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BEYOND THE GIG: CAREER TRANSITION INTENTIONS AND FUTURE ASPIRATIONS OF YOUNG GIG WORKERS IN CHENNAI CITY

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Abstract

Gig work is widely portrayed as a flexible pathway to alternative careers, yet limited evidence exists on how young workers in the Global South perceive their long-term occupational futures. This study examines the career transition intentions and future aspirations of young gig workers in Chennai, India, exploring whether platform-based employment is viewed as a temporary stepping stone or a long-term career option. A descriptive and exploratory cross-sectional survey was conducted among 54 gig workers aged 20–30 years, recruited through convenience and snowball sampling from platforms including Zomato, Swiggy, Rapido, Blinkit, Zepto, Uber, and Porter. Data were collected using a structured five-point Likert-scale questionnaire measuring seven constructs: reasons for joining gig work, work flexibility, income satisfaction, skill development, work satisfaction, career aspirations, and career transition intention. Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, chi-square test, independent-samples *t*-test, one-way ANOVA, and Pearson correlation were employed for data analysis. The findings indicate moderately positive perceptions of skill development (M = 3.60) and work satisfaction (M = 3.60), alongside a moderate level of career transition intention (M = 3.57). Career transition intention differed significantly across educational qualifications (F = 5.711, p = .006), whereas gender showed no significant association with career aspirations or work satisfaction. Furthermore, work satisfaction was not significantly correlated with career transition intention (r = −.017), suggesting that satisfaction with gig work does not necessarily reduce young workers' intentions to pursue alternative careers. The findings offer practical implications for platform companies, policymakers, higher education institutions, and career counsellors in supporting the career

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development of young gig workers. Given the small, non-probability sample, the results should be interpreted as exploratory and are not intended to be generalised to the wider population.

Keywords: gig economy; young gig workers; career transition intentions; career aspirations; platform work; Chennai; India

1. Introduction

Platform-mediated work has become one of the most visible features of contemporary labour markets. Digital platforms connect workers with short-term, on-demand tasks, and the rapid expansion of this form of employment has prompted dedicated measurement initiatives such as the Online Labour Index (Kässi & Lehdonvirta, 2018). Rather than functioning merely as digital marketplaces, platforms act as intermediaries that organise, price and monitor labour while classifying workers as independent contractors (Vallas & Schor, 2020). However, the gig workforce is highly heterogeneous. Kuhn and Maleki (2017) distinguish among micro-entrepreneurs, dependent contractors and workers performing highly controlled service roles, while Spreitzer et al. (2017) argue that alternative work arrangements embody two contrasting narratives: one emphasising autonomy, flexibility and opportunity, and the other characterised by insecurity and precarious employment. Similarly, Healy et al. (2017) contend that although the gig economy may represent a relatively modest share of total employment, it signals broader structural shifts towards increasingly insecure labour markets.

India provides an important context for examining these developments because platform work has expanded rapidly across food delivery, ride-hailing, quick commerce, logistics and home-service sectors. According to estimates reported by Unni and Naik (2024), approximately 7.7 million individuals were engaged in gig work during 2020–21, highlighting the growing significance of platform-based employment. Existing research emphasises that the experiences of Indian gig workers are neither uniform nor universally precarious. Ray (2023) demonstrates that platform drivers frequently rely on informal support networks in the absence of formal labour institutions, describing this phenomenon as digitally organised informality. Likewise, Unni and Naik (2024) argue that employment outcomes differ according to contractual arrangements and degrees of dependence on platform work. More broadly, studies across the Global South identify algorithmic management, weak collective representation and limited worker voice as defining characteristics of platform labour in developing economies (Rani & Furrer, 2021).

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Chennai, one of India's largest metropolitan labour markets, reflects these national trends through the widespread presence of food delivery, grocery and quick-commerce, ride-hailing, logistics and home-service platforms. Despite the city's importance as a hub of platform employment, empirical evidence focusing specifically on Chennai remains limited. Consequently, much of the current understanding must be inferred from studies conducted in other Indian cities or international contexts. This lack of city-specific evidence provides a strong rationale for undertaking the present study.

Young adults constitute a substantial proportion of new entrants into platform work. Previous research attributes this pattern to relatively low barriers to entry, flexible scheduling, immediate earning opportunities and limited access to suitable formal employment (Dunn, 2020; Wood et al., 2019). However, the motivations that attract workers to gig platforms do not necessarily determine how they perceive their long-term careers. Lehdonvirta (2018) argues that platform flexibility is constrained by fluctuations in customer demand and algorithmic management, while Schor et al. (2020) demonstrate that increasing dependence on platform income may reduce the autonomy workers initially sought. Consequently, whether gig work serves primarily as a temporary stepping stone to other occupations or evolves into a long-term career remains an open empirical question. Addressing this question is particularly important for understanding the future career trajectories of young platform workers in emerging labour markets such as Chennai.

Research problem. The dominant research agenda concerns working conditions: algorithmic control, income insecurity, autonomy and well-being (Duggan et al., 2020; Wood et al., 2019). Career-oriented work is growing but remains limited. Ashford et al. (2018) call for research on how individuals survive and thrive in the gig economy, Kost et al. (2020) question whether the boundaryless career concept applies to platform workers, and Zwettler et al. (2023) trace career learning among online-platform workers. These studies, however, rarely examine young location-based platform workers in India, and they seldom ask which specific pathway (higher education, entrepreneurship, government employment or corporate employment) workers hope to follow.

Research gap and need for the study. Three gaps motivate this study. First, there is little empirical evidence on the career transition intentions of young gig workers in an Indian city. Second, existing work seldom separates the alternative futures workers imagine, so it cannot say whether gig work is viewed as a launchpad, a means of financing study, preparation for self-employment or public-sector careers, or a lasting occupation. Third, descriptive evidence on how perceptions of flexibility, income, skills and satisfaction relate to the wish to move on is scarce.

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Without such evidence, platforms, educators, counsellors and policymakers have little basis for designing support.

Aim. The study aims to explore the career transition intentions and future aspirations of young gig workers in Chennai City and to understand whether gig work is perceived as a temporary career pathway or a long-term occupation. The specific objectives and research questions are set out in Sections 4 and 5.

Expected contribution. Academically, the study extends the gig-work career literature (Ashford et al., 2018; Kost et al., 2020; Zwettler et al., 2023) to young location-based platform workers in an Indian metropolis and offers an exploratory evidence base for later confirmatory work. Practically, it informs platforms, policymakers, universities, career counsellors and skill development agencies. The remainder of the paper reviews the literature, identifies research gaps, states the objectives, questions and hypotheses, describes the methodology, presents and discusses the results, and concludes with implications, limitations and future directions.

2. Literature Review

The review is organised thematically. It moves from the growth of platform work to its Indian context, then to motivations, work experience, and finally career development and transition, ending with a synthesis that leads to the research gap.

2.1 Evolution and Growth of the Gig Economy and Platform Work

Early conceptual work separated online labour platforms from traditional freelancing and highlighted the diversity of platform workforces (Kuhn & Maleki, 2017). Later reviews distilled the shared logic of platforms as organisers of labour markets that combine matching with control (Vallas & Schor, 2020). Measurement studies show that online gig work has expanded across occupations and countries (Kässi & Lehdonvirta, 2018), while Healy et al. (2017) argue that scale should not be overstated even as the phenomenon matters for debates on job quality. Kaine and Josserand (2019), studying the organisation of work across platforms, show that experience differs by the degree of platform control and by worker skill. Taken together, these studies agree that platform work is heterogeneous, but they disagree about how far it represents a transformation rather than an intensification of existing precarious work. Most rely on qualitative or conceptual designs, which limits claims about prevalence.

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2.2 Gig Work in India, the Global South and Chennai

Evidence from developing economies stresses livelihood benefits alongside vulnerability. Graham et al. (2017) report that digital labour platforms offer income and flexibility to workers in the Global South but also expose them to competition, weak bargaining power and limited recourse. Anwar and Graham (2021) similarly describe a tension between freedom, flexibility, precarity and vulnerability among African gig workers. Rani and Furrer (2021) show how algorithmic management shapes work in developing countries. In India, Ray (2023), drawing on 55 telephonic interviews with migrant and non-migrant platform drivers and delivery workers, finds that workers cope with crisis through informal socio-spatial networks of care. Unni and Naik (2024) caution against treating all platform work as precarious, noting heterogeneity across contractual forms. These studies are valuable, yet they concentrate on conditions, coping and regulation. They also draw largely on qualitative evidence from a few cities. I did not locate peer-reviewed studies focused specifically on Chennai; this absence should be confirmed through a systematic Scopus search before submission.

2.3 Motivations, Flexibility and Income

Why people join gig work has been explained through both extrinsic and intrinsic motives. Jabagi et al. (2019) argue that gig worker motivation extends beyond financial rewards and sanctions, which resonates with self-determination theory's emphasis on autonomy, competence and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Dunn (2020) finds that workers' motivations shape how they judge job quality, so the same job may be evaluated differently by those who treat it as a main income source and those who treat it as supplementary. Flexibility is widely cited as the core attraction (Wood et al., 2019), but Lehdonvirta (2018) shows that flexibility is constrained by platform demand and by the need to be available at lucrative times. Schor et al. (2020) add that reliance on platform earnings can create dependence that erodes the independence workers initially valued. The consensus is that flexibility attracts workers, whereas findings diverge on whether it persists once income dependence grows. Few studies measure flexibility and income satisfaction alongside career intentions.

2.4 Work Experience, Algorithmic Management and Well-being

Labour process analyses portray platform work as combining autonomy with indirect control (Gandini, 2019), and HRM-oriented work asks how human resource functions are redistributed across platform ecosystems (Duggan et al., 2020; Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). Wood et al. (2019) report that workers valued autonomy and variety yet faced overwork, isolation and low pay.

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Fieseler et al. (2019) show that perceived fairness on crowdworking platforms is shaped by design features. Petriglieri et al. (2019) describe how workers seek holding environments that support identity in precarious, personalised work, and Caza et al. (2022) develop a measure of the challenges workers face. The integrative review by Cropanzano et al. (2023) consolidates this literature from an organisational psychology perspective. Methodologically, the field leans on interviews and ethnography; validated quantitative scales are emerging but have rarely been applied in Indian samples.

2.5 Skill Development, Career Development and Career Adaptability

Career scholars ask whether gig work builds or blocks development. Ashford et al. (2018) frame the central tension as one between surviving and thriving. Kost et al. (2020) question whether the boundaryless career idea (Arthur et al., 2005) fits gig work, because dependence on platforms may restrict mobility. In contrast, Zwettler et al. (2023), using 49 interviews, describe a career learning cycle in which workers build specialised skills and meta-competencies, and some come to see the platform as a stepping stone for entrepreneurial activity. Their account is consistent with protean career theory (Hall, 1996), which stresses self-directed career management. Career adaptability, defined as readiness and resources for coping with career tasks and transitions (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012), offers a useful lens, but it has rarely been measured among location-based platform workers. The evidence therefore splits between optimistic accounts of learning and sceptical accounts of lock-in, and the two literatures draw on different worker populations, which makes direct comparison difficult.

2.6 Career Aspirations and Career Transition Intentions

Aspirations are shaped by perceived accessibility as well as desirability. Gottfredson's (1981) theory of circumscription and compromise explains how people narrow their aspirations in light of perceived barriers, and social cognitive career theory links self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goals to career choice (Lent et al., 1994). Applied to gig workers, these perspectives imply that educational background and perceived opportunity may shape the futures workers consider realistic. Empirical studies of transition intentions among gig workers are scarce. Cropanzano et al. (2023) identify career outcomes as an underdeveloped area, and Kost et al. (2020) and Zwettler et al. (2023) address careers largely among online-platform workers.

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2.7 Pathway Aspirations: Entrepreneurship, Higher Education, Government and Corporate Careers

Evidence on entrepreneurship is mixed. Burtch et al. (2018) report that the availability of gig work can substitute for entrepreneurial activity rather than feed it, whereas Zwettler et al. (2023) find that some workers develop entrepreneurial identity aspirations through platform experience. These findings need not conflict: gig work may reduce low-quality start-ups while still functioning as a training ground for committed entrepreneurs. For the remaining pathways, I did not find peer-reviewed studies that measure aspirations towards higher education, government employment or corporate careers among gig workers, and this should be checked in Scopus. The Indian context, in which public-sector employment and higher education carry strong social value, makes these omissions especially notable.

2.8 Synthesis

Four conclusions follow. First, research on gig work is rich on conditions (control, income, well-being) but thinner on careers. Second, career-focused studies concentrate on online-platform workers in high-income countries, with mostly qualitative designs. Third, Indian studies emphasise precarity and informal coping and rarely ask about future aspirations. Fourth, no reviewed study separates the specific pathways that young workers may hope to follow or links work perceptions to transition intentions in a single Indian urban sample. These observations lead directly to the research gaps below.

3. Research Gap

Table 1 sets out ten gaps identified in the reviewed literature and the way the present study responds to each.

Table 1 Research Gaps and How the Present Study Addresses Them

#	Gap in the literature	How this study responds
1	Career outcomes of gig work are less studied than working conditions (Cropanzano et al., 2023).	Centres the analysis on career transition intentions and aspirations.
2	Career-focused research draws mostly on online-platform workers (Kost et al., 2020; Zwettler et al., 2023).	Studies location-based delivery, mobility and service platform workers.
3	Indian research emphasises precarity and coping (Ray, 2023; Unni & Naik, 2024).	Asks about future aspirations in an Indian urban setting.
4	Peer-reviewed evidence specific to Chennai appears sparse.	Provides a Chennai-based empirical sample.

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5	Young workers (20–30) are seldom treated as a distinct group.	Restricts the sample to ages 20–30.
6	Alternative pathways are rarely separated.	Measures aspirations for education, entrepreneurship, government and corporate careers.
7	Stepping stone versus long-term occupation is seldom asked directly.	Includes career transition intention as an outcome construct.
8	Flexibility, income, skills and satisfaction are seldom linked to transition intentions.	Examines their relationship with transition intention.
9	Few studies test whether education or gender shape aspirations.	Tests differences by gender and education.
10	Studies lean on qualitative designs or complex models that are hard for practitioners to replicate.	Uses a transparent descriptive and inferential survey design.

Together, these gaps indicate that the originality of the study lies in combining a young, location-based Indian sample with a direct, pathway-specific measurement of career transition intentions.

4. Research Objectives

1. To examine the demographic profile of young gig workers in Chennai City.
2. To identify the major reasons why young workers choose gig work.
3. To examine the experiences and perceptions of young gig workers regarding flexibility, income, skill development and work satisfaction.
4. To explore the future career aspirations of young gig workers.
5. To understand whether gig work is perceived as a temporary stepping stone or a long-term career.
6. To provide recommendations for policymakers, digital platform companies, educational institutions and career counsellors regarding the career development of young gig workers.

5. Research Questions

- RQ1: What are the demographic characteristics of young gig workers in Chennai City?
- RQ2: Why do young workers choose gig work?
- RQ3: How do young gig workers perceive their work experiences?
- RQ4: What are the future career aspirations of young gig workers?
- RQ5: Do young gig workers perceive gig work as a temporary stepping stone or a long-term career?

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- RQ6: What recommendations can be provided to stakeholders to support their career development?

6. Hypotheses

Hypotheses were formulated for the inferential tests the sample size supports, informed by the aspiration and career theories reviewed above (Gottfredson, 1981; Lent et al., 1994).

H1: There is a significant association between gender and career aspirations.

H2: There is a significant difference in work satisfaction between male and female gig workers.

H3: Career transition intention differs significantly across educational qualification groups.

H4: There is a significant relationship between work satisfaction and career transition intention.

7. Methodology

7.1 Research Design

The study used a descriptive and exploratory, quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. This design suits an under-researched topic where the aim is to describe patterns and test a small number of relationships rather than to establish causation.

7.2 Population

The target population was young gig workers aged 20–30 years working on digital platforms in Chennai City, including Swiggy, Zomato, Uber, Ola, Rapido, Blinkit, Zepto, Porter, Urban Company and other app-based platforms.

7.3 Sample

The final sample comprised 54 respondents. This size is small and was chosen for feasibility; it limits statistical power and the generalisability of findings, and results are therefore treated as exploratory.

7.4 Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling was combined with snowball sampling. Initial respondents were approached at Chennai and asked to refer peers. Non-probability sampling means selection bias is likely, and the sample may over-represent workers who are more accessible or more willing to respond.

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7.5 Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire was used. Section A collected demographic details (gender, education and platform). Section B contained 35 statements on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), grouped into seven constructs of five items each, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Questionnaire Constructs

Construct	Items	Linked objective
Reasons for joining gig work	5	Objective 2
Work flexibility	5	Objective 3
Income satisfaction	5	Objective 3
Skill development	5	Objective 3
Work satisfaction	5	Objective 3
Career aspirations	5	Objective 4
Career transition intention	5	Objective 5

7.6 Reliability

Internal consistency was assessed with Cronbach's alpha, using 0.70 as the conventional acceptable threshold (Nunnally, 1978). With only 54 cases, alpha estimates are imprecise and should be read with caution.

7.7 Data Analysis Tools

Data were analysed using SPSS. Techniques were frequencies and percentages, means and standard deviations with rank ordering, Cronbach's alpha, chi-square test, independent-samples t-test, one-way ANOVA and Pearson correlation. Structural equation modelling, factor-analytic and mediation or moderation techniques were not used because of the sample size. Given the sample size and the ordinal nature of Likert data, non-parametric alternatives (Mann–Whitney U, Kruskal–Wallis, Spearman's rho, Fisher's exact test) should be reported alongside the parametric tests where assumptions are doubtful.

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8. Results and Discussion

8.1 Demographic Profile

Table 3 Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 54)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	26	48.1
	Female	28	51.9
Education	Diploma	16	29.6
	Undergraduate	18	33.3
	Postgraduate	20	37.0
Platform	Zomato	10	18.5
	Rapido	9	16.7
	Blinkit	9	16.7
	Zepto	9	16.7
	Swiggy	7	13.0
	Porter	6	11.1
	Uber	4	7.4

Women made up 51.9% of respondents and men 48.1%. Postgraduates formed the largest education group (37.0%), followed by undergraduates (33.3%) and diploma holders (29.6%) (Figure 1). Zomato was the most common platform (18.5%), followed by Rapido, Blinkit and Zepto at 16.7% each (Figure 2). In this sample, therefore, gig work attracted relatively well-educated young adults across several platforms.

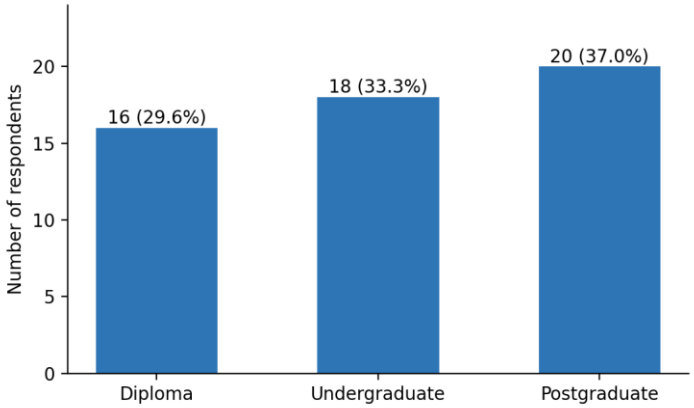


Figure 1 Educational Qualification of Respondents

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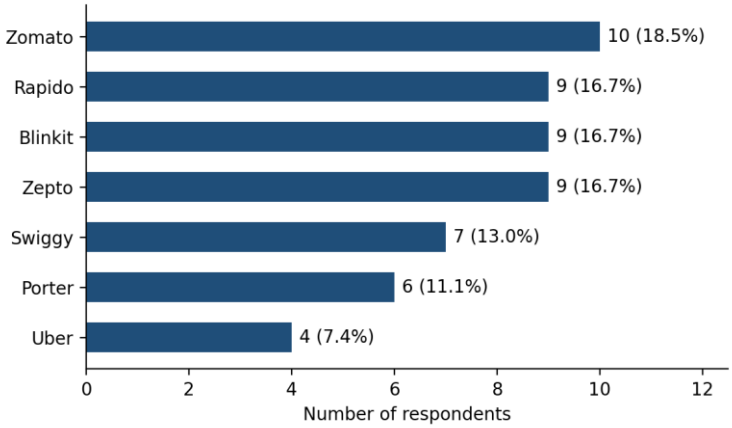


Figure 2 Platform-wise Distribution of Respondents

8.2 Reliability

Table 4 Reliability Statistics

Construct	Items	Cronbach's alpha	Interpretation
Reasons for joining gig work	5	0.929	Excellent
Work flexibility	5	0.922	Excellent
Income satisfaction	5	0.911	Excellent
Skill development	5	0.938	Excellent
Work satisfaction	5	0.932	Excellent
Career aspirations	5	0.922	Excellent
Career transition intention	5	0.937	Excellent

Alpha values ranged from 0.911 to 0.938, above the 0.70 threshold (Nunnally, 1978). Values this high can also indicate item redundancy, and the small sample makes them imprecise, so they should be interpreted cautiously.

8.3 Perceptions of Work and Aspirations

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Rank
Skill development	3.60	0.74	I
Work satisfaction	3.60	0.81	II
Career transition intention	3.57	0.79	III
Reasons for joining gig work	3.48	0.83	IV
Work flexibility	3.48	0.76	V
Income satisfaction	3.44	0.85	VI
Career aspirations	3.43	0.82	VII

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Note. Scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree. Tied means are ranked in table order.

Skill development recorded the highest mean (M = 3.60), followed by work satisfaction (M = 3.60) and career transition intention (M = 3.57). Income satisfaction (M = 3.44) and career aspirations (M = 3.43) were lowest, although differences between constructs are small and all means sit between the scale midpoint and 4.00 (Figure 3). Responses are therefore best described as moderately positive.

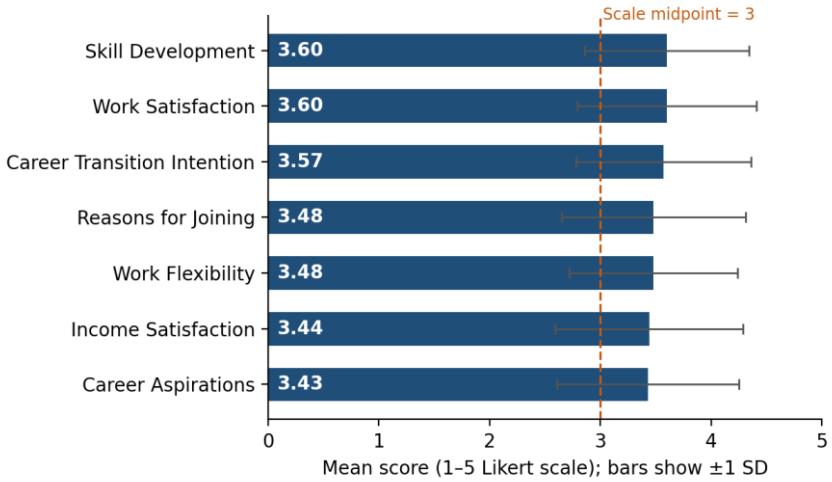


Figure 3 Mean Scores of Study Variables (error bars show ±1 SD)

8.4 Hypothesis Testing

Table 6 Summary of Hypothesis Tests

Hypothesis	Test	Statistic	p	Decision
H1: Gender and career aspirations	Chi-square	$\chi^2 = 2.422$ (df = 4)	.659	Not supported
H2: Gender and work satisfaction	Independent t-test	$t = -0.533$	.596	Not supported
H3: Education and career transition intention	One-way ANOVA	$F = 5.711$	.006	Supported
H4: Work satisfaction and career transition intention	Pearson correlation	$r = -0.017$	.900	Not supported

Note. Group means and a post hoc test are needed to show which education groups differ in H3. With N = 54, some chi-square cells may have expected counts below 5; Fisher's exact test is advisable for H1.

Gender was not significantly associated with career aspirations (H1), and men and women did not differ in work satisfaction (H2). Career transition intention differed significantly across educational groups (H3), though a post hoc comparison is required to locate the differences. Work satisfaction was essentially unrelated to career transition intention (H4).

9. Discussion

This section interprets the results in light of earlier studies. Because the sample is small and the design cross-sectional, the comparisons are tentative.

Skills and satisfaction. The relatively high rating of skill development is consistent with Zwettler et al. (2023), who describe workers building specialised skills and meta-competencies through platform experience. It stands in some tension with the more cautious view that gig work may restrict development (Ashford et al., 2018; Kost et al., 2020). The difference may reflect the worker populations: the career-learning studies concern online-platform workers who are often more skilled, while the present respondents work mainly on delivery and mobility apps. Whether respondents interpret skill development as transferable skills or as task familiarity cannot be determined from a Likert item.

Flexibility and income. Flexibility received a moderate rating, in line with accounts that flexibility is valued yet bounded by platform demand (Lehdonvirta, 2018; Wood et al., 2019). Income satisfaction was among the lowest-rated constructs, which fits arguments that dependence on platform earnings can erode the independence workers seek (Schor et al., 2020). The gaps between means are small, so this pattern should not be over-interpreted.

Education and transition intention. The significant difference across educational groups is consistent with theories that link aspirations to perceived opportunity and self-efficacy (Gottfredson, 1981; Lent et al., 1994): workers with higher qualifications may see more feasible exit routes. It also echoes Unni and Naik's (2024) emphasis on heterogeneity among platform workers. The result does not show that education causes stronger intentions, and the direction of the difference is unknown until group means and post hoc tests are available.

Satisfaction and transition intention. The near-zero correlation between satisfaction and transition intention suggests that wanting to move on is not simply a response to dissatisfaction. Workers may be reasonably satisfied with gig work as a current arrangement while still treating it as a stage, a pattern compatible with the surviving-versus-thriving distinction of Ashford et al. (2018) and with career learning accounts in which platforms serve as a base for later plans (Zwettler et al., 2023). Alternatively, the null result may reflect low statistical power.

Gender. The absence of gender differences should be treated cautiously. Few of the reviewed studies tested gender differences in aspirations, so there is little basis for comparison, and the sample is too small to detect modest effects.

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Pathways. The present data measure career aspirations as a single construct, so they cannot yet say how strongly respondents favour education, entrepreneurship, government or corporate paths. Burtch et al. (2018) and Zwettler et al. (2023) offer divergent expectations about entrepreneurship that future pathway-specific analysis could test.

10. Practical Implications

Findings, once validated with real data, point to the following actions.

- **Platform companies.** Provide verifiable skill certification and learning partnerships, make earnings and incentive structures transparent, and create internal progression routes so that skills gained on the platform are recognised elsewhere.
- **Universities.** Offer flexible, part-time or evening programmes and credit recognition so that workers who intend to study can combine it with platform work.
- **Career counsellors.** Use career construction and adaptability frameworks (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) to help workers articulate transition plans, and tailor guidance by educational background.
- **Skill development agencies.** Design short, modular courses aligned to the pathways workers say they want and deliver them at times and locations that suit shift-based work.

11. Policy Implications

- Support portable benefits and registration systems so that workers retain protection as they move between platforms or out of platform work.
- Fund skills and education vouchers aimed at young platform workers who intend to transition.
- Require platforms to share basic, anonymised data on worker tenure and earnings, enabling evidence-based policy on whether gig work functions as a transition or a trap.
- Align public employment and exam-preparation support with the schedules of workers who juggle platform work and study.

12. Conclusion

This study examined the career transition intentions and aspirations of 54 young gig workers in Chennai City. Respondents held moderately positive views of skill development, work satisfaction and flexibility, and expressed moderate intentions to move to other careers. Transition intention

varied with educational qualification but was unrelated to gender-based differences in aspirations or satisfaction and to satisfaction itself. The central message is that gig work for these workers appears to be neither uniformly a temporary stop nor a settled destination; intentions differ by background and are not explained by satisfaction alone. By focusing on career futures rather than working conditions, the study adds an exploratory, India-specific data point to the gig-work career literature.

13. Limitations

The sample of 54 is small and was drawn through convenience and snowball sampling, so selection bias is likely and findings cannot be generalised beyond this sample. The cross-sectional design prevents causal inference, and self-reported intentions may not translate into actual transitions. Only three demographic variables were analysed, and some chi-square cells may violate expected-count assumptions. The Likert scales are ordinal, and parametric tests were applied alongside small-sample constraints. Reliability coefficients are unusually high and imprecise. The study did not separate individual career pathways or compare platform types.

14. Future Scope

Future work should use larger, probability-based samples across several Indian cities, and longitudinal designs that follow workers to see whether intentions become transitions. Pathway-specific measures (education, entrepreneurship, government and corporate careers) would allow direct comparison of aspirations. Mixed-methods studies could explore why intentions differ by education, and comparisons across platform types, gender and city would clarify heterogeneity. Confirmatory scale validation would strengthen measurement.

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