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The Gig Economy: Workers, Work and Platform Perspective

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Abstract. In recent years, the gig economy has changed the way many people work. This research phenomenon has attracted scientists from many different fields to an emerging field of research. Given the actuality of the topic and diversity of perspectives, there is a great need to collect and connect research findings that serve as a basis for future discussions. Starting with a collection of 139 publications on the gig economy, gig work and related terms, we identify some trends in the literature and the underlying research interests. In particular, we organize the literature around the concept of the gig economy in terms of gig workers, gig work, and digital platforms, and draw several interesting insights from the literature. Finally, we identify important gaps in the existing literature on working in the gig economy and provide guidance for future research.

Keywords: gig work, gig economy, sharing economy, platform work, literature review

1 Introduction

In recent years, the gig economy has changed the way people work and is growing as an area of academic investigations. Traditional work designs will be increasingly complemented by smaller tasks – so-called gigs – that are mediated and coordinated via digital platforms [1]. More than one-fifth of the U.S. workforce works independently, outside of organizations in the gig economy [2, 3]. This additional, rapidly growing labor market has many advantages like work autonomy and job and time flexibility [4, 5]. However, there are also risks and challenges, as the self-employed "gig workers" will have to compete in a larger, more competitive labor market to be successful [1, 6, 7].

This described new phenomenon of gig work is becoming increasingly interesting for research. However, our understanding of this new form of work is still in its early stages and this raises questions about the future of work. For the discipline of information systems (IS), this topic is very relevant as the gig economy offers new opportunities for information technology (IT) work with the ever-increasing demand, chronic skills shortage, and growing talent problem [8]. Digital labor platforms can thus serve as a new source of skilled digital workers for IT jobs [9]. Another aspect of importance to the IT field is that technology plays an important role in mediating gig

work, as gig workers organize their work online via digital platforms [6, 10]. In addition, skills in IT are quickly becoming obsolete due to rapid technological change [11]. The effect of this use of technology, as well as the characteristics and opportunities of gig work in the IT labor marketplace, have been little researched so far [12–14]. The potential new source of qualified digital workers for IT jobs should be investigated in the future. Due to the described fact that gig work is organized via digital platforms in a technology-mediated manner, the role of the platforms in the ecosystem of the gig economy and the effects of this work through IT must also be specified [6, 10].

Literature reviews on specific aspects of the gig economy have been conducted, particularly on crowd work [15–17], the sharing economy [18], and some particular aspects of gig work, such as the organization and experience of gig work [19] or the normative control in platform work [20]. The overall perspective of the gig economy, the characteristics of the individual perspectives and how the gig workers, the work and the platform are connected do not exist by now. Moreover, the various forms of work in the gig economy have not yet been clearly differentiated and defined. In order to better understand the gig economy in all its aspects and to structure the findings, the following research question will be answered: *What different aspects of the gig economy have been studied in IS and management research and how are they interconnected?* We conduct a structured literature review in IS and management literature and organize our results around the concept of the gig economy in relation to gig workers, gig work, and digital labor platforms and draw several interesting insights from research, for this purpose. We examine characteristics of and the motivators for gig workers, the characteristics of the gig work itself, the digital platforms that mediate gig work and the whole gig economy as a framework.

The structure of this paper is as follows. The next section defines the central constructs to provide a theoretical foundation for the topic. After describing the methodology, the subsequent section presents the four main dimensions: the gig worker, the gig work, the gig platform and the whole gig economy. Afterwards the results are discussed and finally, limitations and issues for future research are described.

2 Background

In this section, we define the relevant constructs and their relationships. We also describe the concepts of crowd working and the sharing economy related to the gig economy and clarify the importance of these concepts for this literature research.

Globalization, technological change and economic uncertainties, not least due to the Covid-19 pandemic, have led to a restructuring of labor relations that affects the structure of labor markets [21–23]. These new structures include the gig economy. The term is derived from the employment of musicians who perform for a certain show. Today, the term is used to describe a wide range of employment relationships. Gig workers are employed in many areas, such as coffee shops, factories, food delivery services, cab drivers, dog walkers, IT installation managers, accountants, lawyers, and business consultants [7].

An increasing number of people are working via digital labor platforms. In doing so, they are not employees and do not fit the traditional notions of independent contractors or self-employed [24]. Conventionally, a self-employed person is considered to work directly for the labor market or offer their services to one or more companies without becoming a part of them. Self-employed workers are independent and have a high degree of autonomy. New types of workers in the gig economy - who are coordinated through a digital platform and choose for themselves when, how long, and whether to perform certain task - therefore seem to fit more into the category of self-employed and less into a traditional employment relationship in form of a permanent contract [25].

The work context in the gig economy consists primarily of temporary employees, and an increasingly large part of the workforce consists of people who are either loosely linked to an organization or sell directly to a market [3, 10, 26–28]. As a result, more and more workers are no longer employed in classic "jobs" with a long duration of employment and a constant connection to a company. They work in the form of "gigs" (defined as a short-term job mediated through a digital platform) with short contracts, under flexible agreements as "independently" hired and work only to complete a specific task or for a defined period of time. Therefore, there is no longer a real connection between employee and employer [7, 28]. Moreover, gig workers organize their work online via digital labor platforms such as Uber or TaskRabbit. Thus, the work is technology-mediated. These platforms act as mediators, connecting workers with clients and companies for the completion of different tasks [6, 10].

Work within the described gig economy has become commonly known as gig work. In addition to the classic gig workers who perform location-based in-person service tasks offline [10], this literature review also considers other new forms of work in the gig economy, such as crowd work. Crowd work is a new form of digitally mediated gainful employment and part of the gig economy [29]. It reflects a digital form of employment based on the principles of crowdsourcing. Crowd work involves the outsourcing of work to an undefined and usually large number or network of people in the form of an open call on IT-enabled platforms [25, 30, 31]. In contrast to classic gig work, this form of work is not location-based but is performed online only [29].

Besides the aspect of the gig economy, the sharing economy is a closely related term. A growing number of consumers are paying for temporary access to, or sharing of products and services rather than buying or owning them themselves [32]. The sharing economy was examined from many angles, including customer engagement and the capabilities of the technological platforms. However, for this paper, the work in the sharing economy is interesting, i.e., on platforms such as Airbnb or Uber. Work was considered as a type of asset that is exchanged in the sharing economy [33, 34].

To cover all aspects of the gig economy and to get a broad overview of the relevant literature, aspects of the sharing economy and crowd work were also included in this paper. The term "gig work" in this paper therefore includes crowd workers and workers in the sharing economy. In literature, the type of work in the gig economy was not sufficiently differentiated. Therefore, we will first consider all forms of work in the gig economy. The forms and tasks of work in the gig economy will have to be examined in a more differentiated way in the future. To this end, we propose a differentiation or classification of the various forms of employment in the gig economy in the discussion.

3   Method

The purpose of this review is to better understand the gig economy in all its aspects and to organize the literature around the concept of the gig economy. Therefore, we searched for publications that focus on the gig economy, gig workers, gig work, gig platforms and related terms. We screened relevant outlets according to the guidelines of vom Brocke et al. [35] and Webster and Watson [36] and then grouped the literature into categories including the individual working in the gig economy, the work being done, the gig platform and the overall gig concept.

In our sample, we selected IS and management journals from the AIS Senior Scholars' Basket of 8 and the FT50 management journal ranking. However, we have not limited the search to these journals. Hits from additional journals were also included to cover other relevant topics of the gig economy besides the sources from the IS discipline. In addition to the AIS basket of 8, the following journals published the most paper on the gig economy (number of articles in brackets): JBV (14), ETP (11), JMP (9), JBR (6), MISQE (6), MS (5). We further included published conference proceedings such as ICIS, ECIS, and HICSS. The search string and more detailed information are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of the literature search process

Outlet	Search	Hits	Selected
AIS Senior Scholars' Basket of 8 (ISR, JMIS, JAIS, ISJ, JSIS, MISQ, JIT, EJIS)	*"gig economy" OR "sharing economy" OR "gig work*" OR "gig labo?r" OR "platform work*" OR "micro-task*" OR "uberiz*" OR "collaborative econom*" OR "freelance work*" OR "new form* of work" OR "precarious work*" OR "self-employment" OR "crowd work" OR "crowdwork*" OR "crowdsourc*" NOT "crowdfund*"*	56	13
FT50 Management Journal Ranking (e.g. JBV, ETP, MS, AMJ, AMR, ASQ, CAR)		193	52
Additional Journals (MISQE, JMP, JBR, JOB, JEM, HRMJ, JOM, AJM)		39	25
Conferences (ICIS, ECIS, HICSS)		92	30
	forward/backward search	-	17
	Total	380	**139**

In this data set, we first screened the title and then the abstract of all 380 articles and identified 122 relevant publications. Then we performed a forward and backward search based on the articles collected so far, looking mainly for theoretical foundations, further new applications and results. This resulted in 17 additional publications. In total, the sample consists of 139 articles. Table 1 provides a summary of the literature search process.

In addition, some articles were excluded based on three criteria: (i) the consumer or organizations that employ gig workers, rather than the workers themselves, are the main perspective of the paper; (ii) the sharing economy is the topic of the paper, but work as the subject of sharing is not the focus; (iii) the paper only examines internal crowdsourcing, which involves employees within an organization, rather than gig workers as self-employed [37].

4   Results

In this section of the paper, we summarize and connect the insights from the literature review on the phenomena of the gig economy following the four described main coding dimensions. Figure 1 shows our framework on research topics in the gig economy.
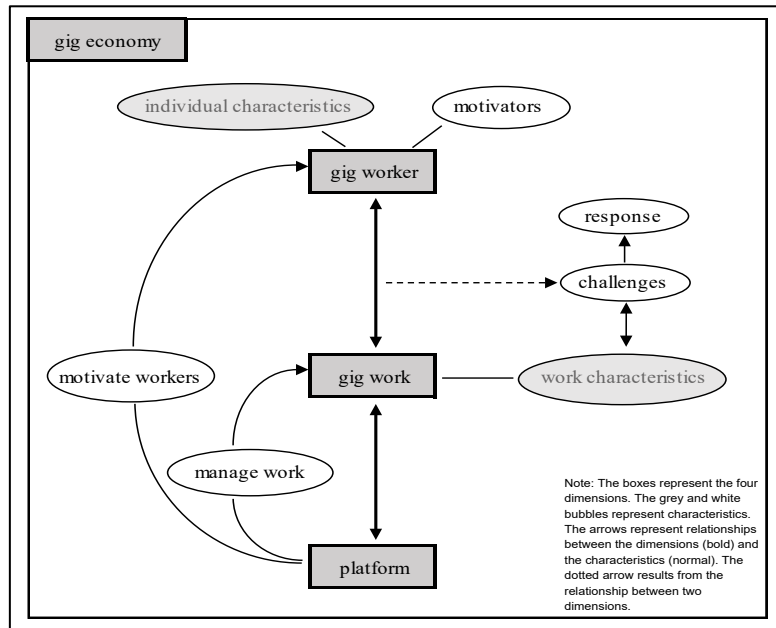

Figure 1. Framework on research topics in the gig economy

4.1   Gig Worker

From the gig worker perspective, two aspects have been examined (see Table 2).

Table 2. Summary of the results for the gig workers

Dimension	Characteristics		Aspects (illustrative citation)
gig worker	individual character-istics	background	gender [38], social class & religion [39], education [40], race [41], family [42]
		personal traits	risk propensity [43], indiv. attributes [44]
	motivators (drivers, benefits)		autonomy [1], flexibility [7], monetary compensation [45], self-growth [4] task variety [46], low entry barriers [47]

Regarding the background of self-employed many researchers investigate the influence of gender [40, 48, 49]. Furthermore, Audretsch et al. [39] point out that some religions are relatively conducive to self-employment, while others harm the choice of self-employment. In addition, people belonging to social classes that are lower in the social

hierarchy are less likely to be self-employed. Regarding education, highly educated individuals are likely to enter self-employment [38]. Other studies investigate the influence of race on the decision to work self-employed [41, 50, 51].

Besides the background of the workers, personality traits also play a role in the decision to become self-employed. The authors Patel and Thatcher [44] find that openness to experience and autonomy increase persistence in self-employment, whereas neuroticism reduces persistence in self-employment. Besides, Keith and Harms [52] investigate how different types of gig workers operate in the gig economy. The authors distinguish between workers who (or not) consider gig work as their primary income and those who (or not) consider it a job.

Many factors and advantages of gig work drive people to this new form of work. In addition to monetary compensation, work autonomy and job and time flexibility are major advantages of working in the gig economy [1, 4, 5, 46]. Friedman [7] highlights the flexibility to be home at uncommon hours to care for children or to fulfill other family responsibilities. Furthermore, Jiang et al. [45] call monetary compensation, self-improvement, time management and emotional rewards as advantages of crowd work. Another advantage for the gig workers is the low entry barriers and flexible working arrangements, allowing individuals to work wherever and whenever they want [47].

4.2 Gig Work

The characteristics of work in the gig economy are special and distinguish gig work from traditional forms of work. Through the literature review, we have identified three main characteristics of gig work: (i) self-employment, (ii) work in form of pre-defined small tasks (gigs) and (iii) digital organization of the work (see Table 3).

Table 3. Summary of the results for the gig work

Dimension	Characteristics	Aspects (illustrative citation)
gig work	work characteristics	self-employment [3], work in form of pre-defined small tasks [7], digital organization of the work [6]
	challenges	high personal responsibility [53], lack of career-paths [1], financial instability, precarity [3], perceived fairness [54], high costs & time expenditure [55], the transience of work [1], social isolation, emotional tensions [3], communication problems [56]
	responses	holding environment [57], resilience, proactivity, self-organization [1], new application of skills & expertise [58]

The work context in the gig economy is comprised primarily of short-term independent workers [2, 3, 10, 26]. The workers are no longer employed in traditional full-time jobs with a long period of employment and a constant connection to a company. They work in form of "gigs" or pre-defined small tasks with short contracts and under flexible agreements. Furthermore, only a certain task is completed or they work for a certain period of time [7]. In addition, the gig workers organize their work online via digital labor platforms such as Uber or TaskRabbit. The work is therefore technology-

mediated. These platforms act as mediators and connect workers with clients and companies for the completion of different tasks [6, 10].

From these characteristics, several implications and challenges for work and workers arise. Petriglieri et al. [57] point out in their study that without the protection and support of a traditional employer, the gig workers feel a variety of personal, social and economic fears. Since the gig workers can be classified as self-employed, they have to take care of things that are traditionally handled by employers, such as their health insurance, training or their careers [1, 7, 53]. The lack of clear and available career paths is a major challenge. Organizations as employers can provide some clarity about the expected career paths on which individuals can progress [59]. However, this clarity does not exist for gig workers [1].

The burden of economic risk is shifted more to the workers [7]. Therefore, financial instability, precarity and job insecurity pose a challenge to the viability of workers in the gig economy. Those who work in the gig economy describe themselves as living very close to the economic edge [3], with unpredictable work that leads to highly volatile incomes, and concerns about maintaining basic income [1]. In addition, the perceived fairness of gig work is often low [54, 60]. Working in the gig economy also involves many unpaid expenses and costs. Gig workers have to bear the cost of any equipment they may need themselves. Also, the time spent on registration, profile design and job search on the diverse gig platforms is necessary but not paid [e.g. 55]. Another challenge is the transience of gig work, since gig work consists of short-term contracts as described above [1]. Furthermore, the fact that the workers organize their work digitally results in social isolation and emotional tensions [3]. The physical separation from others is a challenge for gig workers, as they often lack career mentors or role models. Thus, they have fewer opportunities to develop skills [61]. Finally, there is seldom a social interaction with the employer or the customer because the gig workers organize their work via the digital platform [7].

It is clear from the many challenges that workers in the gig economy need responses, skills and strategies to survive and succeed in this new form of work. In the literature, studies have developed the concept of the "holding environment" [3, 57]. The studies find that the independent gig workers develop a physical, social and psychological space for their work to master the described tensions and challenges. They cultivate four types of connections to place, routines, purpose and people, which help them to endure the emotional ups and downs of their work and gain energy and inspiration from their freedom [57]. Ashford et al. [1] highlight the important reactive and proactive behaviors that can help gig workers seize the opportunities of this economy without failing to meet the challenges: resilience (adapting effectively to disturbances), proactivity (acting in advance to create desirable outcomes) and relational behaviors (architecting and managing a relational infrastructure). Cognitive capabilities are also helpful (thinking flexible and adaptively in the gig economy). Gig workers have to organize things themselves and need to register on different gig platforms, design their profiles and search for jobs on many platforms at the same time [1, 62]. Furthermore, the transience of work requires gig workers to apply their skills and expertise to new combinations of tasks when moving between jobs [1, 58].

4.3   Gig Platform

From the perspective of the gig platform, it is important to motivate the gig workers to use the platform and keep them on the platform [63, 64]. On the other hand, the platform providers have to manage, control and monitor the gig work in various ways [65, 66].

Table 4. Summary of the results for the gig platform

Dimension	Characteristics	Aspects (illustrative citation)
gig platform	motivate workers	employee engagement [67], feelings of pride & respect [64], social dialog & communication [56], perceived fairness in pay [60], platform architecture [63], career anchors [68], reputation [69]
	manage work	regulation [70], governance [71], control [65]

In business models of location-based platform companies (e.g. Uber), topics such as organizational attractiveness, satisfaction as well as employee retention and motivation are very relevant. For example, Uber and Lyft actively compete with each other to recruit drivers [10, 72]. In addition, Boons et al. [64] point out that feelings of pride drive members' ongoing activities on an online crowdsourcing platform and that the platform can increase workers' sense of pride and respect by using specific organizational communication practices. The role of communication between platform and worker is also examined by Gegenhuber et al. [56]. The authors examine platforms that enable crowd workers to communicate task-related topics in order to ensure the availability of crowd workers and the quality of output. Another aspect is the payment of the gig workers. Research has shown that pay that is perceived as not very fair means that crowd workers can put less effort into a task or leave the platform [60]. Jabagi et al. [63] examine how the architecture of digital labor platforms (and the characteristics of the jobs mediated by these IT artifacts) can influence self-motivation. Furthermore, the findings of Taylor and Joshi [68] reveal ways in which the career anchors of technology workers participating in crowdsourcing are evolving in the face of the emerging dynamics in the IT employment marketplace. Most recently, Benson et al. [69] are investigating reputation systems to help employees identify good employers. Due to the impact of employer reputation, gig platforms must build a good reputation to compete for gig workers as employees against other employers.

In addition to motivating the gig workers, the work on the platform itself must be monitored, regulated and controlled. Karanović et al. [70] show that Uber drivers do not always submit to the organizational solutions imposed on them, they also actively resist or complement them. Furthermore, research often investigated the governance of gig workers [66, 71]. For example, Gol et al. [71] examined the governance mechanisms of gig workers and the relationships between these mechanisms and organizational value creation. The importance of control on gig platforms is another research topic. Without proper control, the behavior of the online community may not be in line with the platform's objective, which may lead to poor performance by the platform [65].

4.4   Gig Economy

From the perspective of the entire gig economy, three dimensions were identified, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Summary of the results for the gig economy

Dimension	Characteristics	Aspects (illustrative citation)
gig economy	impacts on traditional markets and industries	disruption [73], demand [74], market competition [75]
	impacts on labor market	unemployment [76], wage [77], participation [78]
	societal impacts	crime rate [79], cohesion & trustworthiness of online information [80], discrimination [81], privacy [82]

Many branches of industry and traditional business models are disrupted or displaced by the gig or sharing economy. Digital platforms connect and facilitate transactions between market parties. These platforms threaten the way established companies do business and they must respond to these threats [73, 83]. The market entry of gig or sharing platforms disrupt the traditional markets and has an impact on the prices and demand in the industries (e.g. Uber disrupt the transport industry) [73–75, 84, 85]. The new gig economy has also changed the competitive landscape in traditional industries with established companies with fixed capacity and volatile demand [75].

The gig economy is also having an impact on the labor market. The emergence of gig platforms brings new opportunities and challenges for local labor markets [76, 77]. They can complement traditional offline workers by facilitating the coordination of services and creating jobs for them, or they can replace offline workers by increasing competition among them [76]. Li et al. [77] examine the impact of sharing economy platforms (especially Uber) on labor force participation, unemployment rate, supply and wages of low skilled workers. The authors' results show that Uber increases labor force participation and lowers the unemployment rate of people below the poverty line. Further studies find that unemployment in the offline labor market has a positive impact on the participation of gig workers [47, 78].

Finally, the rise of the gig economy can have social impacts [79–82, 86]. Han and Wang [79] found a positive association between commercial home sharing and the increase of the crime rate. Another social aspect is crowdturfing as a form of cyber deception, the consequences of which are destructive to the cohesion and trustworthiness of online information [80]. Recent research has also highlighted widespread discrimination of hosts against guests of certain races in online marketplaces [81, 86]. Finally, the online marketing of personal resources in the sharing economy is by nature associated with the disclosure of personal and sometimes intimate information, which makes privacy important [82].

5 Discussion

In this section, we discuss central issues for future research on the gig economy based on the analysis of the existing literature.

5.1 The Form of Work and the Nature of the Work Tasks

Our review identified 139 articles that focus on various aspects of the gig economy. Since the nature of work in the gig economy was not properly differentiated in all studies, we suggest that the forms and tasks of work in the gig economy will have to be explored in the future in a more differentiated way, as this may lead to different results in many areas. In order to better differentiate the terms and constructs of the forms of work in the gig economy, we propose a differentiation of gig work in Table 6.

Table 6. Classification of work forms in the gig economy.

		location dependency	
		location-based (offline, physical)	**not location-based (online, virtual)**
person dependency	**bound to persons**	gig work task to an individual *hospitality services (e.g. Airbnb)* *transport services (e.g. Uber)* *logistic services (e.g. Deliveroo)* *households services (e.g. Taskrabbit)*	freelancing-based crowd work task to an individual *freelancing (e.g. Upwork, Fiverr)*
	not bound	gig work task to many individuals *local micro-tasking (e.g. Streetspotr)*	competition-based crowd work task to many individuals *micro-tasking (e.g. Amazon MTurk)* *creative contests (e.g. 99designs)*

The three work characteristics presented apply to all forms of work: self-employment, work in form of "gigs" and the digital organization of the work via digital platforms. According to location and person dependency, the forms can be further differentiated as follows. The studies in the literature, which actually deal with gig work (according to the classification in Table 6), are small (in this review only 18 articles of 139). If gig work would be regarded differentiated, interesting results could be obtained.

Since gig work takes place offline and in the physical world rather than crowd work, individual risks may be higher, as for example work or traffic accidents might happen. A distinction regarding the rights and conditions of gig workers could also help. With a distinction, more differentiated outcomes could help platform providers to better control and manage workers in the gig economy with different measures depending on the type of work. In this literature review, many of the motivators and drivers of self-employment were related to gig workers. In the future, it should be investigated whether the motivation of gig workers differs from that of the classic self-employed. In addition to self-employment, gig workers, as described in chapter 4.2, have additional special characteristics such as working in the form of gigs and working via digital work

platforms [6, 7, 10]. Self-employed on the other hand do not always perform independent "gigs" as employees of the platform.

Besides to the form of work, the type of tasks completed is a dimension of work that has been little studied [e.g. 63]. It is also possible that the type and characteristics of gig platforms play a role. These two aspects should be put into relation. Some platforms contain repetitive tasks that require low skills (e.g. drivers on Uber), and some platforms contain more complex or creative tasks that require high skills (e.g. creative freelance work on Upwork). Furthermore, the required prior knowledge to complete the tasks is different (e.g. high prior knowledge required for crowdsourced software testing vs. low prior knowledge required for household services on Taskrabbit). Another possible differentiation is the way the tasks are solved. Sometimes specified solutions are required (e.g. in local micro-tasking on Streetspotr) and sometimes there is more freedom to complete the tasks (e.g. design tasks on Fiverr).

5.2   IT Specific Focus and Current Developments

Secondly, we suggest that more emphasis should be placed on IS specific aspects, given the limited focus and the fast-paced development of technology. More research is needed on gig work in the discipline of IS. The special characteristics and chances of gig work in IS have not been investigated much so far. Topics covered include crowdsourced software testing [12, 13] or IT crowdsourcing where clients post IT projects on a crowdsourcing platform for digital crowd workers to bid on [14]. This new source of skilled workers for IT jobs should be investigated in the future [6, 10].

Regarding the role of digital technologies in gig work, it is clear from the literature that they play a role for gig work in the area of platform matching. In the future, it can be expected that this importance will increase and it is conceivable that the gig platform as a technology could become more autonomous and accordingly also take on a role as an actor in its own regard [87].

Furthermore, the implications of current developments must be investigated in the future. Gig work is becoming increasingly relevant due to current phenomena such as ever advancing globalization, ongoing technological changes as well as technological trends, and economic uncertainties [11, 21–23, 88]. Global crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic are changing the context for research [89]. For example, a need for research in the field of gig work is becoming apparent as markets, collaboration, and dynamics are changing dramatically. On the one hand, services such as food couriers or online work have become part of everyday life due to the risk of infection. On the other hand, the pandemic also highlights the precarious situation of employees from the gig economy. These gig workers work as freelancers rather than full-time employees and therefore have few protective measures such as sick pay, guaranteed wages or health care, which are crucial in a crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic. Even if public health agencies recommend social isolation to insulate people from the virus, gig workers must continue to work with others to secure their income [90].

5.3 Implications of the Work Characteristics

Thirdly, the effects of the work characteristics were clearly shown in this literature review, but some implications of this particular form of work are still unclear. On the one hand, few researchers have yet come up with responses to the many challenges of gig work [1, 3, 57]. However, special skills and strategies are important and necessary to be successful with this special form of work and should therefore be further explored in the future.

On the other hand, the high degree of personal responsibility of gig workers, for example for their careers, training and learning, and the effects of this responsibility on the workers have been little researched so far. While research is increasingly investigating how people work in the gig economy in the short term, little research has been done on how gig workers can work in this way for an entire career or their entire life. It is also still unclear how people in the gig economy find their way around in different professions and industries over time and whether terms such as career trajectories, pathways and advancement are relevant or irrelevant [1]. Furthermore, the workers themselves are responsible for their training, further education and lifelong learning. For these reasons, the long-term perspective needs to be explored more and the question of who can support the gig workers in these matters needs to be answered.

5.4 Contributions to Research and Practice

Our study makes several contributions to IS research and practice. First, we provide a broad overview of research on the gig economy and the main aspects of the topic, and we bundle the results in different dimensions. Especially the four result tables and the framework on research topics in Figure 1 help to sort the previous results by developing a structure for the gig economy and the relevant perspectives. Second, we contribute to the IS literature by expanding the knowledge about the perspectives of the gig worker, the gig work, the gig platform and the gig economy and the relevant implications of this form of work from different perspectives were clarified. Furthermore, we developed a demarcation of the terms gig work and crowd work (Table 6), as these have not been clearly defined so far. Third, we identify relevant gaps in research. Fourth, we emphasize the relevance of the topic, especially for the future of work, organizations from the IT industry and other disciplines and platform providers in the gig economy. Finally, this study is also relevant to practice by showing how important it is to consider and combine the different perspectives of the gig economy. From the perspective of the gig workers, we highlighted challenges that arise from the specific characteristics of gig work that workers have to deal with. From the perspective of the gig platform, providers need to manage, control and monitor the gig workers to be successful. Finally, there are important impacts on society and the labor market and many industries.

Despite valuable contributions, our study underlies several limitations. First, the literature search may not cover all relevant studies due to the choice of outlets and keywords. Second, the selection of sources is subjective, despite the systematic approach. Third, there may be other relevant topics for future research that were not identified in this study. These could be discovered by future work.

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