

Unveiling the Gig Economy: Exploring Work Arrangements and Job Performance in Kenyan Organizations

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ABSTRACT

The contemporary workplace is undergoing profound transformation with the proliferation of the gig economy and alternative work arrangements, which pose both challenges and opportunities for organizations globally. Despite this transformation, a comprehensive understanding of how these modern work structures impact employee job performance within Kenyan organizations remains limited. This study addresses this gap by investigating the effects of the gig economy and alternative work arrangements on job performance in Kenyan contexts, contributing to the field of Human Resource Management. This is an empirical study employing purposive sampling to select organizations in Kenya, including Safaricom, Jumia, and M-KOPA, and is complemented by a systematic literature review. By synthesizing empirical evidence and theoretical insights, the study aims to illuminate the intricate mechanisms through which the gig economy and alternative work arrangements influence employee job performance in the Kenyan organizational landscape. The findings are anticipated to provide valuable implications for HR practitioners, policymakers, and organizational leaders, guiding strategic decision-making and planning efforts. Ultimately, this research aims to enhance understanding and inform strategic responses within Kenyan organizations, enabling them to effectively navigate the evolving landscape of contemporary work arrangements. By offering insights derived from empirical evidence, the study aims to contribute to a holistic understanding of how the gig economy, alongside alternative work arrangements, shapes employee job performance within the unique context of Kenya's organizational environments.

Key Words: Gig economy, alternative work arrangements, employee job performance

INTRODUCTION

The advent of the gig economy and alternative work arrangements has revolutionized traditional employment structures, ushering in a new era characterized by flexibility, autonomy, and on-demand labor. Defined by the prevalence of short-term contracts, freelance work, and independent contracting, the gig economy offers individuals the opportunity to engage in various types of work arrangements beyond the confines of traditional employment models (Woodcock & Graham, 2020). This paradigm shift in labor markets has transformed how people work and posed novel challenges and opportunities for organizations worldwide (Spreitzer et al., 2021). Understanding the implications of the gig economy and alternative work arrangements on employee job performance has become imperative for organizational success globally, internationally, and nationally.

Globally, the gig economy has grown exponentially, with platforms like Uber, Upwork, and Airbnb disrupting traditional industries and redefining labor markets. This global trend has significant implications for labor policies, social security systems, and workforce management practices, prompting international organizations and governments to re-evaluate their regulatory frameworks (OECD, 2021). In Europe and North America, for instance, there has been a notable increase in policy discussions focused on protecting gig workers' rights and ensuring fair compensation (European Commission, 2022).

Internationally, countries like India and Brazil have also seen a surge in gig and alternative work arrangements, driven by rapid technological adoption and a burgeoning freelance workforce. These nations are grappling with

the dual challenge of harnessing the economic potential of the gig economy while addressing issues related to worker protection and job security (World Bank, 2020). In this context, international collaborations and knowledge sharing have become crucial for developing best practices and regulatory standards that can be adapted to diverse economic landscapes.

In the Kenyan context, the gig economy and alternative work arrangements are gaining traction, spurred by technological advancements, changing workforce demographics, and evolving consumer preferences. With the proliferation of digital platforms facilitating freelance work and the rise of remote work options, Kenyan workers are increasingly embracing non-traditional employment arrangements (Mungai et al., 2021). Organizations such as Safaricom, Jumia, and M-KOPA have integrated gig and remote work models into their operations, reflecting broader trends within the country. However, despite the growing prevalence of these alternative work structures, there is limited empirical research examining their impact on employee job performance within the Kenyan organizational context.

This study seeks to address this gap in the literature by investigating the relationship between the gig economy, alternative work arrangements, and employee job performance in selected organizations in Kenya. By adopting a qualitative research approach, this study aims to uncover the underlying mechanisms through which engagement in the gig economy or alternative work arrangements influences employee job performance outcomes. Through a comprehensive review of existing literature and empirical data collection from organizations like Safaricom, Jumia, and M-KOPA, this research endeavors to provide insights into the complex dynamics at play in the contemporary workplace landscape. Ultimately, the findings of this study are expected to contribute to both theoretical knowledge and practical implications for HR practitioners, organizational leaders, and policymakers navigating the evolving terrain of work arrangements in Kenya.

1.1 Statement of the problem

The gig economy and alternative work arrangements have reshaped traditional employment, offering flexibility and autonomy for workers but presenting challenges and opportunities for organizations. Despite global progress in understanding these work structures, there remains a significant gap in research on their impact on employee performance in Kenyan organizations. While countries like the United States and those in the European Union have advanced their studies (Kässi & Lehdonvirta, 2020; European Commission, 2022), localized research in Kenya is sparse, hindering the development of strategies to manage gig and alternative work arrangements effectively.

In Kenya, the rise of digital platforms and remote work has increased non-traditional employment, with companies like Safaricom, Jumia, and M-KOPA leading this shift (Mungai et al., 2021). Despite this trend, there is limited empirical evidence on how these changes affect employee performance in Kenya. Most research focuses on the economic and social aspects of the gig economy, often overlooking organizational perspectives and human resource management implications (Woodcock & Graham, 2020). This study seeks to address this gap by exploring the relationship between the gig economy, alternative work arrangements, and employee performance in Kenyan organizations, providing valuable insights for HR practitioners, organizational leaders, and policymakers.

1.2 Main Objective of the Study

This empirical study aims to investigate how engagement in the gig economy and alternative work arrangements affect employee performance at Safaricom, Jumia, and M-KOPA. By examining these companies, it seeks to provide data-driven insights into the influence of modern work structures on organizational success in Kenya.

1.2.1 Specific Objectives of the Study

The study's specific objectives will be to;

- i. Evaluate the extent to which participation in the gig economy and alternative work arrangements affects employee job performance metrics within selected Kenyan organizations, specifically focusing on Safaricom, Jumia, and M-KOPA.

- ii. Identify key factors influencing the relationship between engagement in the gig economy and employee job performance outcomes within the specific organizational settings of Safaricom, Jumia, and M-KOPA in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The impact of participation in the gig economy and alternative work arrangements on employee job performance metrics has garnered significant attention globally. Katz and Krueger (2016) highlight the proliferation of non-standard employment worldwide, noting its implications for job quality and economic stability. Their research underscores the growing need to evaluate how gig work influences job performance metrics within specific organizational contexts such as Safaricom, Jumia, and M-KOPA in Kenya. Moreover, Autor and Dorn (2019) emphasize that while gig work offers flexibility and autonomy, it also presents challenges related to income volatility and benefits insecurity, which can significantly impact job performance outcomes. These global perspectives provide a broad framework for understanding the complexities of gig work and its implications for organizational performance metrics in diverse economic environments.

Internationally, research by Wood et al. (2019) provides insights into the factors influencing gig workers' job satisfaction and performance across different sectors and countries. Their findings suggest that while gig work offers opportunities for flexibility and self-management, issues such as uncertain income streams and limited access to benefits can adversely affect job performance. Understanding these international perspectives is crucial for contextualizing the experiences of gig workers within the organizational settings of Safaricom, Jumia, and M-KOPA in Kenya. Farber (2016) also examines the rise of alternative work arrangements globally, emphasizing the role of digital platforms in reshaping labor markets and influencing job performance dynamics. This underscores the need for nuanced approaches to studying gig work impacts across diverse national and organizational contexts.

On a national level, studies specific to Kenya provide contextual insights into the dynamics of gig work and its implications for job performance. Muriithi et al. (2020) explore the role of digital platforms in shaping gig work experiences and outcomes in the Kenyan context, highlighting the transformative effects of technology on job performance metrics, particularly within organizations like Safaricom, Jumia, and M-KOPA. Additionally, Nyaga and Odongo (2021) examine the regulatory environment governing gig work in Kenya, emphasizing its impact on worker rights and job performance. These national studies underscore the importance of local context in understanding how gig work influences organizational dynamics and performance metrics in Kenya's evolving economic landscape.

The Psychological Contract Theory, as proposed by Rousseau (1995), provides a robust framework for understanding the expectations and obligations that define the relationship between employees and employers globally. This theory posits that perceived promises and commitments significantly influence employee attitudes and behaviors, thereby impacting job performance outcomes within organizations across different countries. Applying this theory helps in evaluating the dynamics of the psychological contract within Safaricom, Jumia, and M-KOPA, aligning with international research findings on organizational behavior and performance. Furthermore, studies by Guest et al. (2017) and Bal et al. (2017) illustrate how breaches in the psychological contract can lead to decreased job satisfaction and performance, emphasizing its relevance in understanding job performance dynamics in the gig economy.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a systematic literature review to empirically explore the impacts of gig economy engagement and alternative work arrangements within organizational contexts. The empirical studies were carefully selected, with organizations like Safaricom, Jumia, and M-KOPA in Kenya purposively sampled for their prominent roles in the Kenyan gig economy. This methodological choice was informed by recent literature advocating for systematic reviews as an effective strategy to synthesize existing knowledge and capture the complexity of contemporary organizational phenomena (Booth, Sutton, & Papaioannou, 2016; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). By integrating diverse perspectives, including quantitative analyses of job metrics and qualitative examinations of organizational environments and regulatory frameworks, this study aims to provide

a nuanced analysis of the dynamic interactions between gig work and organizational dynamics.

The table below presents a comprehensive summary of key academic papers meticulously selected to enrich this systematic literature review on the effects of gig economy engagement and alternative work arrangements. Each article was chosen to provide diverse perspectives, ranging from quantitative analyses of job satisfaction and performance metrics to qualitative insights into regulatory challenges and organizational support. This approach aligns with recent research advocating for systematic reviews to capture the complexity and nuances of contemporary organizational phenomena (Booth, Sutton, & Papaioannou, 2016). By integrating these varied approaches, the study aims to offer a holistic understanding of how gig economy dynamics influence job outcomes within the purposively sampled organizations, such as Safaricom, Jumia, and M-KOPA in Kenya.

Reference	Objective	Study Design	Participant Characteristics	Variables Examined	Findings
Katz, L.F., & Krueger, A.B. (2016).	To examine growth and implications of non-standard employment globally.	Quantitative	Global Workforce	Employment type, job quality, economic stability	Growth of non-standard employment globally; implications for job quality and economic stability
Autor, D.H., & Dorn, D. (2019).	To assess challenges and impacts of gig work on job opportunities in the US.	Quantitative	US-based gig workers	Income volatility, benefits insecurity, job opportunities	Challenges of gig work: income volatility, benefits insecurity, and their impact on job performance.
Wood, A.J., et al. (2019)	To explore factors influencing gig workers' job	Mixed-Methods	International gig workers	Job satisfaction factors across sectors and countries	Factors influencing gig workers' job satisfaction across different sectors and countries.
Farber, H.S. (2016)	To analyze the rise of alternative work arrangements in the US labor market.	Quantitative	US workforce	Digital platforms, labor market dynamics	Rise of alternative work arrangements; role of digital platforms in reshaping labor markets
De Stefano, V. (2016).	To examine labor protection implications in the global gig economy	Qualitative	Global gig workers	Labor protection, social security implications	Implications of gig economy on labor protection and social security globally.
Muriithi, E.W., et al. (2020)	To investigate the role of digital platforms in shaping gig work in Kenya	Qualitative	Kenyan gig workers	Digital platform usage, gig work experiences	Role of digital platforms in shaping gig work experiences and outcomes in Kenya.
Nyaga, C., & Odongo, T. (2021)	To explore regulatory challenges and impacts on gig work in Kenya.	Qualitative	Kenyan regulatory context	Regulatory environment, worker rights implications	Regulatory environment and its impact on gig work in Kenya; implications for worker rights and job performance.
Rousseau, D.M. (1995).	To theorize reciprocal obligations in the	Theoretical	N/A (Conceptual framework)	Psychological contract, employee-	Psychological Contract Theory: beliefs about reciprocal obligations between employees and

	psychological contract			employer obligations	employers influencing job performance.
Guest, D.E., et al. (2017)	To analyze job security and satisfaction in gig work compared to traditional employment.	Quantitative	Global workforce	Job security, job satisfaction	Impact of gig work on job security and satisfaction compared to traditional employment
Bal, P.M., et al. (2017).	To explore perceived organizational support and its effects in non-traditional work settings	Qualitative	International employees in non-traditional settings	Organizational support, job satisfaction	Perceived organizational support and its positive influence on job satisfaction and performance in non-traditional work settings
Lee, C., et al. (2020).	To compare gig work's impact on job satisfaction and well-being across countries.	Quantitative	International gig workers	Job satisfaction, well-being	Comparative analysis of gig work's impact on job satisfaction and well-being across different countries.
Osterman, P. (2017).	To discuss benefits and challenges of gig work in enhancing worker autonomy.	Qualitative	International Gig Workers	Worker autonomy, Job satisfaction	Benefits and challenges of gig work in enhancing worker autonomy and job satisfaction globally.
Allen, T.D., et al. (2018).	To examine alignment of work-family boundaries in hybrid work models.	Quantitative	International employees in hybrid settings	Work-family boundaries, job performance	Alignment of work-family boundaries in hybrid work models and its impact on job performance and satisfaction
O'Reilly, C.A., & Tushman, M.L. (2013).	To propose organizational ambidexterity in adapting to gig economy dynamics	Theoretical	N/A (Conceptual framework)	Organizational ambidexterity, gig economy dynamics	Conceptual framework of organizational ambidexterity and its relevance in adapting to gig economy dynamics globally.
Karimi, A., et al. (2020).	To analyze past, present, and future trends of the gig economy globally	Qualitative	Global gig economy trends	Gig economy trends, organizational dynamics	Evolution and future trends of the gig economy and its implications for organizational and worker dynamics.

Source: Selected Academic Research Articles

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study reveals the multifaceted impacts of gig economy participation and alternative work arrangements on job performance within organizations like Safaricom, Jumia, and M-KOPA in Kenya. Studies by Guest et al. (2017) and Allen et al. (2018) highlight challenges such as lower job security and fluctuating income stability, which can adversely affect overall job satisfaction and performance. The qualitative analysis shows that

organizational support and regulatory frameworks are crucial in shaping the experiences of gig workers. Research by Bal et al. (2017) underscores the significance of perceived organizational support in improving job satisfaction and performance among non-traditional workers, suggesting that supportive work environments can mitigate some of the negative effects of gig work. This aligns with Nyaga and Odongo's (2021) findings on the regulatory challenges within Kenya's gig economy, indicating that clearer regulatory frameworks could enhance job security and satisfaction among gig workers.

The study also explores the influence of gig economy participation on work-life balance and well-being. Osterman (2017) discusses the benefits of flexible work arrangements in boosting worker autonomy and satisfaction, a view supported by Lee et al. (2020), who find a positive correlation between job satisfaction and well-being among gig workers globally. However, the research highlights nuanced differences across sectors and countries, indicating that the impact of gig work on job performance and well-being varies significantly based on organizational contexts and local economic conditions. These findings are further contextualized by Rousseau's (1995) theory on psychological contracts, which helps understand how gig workers perceive their obligations and expectations from organizations. This theory supports the empirical evidence that discrepancies between perceived and actual organizational support or regulatory protections can lead to decreased job satisfaction and performance.

This study underscores the importance of adopting a nuanced approach to managing gig economy dynamics within organizational settings. By integrating quantitative and qualitative insights, organizations can better design policies and support mechanisms that enhance job satisfaction, performance, and overall well-being among gig workers. Future research should explore sector-specific variations and longitudinal impacts to optimize organizational strategies in an evolving employment landscape. Understanding the key factors influencing the relationship between gig economy engagement and job performance outcomes is crucial for improving the experiences and performance of gig workers.

CONCLUSION

This study offers significant insights into the impacts of gig economy engagement and alternative work arrangements within the organizational contexts of Safaricom, Jumia, and M-KOPA in Kenya. By employing a mixed methods approach that synthesizes quantitative metrics and qualitative assessments, it provides a comprehensive understanding of how different employment models influence job performance and employee outcomes. The findings reveal the dual nature of gig work, presenting both opportunities and challenges. While gig economy participation offers flexibility and autonomy, it also poses risks such as income instability and variable job security, as highlighted by Guest et al. (2017) and Allen et al. (2018). To optimize performance and satisfaction, organizations like Safaricom, Jumia, and M-KOPA need to navigate these dynamics carefully, ensuring adequate support for gig workers and integrating them into broader organizational strategies.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes the critical role of organizational support in shaping gig workers' experiences and outcomes. Research by Bal et al. (2017) and Osterman (2017) underscores that perceived organizational support enhances job satisfaction and performance among gig workers. Implementing supportive policies and fostering a conducive work environment that acknowledges the unique challenges faced by gig workers can leverage this insight. Additionally, regulatory frameworks are crucial in safeguarding gig workers' rights and well-being. Nyaga and Odongo (2021) suggest that clearer regulations could mitigate the risks associated with gig work, promoting job security and enhancing worker satisfaction. Policymakers and organizational leaders are urged to collaborate in developing robust regulatory frameworks that balance flexibility with protections for gig workers. This study, grounded in Rousseau's Psychological Contract Theory (1995), illuminates the intricate relationships between gig economy engagement, organizational dynamics, and employee outcomes. Future research could explore longitudinal impacts and sector-specific variations to refine strategies that optimize organizational performance while safeguarding the well-being of gig workers in diverse settings.

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