025). Many employers now prefer workers with digital portfolios and project experience on gig platforms over formal diplomas. This is driving a paradigm shift in education, where practical experience and applicable skills are becoming more valued than academic degrees alone (Siti Maria et al., 2025).

Due to skills disruption, workers who are unable to adapt to technology risk being marginalised from the labour market. Those who lack basic digital skills will find it difficult to compete and are likely to be trapped in low-wage or informal jobs. This phenomenon can widen the social and economic gap between communities. In addition, skills disruption has also led to the emergence of new professions that were previously unknown in the traditional



labour market (Jaishree & Vidya Jha, 2024). Examples include content creators, social media managers, data analysts, and app-based online motorbike taxi drivers. These professions offer new opportunities, but also require continuous learning and adaptation to remain relevant amidst rapid technological change.

Vocational education and training are key to addressing skills disruption. Education curricula need to be adapted to the needs of today's labour market, with an emphasis on digital literacy, problem-solving and collaboration skills. In addition, ongoing training for adult workers is essential to ensure they are not left behind in the competition (Watson et al., 2024). Collaboration between governments, businesses and educational institutions is needed to create a learning ecosystem that is inclusive and responsive to technological change. Digital platforms can also act as strategic partners in providing online training, skills certification and access to relevant labour market information (Vallas & Schor, 2020).

Overall, the skills disruption caused by the gig economy is both a challenge and an opportunity for the Indonesian workforce. Those who are able to adapt and keep learning will benefit the most from this development, while those who are left behind need to be supported with training, access to technology, and inclusive policies so that digital transformation brings equitable progress to the whole society.

## CONCLUSION

The gig economy has revolutionised the traditional labour structure in Indonesia by introducing a more flexible, project-based and digital-driven work model. This transformation opens up new employment opportunities, increases labour force participation, and drives innovation and efficiency in the labour market. However, on the other hand, this shift has also resulted in decreased job stability, erosion of formal labour relations, and weakened social protections for workers, especially regarding health insurance, pensions, and income security.

The socio-economic impact of the gig economy is complex. On the one hand, the gig economy is able to absorb labour from groups that previously had difficulty accessing the formal labour market, such as housewives and people with disabilities, and drive the growth of the national digital economy. However, on the other hand, gig workers face the risk of income uncertainty, lack of access to digital skills training, and psychological stress due to competition and social isolation. Gaps in access to technology and digital literacy also widen disparities between groups of workers. To address these challenges, adaptive and inclusive policies are needed, ranging from labour regulation reform, strengthening portable social security systems, to expanding access to digital skills training. Collaboration between the government, digital platforms, and educational institutions is key so that the transformation of the gig economy can run sustainably, fairly, and provide optimal protection for all workers in the digital era.

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