Challenges with gig workers-
A mediator perspective

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Abstract

Title

Challenges with gig workers – A mediator perspective

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Background

A new type of worker, the gig worker, is acknowledge and problematized as to what challenges mediators can face with managing them as previous research points out their differences from other workers.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze challenges that a mediator can face when managing gig workers and also elevate the knowledge regarding gig workers on how to work with them.

Method

A semi-structured interview was conducted with four participants, three mediators of established gig firms in Sweden and one management consultant and expert in the field of gig economy.

Conclusions

The finding indicated that there exist two challenges that mediators can face when managing gig workers: 1) *The expectations of the matchmaking* 2) *Allowing gig workers to be independent*

Keywords

Gig economy, Gig worker, Mediator, Management, Challenges

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

All development occurring in the world, from the technology advancements to individuals own wishes of fulfillment in their work life, is changing the way that we work and can work today (Prassl, 2018) and now we have entered into a new trend of work thanks to the gig economy. Gig economy relates to the rapid spread of individuals working with short-term employment or as freelancers around the world through the use of digital platforms (Healy, Nicholson & Pekarek, 2017) and steers individuals away from the common long-term employment in one organization (Friedman, 2014). It is not that working in gigs is new for people, short-term employment, freelancing, etc. has been a common way of working in the business world for years; it is the increase of individuals that today choose to work in gigs alongside the technological use of connecting people through digital platforms to these different possibilities of gigs that today is referred to as gig economy and the workers within it as gig workers (Istrate & Harris, 2017). The impact from gig economy and its gig workers has been unexpected, an example of this can be found by looking at how Uber and its gig workers disrupted the taxi industry in only a few years by offering something that traditional taxi firms had a hard time competing with, flexibility and lower costs (Sinicki, 2019). It is because of examples like Uber that now has made both business and researchers investigate more into the gig economy and its gig workers (Kuhn, 2016).

There are different factors that have driven the development of the gig economy and its workforce. Alongside the increased use of digital platforms to connect workers to customers and firms that needs a task or service provided to them, there is the change of mind in individuals who searches for flexibility and independence in their work life instead of having commitment to one organization and one set of work-hours, to mention a few factors (Poon, 2018). These individuals see the benefits of being a gig worker, as it means increased flexibility and freedom alongside more personal fulfillment for each individual (Istrate et al., 2017). Research shows how the gig economy can be beneficial for the society as well, as it could lower the unemployment level and create increasing opportunities as it provides new work opportunities for individuals (Chappa, Varghese & Chandler, 2017), which could be one reason why workers of all ages and skill sets are choosing to become gig workers, and doing so fast (Scheiber, 2015). Research done by Balaram, Warden and Wallace-Stephens (2017) highlights that gig workers are increasing and becoming generally active in three main

categories: 1) professional, creative or administrative services 2) skilled manual or personal services and 3) driving and delivery services, illustrating that gig worker today exists in some of the more common working sectors.

Being a gig worker evidentially comes with its benefits, but also some challenges and risks, as gig workers live on the risk of not knowing when their next gig can be expected, therefore not having a safe income (De Stefano, 2016). Gig workers that are hired through a digital platform are done so in the expectation of only performing a gig, they are not hired so that they can become a part of the organization but just to perform the service. That means that the employment condition is different compared to other short-term employment, the wage is more flexible and extra condition such as securities and benefits are not guaranteed for gig workers, making their employment for each firm with a more increased risk compared to what other forms of employment would signify (Friedman, 2014; Chappa et al. 2017). These challenges and risks are known for gig workers and those interested in becoming one, but even so, there still are increasing individuals that are choosing to become a gig worker as these individuals feel that the benefits of being a gig worker weigh more than the risks it provides (De Stefano, 2016).

1.2 Problem statement

Gig workers are working to become a part of the labor market and to get the work opportunities they are interested in (MGI, 2016). Firms like Gigstr have become successful by offering gig workers those opportunities and by using the labor force to compete with the long-standing industries on the market (Burtch, Carnahan, & Greenwood, 2018). Their success has not gone unnoticed and previous researches have highlighted what benefits employers can expect to gain from using gig workers: lower cost, labor at demand e.g. (Poon, 2018; Storey, Steadman and Davis, 2018; Taylor & Joshi, 2018). While these studies acknowledged different benefits for managers there is a gap in research regarding what challenges these gig workers would mean for firms that starts to make use of the labor force and how to actually manage them.

The gig workers are not like other employees that firms hire and cannot be managed in the same way as well, as the communication/interaction between the firm and gig worker is not daily and mostly made through the digital platform (Chappa et al, 2017). Employers'

knowledge of the amount of gig workers available on the labor market and the benefits they can bring the firm that chooses to work with them is one thing; for the firm to successfully harness gig workers and make use of them in the best possible way through their firm is another (Patton, 2018). Even if firms would like to harness this available labor force, the employers need to be aware of what challenges are awaiting the organization to give themselves the best opportunity to do so in the best possible way. Unfortunately, these challenges are undefined for employers that have not previously managed gig workers and to those that are interested and willing to use this new labor force would need to be acknowledged of challenges to manage gig worker before they begin their usage of the labor workforce (Horney, 2017).

Therefore, this study wants to make further research on those employers that have successfully managed to operate a firm that offers gig workers opportunities to find gigs, these mediators that enable the connection between gig workers and gigs. By making research on these mediators, there is a possibility that such challenges can be discovered and acknowledged to those interested in harnessing this new labor force, while also increasing the knowledge regarding this new phenomenon gig workers and how to manage them. This study could contribute to other employers interested in being a mediator for gig workers; as such discovery could create awareness regarding challenges they could face.

1.3 Purpose of study

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the challenges that a mediator can face when managing gig workers. As previous studies have not researched these challenges yet, this study hopes to fill that gap and create an awareness of these challenges that can await mediators and also elevate the knowledge regarding gig workers on how to work with them.

1.4 Research question

What challenges can a mediator face when managing gig workers?

1.5 Delimitations

This study will conduct its research in Sweden and therefore emphasis on firms that are currently operating in Sweden.

2. Theoretical section

The following chapter consists of the theories that are considered relevant for the thesis and meant to clarify and support its topic. First, the concept of the gig economy and gig workers are explained further to underline important parts of them and to more clearly illustrate the phenomenon of this thesis. It then continues with a look at outsourcing and operational risk, as these topics are considered being relevant both in comparing and relating to managing gig workers. To conclude, there is a summary and the analytical framework is presented that will be used as a basis for the analysis.

2.1 Gig economy

The gig economy is a trend that has existed for almost ten years now that came from an increase of individuals that began to work gigs (i.e. a task, service or project), gigs that they were able to find through a digital platform. (Sinicki, 2019) The digital platform is a technology-enabled business model set up by a firm (the mediator) that offers enhanced and improved communication experience between the users connected to the platform (between a buyer and a seller e.g.) or in this case between the gig worker and a customer. There exist different platforms that offer different experiences, such as social platforms (Facebook, Twitter e.g.) or crowd-sourcing platforms (Gigstr e.g.). The purpose of these platforms is the same and that is to create an interaction between people connected for them to create and exchange value for each other (Tomassetti, 2018). This trend has had much influence from the technological advantages that had been made, which has increased the possibility of a connection between people online. For gig workers, this trend has changed how they can find work, as instead of the traditional way of searching for work through interviews with employers face to face, mediators have enabled so that you can find your work (or gig) online through the platform. Many of the gigs available in the gig economy are traditional jobs related to such areas as construction, transportation, marketing, etc. What the gig economy has facilitated with is how workers can easier find these gigs and how customers can find workers willing to perform gigs. (Balaram, Warden & Wallace-Stephens, 2017)

With the gig economy still being new, the studies made on the subject are still few. What can be clarified from studies that have been made is that the gig economy is increasing and developing alongside those that are taking part in it (Healy, Nicholson & Pekarek, 2017). There are really three actors that are part of the gig economy: the firms that offer the digital

platforms (the mediators.), the gig workers performing the labor and the consumers that offer the gig opportunity with the service they want to be provided to them. (Istrate & Harris, 2017) This trend has not only come from mediators wanting to offer individuals more work opportunities by providing gigs, but also from the workers wanting a change in their work life. The gig workers are an important driving factor of the gig economy appearing and growing (Chappa et al. 2017).

2.1.1. Gig workers

As previously mentioned, there have existed individuals working part-time or as entrepreneurs or freelancers long before the gig economy trend and now during it as well. It is these sorts of workers that today are considered as gig workers and that have increased since the trend started ten years ago. Studies show that not everyone that has become a gig worker has chosen this sort of work style, that there are individuals that need to work gigs as they have trouble finding full-time employment and need an income during their search for more reliable employment. By being a gig worker, they are offered many different possibilities of gigs to earn themselves a proper income. (Balaram et al. 2017)

Mainly, being a gig worker means being an individual that searches for flexibility and the possibility for an adjustable work life. The aim and ambition are to get away from being a typical nine to five worker and instead have the freedom and self-control over your work days, to have your own independence and be your own boss, possibilities which the gig economy has come to offer. Four key features that define a gig worker is a high degree of autonomy, short-term relationships to customers, payment by task or service and being connected and employed through a digital platform. (Sinicki, 2019) Feeling successful as a gig worker comes from having the control of these features, still, gigs come from firms providing the firms opportunities for the gig workers with digital platforms. So, even if a gig worker seeks to be independent they need help from firms to provide a digital platform which supplies the gigs and creates the connection between the workers and customer in order for a gig worker to have a chance to be successful. As you can be a gig worker in most any working sector, you also need the skills required to perform certain gigs. Anyone can be a gig worker, but not everyone has the skills to be any gig worker and succeed in performing any gig. (Ravanelle, 2017)

Because what makes gig workers different from other part-time workers is the digital platform that they work through, gig workers are not monitored by mediators in the office or in communication with each other. As a gig worker you find gigs through the platform, perform the gig and are evaluated based on the results and performance of that service. That is often the communication between the mediator and gig worker, where the performance and results are presented to the mediators from the customers. The mediator base his or her view on the gig worker based on that information and are the performances not a good enough level then the collaboration will be concluded. Gig workers are truly by themselves and depend on their own performance to be able to keep working gigs. Should a gig worker not perform, they would be of less interest for the mediator and probably have less chance to keep being a gig worker. It is therefore important for gig workers to acknowledge their skills and abilities, to work gigs that are in line with those in order to be able to perform. (Gandini, 2018)

How employees are managed is an important part for a firm to ensure that their employees are contributing to the organization, but as gig workers are not a part of an organization manager can find it harder to actually manage them and to get the performance that they expect from their employees. While gig workers are not an actual part of the organization they should still be seen as employees managers need to manage to in order to get the expected performance from them. The firm's digital labor platform design can be an important part in supporting these workers and for managers to communicate information, knowledge and expectation that they have on the gig workers. (Jabagi, Croteau, Audebrand & Marsan, 2019) Gig workers are not like other workers; they cannot be managed like other workers and should therefore not be treated like other workers. They are a labor force that will require different efforts from a management point of view if you want to be able to manage them (De Stefano, 2016).

2.2 Outsourcing

A way for this research to understand and find information regarding how you can manage gig workers is to compare the situation to other relatable concepts and theories. One concept which this research find relatable to the situation of managing gig workers is outsourcing. Outsourcing is a strategy that is frequently used by managers and means that the firms choose to hire an outside party (an individual or organization e.g.) to handle a business activity for

your organization externally. There are many different activities that can be outsourced, accounting and administrations, recruitment or manufacturing processes e.g. where all these activities are provided from the outside party as a service for the firm who hired them. Outsourcing your activity does not mean that there is a partnership created between the two parties with sharing profits and employees between each other, its purpose is to get a service provided for the firm outsourcing. (Belcourt, 2006) There are different reasons for why managers would choose to outsource a part of their organizational activity, where the more common reasons according to Bidwell's research (2012) are:

- **Cost savings** – you can end up with a lower cost for performing the activity by using an outside party instead of doing it internally
- **Better focus and use of internal resources** – you can get the opportunity to delegate your employees to emphasis on other activities, which could be more important and meaningful for the firm
- **Increased productivity and efficiency in the organization** – with a tighter focus on more meaningful activities, the performance of the organization has the possibility to increase
- **Gain access to external knowledge and skills that do not exist internally** – you will be able to reach abilities not existing internally from outsourcing, providing the organization with something they did not have before

Whatever the reason, deciding to outsource should bring value to your firm and develop a competitive advantage as well both in the short- and long-term. (Arias-Aranda, Bustinza & Barrales-Molina, 2011) Reasons for outsourcing should be well evolved and understood for the organization, choosing to outsource should be beneficial for the organization whether the reason is to lower cost or to give the organization the opportunity to focus more on one activity by outsourcing another. Outsourcing could also lead to an increase in your firm's costs (depending on which party you chose to outsource to), but could then lead to an increase in other areas, like productivity and efficiency. You as a manager need to weigh all these possibilities against one another to make the best decision regarding outsourcing, as it could be both positive and negative for your organization. (Varamezov, 2013) Not all activities in an organization are good candidates for outsourcing, in regards to how outsourcing a certain activity can impact the process and workflow of the organization. This is something that the firm has to identify for themselves beforehand if they hope to succeed in

bringing value to the organization and increase its performance through outsourcing. (Tadelis, 2007)

Deciding to outsource comes with its risks and challenges, mainly that the organization might not get the positive effect and result that it was hoping to get, which might not be dependent on your choice to outsource but instead on whom you hired as the provider of the service. (Lahiri, 2016) That is because managing the result that you get from outsourcing is a challenge for managers, as the control of the result often does not lie in their hands, but in the outside party hired. The firms will set certain terms when they present what service they seek to get provided, what the firm demands and the expectations they have on the hired party, but the result will still lay in the outside party's hand and their performance. What becomes important from managers in this situation is to monitor and follow up on the work and performance provided from the outside party, to make sure that they perform in the level expected and bring the value that outsourcing is expected to bring to the organization. (Clark, Huckman & Staats, 2013)

This becomes a combination of control and trust, two aspects that will determine how well the collaboration between the two parties will be. Managers need to make sure that they can trust the hired party, but also make sure that they have some control on the situation so the result does not land far away from the expectations and damages the firm. (Smith & Smith, 2003) A good result and long-term success with outsourcing will come from a combination of trust and control, to hire a firm that produces what you expect but also has the ability to adapt and change if needed for your firm to get the result that the firm expects. (Plugge, Borman & Janssen, 2016) This is very important, as a firm chooses to outsource because the firm seeks to have these activities being carried out by external parties so their own organization can focus on other core activities. Manager hopes to not have to constantly monitor the process, but that the activity is instead performed just as expected and promised (Quinn & Hilmer, 1994) and if not, that there exists a flexibility between the two parties to exchange the right information so there is a possibility to respond to needed changes in the process. (Arias-Aranda et al. 2011) If that would not be the case and the effect that outsourcing has on the organization would be negative, then the firm should look for other ways to bring value to the firm and increase the organization's performance. (Tadelis, 2007)

2.3 Operational risk

With performance in mind, operational risks are such that managers sometimes can have a hard time to manage as it is a daily changing risk that affects an organization's performance. (Croitoru, 2014) OR emphasizes on an organizations performance; on how the business activities have been conducted, how the performance has been and the result it has provided to the firm. Every organization has some exposure of OR, but the amount of exposure will vary depending on which business the firm conducts and are often related to how the organization's resources are or have been managed. (Croitoru, 2014) The typical factors for OR are issues related to the people, processes and systems in the business activities. Most OR therefore comes from human errors and is therefore not inevitable for the organization if managed correctly. (Ashby, 2008)

All OR can be identified and managed and it is very important that every organization has identified their ORs and does not let them be a problem for the organization. The less control a firm has on risks, the more damage it can do for the entire organization. Increase the awareness of ORs will increase an organizations ability to respond, adapt and change if needed and gain the possibility to improve on their overall performance instead of risking increased damage on the performance. (Breden, 2009)

Vaid (2008) discusses how essential it is for firms to conduct risk management, to identify, treat and monitor each risk to control its effect on the organization. Even if there usually is one risk manager hired to manage OR, there are many activities needed to actively manage and monitor the risks. The most effective way for an organization to manage OR should be by establishing a collective internal control with all managers, as the OR covers all areas of an organization and are daily changing and affecting the organization's performance. (Croitoru, 2014)

2.4 Summary and analytical framework

To clarify the connection between the different theoretical concepts illustrated in this chapter, an analytical framework is presented. The main concepts of this thesis are gig economy and gig workers, this new trend and type of workers that are of interest to the previous researchers and for this researcher in particular. It is highlighted that gig workers are not like other workers and cannot, therefore, be managed like other workers (Di Stefano, 2016). They are

individuals searching for flexibility and independence in their work life, which they have gained the possibility to achieve through the gig economy (Sinicki, 2019) Being a gig worker means that you are not employed with a certain firm, that you instead are hired to work gig through a mediator with different firms and organization to whom the gig workers offer their knowledge and skills. Since the gig worker is only hired and not employed through the mediating firm, this leads to a different collaboration between the gig worker and the mediator (Gandini, 2018) and for how the mediator can manage the gig workers (Jabagi, Croteau, Audebrand & Marsan, 2019).

This thesis believes that outsourcing is a concept that is relatable to the activities and challenges that appears for managers when working with gig workers. As outsourcing is a strategy that leads to a certain activity being handled by an outside party (Belcourt, 2009) it is an activity that leads to firms not having any control over that service and it becomes something that they need to manage differently (Lahiri, 2016). This is similar to how gig workers are hired through the firm to provide gigs to customers, without the firm being able to control that performance or result (Jabagi et al. 2019). The situation becomes similar to outsourcing in the sense that it is a combination of control and trust between two parties collaborating with each other and firms need to make sure that they can trust the hired party, as the control of outcome and performance is in their hands (Smith & Smith, 2003).

As each business activity firm conducts exposes them to some sort of operational risk (on how the organization has performed) (Croitoru, 2014), working with gig workers could expose firms to different risks that are challenging to manage. Firms always need to emphasis on identifying and managing their risk as to not let it affect their performance and result (Breden, 2009) where such risk management for mediators can be of interest for this thesis.

These concepts together give this study a foundation to stand on, as each concept highlights challenges that managers can face which therefore can be compared and related to this study's analysis. Together they give ideas of what challenges managers could face and becomes an analytical framework for the empirical collection, illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. The analytical framework presented by the author

3. Method

The following chapter will present the method that this research will use. The chapter consists of a brief presentation of the research approach and its justification, the research plan, the research reliability and validity and is concluded with ethical consideration for this study.

3.1 Research approach

The purpose of the study is to identify and analyze challenges that a mediator can face when managing gig workers, while also elevate the knowledge regarding gig workers. As the purpose is to elevate the knowledge and understanding, this study will use a qualitative method since Bryman and Bell (2013) suggests this method is used when your research is made regarding a phenomenon that is not yet well understood, is lacking clear theoretical support and your research requires more detailed empirical data. Further statements are made from Park and Park (2016) that states a qualitative method will provide researchers a possibility to discover more specific and evolved information to develop an understanding regarding your phenomenon, which is crucial for this study's aim as it was implied that the knowledge of the people being interviewed would help in increasing the understanding of challenges when managing gig workers.

This research will be carried out using an abductive approach, since a deductive approach does not fit this research as there exists a lack of theories ready to be tested and an inductive approach does not fit since not enough empirical data will be gathered for the result would lead to theory-building, Hence, an abductive approach was chosen as it is a combination of deductive and inductive approach that moves between theory and empirical data to increase understanding concerning the research's topic (Bryman & Bell, 2013) Dubois and Gadde (2002) states that abduction begins from considered facts which then can be modified or developed based on new empirical findings from your research, which is what this study aims to do based on its existing theories.

3.2 Research design

The empirical data was obtained through semi-structured interviews. This method was chosen as it brings out a more evolved answer from its participants than a structured interview (Bryman & Bell, 2013). This method provides both structure and flexibility to the interviews, with the interview guide being the framework of the interview process, but where answers

and follow-up questions can deviate from the interview guide and the answers can become more developed and with a deeper knowledge for the research, (ibid.) This means that the researcher can retrieve more data than expected from the interviews which could be useful.

3.3 Data selection

The participant of this research consists of individuals that are currently operating within the gig economy business as mediators and who have experience of working with gig workers. As mentioned, this thesis emphasizes its research on those firms that enables the connection between gig workers and gig, which is why managers within such firms will be contacted. These firms are similar to traditional staffing firms, while the gig economy has digitalized their hiring process by moving it towards their digital platform. There have been a number of firms contacted that contains managers that would fit these expectations. These firms were contacted by phone if there was a contact number available and the other firms were contacted through email or their help-support, as there is a limited ability to contact these firms in other ways. Due to a lack of time and opportunity for managers within these firms to participate, there has been a limited selection of participants for this research. Still, the research managed to find four participants able to participate in the research who were all are currently operating within the gig economy business and have experience of working with gig workers, while the experience varies between each participant.

3.3.1 Claes Persson

Claes is the CEO of Gigger, a firm that has modernized and digitalizes staffing and administration work to facilitate their customers to hire labor when in demand at a lower cost. He invested in the firm in 2016 and has seen the firms go from almost bankrupt to one of the strongest gig firms in Sweden which emphasizes its staffing for customers through their digital platform.

3.3.2 Nicole Johansson

Nicole has worked at Gigstr since 2017 as a customer manager and recruiter, with the purpose to attract gig workers to their platform and have them work gigs through their platform. Her job revolves around communication and management with their gig worker, working closely with them as a mediator to find the best options for her firm and the gig worker.

3.3.3 Marianne Olsson

Marianne is currently a management consultant who has experience in both traditional and gig oriented organizations. She has worked as a consultant since 2001 and has become both a well-known consultant and gig expert, where she has published several books regarding the field of the gig economy. She has been in contact with several firms regarding adopting an approach towards gig orientation and management on gig workers.

3.3.4 Per-Ola Malm

Per is the deputy CEO of ASociety, where he has worked since 2007 and took part in the firms change in 2017 from a traditional staffing firm to becoming a gig firm that priorities the flexibility and freedom for their workers. He takes part in working and managing gig workers, which has given him a good insight into gig workers.

3.4 Data collection

The collection of data was made through semi-structured interviews, with the use of an interview guide (see Appendix 2). Each respondent was approached by phone before the interview, discussing details regarding the purpose and approach of the thesis. An email was also sent before each interview with specifics regarding the interview and expected questions so that each resonant could prepare for the interview and reflect on their answers beforehand. There was also communicated their right for anonymity and confidentiality, which no one claimed being needed. The idea was to have each interview face-to-face, as it could provide a possibility for better communication and dialog during the interview. Due to a lack of time and opportunity for the respondents to conduct the interview in person, only one interview could be held face-to-face and the other three had to be conducted by phone. To not let the interviews conducted thorough phone affect the quality of the interview, these interviews were held in quiet rooms and with clear coverage to enable the communication and the quality of the interview.

The questions consisted of open-ended questions, as a part of the semi-structured interview that would allow structure and flexibility for the respondent to answers the questions and freely discusses what they deemed important (Bryman & Bell, 2013). Before each interview, the permission to record the interview was asked to facilitate to transcript the interview

afterward and gather all the information so nothing got lost. It also helps the interviewer to be focused on the answer and discussion from the respondent instead of writing down notes etc. The questions were asked in the same order, to facilitate the transcript of the interviews.

The interviews conducted and their summary is presented in Table 1. The length of the interview varied between each interview, but every interview included the questions from the interview guide along with some follow-up questions depending on the answers given from each respondent. There was also a follow-up after the interviews of the collected data, to provide further insights or information if needed.

Respondent	Date of the interview	Style of the interview	Length of the interview
Claes Persson, CEO of Gigger	9th April 2019	Face-to-face	50 min
Nicole Johansson, Client manager and recruiter at Gigstr	10th April 2019	Phone	37 min
Marianne Olsson, Management consultant & gig expert	19th April 2019	Phone	53 min
Per-Ola Malm, Deputy CEO of Asociety	30th April 2019	Phone	34 min

Table 1, Data collection respondents

3.5 Operationalization

The operationalization (see Appendix 1) was based on the theoretical framework (presented in Chapter 2) and enabled to construct the interview guide. The theories are a collection of books and scientific articles gathered from keywords related to each topic and with regards to subjects that the researcher believed had relevance for the research.

Here is a presentation of the keywords used for each topic:

- **Gig economy:** *gig economy, impact, challenge, future, firms, employers, employees*
- **Gig workers:** *gig workers, gig economy, risk, challenge, trend, motivation, employers, employees*

- **Outsourcing:** *outsourcing, benefit, risk, challenge, impact, value, performance, organization, flexibility, efficiency, manager, management*
- **Operational risk:** *operational risk, management, challenge, impact*

The questions were grouped into four different categories, which were presented in the theoretical framework: gig economy, gig workers, outsourcing and operational risk. There were 14 questions formulated, where the first 3 questions were background questions regarding the respondent. First questions regarding the gig economy were asked to clarify each participant's view of the gig economy, why they found it important and wanted to work within it. This could give insight into the respondent's reason for wanting to work with gig workers. Secondly, the questions regarding gig workers were to gain a better understanding of the respondent's view of gig workers. This was an important area of the interview as it would lay the foundation of the analysis regarding working and managing gig workers. Thirdly, the questions regarding outsourcing highlighted challenges that firms face during outsourcing and was asked in relation to gig workers to view those challenges from that perspective. This was important for the study, as an understanding of how the participants worked with having control and trust with their gig workers was important to answer the research question. The last category, operational risk, emphasized on risks that firms can be exposed to from working and managing gig workers, as those types of risk could be something that the participant's firm finds challenging to manage. The aim of these questions was to create an understanding of how the participant firm worked and managed gig workers to find similarities that could help answer the research question.

3.6 Data analysis

As the interviews were recorded, these enabled the researcher to transcript the data and thoroughly analyze its content. The analysis was based on the analytical framework (presented in Chapter 2), where the aim was to find patterns and similarities from the collected data. It was important during the transcription of data that the context of the respondents was not lost, that what they intendant to say does not change into something different. This was assured by performing the transcript of each interview separately and written down in accordance with the interview guide. This was also done to keep the frame of each transcription the same, as Bryman and Bell (2013) states that a coding frame is needed to enable the identification of patterns within the answers. The next step was to group the collected data into categories that were best suitable for the analysis, which where gig

economy & gig workers, working with gig workers, managing gig workers and risks with gig workers. These categories were deemed important for the study as each category offered help in answering the research question and enable the purpose of the study. Within each category, the collected data was assessed upon its importance according to the aim of the study, as only the essential parts were used in the empirical findings chapter. Lastly, this collected data were related and compared during the study's analysis, to find patterns, similarities and differences that could help answer the research purpose.

3.7 Reliability and validity

The criteria for assessing the quality of research are its reliability and validity (Bryman & Bell, 2013). Reliability implies to the degree to which the study can be replicated in the future (ibid.) which this study aims to avoid by being as clear as possible with the way the research was conducted. Reliability can also be affected by the researcher being too subjective on his observation and tend to directs its data towards what the researcher fins important instead of sharing the entire picture (ibid.). To avoid this issue, the transcript has been written down in full and stated by the respondents that the information is correct and avoid confusion.

Validity emphasizes on whether the observation and result obtained has in fact measured what was intended to measure (Bryman & Bell, 2013). To avoid this issue, it was important to find respondents that were shown to have a background with the gig economy and experience on working with gig workers. That would verify that they had the knowledge and information regarding the study's topic. Though, some had more experience than others within the gig economy field which affected their ability to answer certain questions and could affect the validity of the collected data.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Considerations regarding the ethical aspects of the research are important to acknowledge states Bryman and Bell (2013). Among the things to consider is the matter of privacy of the participants, allowing them anonymity and the right to withdraw any information they do not wish to disclose. As full disclosure and information what regard the research topic and aim, the participants were aware of what to expect and prepare for regarding what information they wanted to disclose during the interview. This is in line with having informed consent

from the participants, another ethical consideration, as to make sure that the information used in this research has been approved by the participants.

3.9 Critical considerations

An important notion of critic with the research method is towards the data collection, as to the participant's knowledge, experience and understanding are enough to gain the relevant knowledge and understanding to reach the research purpose. The accuracy and truthfulness of the research can, therefore, be questioned where other participants might disclose other information or knowledge. Another critic is towards the amount of questions within the interview guide, which could both have been higher in order to increase the depth of the collected data and could also have been better focused to actually dig deeper within the challenges that could occur. The limitation of question and their depth are related to the researchers' difficulties in his search for relevant theories related to the topic, which is mainly related to the limited time and resources. Another aspect to consider within the research method is in regard to the objectivity from the participants is something that this research has taken into consideration, where the participant could try to uphold a biased view when answering the questions. This has been attempted to be avoided by allowing the respondents to explain their thoughts and clarify their answers in more detail.

4. Empirical findings

This chapter provides an overall view of the finding from the empirical data collection. The chapter is divided into four sections based on the data analysis made on the interviews: gig economy and gig workers; working with gig workers; managing gig workers and risk with gig workers. This is to clearly illustrate each respondent's view on each topic and group them together.

4.1 Gig economy and Gig workers

Claes (CEO of Gigger) believes that the modern view of labor is that you want to be able to hire labor when in demand, to have it when you need it instead of employing full-time. That a firm wants to hire, not employ labor, which is what Gigger offers its customers, to use resources in a more efficient way. His firm Gigger wants to modernize recruitment of workers through a digital platform, to remove the recruitment process for their customer and have them rely on firms like Gigger to provide workers that have the competence and knowledge they currently demand. Claes states that this sort of digital staffing works today since there now are more individuals that are willing to work in such a flexible work style, that these gig workers seek opportunities to work gigs instead of having a traditional work style. There is a selection of gigs and gig workers on the market and Gigger wants to connect them to create value for all actors (Gigger, customer and worker) involved.

Nicole (client manager & recruiter at Gigstr) explains that Gigstr wants to help individuals that today seek flexibility and the possibility to decide when and where they want to work. The development of people's attitude and interest towards their work life are some factors that have made the gig economy relevant today and Gigstr believes it is important to create work opportunities and facilitate for this type of workers. Gigstr works a lot with presenting for workers what they can offer them in terms of guarantees, safety and gig opportunities. Nicole believes that it is important to meditate that information for individuals interested in being gig workers that Gigstr wants to offer them the opportunity to be just that.

Per (Deputy CEO of ASociety) states that his firm has adapted its business and became a "new time staffing firm" that works with not employing workers but hiring them for gigs. Asociety works with a brokerage model were they are the middleman that matches the firm and worker through a more effective personal appointment than traditional staffing firms. These workers are skilled, driven individuals that are all searching to work more independent

and flexible. ASociety wants to collaborate with these workers and start a business relationship that would benefit both parties. Their workers are part of a big network, where it is important for Per that they always have workers available in their network that have the right competence and knowledge that their customer needs. If not, ASociety makes sure to proactively search for that competence through different contacts or networks to always be able to offer an effective personal appointment for their customers.

Marianne (management consultant) argues that questions regarding organizations and HR are more critical than ever, where competence management planning and digitalization are the single biggest trends that will affect and determine whether or not firms will succeed. Most firms today lack a competence management strategy, where they instead think just six to twelve months ahead when employing an individual with a certain competence, which they might not need after twelve months anymore. Gig workers offer flexibility and are a clever way for managers to organize their firm. By hiring gig workers, you can assign and contract labor and competence when needed for the organization. Gig firms are those that provide gig workers and help customers find demanded competence and skills when they need it in a timelier and cost-efficient way. Without these firms, the match between the worker and customer might not occur.

4.2 Working with gig workers

Gigger sees the gig workers as customers, according to Claes. It is not an employment relationship between Gigger and the worker, but a business relationship that is meant to create value for both. Anyone can create a profile onto Gigger's platform and apply interest in gigs offered through the platform. Claes argues that their work is not to double check the competence and knowledge of their workers, only to create the opportunity for firms and workers to connect. The platform automatically matches gig workers to gigs that match their competence and knowledge, where Gigger has no involvement in finding the best match of gig worker and gig. Their assignment is to provide the opportunity for matchmaking and expects that the gig worker matched to a gig will be able to perform that gig, no questions asked. Claes argues that it is difficult to actually guarantee for their customers that each gig worker they provide has the qualification the customer expectations and has therefore chosen not to provide such guarantees.

Nicole says that Gigstr's business idea revolves around creating a well-established working relationship with their gig workers. When they begin collaboration with a worker, the expectation is always that it will be a long-term relationship where Gigstr can create a connection and relation with a worker, so that they can get opportunities to develop and evolve within Gigstr network. This is possible since Gigstr works with recruitment processes during matchmaking with worker and gig. Anyone can create a profile at Gigstr, apply interest for a gig and be automatically matched to a gig, but Gigstr themselves always goes through a recruitment process with that selection of gig workers matched to a gig. This process does not just mean looking at the gig workers previous experience, education, competence and knowledge, but also their personality and drive. Gigstr expects their workers to have certain characteristics, such as service minded, responsible, adaptable etc. as these are characteristics that fit an independent worker and that can help Gigstr to make sure that the workers within their platform have what it takes to work gigs. This is a challenging process that takes time, as there is a constant flow of workers going through Gigstr's platform. But the goal is to have their workers to work within their network long-term, which would lead to this process becoming briefer and ease the decision-making and recruitment process.

Working with gig workers is to start a business relationship, according to Per. You do not sign a contract with each other, but seek a collaboration which is why ASociety emphasizes on having a good relationship with their workers. Their business model is built on delivering accurate, quality assured workers and you do that best by knowing your workers. There is a communication between managers at ASociety and their workers, listening to their requests and desire to offer them the opportunity to be the free worker they have chosen to be. Per is also aware that the gig worker is free to choose to work through any other competitor to ASociety as well. That is why Per believes it is important to clarify for the workers what ASociety can offer them in terms of opportunity and safety, what the advantage of starting a business relationship would mean for the worker to earn their trust and loyalty. As Asociety has chosen not to work with a digital platform, this means that the matchmaking between customer and worker is not automatic proceeded. Per states that with each gig there is a number of workers in their system that matches with the competence and knowledge that the customer request for their gig, as normal matchmaking. But through this selection of candidates, ASociety has its own recruitment process and quality assurance with each candidate to find the right worker for their customer. This means having interviews,

meetings, verification of resumes, references, etc. like a traditional recruitment process, which is part of ASociety's aim in getting a closer relationship with their workers.

Working with a gig worker is to work with an individual that knows what he or she wants and needs, according to Marianne. They want to be this independent worker but also need help in finding gig opportunities. Every gig firm needs an inflow of workers and Marianne states that a mediator needs to try to build a relationship with gig workers, as mediators need to show what their firm can provide and facilitate for the worker, to appeal them for collaboration. Gig firms can provide safety, assurances and gig opportunities, which are factors that mediators need to acknowledge for workers to not risk losing their competence to competitive firms.

4.3 Managing gig workers

Gigger does not work with managing performance or communicating with their gig workers during gigs, they leave that responsibility to the customers and workers themselves states Claes. Gigger does not emphasis on the relationship with their workers, to build up expectations and development. It is just a business relationship and they are aware that performance and result is a part of that business being successful. But Claes states that they do not provide quality assurances on their workers or guarantee that they have the competence and knowledge they claim to have. They have provided gig workers to actual gigs and therefore expect them to perform as it is in their best interest. He compares Gigger to Blocket, as they provide the opportunity for firms and workers to connect and leave the responsibility of the performance to the actors using their platform. Claes states that he has thought of ways that they could facilitate their customers in managing worker performance, where the best way would be through rating systems like Uber and AirBnb uses. The rating would reflect the worker's performance according to the customers and motivate gig workers to perform with each gig. This would be the way of the market to demand trustworthiness and competence from the workers and would do more use than what Gigger would if they tried to manage workers themselves.

Nicole states that Gigstr's recruitment process is very important for them to create an understanding of each worker and their competence, knowledge and trustworthiness, to ensure for them and the customer that the worker is someone that they believe can represent what Gigstr stands for and has the ability to perform well. Nicole argues that if they perform

that process well, then they create the best possible prerequisites for the worker and gig being a good match. Gigstr's concept is towards independent workers, so the firm emphasis on letting their workers on being just that and put trust on them to perform without their involvement during the gigs. Their job is preparatory work and the follow-up, to look at how well the match was between worker and gig and from always looking for ways they can improve our matchmaking process.

Asociety's business model is built on accurate quality assurances of their workers and to have a close relationship with both their customers and workers. Per acknowledge that since they perform a recruitment process with each candidate for a gig, they can make sure that they provide their customers with a quality worker. Asociety does not provide a selection of candidates for its customers, just one that they believe is the best fit for that gig. By doing this, ASociety leaves guarantees for their customers that the worker they have provided has the competence and knowledge to perform the gig. While ASociety does not have employer responsibility Per still feel that they have the responsibility of the workers' performance because of these assurances, which is why they are always working closely with their workers during gigs as well. They do that through regular contact with the worker, to monitor their performance and result but also to help and facilitate the worker if needed, as their relation to the worker is important. After there is always a follow-up on each gig, to evaluate their process to see how well the match and performance was. Asociety needs to make sure that what they have offered both the customer and worker is in line with what they expect and need.

Mediators of gig firms are more consulting agents, providing their customers with gig workers to the gigs they seek to get assigned and delivered according to Marianne. Their job is to make sure everything goes smoothly, that there is a gig worker provided to the customer that has the right competence and knowledge to accomplish the gig. Gig firms provide the matchmaking between the gig worker and customer, but the communication thereafter is between the customer and worker. The responsibility to perform lies with the gig workers and the customer has their own responsibility to get the performance they expect from the gig workers themselves, says Marianne. Mediators offer guarantees that the gig workers they have provided have the competence and skills to perform the gig (quality assurance), but that is all they provide. The delivery of the assignment is naturally the gig workers full responsibility. But firms are different in how they chose to manage their gig workers. Some

firms are more digitalized with their platforms and expect everything to go automatically without their participation in the process, while other firms work more with their relation towards both the worker and customer. You could say that the more you can get paid for a gig worker, the more interaction and management are you interested in performing yourself with the gig worker to ensure performance and quality.

4.4 Risks with gig workers

Right now, there is a minimum amount of risks that Gigger takes according to Claes. That is because they have chosen not to guarantee the performance of their worker or provide quality assurances for their customers. Claes is aware that bad performances would lead to an unhappy customer, but the responsibility does not lie on Gigger but on the worker. Would a customer be unhappy with a worker now, they will dispute payment of that worker. Then if needed, Gigger can provide another worker or they will find a different solution, but Gigger will not be damaged by that performance, just the worker. If Gigger would choose to have more safety guarantees, it would mean an increased risk for the firm and in that case demand Gigger to start managing their workers more.

The risk lies with us leaving the control and responsibility in the worker's hands, says Nicole. They represent Gigstr, so it is our name and brand that would take damage if they should not perform or other circumstances occur. But we trust in our recruitment processes, we believe that we create good enough contact and relation to our workers to know what we can expect from them. We want them to work independently, that is our strategy and it is up to us to make sure that we have the worker that will not fail us. We need to perform our recruitment process well to minimize the risks.

ASociety's business model is in conflict with other actors on the gig market, as they have chosen not to work with a digital portal solution. While this gives his firm an opportunity for a closer relationship with their workers, this also increases the expectations from the customer to provide an accurate worker which of course increases the risk. Every performance and result affects the firm's trustworthiness and image, where Per argues that ASociety wants to deliver quality assured workers and believes that their recruitment process is of grave importance to minimize the risk of that going wrong.

Marianne states that the risks are actually the same as when working with a traditional worker, but at a lower cost. There is seldom any financial damage to be expected, as all workers can be replaced with others in the system. The gig workers are not employed by the firms like traditional staffing firms that might have employees that are sitting on the bench waiting for an assignment to be attached to them. With gig workers, you have no bench and therefore not a financial risk with having them in your system as their contract is gig based. It ones again show that traditionally hiring firms to take a higher risk with their employees than other firms that apply the benefits and flexibility of a gig-organization. To minimize your risk with gig workers not performing well, managers need to make sure that the preparatory work and preliminary research of the gig worker match the specifications. If the basic information regarding the gig worker is correct, then there should be a minimized risk that the worker should not be able to perform.

5. Analysis

This chapter consists of the study's analysis. It is structured the same as the previous chapter and will analyze all the respondents together in each section in order to find patterns that are of value for answering the research question. The first part presents an analysis on the participants' reflection of the gig economy and gig workers, the second part analysis the participants' work with gig workers, followed up with the analysis on how the participants manage gig workers and ending with analyzing the participant's risks with working and managing gig workers.

5.1 Gig economy and Gig workers

As understood from the findings, the participants see the development of the gig economy to have good implications for those involved, firms can hire labor instead of employing in a more efficient way while workers are allowed a chance to get away from the traditional work style and be a gig worker. These findings are in line with reflections made from previous researches regarding how the gig economy facilitates and increases possibilities for actors involved (Balaram, Warden & Wallace-Stephens, 2017; Healy, Nicolson & Pekarek (2017). What the findings state is that their firm and other gig firms offer a gig worker is the chance for this to be possible, that they create the connection and matchmaking between their customers and workers to enable these opportunities through their firms. This was something that Tomassetti (2018) discussed as well, that the connection and interaction between actors are enabled from firms that have set up their business to allow people connect and exchange value between each other. While the participants are aware of what they can offer gig workers, they argue that it is important for their firm to present that information to gig workers as well in order to establish the worker's interest for their firm and explain what opportunities collaboration between them can lead to. The mediators and their firms need gig workers to achieve their business idea and want to present to gig workers that they need their firm to gain gig opportunities. Ravanelle (2017) argues how gig workers are in need of help from firms to create the connection between them and customers, where these findings illustrate that not only does the mediators seek to help gig workers but also hopes that gig workers can give value to their firm through collaboration.

5.2 Working with gig workers

Being a gig firm usually means that the communication with gig workers occurs through their platform (Gandini, 2008) and while this relates to how Claes has chosen to conduct his firm's

communication with their workers through their platform, both Nicole, Per and Marianne believes that mediators need to create a deeper relationship with their workers. One reason is that they believe mediators need to create a better connection and relation with gig workers to facilitate the probability of workers wanting to collaborate with their firm. Another is that they also need a better connection with their workers to know and understand their workers' competence, knowledge and personality to ensure that the gig worker working through their firm as such individuals they believe fit their and the customers' expectations. This relates to what Jabagi, Crotean, Audebrand and Marsan (2019) discuss on how firms can have problems with managing gig workers when their communication only exists through the digital platform, which is something that Nicole, Per and Marianne acknowledges and believes is a challenge needed to confront.

By analyzing the firms' matchmaking process, an understanding is created in how this challenge is confronted by the firms. There is a difference between how Gigger chooses to emphasis on the process compared to Gigstr and ASociety. At all these firms, they are allowing anyone to create a profile on their network, apply interest to their gigs and be matched to gigs. But there is a difference in which gig workers actually are allowed to work gigs through the firms, where both Gigstr and ASociety have chosen to conduct their own recruitment process alongside the matchmaking process with the selection of worker matched to a gig. This recruitment process is important for the firms since they from this process can ensure the quality of their workers themselves and facilitate the matchmaking to always match their gigs with what they find to be good gig workers. This is in line with what Lahiri (2016) argues that the outcome of outsourcing lies in the choice a firm makes in whom you hire as the service provider. Claes argues that since Gigger is only expected to provide the opportunity for matchmaking and not to guarantee the quality of the match or gig worker, he does not believe that his firms need to work closer with gig workers and establish a better relationship with them. Therefore the challenge of meeting expectations is something that his firms do not need to confront. While both Nicole and Per states that their firms do not want to just provide the matchmaking, but also assure to their customers that they will be provided with workers that have the competence and knowledge they expect and need. That, therefore, demands more from their work and matchmaking process with gig workers compared to Gigger and therefore becomes a challenge they need to face and manage.

5.3 Managing gig workers

The findings suggest that the participants have different approaches to how they chose to manage gig workers. While each participant agrees that the responsibility to perform during each gig lies in the gig worker's hands, they feel different responsibility in how the mediator's work can affect that performance and result. De Stefano (2016) argues that gig worker cannot be managed like other employees and requires different efforts from managers, where the findings confirm that the participants' view of managing gig workers is different from how they would manage other employees. The participants state that gig workers are expected to want to be an independent worker, which means that they should be motivated to perform well as that would able them to keep working as a gig worker. The mediators have these expectations on their gig works and therefore want to offer gig workers that opportunity. Managing or having some control over the gig workers performance or even knowing what the result of each gig will be is a challenge for the mediators, which is in line with Clark, Huckman and Staats (2013) arguments regarding outsourcing as firms can set certain demands and expectations on the service provider but are still not in control of the performance and result. What the findings suggest is that mediators can affect who their gig workers are and therefore should emphasis on their matchmaking process, as this challenge can be managed within that process.

However, according to the findings, mediators chose to manage the matchmaking process depending on what their expectations and demands are on gig workers, alongside what the customer should expect from the matchmaking. Both Nicole and Per states how they seek to provide quality assured workers, which therefore means that their customers have certain expectations of their matchmaking and that the gig worker provided is expected to perform well. This is why they have chosen to be more involved with the matchmaking process themselves and not trust the automatic matchmaking to provide the customers with workers within their expectations. While Claes argues that since his firm leaves no such guarantees regarding their gig worker's competence, knowledge or performance, he does not need to work on managing his workers and are instead just emphasizing on providing the matchmaking. This is relatable to Varamezov (2013) arguing that firm needs to be aware of what they expect from their outsourcing, what they seek to gain from it and how which then affects the outcomes of the activity. How each mediator chooses to work on managing their gig workers seems to be related to what they want to create and offer their customers as

mediators, to ensure the performance and quality of their workers. So, it is suggested that with increased responsibility taken from the mediators, the more demanding and necessary it seems to become for mediators to actually manage their gig workers.

Plugge, Borman and Janssen (2016) discuss how a long-term success with outsourcing comes from a combination of trust and control, which relates to how Gigstr and ASociety have chosen to conduct their business. They create trust and control with their collaboration with gig workers by becoming more involved in the matchmaking process, to find and match gig workers to gigs that they believe that they can trust with their ability and can perform gigs well. They control the matchmaking process to find gig workers they can trust to perform and in such way they can manage their challenges of both meeting expectations of the matchmaking and allowing gig workers to actually be independent workers and not interfere in the gigs.

5.4 Risks with gig workers

The participants state that working with gig workers means having certain risks associated with the firm. Both Nicole and Per argues for how each performance a gig worker has affects the firm's trustworthiness and image since the expectations both they and the customers have is that the matchmaking will be quality assured and therefore without any problems. But as mediators are challenged with providing such guarantees, this adds risks to each firm. Breden (2009) argues how firm how to stop risks to be a problem for their firm by always adapting, changing and responding to minimize the risk probability. This is something that the participants argue can be done through the preliminary work conducted during the matchmaking process. But that still remains challenging since there is a constant flow of workers joining their network, which means that they cannot always work with the same gig workers. This leaves their matchmaking with some uncertainties regarding the quality of matchmaking and becomes a risk that mediators need to manage. Croitoru (2014) argues that the firm's exposure to risk is related to how its resources are or have been managed, which is why a well-established internal control is important to manage possible risks. This is something that the participants' state that they are aware of, which is why they have chosen more involvement in the matchmaking process and which is something that is kept in development from their follow-up of each gig. Would the matchmaking become more trustworthy and accurate, then the risk of low-quality matchmaking would decrease.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze challenges that a mediator can face when managing gig workers and also elevate the knowledge regarding gig workers on how to work with them. Based on the theoretical framework and the analysis of the empirical findings, the research question **What challenges can a mediator face when managing gig workers?** was able to be answered. The conclusions are based on what the findings provided and indicated two challenges that could be identified throughout this study:

- The expectations of the matchmaking
- Allowing gig workers to be independent

The analysis indicated that these challenges are different depending on how mediators choose to work with gig workers. Both Gigstr and ASociety have chosen to leave expectations and guarantees of quality gig workers with their matchmaking in the sense that they offer gig workers that have been through a recruitment process and are quality assured by their firm. This is a challenge that the mediators need to face with each gig, to manage the expectation of the matchmaking by both the customer and gig worker. This difference from Gigger, a firm which provides no guarantees of their gig workers' competence, knowledge of performance to the customers, which therefore has led to the mediator not emphasizing to manage the expectation of matchmaking.

The second challenges regard to mediators allowing gig worker to be independent, to allow them to be what the firms inform to the gig worker that they indent to offer. That means that the firms should not work on managing gig workers during gigs but allowing them to be in charge of the performance and do it to their own abilities. Mediators work to manage this challenge is by hiring gig workers that they believe can be trusted to perform well, as the control for who perform gigs through their firm lies in the mediators' hands. De Stefano (2016) argued that gig workers cannot be managed like other employees, these findings suggest that gig workers should not if they are to get the opportunity to be the independent worker they aim and are offered by the mediators to be. This is also indicated through the findings as to the collaboration between the gig firm and the worker should bring benefits and value for both parties, which is why such challenge could be common to face for mediators.

6.2 Contribution to the theory

This study has contributed to developing the knowledge and understanding of the gig economy, gig workers and the actor's role within its industry by identifying challenges with managing gig workers. As previous researches have emphasized their viewpoint from the gig workers perspective, this study has done so from the mediator's perspective and has therefore provided a different knowledge and understanding regarding gig workers. This study has contributed by laying the groundwork of challenges that could be faced when managing gig workers, from a mediator's viewpoint. Identifying such challenges can help understand the concept better and help further research made on this subject.

6.3 Contribution to practice

The study has contributed by providing an insight into the mediators' viewpoint of working and managing gig workers. It shows off their intent in collaboration with them, alongside highlighting what such collaboration can offer their firm, customers and gig workers and also identified challenges within it. These findings can contribute to both current mediators and those interested in taking part within this industry to be aware of challenges they could face and therefore facilitate their adaption towards gig workers.

6.4 Limitations and suggestions for future research

An important limitation for this study has been the lack of theoretical background to this subject. As the subject is still new in the field of studies, the previous studies regarding gig economy and gig workers have not emphasized on this subject and have therefore prevented the study to have a more stable theoretical background to lean on regarding its purpose. This has hindered the depth of findings that this study could retrieve to answer its research question and could be a reason to why so few challenges were identified. An important limitation for this research was the choices of participants for the empirical data collection. The choice of participants could be clearer and consistent in regards to their experience and role within the firms and the gig economy, which of course could have affected the findings and results of this study.

This study has emphasized its research on employers that mediate gig workers towards gigs and how they manage their workers. Future research could be done on these firms' customers, as they will become employers of the gig workers and has other challenges that

they could face. Their viewpoint could give more insight into the gig workers and provide a deeper understanding of challenges with managing those workers, where this study can be a foundation for such researches to continue on.

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Appendix 1

Operationalization

Concept	Theory	Questions
Gig economy	Balaram, Warden and Wallace-Stephens, 2017; Chappa, Varghese & Chandler, 2017; Healy, Nicholson & Pekarek, 2017; Istrate & Harris, 2017; Sinicki, 2019; Tomassetti, 2018	What is your opinion/view regarding the gig economy? What do you believe the future of this trend is?
Gig workers	Balaram, Warden and Wallace-Stephens, 2017;De Stefano, 2016; Jabagi, Croteau, Audebrand & Marsan, 2019; Ravanelle, 2017; Gandini, 2018; Sinicki, 2019	How would you characterize gig workers (what are the factors that differences them from other workers)? How would you describe working with gig workers as a labor force? Can you compare it to other experiences you have had? How would you say a manager can affect gig workers? How would you manage gig workers? How do you communicate with your gig workers?
Outsourcing	Arias-Aranda, Bustinza & Barrales-Molina, 2011; Belcourt, 2006; Bidwell, 2012; Clark, Huckman & Staats, 2013; Lahiri, 2016; Plugge, Borman & Janssen, 2016; Quinn & Hilmer, 1994; Smith & Smith, 2003; Tadelis, 2007; Varamezov, 2013	How can you trust and control gig workers to do what they are expected to do? How can you manage gig workers performances? Do you often follow up and monitor their performance? How would that process look like?
Operational risk	Ashby, 2008; Breden, 2009; Croitoru, 2014; Vaid, 2008	What risks would you say a firm that uses gig workers is exposed to?

Appendix 2

Interview Guide

Warm-up questions

Could you tell me a little bit about you and your role at the firm?

Can you tell me about your organization and how it is employed (mainly your labor work force)?

Have you had any prior job roles as the one you have now in a more traditional organization and if so, what are the differences in the way that you conduct your work?

<u>**Discussion points**</u>

Gig economy

What is your opinion/view regarding the gig economy?

What do you believe the future of this trend is?

Gig workers

How would you characterize gig workers (what are the factors that differences them from other workers)?

How would you describe working with gig workers as a labor force? Can you compare it to other experiences you have had?

Why do you believe a manager/employer/firm would chose to use gig workers as a labor force?

How would you say a manager can affect gig workers?

How do you manage gig workers?

How do you communicate with your gig workers?

Outsourcing

How can you trust and control gig workers to do what they are expected to do? How can you manage gig workers performances?

Do you often follow up and monitor their performance? How would that process look like?

Risk exposure

What risks would you say a firm that uses gig workers is exposed to?